

India and Central Asia



Intro

Central Asia is located between Asia and Europe

* Central Asia stretches from the Caspian Sea in the west to China in the east and from Afghanistan in the south to Russia in the north.

The region consists of the former Soviet republics of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

They are also together known as “the stans”

Most Central Asian States are landlocked (some of them doubly landlocked).

Central Asia has historically been closely tied to its nomadic peoples and the Silk Road.

All Central Asian States are well endowed with mineral and hydroelectric resources.

The Caucasus and Central Asia



Central Asia importance for India

Political Importance	Strategic Importance	Economic Importance	Cultural Importance
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Central Asian nations and India can play effectively role in bringing normalcy in Afghanistan.• Some Central Asian governments support India in its bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The strategic location of these countries makes them a bridge between different regions of Asia and between Europe and Asia• Central Asia can help India overcome challenge of terrorism, narcotics trafficking and arms smuggling from Golden Crescent.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The countries of Central Asia are endowed with significant hydrocarbon and mineral resources• These countries with rich Uranium as well as other mineral reserves can help India in energy security as well as reduce dependence on China and other countries for import of minerals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relations between India and Central Asia are ancient and civilisational.• The Silk Route connected India with Central Asia not only for transportation of goods and wares like silk, textiles, spices etc but was an effective channel of exchange of thoughts, ideas, religion and philosophy.

Connect Central Asia Policy



- Central Asian region is considered to be the part of **India's "extended neighborhood"**.
- The **policy include** political cooperation, economic cooperation, strategic cooperation, regional connectivity, information technology (IT), cooperation in education, people-to-people contact, medical cooperation, and cooperation in regional groupings.
- The Connect Central Asia Policy is based on - **4Cs: Commerce, Connectivity, Consular and Community**.
- India see's central Asia for its energy security - **uranium and oil and gas**. Eg: **TAPI pipeline**; India signed a **civil nuclear deal with Kazakhstan**.

Connect Central Asia Policy

- **National security:** India's only overseas airbase lies in **Farkhor, Tajikistan**.
- The economic development of Central Asia has sparked a construction boom and development of sectors like **IT, pharmaceuticals and tourism**. India has expertise in these sectors.
- It recognizes instability in Central Asia will have a **spillover effect on India**.
- Central Asian countries are important for India's bid to become a **permanent member of UNSC**.
- **India-Central Asia link will be re-energized** due to India's participation in multilateral fora like **Eurasian Economic Union, Heart of Asia Conference and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation**.

Central Asia-India relationship over the years

Independence of Central
Asia

1991

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to
Tajikistan

1992

2003

PVNR's visit to Kazakhstan and
Uzbekistan

India joins SCO

2015

PM Modi's visit to Central Asia



Freedom from USSR 1991

- None of the five Central Asian States **had to fight for its independence** from the Soviet Union
- Freedom was granted to these countries **as a gift**
- Central Asian States have **used the 25 years since independence in nation building and consolidation** of their statehood.

PVNR's visit to Central Asian countries

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao,
**realizing the strategic
significance of the region,**
undertook visits to **four of the
five** newly independent
countries within a few years of
their liberation.

He visited Kazakhstan and
Uzbekistan in 1992 and
Turkmenistan and Kyrgyzstan in
1995

Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit - 2003

- PM Vajpayee visited Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in 2003.
- The first visit by an Indian PM to Tajikistan took place when Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited that country in 2003.
- He spoke about the need to build a new silk route of friendship and cooperation between India and Central Asia.

PM Modi's visit to Central Asia - 2015



Objectives

It was a bold and decisive move by PM Modi to visit all five Central Asian States in July, 2015, combining his travel with his tour to Ufa, Russia for the BRICS (and SCO) Summit.

His visit to these countries sent out a loud and clear message to the region and the world that India is determined to make up for lost time and expand its ties with these countries.

India and Kyrgyzstan signed four agreements including one to boost defense cooperation and hold annual joint military exercises.

A joint military exercise between India and Kyrgyzstan Khanjar was started. “Kazind” is annual joint military exercise between India and Kazakhstan

Objectives

TAPI gas pipeline project got a major push and work started on it.

A Memorandum of Understanding on supply of Chemical Products was signed.

Other agreements signed during visit include cooperation in the field of defense, tourism, Science and Technology.

An agreement on **Programme of Cooperation (POC)** between Ministries of Culture of India and Tajikistan in the field of Culture for the years 2016-18 was signed.

India would also help in setting up of **Computer e-Labs** in 37 Schools in Tajikistan

Objectives

A Memorandum of Mutual Understanding and Cooperation in the field of Elections was also signed.

The two countries inked three pacts to boost **cooperation between their foreign offices** and in the field of culture and tourism.

Ways to implement the contract for **supply of, uranium from mineral-rich Uzbekistan signed in 2014** were also discussed.

An agreement on cooperation in the field of E-tourism was also signed.

Both countries focused on boosting trade, energy, defence and security cooperation.

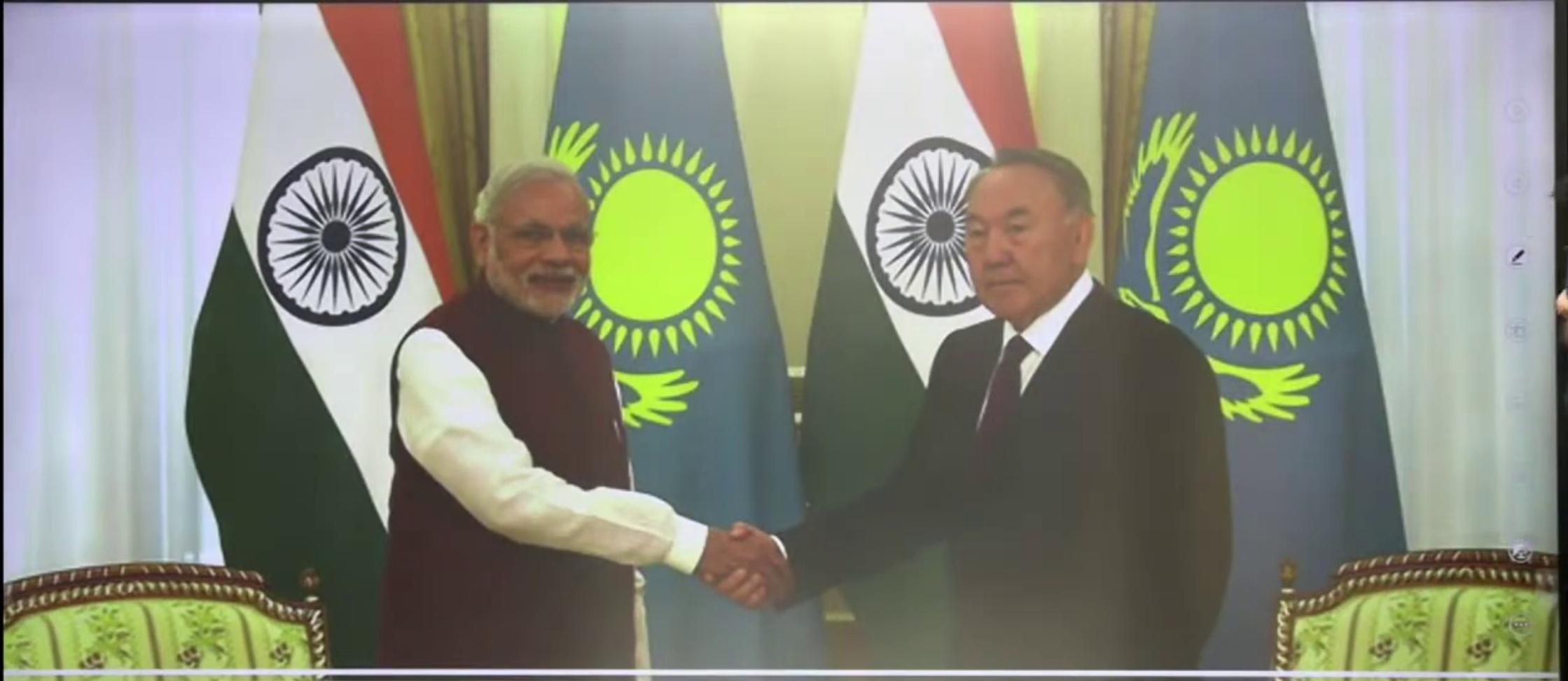
Kazakhstan will supply 5,000 tonnes of uranium to India during **2015-19**.

A Joint Study Group between India and the Eurasian Economic Union would be established on the feasibility of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA)



24th Dec

EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION (EAEU) [EEU]



PM Modi's visit to Central Asia 2018

AIM

- PM Mod July 2018 visits **five Central Asian countries** - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan 2018 visit to, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan – was aimed at **making India a strong player** in a region rich in **natural resources and important strategically, especially in the fight against terrorism**. By this time **China has already build a strong presence** in the region.
- India and Kazakhstan inked a deal for a renewed long-term supply of natural uranium, and a wide-ranging defence cooperation pact besides a railway cooperation agreement to boost connectivity to realize full economic potential.
- PM Modi and his counterpart also agreed to enhance intelligence cooperation to fight terror in the immediate region. Including Afghanistan, where both have critical stakes.

AIM

- India and Uzbekistan are set to route their trade through the Iranian port of Chabahar.
- India and Uzbekistan have inked 17 - agreements including for visa free travel for diplomatic passport holders and cooperation in the fields of tourism, national security, training of diplomats and against trafficking.
- The two countries will also cooperate in exploring the outer space for peaceful purposes.
- The two countries have also agreed to cooperate in combating trafficking and illicit narcotic drugs.
- Business relationships between the two countries will be promoted through the India- Uzbekistan Business Council, for which an agreement was signed.



EAM Jaishankar's visit to Tajikistan June 2019

Objective

- External Affairs Minister, S Jaishankar, on his second trip abroad in his current capacity attended the **5th Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Summit in Dushanbe, Tajikistan** eyeing to explore ideas **to stabilize Asia** amid tumultuous geopolitics.
- The **Dushanbe visit also push India Eurasia and Central Asia agenda held back to back with SCO summit.**

Trade Partnership

- Central Asia provides a '**near abroad**' market for India's emerging export industries.
- **Kazakhstan** has the world's second largest reserves and is the world's **largest producer of uranium**. It has almost **all minerals on Mendeleev's table** including iron-ore, coal, oil, gas, gold, lead, zinc, molybdenum etc. in commercially viable quantities.
- **Uzbekistan** has large reserves of gas, uranium and gold.
- **Turkmenistan** is endowed with world's fourth largest reserves of natural gas.
- **Kyrgyzstan** is rich in gold and hydroelectric power.

India Central Asia Summit 2022

- Prime Minister of India hosted the first India-Central Asia Summit (2022) in virtual format.
- It was attended by Presidents of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Republic of Uzbekistan.
- This first India-Central Asia coincided with the 30th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Central Asian countries.
- The summit came two days after a similar China-Central Asia Conference was held where China offered USD 500 million in assistance and pledged to ramp up trade to USD 70 billion from the present levels of about USD 40 billion a year.

- In a historic decision, the Leaders agreed to institutionalise the Summit mechanism by deciding to **hold it every 2 years**.
- They also **agreed on regular meetings** of Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers and Secretaries of the Security Council to prepare the groundwork for the Summit meetings.
- An **India-Central Asia Secretariat** in New Delhi would be set up to support the new mechanism.
- The Leaders discussed far-reaching proposals to further cooperation:
- **Round-Table** on Energy and Connectivity.
- **Joint Working Groups** at senior official level on **Afghanistan** and use of **Chabahar Port**.
- **Showcasing of Buddhist exhibitions** in Central Asian countries and commissioning of an India-Central Asia dictionary of common words.
- Joint **counter-terrorism exercises**.
- Visit of 100 member **youth delegation** annually from Central Asian countries to India and special courses for Central Asian diplomats.



Indian
Technical and
Economic
Cooperation
(ITEC)
Programme

- ITEC Programme is an effective instrument under which young professionals of these countries **undergo training and human capacity development.**
- This is in areas ranging from banking, remote sensing and **English speaking to agriculture, rural development and information technology** in the premier institutions in India.

Cash Laining

SECURITY CHALLENGES IN CENTRAL ASIA

CHALLENGE 1

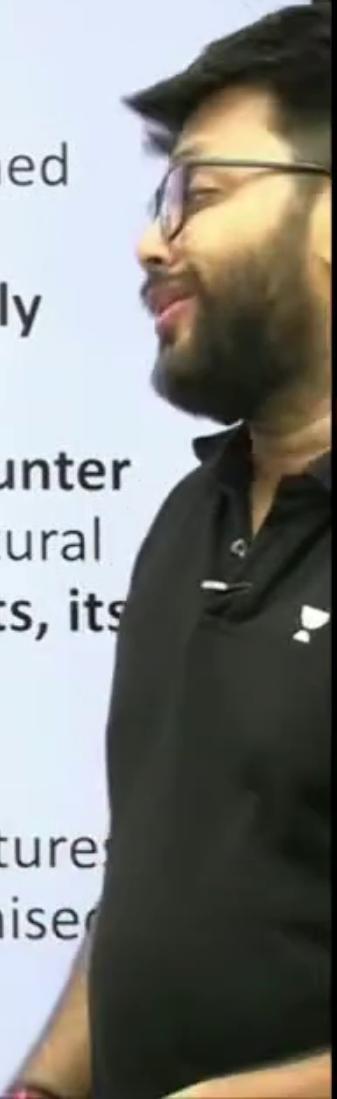
RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM, FUNDAMENTALISM

Challenge 2

Terrorism

Religious extremism, fundamentalism

- Although the **region has been stable** since the five countries gained independence the threat and risk of **extremist, fundamentalist influences** seeping into minds of young women and men is **rapidly increasing**.
- India is **now withstanding its huge diversity** has been **able to counter** these destabilising influences effectively so far because of its cultural heritage and legacy, **its acceptance of diverse views and thoughts, its value based education system etc.**
- India and Central Asia **can collaborate to mutual benefit to strengthen** the fabric of their social, interethnic, interracial structures so that extremist and divisive pressures are contained and minimised



Terrorism

- **Central Asia finds itself exposed and vulnerable** to influences like Al Qaeda, Islamic State, Taliban, IUM, Hizb-ul-Tahrir and others.
- **Afghanistan** poses a rising challenge for these countries as well as India with the advent of Taliban.



IMPORTANT REGIONAL ORGANIZATION & PROJECTS

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

- SCO is a Eurasian political, economic, and **security organisation**.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation-Charter was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003.
- India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in **Astana**, Kazakhstan.



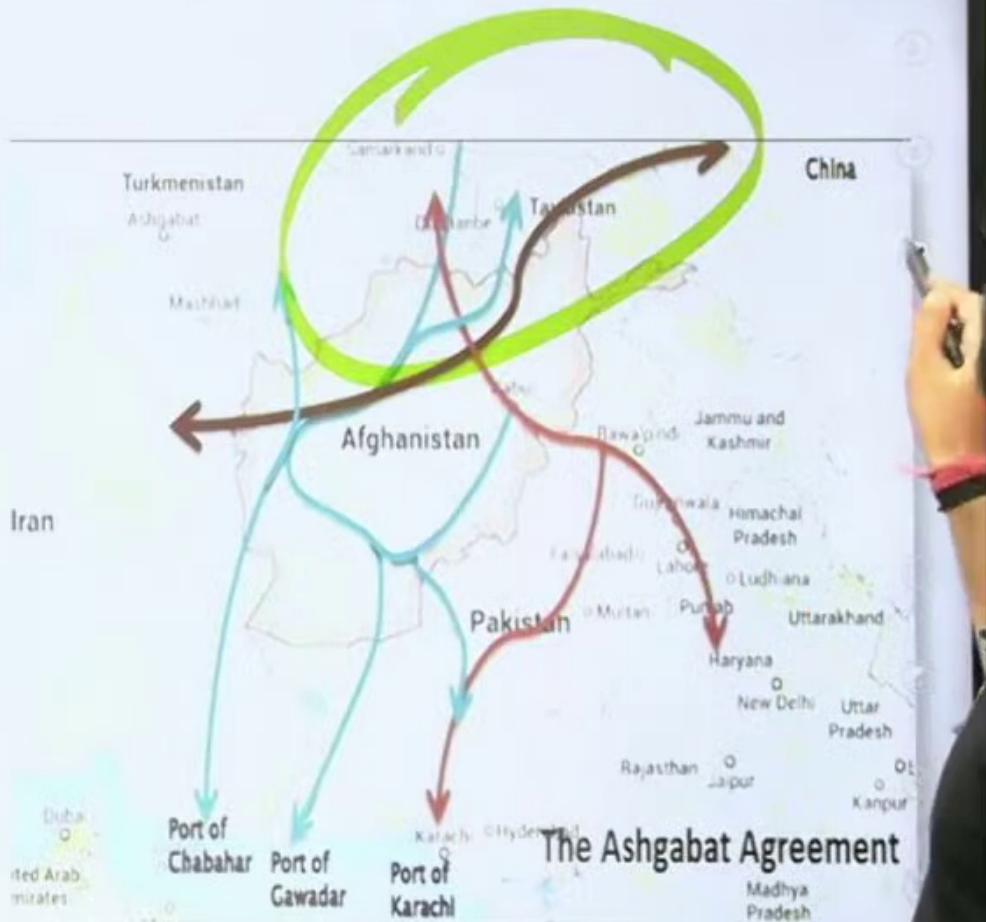
Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) Pipeline

- **TAPI** also known as Trans-Afghanistan Pipeline is a **natural gas pipeline**.
- It is being developed with participation of the **Asian Development Bank**.
- Construction on the project started in Turkmenistan on **December 13th, 2015**.
- Proponents of the project see it as a **modern continuation of the Silk Road**.



Ashgabat agreement

- It is a **multimodal transport agreement** between India, Iran, Kazakhstan, Oman, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.
- It is an international transport and transit corridor facilitating **transportation of goods** between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.
- The agreement came into force in April, 2016 **India formally joined Ashgabat agreement** on 2nd February 2018.



First India-Central Asia Dialogue



- The first **India-Central Asia Dialogue** was held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in January, **2019**.
- The Dialogue was co-chaired by the then **External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj** and **the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov**.
- The **Foreign Ministers of Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan also participated** in the event with Foreign Minister of Afghanistan as a special invitee.

The objectives of the first India -Central Asia Dialogue are

- To enhance their **cooperation** in wide- ranging spheres including exploring ways to substantially enhance India's **economic involvement in business and development sector** of Central Asia.
- Developing **viable connectivity options** between India and Afghanistan and Central Asia to further **facilitate trade and economic activity** in the region.
- Strengthen India's engagement, including **political, economic, development partnership and cultural**, with all the Central Asian countries and take it to a new level.