

What is the SCO?

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a multi-government organisation that was formed in 2001 as an expression of greater coordination among the major powers in the Eurasian region. The organisation was launched by China, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan, reflecting a growing awareness among these countries to come to terms with the unilateralism of the U.S.-led post-Cold War world order. The group was a formal initiative borne out of the Shanghai Five Mechanism which came up in the backdrop of growing unilateral moves by the U.S., such as the Iraq war of 1990-91.

What is its agenda?

The agenda of the nascent SCO was shaped under the Shanghai Five Mechanism to include violent liberation movements and counter-terrorism efforts. For instance, in a criticism of U.S.-led intervention in various states in West Asia and the Balkans, the Shanghai Five Mechanism aimed to secure national sovereignty of the member countries. The SCO also served as a platform to facilitate warmer ties among its countries by enhancing cooperation on the economic, technology, culture, energy and other fronts, subsequently helping China resolving its border problems with the Central Asian region. The SCO aims to create a 'fair and rational new international political and economic order'.

What is India's role in the SCO?

The SCO granted India and Pakistan full membership in 2017. After inclusion, both India and Pakistan are expected to participate in the activities of the SCO Secretariat in Beijing. While the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) provides a rare platform for regional cooperation to counter-terrorism, it also brought into focus the different views the two countries have on terrorism. Yet in September, India and Pakistan will join other SCO members in counter-terrorism exercises.

What is the importance of the upcoming summit in Qingdao?

The June summit will be the first major multilateral meeting since the re-election of Russian President Vladimir Putin where he is likely to push for Iran's formal entry into the organisation. This could signal a coming together of SCO members against the unilateral U.S. withdrawal from the Iran nuclear deal. This will also be an opportunity for India, China and Russia to reset regional ties, helping them navigate the adverse impacts of U.S. Treasury sanctions. India especially appears to be under pressure from the U.S. on its trade with Iran, as it is also an MNNA (Major Non-NATO Ally) of the U.S. and has held 'Quadrilateral' talks with the U.S., Australia, and Japan in 2017. The next summit will therefore provide the space for urgent consultations on India's "plurilateralism", a term that has been used to characterise India's current foreign policy.

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When a child faces brutality, in or outside the family, society's contract with its own spirit is violated

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