17th India-Uzbekistan Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)

Prelims: Current events of national and international importance Geography

Why in News?

The 17th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held between India and Uzbekistan.

- **Venue –** New Delhi

Outcomes of the 17th FOC

- **Comprehensive Review -** Both nations reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations, including political, trade-economic, investment, and cultural-humanitarian spheres.
- **Sectoral Focus -** Specific emphasis was placed on cooperation in Information Technology (IT), pharmaceuticals, healthcare, energy, and agriculture.
- **Connectivity and Regional Security -** Discussions touched upon strengthening inter-regional ties and coordinating efforts to ensure stability in Central Asia, particularly concerning the situation in Afghanistan.
- **Multilateral Engagement -** The visit coincided with the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting (hosted by India in May 2026), highlighting Uzbekistan's growing engagement with the bloc.

Geography Profile of Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan is a critical strategic partner for India in Central Asia, serving as a gateway to the region.

To know more about Uzbekistan click here

- **Geopolitical Status** - It is one of only two doubly landlocked countries in the world (the other being Liechtenstein), meaning it is surrounded entirely by other landlocked nations.
- **Strategic Partnership** - India and Uzbekistan ennobled their relationship to a Strategic Partnership in 2011.
- **Borders -** Bordered by Kazakhstan (North), Kyrgyzstan (Northeast), Tajikistan (Southeast), Afghanistan (South), and Turkmenistan (Southwest).
- **Rivers (Drainage) -** Situated between the Amu Darya (to the southwest) and the Syr Darya (to the northeast).
- **Environmental Crisis -** The Aral Sea, located on the border with Kazakhstan, has shrunk by nearly 90% due to historical water diversion for cotton irrigation, leading to a major ecological disaster.
- **Historical Significance -** Home to the "Golden Triangle" of the Silk Road—Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khiva—which are UNESCO World Heritage sites.

For Reference: DD News | IAS Parliament

