

CURRENT AFFAIRS

July 05th



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2023

1. SCO calls for multipolar world order as Iran joins grouping: The Hindu – Page 1,10

Why is it in news?	The formation of a “more representative” and multipolar world order is in the global interest, leaders of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation said at a virtual summit chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
UPSC SYLLABUS RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	<p>Prelims: Current events of National and International Importance.</p> <p>Mains: General Studies-II: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.</p>
Important concepts	<p>Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)</p> <p>New Delhi Declaration</p>

Today's prelims practice question:

Q. Consider the following statements about the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

1. Iraq has formally become a full member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2023.
2. The next meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State will be held in 2024 in Kyrgyzstan.

Which among the statements mentioned above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct answer: D

Explanation: Iran, one of India's neighbours in its extended neighbourhood, has formally become a full member of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed Iran as the newest member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at the virtual summit of the grouping on July 4. Prior to Iran’s joining, the SCO consisted of eight member countries: China, Russia, India, Pakistan, and the four Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. The next meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State will be held in 2024 in the Republic of Kazakhstan.

Mains PYQ exercise:	Critically examine the aims and objectives of SCO. what importance does it hold for India. (2021)
Today's mains practice question:	Examine the significance of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) for India, in the context of India being the chair of SCO this year. Also bring about the opportunities for India.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO):

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) is an intergovernmental organization founded in Shanghai on 15 June 2001.
- The SCO currently comprises eight Member States (China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Pakistan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan), four Observer States interested in acceding to full membership (Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran, and Mongolia) and six “Dialogue Partners” (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Turkey).
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation focuses on cooperation with international and regional organisations.
- In 2021, the decision was made to start the accession process of Iran to the SCO as a full member, and Egypt, Qatar as well as Saudi Arabia became dialogue partners.
- Since its inception in 2001, the SCO has mainly focused on regional security issues, its fight against regional terrorism, ethnic separatism and religious extremism.
- To date, the SCO’s priorities also include regional development.
- The SCO has been an observer in the UN General Assembly since 2005.
- In April 2010, the UN and SCO Secretariats signed a Joint Declaration on Cooperation.
- SCO Secretariat has also established partnerships with the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in addition to its ongoing cooperation with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the UN Office on Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT).

New Delhi Declaration:

- The Indian government coined the New Delhi Declaration and proposed at the SCO Summit, aiming to fight against terrorism.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member nations adopted the New Delhi Declaration after the 23rd meeting of the Council of Heads of State of the grouping.
- The Declaration also proposes four other joint statements on de-radicalisation, sustainable lifestyle to tackle climate change, production of millets and digital transformation, where India offered to share expertise on digital payment interfaces.
- Russian President Vladimir Putin during his address at the SCO Summit underlined the need for counter-terrorism, and supported the New Delhi Declaration.
- Russia supported the New Delhi declaration which gives a consolidated approach to international issues.
- The New Delhi Declaration outlines areas of cooperation between SCO countries.
- Member states of the SCO stand for responding to global and regional security challenges and threats through political and diplomatic means on a multilateral basis, according to the Declaration.
- The member states also agreed in the Declaration that one of the most important factors in the preservation and strengthening of safety and stability within the SCO region is the early settlement of the situation in Afghanistan.
- The Declaration said member states also pledged to maintain and consolidate an open, transparent, fair, inclusive and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system, voicing stern opposition to unilateral protectionist behavior and trade restrictions that violate WTO principles.
- The Declaration also outlined the member states' intent to strengthen cooperation across various domains such as politics, security, trade, economy, finance, investment and culture.
- According to the New Delhi Declaration, the Member States will seek to develop common principles and approaches to form a unified list of terrorist, separatist and extremist organizations whose activities are prohibited on the territories of the SCO Member States.
- They opposed the militarization of information and communication technologies.

- The Member States have expressed their concern about the growing threats posed by increased production, trafficking, and abuse of narcotic drugs and using the proceeds of illicit drug trafficking as a source of funding for terrorism.
- They stressed the need for a joint and balanced approach to countering the trafficking of illicit drugs.
- The Delhi Declaration listed a number of global challenges, including new and emerging conflicts, turbulence in the markets, supply chain instability, climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The next meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State will be held in 2024 in the Republic of Kazakhstan, according to the Declaration.

2. Govt. to help combat child trafficking in border areas, set up rehabilitation homes: The Hindu – Page 12

Why is it in news?	The Centre has decided to help build infrastructure in border areas to combat child trafficking and help in rehabilitation and protection of victims.
UPSC SYLLABUS	Prelims: Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution
RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	Mains: General Studies-II: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.
Important concepts	Mission Vatsalya Scheme
<p style="text-align: center;">Prelims PYQ Exercise-Find answer:</p> <p>Q. Which of the following are envisaged as being part of the 'Right against Exploitation' in the Constitution of India? (2017)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prohibition of traffic in human beings and forced labour. 2. Abolition of untouchability. 3. Protection of the interests of the minorities. 	

4. Prohibition of employment of children in factories and mines.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a. 1 and 2
- b. 1 and 3
- c. 1 and 4
- d. 2,3 and 4

Today's prelims practice question:

Q. Consider the following statements about the Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU):

1. These units were established by India in 2020 to address existing gaps in law enforcement, ensure a victim-centric approach, develop databases on traffickers, etc.
2. As of now, 788 AHTUs are functional.

Which among the statements mentioned above is/are incorrect?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct answer: A

Explanation:

- India established Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) in 2007 to address existing gaps in law enforcement, ensure a victim-centric approach, develop databases on traffickers, etc.
- There exists a target of establishing units in all districts.
- Till now, the Women and Child Development Ministry has been providing financial assistance to all States and Union Territories under the Nirbhaya Fund to set up and strengthen Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTU) in every district of the country.
- Funding has also been provided for setting up these units in border guarding forces such as the Border Security Force (BSF) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
- As of now, 788 AHTUs are functional.

Mains PYQ exercise:	India's proximity to two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What countermeasures should be taken to prevent the same? (250 Words, 15 Marks) (2018)
Today's mains practice question:	What do you think are the major reasons for child trafficking in India? Suggest measures to combat child trafficking effectively, along with a mention of the existing legal provisions.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

Mission Vatsalya Scheme:

- Mission Vatsalya is the central scheme focused on the protection and welfare of children.
- The trafficking victims in the border areas will be produced before the child welfare committees to declare them fit for availing sponsorship as per the Mission Vatsalya Scheme guidelines and accordingly, the States and U.T.s will be requested to do the needful.
- The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) conducted a three-day Refresher Training Programme on Mission Vatsalya, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, at its Regional Centre in Mohali from 29th to 31st May 2023.
- The objective of the programme was to enhance the knowledge and skills of the functionaries involved in the implementation of Mission Vatsalya, which aims to provide care and protection to children in need.
- The programme was attended by 33 participants from various states and union territories.
- The programme also included interactive sessions, group work, case studies, field visits and feedback from the participants.
- They also suggested some areas for improvement such as more time for field visits, more practical exercises and more exposure to innovative models of child care and protection.

- The programme covered various topics related to the mission, such as: the roles and responsibilities of statutory bodies such as Child Welfare Committees, Juvenile Justice Boards, Special Juvenile Police Units, etc.
- The quality standards and guidelines for service delivery services such as Child Care Institutions, Adoption Agencies, Foster Care, Sponsorship, etc.
- The strategies and best practices for upscaling institutional care and services for children who cannot be placed in family-based care.
- The challenges and opportunities for encouraging non-institutional community-based care such as family preservation, reunification, kinship care, etc.
- The training and capacity building needs and methods of duty holders such as social workers, counsellors, caregivers, etc.

3. Stoltenberg to remain at NATO helm for another year: The Hindu – Page 13

Why is it in news?	NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will stay in office for another year, the 31 nation military alliance decided recently.
UPSC SYLLABUS RELEVANCE for prelims and Mains	<p>Prelims: Current events of national and international importance.</p> <p>Mains: General Studies- II: International relations - Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.</p>
Important concepts	NATO

Today's prelims practice question:

Q. Consider the following statements about the Secretary-General of NATO:

1. Jens Stoltenberg is currently the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
2. Mette Frederiksen was announced to be the Secretary-General of NATO until 1 October 2024.

Which among the statements mentioned above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only

- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct answer: A

Explanation: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will stay in office for another year, until 1 October 2024. It's the fourth time Mr. Stoltenberg has had his mandate extended. He is the second-longest serving NATO Secretary-General.

DETAILED EXPLANATION OF IMPORTANT CONCEPTS

NATO:

- The foundations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) were officially laid down on 4 April 1949 with the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty, more popularly known as the Washington Treaty.
- The Washington Treaty – or North Atlantic Treaty – forms the basis of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization – or NATO.
- The Treaty was signed in Washington D.C. on 4 April 1949 by 12 founding members.
- The Treaty derives its authority from Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, which reaffirms the inherent right of independent states to individual or collective defence.
- Collective defence is at the heart of the Treaty and is enshrined in Article 5.
- It commits members to protect each other and sets a spirit of solidarity within the Alliance.
- The Treaty is short – containing only 14 articles – and provides for in-built flexibility on all fronts.
- Despite the changing security environment, the original Treaty has never had to be modified and each Ally has the possibility to implement the text in accordance with its capabilities and circumstances.
- At present, NATO has 31 member countries.
- These countries, called NATO Allies, are sovereign states that come together through NATO to discuss political and security issues and make collective decisions by consensus.

NATO Secretary-General:

- NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg will stay in office for another year, until 1 October 2024.
- Mr. Stoltenberg, a former Norwegian Prime Minister, has been NATO's top civilian official since 2014.
- His term had been due to expire last year but was extended then to keep a steady hand at the helm after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.
- U.S. President Joe Biden and his NATO counterparts had been due to name a successor when they meet in Vilnius, Lithuania, on July 11 12.
- But the world's biggest security organisation makes decisions by consensus, and no agreement could be found on a new candidate.
- It's the fourth time Mr. Stoltenberg has had his mandate extended.
- He's the second-longest serving NATO Secretary-General.

MODEL MAINS ANSWER FOR TODAY'S EXPECTED MAINS QUESTION

Q. What do you think are the major reasons for child trafficking in India? Suggest measures to combat child trafficking effectively, along with a mention of the existing legal provisions.

<p>Why this question</p>	<p>The question theme is reflected several times in UPSC (including prelims) and APPSC mains.</p> <p>UPSC PYQs</p> <p>India's proximity to two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What countermeasures should be taken to prevent the same? (250 Words, 15 Marks) (2018)</p>
<p><u>First step is to understand the demand of the</u></p>	<p>Question has two parts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reasons for child trafficking 2. Measures to combat child trafficking

<u>question</u>																																					
Introduction	<p>Child trafficking means the recruitment and or transfer, harboring or receipt of children for the purposes of exploitation. It can manifest in various forms of exploitation, including forced labor, sexual exploitation, forced begging, and forced marriage. Migrants, refugees and children on the move are the most at risk of becoming victims of child trafficking.</p>																																				
Body	<p>Reasons for child trafficking</p> <table> <tr> <th>Dimension</th><th>Content</th></tr> <tr> <td>Reasons</td><td>Poverty</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Unemployment</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Lack of education</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Hunger</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Armed conflict</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Sexual exploitation</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Labour</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Illegal activities</td></tr> </table> <p>Key challenges to address child trafficking</p> <table> <tr> <th>Dimension</th><th>Content</th></tr> <tr> <td>Measures</td><td>Lack of awareness</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Inadequate legislation</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Lack of reporting</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Enforcement is not so effective</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Cross-border nature</td></tr> <tr> <td></td><td>Online exploitation</td></tr> </table> <p>Measures to combat child trafficking</p> <table> <tr> <th>Dimension</th><th>Content</th></tr> <tr> <td>Constitutional provisions</td><td>Article 23 prohibits human trafficking and began (forced labour without payment).</td></tr> </table>	Dimension	Content	Reasons	Poverty		Unemployment		Lack of education		Hunger		Armed conflict		Sexual exploitation		Labour		Illegal activities	Dimension	Content	Measures	Lack of awareness		Inadequate legislation		Lack of reporting		Enforcement is not so effective		Cross-border nature		Online exploitation	Dimension	Content	Constitutional provisions	Article 23 prohibits human trafficking and began (forced labour without payment).
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Constitutional provisions	Article 23 prohibits human trafficking and began (forced labour without payment).																																				

		Article 24 forbids employment of children below the age of 14 years in dangerous jobs like factories and mines.
	Legal provisions	No composite anti-trafficking law that addresses prevention, protection, rehabilitation and compensation of survivors. However, separate regulations that address different crimes related to trafficking exists.
		The Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act, 1956 (PITA) is targeted at stopping immoral trafficking and sex work. It went through two amendments, in 1978 and 1986.
		The Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006, prohibits and penalises the act of child marriage.
		The Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Act, 1986, prevents children from partaking in certain employments and regulates the conditions of work for children in other fields.
		The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976, prohibits systems of labour where people, including children, work under conditions of servitude to pay off debt, and also provides a framework for rehabilitating released labourers.
		The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015, which governs laws relating to children alleged and found to be in conflict with law.

		The Transplantation of Human Organs and Tissues Act, 1994, makes commercial dealing in human organs a punishable offence.
		The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 sets out laws relating to children who are said to be in conflict with the law and defines “Child in Conflict with Law” as a child who is alleged or found to have committed an offence and has not completed eighteen years of age on the date of commission of such offence.
		The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012 (POCSO) aims to prevent the commercial sexual exploitation of children.
Conclusion:	<p>Raise Awareness and Education: Conduct widespread awareness campaigns to educate communities, children, parents, and relevant professionals about the dangers of child trafficking.</p> <p>Strengthen Legislation: Laws should provide severe penalties for traffickers and prioritise the best interests of the child.</p> <p>Strengthen International Cooperation: Facilitate cooperation and information sharing among countries to combat cross-border trafficking.</p> <p>Improve Victim Identification and Support: Enhance training for law enforcement officers, social workers, healthcare providers, and educators to identify signs of child trafficking and provide appropriate support to victims.</p> <p>We need community-based rehabilitation models to allow for greater agency for the individual. The present laws are to be reviewed to address legal gaps and have to raise awareness of various human trafficking crimes and design targeted child protection programs.</p>	