Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Why in news?

Recently, India hosted the SCO heads of governments meeting for the first time.

What are the outcomes of the meeting?

- It aimed to develop a "**Plan of Priority Practical Measures for 2021-2022**" to overcome the socio-economic, financial and food consequences of COVID-19.
- In the final statement, members said that they are committed to strengthen multilateralism and the principles in UN charter.

What are the differences seen in the meeting?

- Neither Indian PM nor Pakistan PM attended the meeting.
- In the final statement, both the countries statement on terrorism was in deviation.
- India mentioned that cross-border terrorism is one of the biggest challenges & Pakistan's representative too spoke of the need to combat state terrorism in disputed areas in reference to J&K.
- Both India-Pakistan troops did not arrive to a conclusion on the issue of Regional Anti-Terror Structure.
- India also mentioned the need for maintaining transparency and trust in trade practices with reference to China over the BRI.

How important is SCO for India?

- SCO grouping referred as the "**Asian NATO**" though it did not have the mandate of security alliances.
- With the decline in India's engagement with SAARC, BBIN and the RCEP, SCO is one of the few regional structures to engage in.
- It provides a convenient channel to maintain trade and strategic ties to Central Asian countries.
- It is seen as a platform to conduct bilateral discussions & resolve the issues between India & China, Pakistan.
- Amidst of LAC stand-off, India used SCO for talks with China.
- On the whole, it seen by India to retains its geopolitical balance & maintains robust relation with the western world.

Source: The Hindu

