

NEWS TODAY

India Refuses to Sign Joint Statement At Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting

Because of India's refusal, the meeting concluded without the adoption of a joint declaration, as SCO rules require **full consensus for joint declaration**.

- India's Defence Minister reiterated that India has sought to build consensus on addressing global challenges based on the motto '**One Earth, One Family, One Future**,' which is rooted in India's civilizational ethos of '**Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam**.'
- He also highlighted that the **SCO accounts for 30% of global GDP and 40% of the world's population**.

Significance of SCO for India

- **Fostering Regional Security:** SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) can help counter terrorism.
 - **Boost to Socioeconomic Ties:** Promotes cooperation through initiatives such as the **SCO Young Scientists Conclave** and the **Special Working Group on Innovation and Startups** (proposed by India).
 - **Enhancing Regional Connectivity:** International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) involves SCO members; thus, their support could be leveraged.
 - ⊖ Such projects are also crucial for **countering China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.
 - **Countering the hegemony of Western-dominated institutions** via the SCO's proposal for trade in national currency instead of the dollar.
- China-Pakistan Axis**, China's silence towards Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism and the Perception of the SCO being an anti-Western grouping, etc., are the key issues being faced by India at the SCO.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)



Genesis

Founded at the Shanghai Summit in 2001 as an **intergovernmental organisation**
Evolved from the "Shanghai Five" grouping



10 Member Countries

- **Original Shanghai Five (2001):**
China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan
- **Later Additions:**
Uzbekistan, India, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus



"Shanghai Spirit"

- Mutual trust
 - Mutual benefit
 - Equality
 - Consultation
 - Respect for cultural diversity
 - Pursuit of common development
- These principles underpin the working of the SCO



Organizational Structure

- **Council of Heads of States** (Apex decision-making body)
- ↓
- **Council of Heads of Governments** (Second-highest council)

India In Touch with China on Rare Earth Magnet Supply Amid Its Export Restriction: MEA

China, which **controls over 90% of global processing capacity**, enacted restrictions in April requiring **companies to obtain import permits from Beijing**.

- China's export restriction was **seen as a response to the US's policy of reciprocal tariffs**.

What are Rare Earth Elements (REE)?

- **Definition:** REE include **17 metals** (the lanthanides plus scandium and yttrium).
 - ⊖ **Classified as critical minerals** due to:
 - ◆ Rarely found in **economically exploitable concentrations**, limited suppliers, Strategic importance in defence, etc.
- **Features:**
 - ⊖ REE alloys **prevent corrosion in metals and increase efficiency** in energy storage.
 - ⊖ They also **improve performance in electronics and advanced manufacturing**.
 - ⊖ **REE magnets** are often **utilised in magnets due to their high remanence and coercivity**.
 - ◆ This property is a result of the **relatively large number of unpaired electrons in their atomic structure**.
- **Application:** They are **essential in aerospace, defence, automotive, and energy systems**.
 - ⊖ Examples include **cellular telephones, computer hard drives, guidance systems, lasers, and radar and sonar systems etc.**
- **Global reserves**
 - ⊖ **China:** 44 million metric tons (largest reserve)
 - ⊖ **Brazil:** 21 million metric tons (2nd Largest)
 - ⊖ **India:** Around 7 million metric tons (5th largest in the world)

Limited processing capacity has made India **dependent on imports for REEs** (especially from China). The **National Critical Mineral Mission (NCMM)**, launched in 2025, aims to promote the exploration of various critical minerals, including REEs.

Union Minister Of Ports, Shipping & Waterways (Mopsw) Inaugurates Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL)

SMFCL is India's first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) in the maritime sector.

- Formerly known as Sagarmala Development Company Limited, SMFCL is a Mini Ratna, Category-I, Central Public Sector Enterprise.
- It is now formally registered as an NBFC with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- It will offer tailored financial products to a diverse range of stakeholders, such as port authorities and shipping companies.
 - ⊕ It will also support strategic sectors like shipbuilding, renewable energy, cruise tourism, and maritime education.

Other Key initiatives launched for the Maritime Sector

- **Digital Centre of Excellence (DCoE):** Foster innovation and modernisation of port operations and shipping logistics through emerging technologies like AI, IoT, and Blockchain.
- **SAGAR SETU platform:** Aligned with PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan, SAGAR SETU integrates multiple service providers to offer seamless EXIM (export-import)-related services.
- **DRISHTI (Data driven decision support-Review-Institutional Information-System for-Hastening and-Tracking-Implementation):** Aims to accelerate the implementation of Maritime India Vision 2030 and Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.
- **Scale of Rates (SOR) of Major Ports:** Providing a uniform structure for port tariffs.
- **Gateway to Green: India's Ports Transforming into Hydrogen Hubs:** Outlines a roadmap for transforming Indian ports into hubs for green hydrogen production, storage, and export.

Maritime India Vision 2030

- Provides a comprehensive framework for the holistic development of India's maritime sector, encompassing ports, shipping, and waterways.
- It aims to propel India to global maritime leadership.

Amrit Kaal Vision 2047

- Builds on the Maritime India Vision 2030.
- Aims to develop world-class ports and promote inland water transport, coastal shipping, and a sustainable maritime sector.

US pulls funding from Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance

The US has accused Gavi, along with the World Health Organisation (WHO), of silencing dissenting views and legitimate questions about vaccine safety.

- ⊕ The US has long been one of the biggest supporters of Gavi.

Rising trend of US withdrawal from Global Alliance

- In recent years, the United States has exhibited a rising trend of withdrawing from key global alliances and institutions such as the WHO, the Paris Climate Agreement, UN Human Rights Council, UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), etc.
- As a global superpower, the U.S.'s withdrawal carries far greater implications for international governance.



Impact of US Withdrawing from Global Alliances

- **Weakening of Multilateralism/Rule-Based Order:** E.g. Israel withdraws participation from UN Human Rights Council.
- **Undermine Climate Actions:** 2024 was recorded as the hottest year and the USA stands as the world's second-largest greenhouse gas emitter behind China.
- **Shortage of Funds for Health:** US exit could leave institutions with fund crunch. E.g., In 2024, US funded about 15% of WHO's total funding.
- **Other:** It creates a leadership vacuum that can be filled up by China (it may reduce India's influence in global organisations' decision-making), etc.

About Gavi (2000)

- It is a public-private partnership.
 - ⊕ Its core partners include the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, and the Gates Foundation.
- **Mission:** To save lives and protect people's health by increasing equitable and sustainable use of vaccines.
 - ⊕ It vaccinated over 1 billion children across the poorest countries
- It is a member of the WHO-led Vaccine Safety Net (VSN) project.
- **Secretariat** - Geneva, Switzerland.

India celebrates 10 years of the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)

It was launched on 25 June 2015 and it is the **First Water-focused Mission**.

➤ **AMRUT 2.0 was launched on 1 October 2021** for a period of 05 years i.e. 2021-22 to 2025-26.

⊖ It covers all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).

About AMRUT

➤ **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

➤ **Key Objective:**

⊖ Ensure every household has access to a tap and a sewerage connection.

⊖ Increase the amenity value of cities (e.g. parks)

⊖ Reduce pollution by promoting public transport, etc.

➤ **Scheme Type:** Centrally sponsored scheme, funds shared among States and UTs based on urban population and number of towns.

➤ **Coverage:** Covered 500 selected cities and towns (now 485 cities including 15 merged cities).

➤ **Other Key Initiatives Under AMRUT**

⊖ **Jal Hi AMRIT:** To treat and reuse water safely

⊖ **AMRUT Mitra:** To foster skills among SHG women related to water management in their communities

Key Reform-Oriented Outcomes under AMRUT & AMRUT 2.0



99 lakh streetlights replaced with energy-efficient LEDs.



3,599 cities implemented Online Building Permission System.



46 lakh tonnes CO₂ reduction per year.



₹4,984 crore raised by BULBs through Municipal Bonds.



GIS-based Master Plans for AMRUT cities formulated for **231 cities covering 1 lakh sq. km area**.



Also In News



AlphaGenome

Google DeepMind has launched a new AI model called AlphaGenome. AlphaGenome

➤ New AI model will help in accurately predicting how individual mutations in human DNA affect their functions and impact our health.

➤ It is built upon Google DeepMind's earlier genomics model, Enformer, and complements to AlphaMissense, which specializes in categorizing the effects of variants within protein-coding regions.

➤ Model will analyze extremely long DNA sequences – up to 1 million base pairs – and generate highly detailed predictions.



Operation Deep Manifest

Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has seized goods valued at approximately ₹9 crore under Operation Deep Manifest

About Operation Deep Manifest

➤ This operation was launched to target the illegal import of Pakistani-origin goods routed through third countries, primarily via Dubai, UAE.

⊖ Following the Pahalgam terror attacks, India imposed a comprehensive ban on the direct or indirect import or transit of goods originating in or exported from Pakistan.

◆ Previously, such goods were subject to a 200% customs duty.



Science and Technology (S&T) Clusters Initiatives

S&T Clusters Annual Report 2024-2025" highlighted various initiatives launched under the programme, including **Kalaanubhav.in** which is an AR/VR-enabled artisan marketplace

About the S&T Clusters initiative

- **Genesis:** Launched in 2020 based on the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology, and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- **Aims:** To bring together stakeholders, like academic institutions, R&D organisations, industry, local governments, to deliver demand-driven solutions through innovative ideas.
- **Working Model:**
 - ⊕ Operates through a consortium-based approach.
 - ⊕ Focuses on science and tech-based regional problem-solving.
- **Nodal Implementing Agency:** Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA)
 - ⊕ PSA works under the Cabinet Secretary



Official Language

Golden jubilee of Department of Official Language has been celebrated.

- It was established in the year 1975.

Official Language

- Provisions related to the official language are covered in Part XVII of the Constitution.
- **Article 343** states that official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script.
 - ⊕ **Official Language Act, 1963** provides for use of English, in addition to Hindi, for all official purposes of Union and business transactions in Parliament.
- **Article 344** provides for constitution of Commission and Committee on Official Language
- **Article 345** provides that State Legislature may adopt any one or more languages used in the State or Hindi as the official language of that State.



Green Data Center

Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and Union Minister for Science & Technology laid the foundation of state-of-the-art **Green Data Centre** at Central Electronics Limited (CEL), Ghaziabad.

About Green Data Center

- It will focus on minimizing environmental impact and maximizing energy efficiency.
 - ⊕ It is aligned with aim of making India a self-reliant global digital power.
- It has been set by the of collaboration between **CEL**, a Govt PSU affiliated with **CSIR** under Ministry of Science & Technology and **ESDS** (private company)



Manasarovar lake

After a six-year gap, Indian pilgrims completed the **Kailash Mansarovar Yatra** and visited the sacred lake.

- This marks the first **India-China people-to-people exchange** to resume since the COVID-19 pandemic and the LAC stand-off.
- The yatra takes place via two routes: **Lipulekh Pass (Uttarakhand)** and **Nathu La Pass (Sikkim)**.

About Manasarovar lake

- **Mount Kailash Parvat** is also known as **Lake Manas Sarovar** in Sanskrit
- **Location:** Located in Tibet, the Southern foot of Mount Kailash.
 - ⊕ It is world's highest freshwater lake.
- **Major Monastery:** **Chiu Gompa Monastery** is located near the lake.
- **Cultural and Religious Significance**
 - ⊕ **Hinduism:** Lake is believed to be created by **Lord Brahma**
 - ⊕ **Buddhism:** Buddhists associate it with **Lake Anotatta** and believe **Lord Buddha** was conceived here.



International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)

Finance Minister reviewed progress of **Gujarat International Finance Tech- City (GIFT City)-IFSC**.

- **GIFT City-IFSC** was established as Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in 2015.
- It acts as a **hub for international financial activities**, bridges the gap between **Indian and global financial markets**, etc.

IFSC Authority

- **IFSC Authority** is a statutory body established under IFSC Act, 2019.
- A unified regulator for development and regulation of financial products, financial services and financial institutions in IFSCs in India.



UN80 Initiative

UN80 Initiative was launched by the United Nations to **commemorate the signing of the UN Charter 80 years ago** in 1945.

- The UN80 Initiative is aimed at **streamlining operations, sharpening impact, and reaffirming the UN's relevance** for a rapidly changing world.

About United Nations (UN)

- **Genesis:** United Nations is an international organisation founded in 1945 following the World War II
- **Six principal organs**
 - ⊕ General Assembly
 - ⊕ Security Council,
 - ⊕ Economic and Social Council,
 - ⊕ Trusteeship Council
 - ⊕ International Court of Justice
 - ⊕ UN Secretariat
- **Total Members:** 193 (India is a founding member)

Place in News



Japan (Capital: Tokyo)

Earthquakes strike the Japanese island chain.

- **Political Features:**
 - ⊕ **Location:** An island nation off the east coast of Asia.
 - ⊕ **Main Islands:** Honshu (largest), Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku.
 - ⊕ **Maritime Boundaries:**
 - ◆ East: Pacific Ocean
 - ◆ North: Sea of Okhotsk
 - ◆ West: Sea of Japan (also called East Sea)
 - ◆ Southwest: East China Sea
- **Geographical Features:**
 - ⊕ **Highest Peak:** Mount Fuji (3,776 m), a famous volcano.
 - ⊕ **Major Rivers:** Shinano (longest), Tone, and Kiso.
 - ⊕ **Natural Hazards:** Frequent earthquakes due to its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire.

