

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

Why in news?

\n\n

The Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) was held recently in London.

\n\n

What is the Commonwealth grouping?

\n\n

\n

- It is a group of nations of mostly former British colonies.

\n

- It is now a 53-nation grouping.

\n

- The present Queen Elizabeth II is the head of CHOGM.

\n

\n\n

How was the latest summit perceived?

\n\n

\n

- The meeting came with hopes of a “re-energised Commonwealth”.

\n

- The summit was held in the U.K., the founder State, after 32 years.

\n

- Besides, Queen Elizabeth II attended the summit.

\n

- She has skipped the meeting often in the last few years owing to her health.

\n

\n\n

\n

- Also, the present meet took place amidst Britain’s exit from the EU.

\n

- All these led to hopes of reviving the grouping as Commonwealth 2.0.

- \n
- **India** - Mr. Modi was the first Indian PM to attend CHOGM in a decade.
- \n
- Some of the earlier summits were skipped over bilateral differences.
- \n
- It was widely expected that India would step up to play a leadership role.
- \n
- It was seen to be helping chart a future course for the Commonwealth.
- \n
- Prince Charles's visit to Delhi to invite Indian PM bolstered that belief.
- \n

\n\n

Were the expectations met?

\n\n

- \n
- The outcome of the meet was largely against the expectations.
- \n
- CHOGM again failed to make a case for its relevance in the 21st century.
- \n
- **Head** - It was announced that Prince Charles would 'succeed' his mother as the head of the Commonwealth.
- \n
- This has ignored calls by members for the position to be more democratically shared or rotated.
- \n
- **China** - There were statements on the Blue Charter on Ocean Governance and on the Commonwealth Connectivity Agenda for Trade and Investment.
- \n
- This could together counter China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- \n
- But there was little by way of a road map to achieve the goals.
- \n
- **Immigration** - Britain PM Theresa May apologised for her Home Office's threat to deport thousands of immigrants.
- \n
- They were brought as manual labour in the 1940s on the ship Empire Windrush from the Caribbean.
- \n
- But she failed to convince most members of the Commonwealth that Britain would reverse its present policies on immigration.
- \n
- **Trade** - The U.K.'s hard line on Indian "illegals" prevented the signing of a

bilateral agreement on immigrant “returns” with India.

\n

- This was in regard to return of illegal Indian migrants within a month of their being detected by authorities.

\n

- This indicates that post-Brexit London is likely to welcome trade in goods from the Commonwealth, but not services.

\n

\n\n

What is the way forward?

\n\n

\n

- The Commonwealth remains a great platform for development aid, democratic values and educational opportunities.

\n

- But its relevance is put to test with increasing call for democracy within the grouping.

\n

- It needs to adopt a more egalitarian and inclusive attitude to its next generation of Commonwealth citizens.

\n

- Only this can ensure the sustainability and credibility of this grouping.

\n

\n\n

\n\n

Source: The Hindu

\n

