

# **GS Paper 2**

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

**Regional groupings /Agreements concerning South Asia**

# **SAARC**

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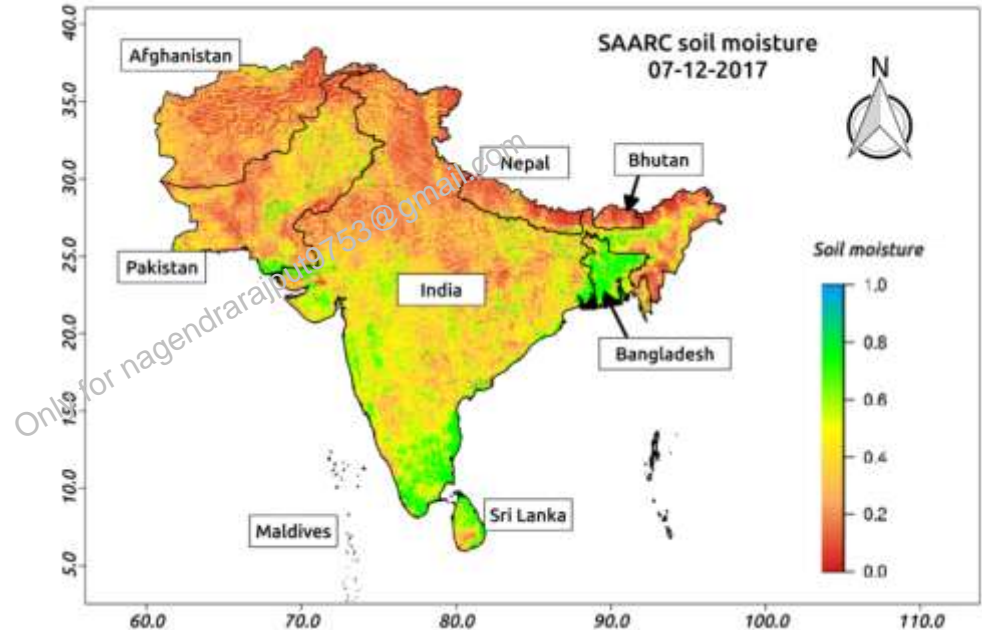
## Context

- **September 2022**--The annual SAARC foreign minister's meeting, which usually happens on the side lines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) summit in New York, was cancelled this year.
- **Jan 2022**---Pakistan reiterated its offer to host the long pending summit of SAARC . SAARC member countries turned down Pakistan's proposal. India said that there has been no material change in the situation since 2014 and there is no consensus that would allow the holding of the summit.
- In 2021 also the meeting of foreign ministers from SAARC countries got cancelled.

# How SAARC came into being?

1) Cold War-era politics of regionalism.

2) Regional necessity



The idea of regional cooperation in South Asia was first raised in November 1980.

**8<sup>th</sup> December 1985: SAARC got established.**

# Few Facts about SAARC

**Number of Member Countries in SAARC**

**8 Countries – India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Bhutan, Afghanistan, Pakistan.**

**Afghanistan became the newest member of SAARC at the 14th annual summit in 2007.**

**Number of Observers in SAARC**

**9 Observers – Australia, European Union (E.U), Iran, Japan, Mauritius, South Korea, United States of America (USA), China, Myanmar.**

**SAARC Headquarters**

**Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Launch of SAARC Satellite for South Asia**

**2017**

SAARC Potential future members – Turkey and Russia have also applied for SAARC membership.

<b>Current Secretary-General of SAARC</b>	<b>Esala Ruwan Weerakoon (Sri Lanka) – Took office from 1st March 2020.</b>
<b>Last Member to Join SAARC</b>	<b>Afghanistan (April 2007)</b>
<b>Last SAARC Summit</b>	<b>19th SAARC Summit in Pakistan (Cancelled)</b>

# Significance of SAARC for India

- SAARC comprises 3% of the world's area, 21% of the world's population and 3.8% (US\$2.9 trillion) of the global economy.
- Creating synergies
- Common solutions
- Furthers Neighbourhood first policy.

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- **Game changer for India's Act East Policy**
- **Geostrategic significance**
- **Enabler of Regional stability**
- **Offer global leadership role to India**

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## What are its Achievements?

- **Free Trade Area (FTA)**
- **SAPTA: South Asia Preferential Trading Agreement** for promoting trade amongst the member countries came into effect in 1995.
- **SAFTA: A Free Trade Agreement** confined to goods, but excluding all services like information technology.
- **SAARC Agreement on Trade in Services (SATIS)**
- **SAARC University**



**Ques/- Critically analyse if SAARC has been of relevance in the past. Also discuss how it can be of greater relevance in the future. (150 Words)**

**Ques/ Discuss the potential and issues of SAARC as an organisation to emerge as a successful model of cooperation among nations in a region.**

**OR**

**Discuss the reasons for the failure of SAARC as a regional organisation.**

**Ans: Potential of SAARC to emerge as a successful model of cooperation among nations in a region.**

- **Demography:** SAARC constitutes for 21% of the world's population and most of its population is young.
- **Economy:** SAARC comprises 3.8% (US\$2.9 trillion) of the global economy.
- **Security:**
- **International cooperation**
- **Environmental cooperation**

## **Discuss the associated challenges on the working of SAARC**

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**Ques/-Discuss the need for revival of SAARC**

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**How can SAARC be rejuvenated or revived?/ What could be the way forward?**

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