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TODAY'S ANALYSIS

(05 July 2024)

TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION
- ELECTIONS IN THE UK
- MCQs



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SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANISATION

On July 4, the final day of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit** in **Kazakhstan's capital Astana**, Indian External Affairs Minister **S Jaishankar** held talks with **Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi**.

Earlier, Jaishankar **also held bilateral meetings** with his counterparts from SCO members **Tajikistan and Russia**, and the **newest member Belarus**, on the sidelines of the two-day summit that began on Wednesday.

ABOUT SCO

The grouping **came into existence in Shanghai in 2001**.

Its name comes from its origins in the "**Shanghai Five**", formed in **1996** and consisting of:

- **China**
- **Russia**
- **Kazakhstan**
- **Kyrgyzstan and**
- **Tajikistan.**

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THE BACKGROUND

With the **dissolution of the USSR in 1991** into 15 independent countries, there were **concerns in the region about extremist religious groups and ethnic tensions** coming to the fore. To manage these issues, a grouping was created for Cooperation on security matters.

Building on this, **SCO was established on June 15, 2001**, as an international organisation and also **included Uzbekistan as a sixth member**.

PRESENT MEMBERSHIP

With further expansions, it currently has 10 members:

- Russia
- Tajikistan
- Uzbekistan
- Kazakhstan
- China
- Kyrgyzstan
- Pakistan (2017)
- India (2017)
- Iran (2023).
- Belarus (2024)

Observer members:

- Afghanistan
- Mongolia.

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Aims of sco

The main objectives of the sco are as follows:

- Strengthening mutual trust, friendship and neighborly relations among the member states;
- Promoting effective cooperation in political, trade, economic, scientific, technical, and cultural spheres as well as in the realm of educational, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas;
- Jointly maintaining and safeguarding of peace, security and stability in the Region; and
- Fostering creation of democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

SIGNIFICANCE OF SCO

- SCO is one of the few international organisations which **deal with security issues and primarily has Asian members.**
- Regional heavyweights Russia and China have stressed its position as an **alternative to a “Western” international order.**
- **Along with the BRICS grouping**, which has India, South Africa and Brazil as well, Russia & China are seen positioning against US influence.

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- The Central Asian Republics (CAR) ie Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan & Tajikistan (Turkmenistan is also part of CAR but not of SCO) often considered as backyard of Russia are a major source of Oil & Natural Gas. These resources are vital for projects like BRI of China & overall Energy Security.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

- On one level, SCO membership allows India to participate in a forum which **enhances its scope of cooperation with Central Asian countries**, which have **not had particularly close relations** with India since their formation in 1991.
- It also matters for **maintaining communication with major actors** in the Region on **common security issues**.
 - For example, an important permanent structure within the SCO is the Regional anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS).
 - It assists members in the preparation and staging of counter-terrorism exercises, analyses key intelligence information coming in from the member states, and shares information on terrorist movements and drug trafficking.

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CONCERNS IN BRI

Bilateral issues remain unsolved:

- India & China have unresolved border issues.
 - Last year, when the summit was under India's leadership, it was hosted digitally. India refused to sign the paragraph which endorsed the Belt & Road Initiative (BRI)
- India & Pakistan relationship have time & again been hampered by Cross Border Terrorism.
- There are border conflicts between Russia & China as well.

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ELECTIONS IN THE UK



Britain held a parliamentary election on **July 4** which opinion polls indicate will hand power to **Keir Starmer's Labour Party** and end 14 years of **Conservative Party-led government**.

THE PRESENT SITUATION



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HOW IS THE WINNER DECIDED?

To win outright, one party needs to win at least **326 out of the 650 parliamentary seats**. The **leader of that party becomes prime minister**. In each of the 650 constituencies, **voters elect a local candidate** who is usually affiliated with a Larger political party. **Voters choose one candidate and the candidate with the Most votes wins the seat.**

WHAT HAPPENS IN CASE OF A HUNG PARLIAMENT?

A hung parliament occurs **if no single party wins a majority**. In this case the **incumbent prime minister remains in power** and is **given the first chance to form a government** either by building a coalition or governing with a minority.

THE AFTERMATH OF POLLING

- Once the overall result is clear, and **if the governing party has lost**, The prime minister would be expected to tender his **resignation to the king**.
- The **leader of the winning party will then meet the king**, who will request he or she form a government.
- They will then head to **Downing Street to make a speech to the British public** as the new prime minister.

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- The **new PM will begin appointing ministers**, starting with senior positions.
- The **Speaker of the House of Commons** - parliament's lower chamber - **will be elected** from among members of parliament (MPs).
- Each MP will then in turn swear the oath of allegiance to the king or make A solemn affirmation. This usually takes a few days.
- The **Opening of the Parliament with the King's speech** also takes place setting out the agenda for the government for legislation.

WHO CAN VOTE & HOW?

- Voters must be **aged 18 or over on polling day**, and be **either a British citizen, Irish citizen or qualifying Commonwealth citizen**.
- Close to **50 million people are registered to vote**.
- Votes can be **cast in person, by post, or through a proxy**.
- Voters must take photo I.D. with them to vote, the first national election at which that has been required.
- Overseas British citizens will also get to vote regardless of how long they have been living outside the country.

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MCQs

1. Which of the following countries is not considered as part of the Central Asian Republic?

1. Kazakhstan
2. Kyrgyzstan
3. Uzbekistan
4. Turkmenistan

- (A) Only 1 & 2
(B) Only 4
(C) All are part of CAR.
(D) None of the above options.

Ans. (C)

2. Which of the following countries were part of the Shanghai Five?

1. China
2. Russia
3. Turkmenistan
4. Tajikistan

- (A) Only 1 & 2
(B) Only 1,2 & 4
(C) Only 1 & 3
(D) All of the above countries were part of Shanghai Five.

Ans. (B)

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3. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:

1. SCO has one of its objectives of fighting terrorism.
2. India is a founding member of SCO.

- (A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 & 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (A)

4. Which of the following entities are part of The United Kingdom?

1. Ireland
2. England
3. Scotland
4. Wales

- (A) 1,2 & 3
(B) 2,3 & 4
(C) 2 & 4

(D) All of the above are part of UK.

Ans. (B)

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5. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:
1. The UK has a Parliamentary form of government.
 2. The Head of the State of UK is directly chosen by the people.
- (A) Only 1
(B) Only 2
(C) Both 1 & 2
(D) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans. (A)



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