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1. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- Prelims - Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)
- Mains - GS 2 - International Relations

Why in the news?

- SCO Summit 2025 held in China.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

- **What is it?**
 - SCO is a permanent intergovernmental international organization.
 - It's a Eurasian political, economic and military organization aiming to maintain peace, security and stability in the region.
- **Formation:** It was created in 2001.
- **Headquarters:** Beijing, China
- **History:**
 - Prior to the creation of SCO in 2001, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan were members of the Shanghai Five.
 - Following the accession of Uzbekistan to the organization in 2001, the Shanghai Five was renamed the SCO.
 - India and Pakistan became members in 2017.
- **Significance of SCO for India:**
 - **Regional Security Cooperation**
 - ★ Collaboration on counterterrorism, separatism, and extremism.
 - ★ Enhances India's role in stabilizing Afghanistan post-Taliban.
 - **Strategic Balance**
 - ★ Helps India balance China's growing influence in Central Asia.
 - ★ Strengthens India's ties with Russia and Central Asian countries.
 - **Economic Cooperation**
 - ★ Facilitates trade and connectivity with Central Asia and Europe.
 - ★ Improves energy security through cooperation with energy-rich SCO nations.
 - **Diplomatic Platform**
 - ★ Multilateral forum to engage with China and Pakistan on neutral ground.



- ★ Fosters diplomatic dialogue to manage bilateral tensions.

→ Cultural and Civilizational Ties

- ★ Promotes cultural cooperation, enhancing India's soft power in Central Asia.
- ★ Revives historical connections through people-to-people exchanges.

→ Global Geopolitical Role

- ★ Strengthens India's position in promoting a multipolar world order.
- ★ Expand strategic partnerships beyond Indo-Pacific alliances.

→ Non-Traditional Security Cooperation

- ★ Addresses climate change, water security, and health challenges in the region.

→ Regional Connectivity

- ★ Aligns with India's connectivity projects like **Chabahar Port** and the **North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**.

● Challenges Faced by SCO:

→ Diverging Strategic Interests

- ★ **India-China Rivalry:** Ongoing border tensions and strategic competition between India and China create friction.
- ★ **Russia-China Dominance:** Russia and China's dominance in the organization can limit the influence of other member states, including India.

→ Bilateral Tensions Among Members

- ★ **India-Pakistan Conflicts:** Historical and ongoing disputes between India and Pakistan can hinder effective cooperation within the SCO.
- ★ **Regional Rivalries:** Differing priorities of Central Asian countries could lead to conflicts over resource control and influence.

→ Lack of Economic Integration

- ★ **Limited Trade Cooperation:** SCO lacks a strong economic framework like the EU or ASEAN, limiting its potential as a trade bloc.
- ★ **Sanctions on Russia:** Western sanctions on Russia can indirectly affect SCO's economic potential.



→ Differing Approaches to Terrorism

- ★ **Varied Counterterrorism Agendas:** Countries have different definitions of terrorism, leading to a lack of unified action. For instance, Pakistan's approach to terrorism differs from India's concerns about cross-border terrorism.

→ Logistical and Connectivity Issues

- ★ **Poor Regional Connectivity:** Infrastructure challenges and lack of proper transport corridors make it difficult to enhance trade and connectivity among SCO members.

→ China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

- ★ **India's Opposition to BRI:** India opposes China's BRI, particularly the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. This creates division within SCO, which endorses the BRI.

→ Non-Alignment on Global Issues

- ★ **Different Foreign Policy Agendas:** SCO members have different stances on global issues like the US, NATO, and regional conflicts, making it hard to form a unified front.

→ Institutional Weaknesses

- ★ **Limited Scope:** SCO has focused more on security and political cooperation, but its institutional capacity for deepening economic or cultural ties remains limited.
- ★ **Slow Decision-Making:** Consensus-based decision-making often delays effective policy implementation.

→ Afghan Instability

- ★ **Unstable Neighbor:** The situation in Afghanistan poses a challenge, particularly regarding terrorism and drug trafficking, which directly impact SCO's goals for regional security.



2. Nauru

- **Prelims** - Location of Nauru
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Geography

Nauru

Why in the news?

- Australia announced an agreement with the Pacific nation Nauru enabling it to send hundreds of immigrants to the barren island.

Nauru

- **Location:** Nauru is an island nation and a microstate in Oceania, located in the southwestern Pacific Ocean.
- **Capital:** It has no official capital city but Yaren is the de facto capital of Nauru.
- **Fact:** It is the smallest republic in the world.
- **Border:** The island is about 1,300 km northeast of the Solomon Islands; its closest neighbour is the island of Banaba, in Kiribati.
- **Geography:** The island is dominated by a central phosphate plateau which is surrounded by coral cliffs.

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3. Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)

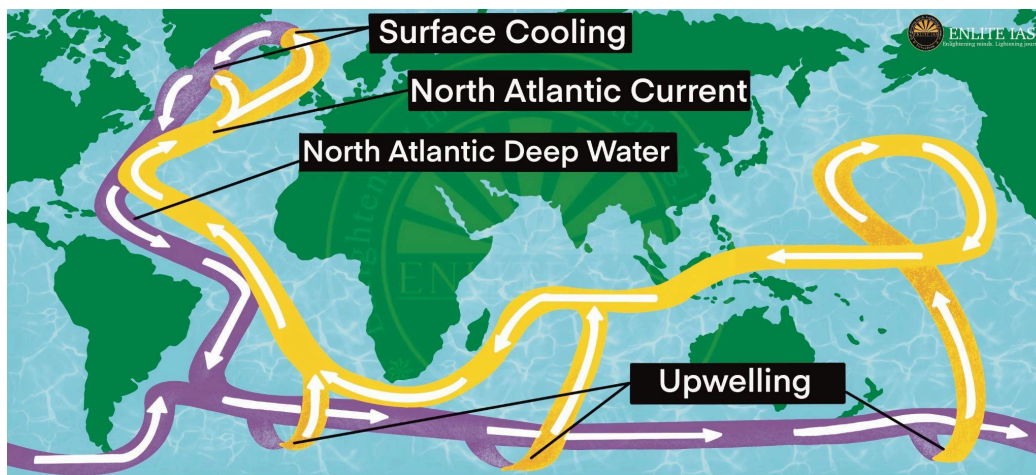
- **Prelims** - Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)
- **Mains** - GS 1 - Geography

Why in the news?

- A new study warns that the Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC) could reach an irreversible tipping point within decades, with its collapse likely in 50–100 years.

Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (AMOC)

- **What is it?**
 - It is a large system of ocean currents in the Atlantic Ocean, part of the global Thermohaline Circulation (also called the "Global Conveyor Belt").
 - AMOC transports warm, salty surface water northward and cold, deep water southward.
- **How it works?**
 - Warm surface water flows from the tropics to the North Atlantic (e.g., Gulf Stream).
 - In the North Atlantic, the water cools and sinks due to increasing density (from cooling and salinity).
 - The cold, dense water flows southward at deep ocean levels.
 - Eventually, it upwells in the Southern Ocean and elsewhere, completing the circulation loop.





- **Importance of AMOC**

- Regulates climate in the North Atlantic region (e.g., Europe's relatively mild winters).
- Helps in carbon sequestration (draws down CO₂ into the deep ocean).
- Supports marine ecosystems and fisheries by nutrient cycling.
- Impacts monsoon systems including Indian and West African monsoons.

- **Evidence of Slowdown:**

- Scientific studies and IPCC reports indicate AMOC has weakened by ~15% since the mid-20th century.
- May be at its weakest in over a millennium (based on proxy data).

- **Causes**

- Global warming: Melting of Greenland ice adds freshwater, reducing salinity and density- disrupting the sinking process.
- Increased precipitation and Arctic ice melt contribute to surface freshening.

- **Consequences:**

- Cooling in Europe, especially in Northwestern Europe.
- Disruption of monsoons (especially Indian and Sahelian).
- Sea-level rise along North American coasts.
- Collapse of fisheries due to changes in nutrient upwelling.
- Risk of a tipping point leading to abrupt climate changes.



4. Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)

- **Prelims** - Indian Ocean Naval Symposium
- **Mains** - GS 2 - International Relations

Why in the news?

- Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) 2025 held at the Southern Command of the Indian Navy.

Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

- **What is it?**
 - Voluntary initiative aimed at enhancing maritime co-operation among navies of the Indian Ocean littoral states.
 - Provides an open, inclusive forum for discussions on regionally relevant maritime issues.
 - Conceived by the Indian Navy in 2008.
- **Membership:**
 - 36 Littoral States of the Indian Ocean.
 - Grouped into four sub-regions:
 - ★ **South Asian Littorals:** Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, United Kingdom (British Indian Ocean Territory).
 - ★ **West Asian Littorals:** Iran, Oman, Saudi Arabia, UAE.
 - ★ **East African Littorals:** France (Reunion), Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania.
 - ★ **South East Asian & Australian Littorals:** Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, Timor-Leste.
 - **Observers:** China, Germany, Italy, Japan, Madagascar, Netherlands, Russia, Spain.
- **Significance:**
 - Enhances maritime security cooperation and confidence-building in the IOR.
 - Facilitates Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), counter-piracy, maritime domain awareness, and environmental protection.
 - Provides India with a platform to play the role of a net security provider in the Indian Ocean.
 - Complements regional initiatives like Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)



5. Guru Tegh Bahadur

- Prelims - Guru Tegh Bahadur
- Mains - GS 1 - Modern Indian History

Why in the news?

- Indian Railways set to commemorate the 350th Martyrdom Day of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji to educate the younger generation about his teachings and sacrifices.

Guru Tegh Bahadur

- **Who is he?**
 - Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621–1675) was the ninth Guru of the Sikhs, known as the "Protector of Humanity" (Hind di Chadar).
 - Born Tyaga Mal in Amritsar, Punjab in 1621, he was the youngest son of Guru Hargobind, the sixth Sikh Guru. He learned Gurmukhi, archery, swordsmanship, and horse riding.
 - He played a significant role in promoting Sikh values of courage, sacrifice, and religious tolerance.
- **Key Contributions:**
 - **Religious Leadership**
 - ★ Advocated for spiritual enlightenment and moral conduct.
 - ★ Composed 115 hymns included in the Guru Granth Sahib, emphasizing inner peace and devotion to God.
 - **Social Reform**
 - ★ Stood against caste-based discrimination and superstitions.
 - ★ Encouraged equality and selfless service to humanity.
 - **Advocacy for Religious Freedom**
 - ★ Opposed forced religious conversions under the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb.
 - ★ Supported the Kashmiri Pandits who sought his help to preserve their religious freedom.
 - **Sacrifice for Justice**
 - ★ Martyred in 1675 at the Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib in Delhi by Aurangzeb for upholding the right to religious freedom.



→ Legacy

- ★ His martyrdom strengthened Sikhism's foundations and inspired resistance against injustice.
- ★ Celebrated annually through Shaheedi Divas to honor his sacrifice.

- **Significance in Modern Context:**

- Embodies principles of secularism and the fight for human rights.
- A symbol of standing firm for one's beliefs, relevant in the struggle against intolerance and oppression.



6. Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX Mission)

- Prelims - LUPEX Mission
- Mains - GS 3 - Science and Technology

Why in the News?

- India and Japan have officially entered into a partnership on Chandrayaan-5, marking a joint lunar endeavour, also called as LUPEX Mission.

Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX Mission)

- What is it?:
 - A joint mission of ISRO (India) and JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency).
 - Aims to explore the **lunar south pole region**, which is believed to contain **water ice** and other resources crucial for future lunar habitation.
- Objectives:
 - **Detect and quantify lunar water** (in the form of ice) at the south pole.
 - Study the **lunar surface and subsurface composition**.
 - Assess the **possibility of sustainable lunar exploration** by humans.
 - Test advanced rover and lander technologies for future missions.
- Mission Components:
 - **Launch Vehicle:** Japan's **H3 rocket**.
 - **Lander:** Developed by **JAXA**, capable of precise soft-landing in rugged polar terrain.
 - **Rover:** Developed by **ISRO**, designed to:
 - ★ Drill up to **1 metre below the lunar surface**.
 - ★ Analyse soil for **water molecules and volatiles**.
 - **Payloads:**
 - ★ ISRO & JAXA scientific instruments.
 - ★ NASA may also contribute technology (like the neutron spectrometer).
- Significance:
 - Strengthens **India-Japan space cooperation**.
 - Complements India's **Chandrayaan-3 success** by focusing on **polar resource mapping**.



- Supports global efforts for **sustainable space economy** (lunar bases, in-situ resource utilisation).
- Enhances India's role in **future human lunar missions**.
- **Challenges:**
 - **Technical Challenges:** Precision landing at lunar south pole and rover drilling capacity challenges.
 - **Scientific Challenges:** Damage to systems due to Lunar dust, challenges in communication arising due to blockage of line of sight.
 - **Logistical and Financial Challenges:** High cost of deep space missions and Time and cost incurred on testing and integration.
 - **Strategic Challenge:** Technology demonstration pressure on ISRO and JAXA.