



**TATHASTU**  
Institute Of Civil Services

# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

## 27th June 2025



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9560300770



[www.tathastuics.com](http://www.tathastuics.com)



[support@tathastuics.com](mailto:support@tathastuics.com)

HEAD OFFICE: 53/1, UPPER GROUND FLOOR, BADA BAZAR ROAD,  
OLD RAJINDER NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110060



**27<sup>th</sup> June 2025**

**Mains Manthan**

- India declines to sign the SCO statement  
(Page No - 1)
- Jal Jeevan Mission (Page No - 14)

**Prelims Saarthi**

- Axiom 4 Mission
- Gaganyaan Mission
- Keeladi Excavation

**India declines to sign SCO statement**

**Why in News?**

- India declines to sign the statement as Pahalgam Terror Attack was not included in it.

**Syllabus**

- GS Paper 2 – International Relations

**Pahalgam excluded:  
India declines to  
sign SCO statement**

**Saurabh Trivedi**  
NEW DELHI

India declined to endorse the joint statement at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting in China, and pushed for including tougher language on terrorism that would reflect the Indian position, particularly since the Pahalgam attack on April 22.

Sources said Defence Minister Rajnath Singh refused to sign the document on Thursday as it did not mention the Pahalgam attack but included militant activities in Balochistan. Pakistan and China were trying to divert attention from terrorism, and the document would have diluted India's position on critical issues, particularly terrorism and regional security, sources added.

Randhir Jaiswal, Ministry of External Affairs spo-



Rajnath Singh with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun. ANI

kesperson, said: "We understand that the member countries could not reach consensus on certain issues and hence the document could not be finalised. India wanted concerns on terrorism reflected in the document which was not acceptable to one particular country. As such the joint statement was not adopted."

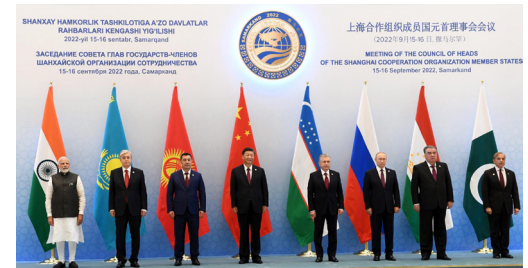
**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 12





## Key Takeaways from the Article

- About Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
  - ◆ Genesis - ?
  - ◆ HQ - ?
  - ◆ Members - ?
  - ◆ Two Permanent Bodies - ?
  - ◆ Major Goals & Activities - ?
- **SCO: Role in Reshaping Global Multilateral Order**
  - ◆ SCO's global pivot
  - ◆ SCO's challenging Western structures
  - ◆ Filling the Security Void
  - ◆ Counter-Terrorism
  - ◆ SCO fulfilling China's strategic design
  - ◆ Central Asia's Connectivity Catalyst
- **Challenges faced by SCO**
  - ◆ Expansion Dilemma
  - ◆ Blurs Asia Focus
  - ◆ Afghanistan Policy Fracture
  - ◆ China's multilateral power play
  - ◆ SCO having an "identity crisis"
  - ◆ Diverse Interests



### Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Established in June 2001,  
SCO is an 8 member multilateral organization

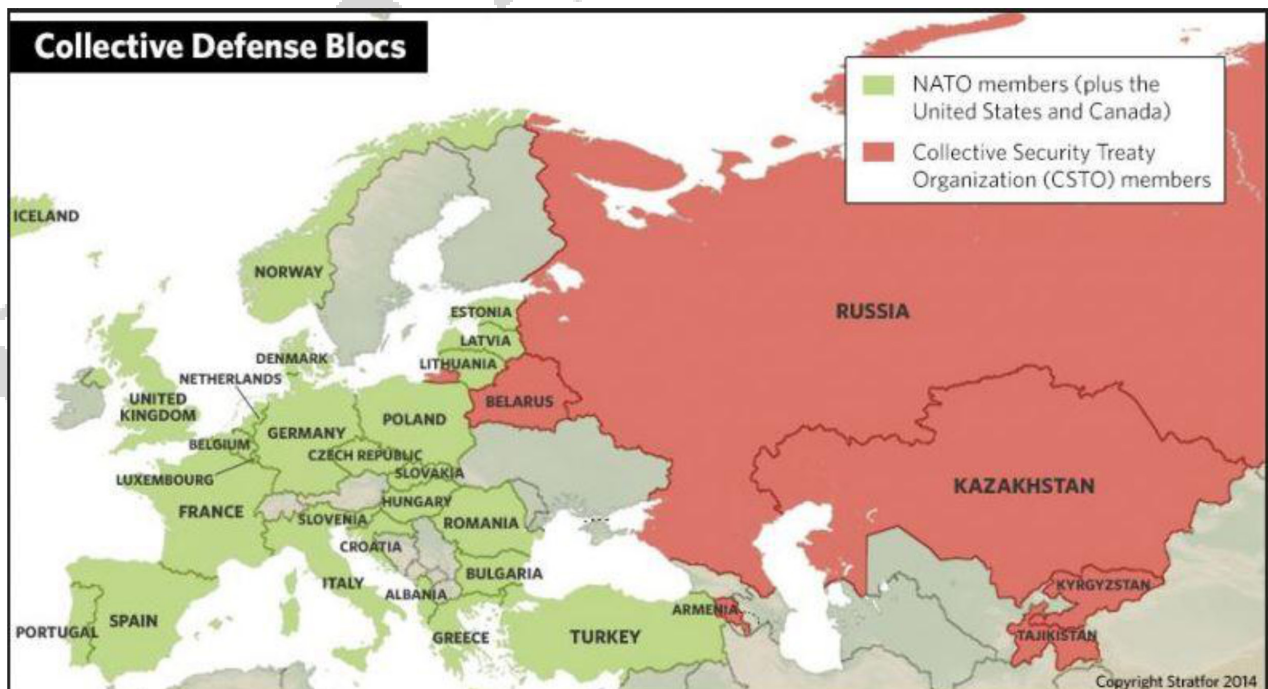
— This year summit is taking place under India's chairmanship —

— India's association with SCO began in 2005 as observer country —

— The theme of the Summit is "Towards a SECURE SCO" —

The SECURE acronym was coined by PM at 2018 SCO Summit and stands for Security, Economy and Trade; Connectivity; Unity; Respect for Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity; and Environment

### Collective Defense Blocs





## Key Takeaways from the Article

India's priorities in SCO are shaped by Prime Minister's vision of a '**SECURE**' SCO.

**SECURE** stands for: Security; Economic cooperation; Connectivity, Unity, Respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity; Environmental protection

## Jal Jeevan Mission

### Why in News?

- Additional demand and realization of groundwater is insufficient to provide a potable water supply in the Jal Jeevan Mission.

### Syllabus

- **GS Paper 2 – Governance & Social Justice**

#### 'Additional demand behind delay in Jal Jeevan Mission'

Jacob Koshy  
NEW DELHI

Additional demand and the realisation that groundwater sources alone would be insufficient to provide potable piped water to all households have contributed to delays in the Jal Jeevan Mission, Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil said at a press conference on Thursday.

In 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that all rural households – estimated at around 19 crore – would be covered by 2024, when approximately 16% (or 3.2 crore households) had piped water connections.

In her Budget speech in February, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that the scheme had been extended to 2028 with an "enhanced outlay".

"If you consider the data until March 2024, we were pretty much on target. Subsequently, about four crore additional houses that required piped water connections were added. There have been some mistakes made by contractors. We also discovered that in some places groundwater resources would not be enough to provide water and so we'd need surface water [from rivers, lakes

and will be more infrastructure intensive]," Mr. Patil said.

According to the Minister, 80% of rural households – around 15.6 crore – have been provided with piped water connections. Since 2019, the government has spent ₹2.6 lakh crore towards achieving this goal.

Budget documents show that the Jal Shakti Ministry expects to spend ₹67,000 crore in 2025-26, slightly lower than the ₹69,992 crore it spent in 2023-24. For 2024-25, the Ministry had provisioned ₹70,000 crore between March 2024 and March 2025. However, as of February, the actual expenditure stood at only ₹22,694 crore – indicating underutilisation of nearly ₹50,000 crore despite budgetary allocation.

The Ministry's website continues to list the target as 19.3 crore households, unchanged from the initial estimate in 2019. The *Hindu* reached out to officials for clarity, but no response was available at press time.

The mission aims to provide every rural household a tap water connection, delivering 55 litres per capita per day of water that meets BIS:10500 standards, according to the website.





## Key Takeaways from the Article

- **About Jal Jeevan Mission:**

- ◆ Launched in 2019, it envisages supply of **55 litres of water per person per day** to every rural household through **Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTC)** by 2024.
- ◆ JJM looks to create a Jan Andolan for water, thereby making it everyone's priority.
- ◆ It comes under **Jal Shakti Ministry**.



- **Aims:**

- ◆ The mission ensures **functionality of existing water supply systems** and water connections, water quality monitoring and testing as well as sustainable agriculture.
- ◆ It also ensures **conjunctive use of conserved water**; drinking water source augmentation, drinking water supply system, grey water treatment and its reuse.

**JAL JEEVAN MISSION**

Community Involvement (As of August 8, 2024)

- 5.32 lakh Village Water & Sanitation Committees formed, with 50% women and marginalized community representation.
- 24.64 lakh women trained to test water samples, ensuring quality with over 54.20 lakh tests conducted.
- 14,000+ NGOs and community organizations engaged as Implementation Support Agencies for effective water management.

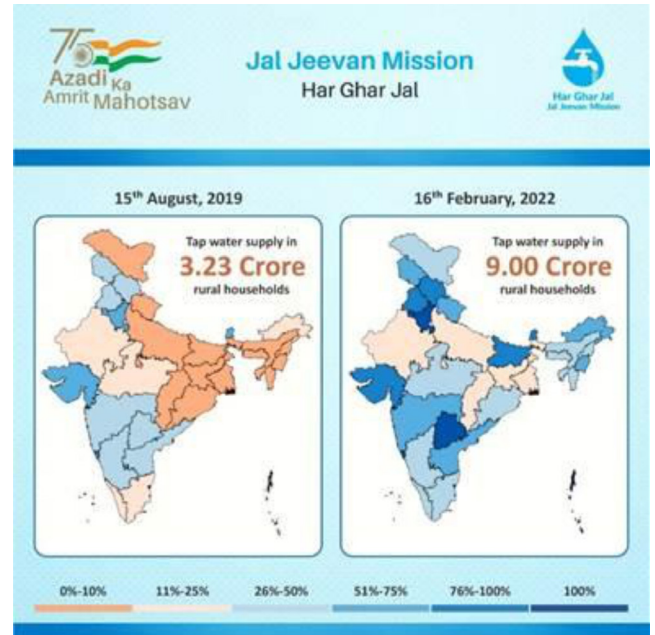






- **Features:**

- ◆ JJM focuses on integrated **demand and supply-side** management of water at the local level.
- ◆ Creation of local infrastructure for source sustainability measures as mandatory elements, like rainwater harvesting, **groundwater recharge and management of household wastewater for reuse**, is undertaken in convergence with other government programmes/schemes.
- ◆ The Mission is based on a community approach to water and includes extensive **Information, Education and Communication** as a key component of the mission.



- **Implementation:**

- ◆ Paani Samitis plan, implement, manage, operate and maintain village water supply systems.
- ◆ These consist of 10-15 members, with at least 50% women members and other members from **SHG, ASHA, Anganwadi teachers, etc.**
- ◆ The committees prepare a one-time village action plan, merging all available village resources. The plan is approved in a **Gram Sabha** before implementation.



- ◆ **Funding Pattern - ?**

### Axiom Mission

- ◆ The mission is a collaboration involving **Axiom Space (private company)**, the **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)**, **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)**, and **European Space Agency (ESA)**.
- ◆ The crew members will spend 14 days onboard the ISS **conducting microgravity research, technology demonstrations, and outreach engagements.**

### Gaganyaan Mission

- ◆ Demonstrate India's human spaceflight capability by launching crew of 3 members to an orbit of **400 km (Low Earth Orbit)** for a **3 days mission** and bring them back safely to earth, by landing in Indian sea waters.





# Ax-4 docking successful, Shukla sets foot in ISS

IAF Group Captain is the pilot of the much-delayed mission and will spend two weeks in the space station; he is one of the four astronauts designated to take part in Gaganyaan mission

**The Hindu Bureau**  
CHENNAI

**G**roup Captain Shubhanshu Shukla of the Indian Air Force created history on Thursday afternoon by becoming the first Indian to enter the International Space Station.

As the Dragon crew capsule carrying Mr. Shukla and three other astronauts as part of Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) circled earth, he greeted people back home with a "Namaskar from space". The spacecraft then docked with the ISS at 4.01 p.m. IST as it passed over the north Atlantic Ocean.

For Mr. Shukla, this is the first step to a more ambitious mission as he is one of the four astronauts designated to take part in Ga-



**Mission update:** Shubhanshu Shukla and his fellow astronauts being welcomed aboard by the ISS crew. PTI

ganyaan, India's first human spaceflight mission. The Indian Space Research Organisation, which expects to conduct the first crewed flight under this mission no earlier than 2026, paid more than ₹500 crore for the Ax-4 mission to include Mr. Shukla and Prasanth Nair, another Gaganyaan designate who

was part of the back-up crew for the Ax-4 mission.

On Thursday's flight, Mr. Shukla was the mission pilot. A live video link from NASA showed the spacecraft approaching the station, with the docking sequence being completed at 4.15 p.m. At the lift-off on Wednesday evening from Florida, Axiom Space –

which is orchestrating the mission – had said the capsule would attempt docking in about 28 hours.

"Shubhanshu stands at the threshold entrance of International Space Station... as the world watches with excitement and expectation," Union Minister of State for Space Jitendra Singh wrote in a post on X.

The four astronauts aboard will spend the next two weeks at the ISS conducting scientific experiments, including eight from ISRO, and helping with the station's upkeep.

Axiom Space had targeted a May 29 launch date for Ax-4 but had to postpone it multiple times.

**CONTINUED ON**  
» PAGE 12  
**634TH ASTRONAUT IN SPACE**  
» PAGE 14

## Accelerator Mass Spectrometry

### What sparked the Keeladi controversy?

What was the dispute between the archaeologist and the ASI? Why did the ASI ask for a rewrite of the Keeladi report? Why did political parties react strongly to the decision? How did the public and historians respond to the findings?

#### EXPLAINER

D. Suresh Kumar

**The story so far:** On June 17, archaeologist K. Anamath Ramakrishna, whose excavation at Keeladi in Tamil Nadu drew the nation's attention, was transferred yet again, this time from New Delhi to Greater Noida. Mr. Ramakrishna, who was serving as the Director (Antiquity) and as Director of the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMA), will now be the Director of the NMA only. The NMA unit, set up in 2007, according to sources, remains almost defunct. Over two years after Mr. Ramakrishna submitted his 982-page report on the first two phases of excavations carried out at Keeladi between 2014 and 2016, a fresh controversy erupted last month. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) mandated that he revise his report, but he refused to do it. This disagreement sparked a political clash between the Centre and Tamil Nadu.

**How did Keeladi excavation begin?** Keeladi has become a symbol of pride for many in Tamil Nadu. Over a decade ago, Anamath Ramakrishna, then the ASI's Superintending Archaeologist, had initiated excavations at a site known as the Pallikanchi Tidal in Keeladi, an originally a coconut grove spanning 100 acres. He had identified over 100 sites for excavation along the Vaigai River, but Keeladi stood out.

It was in Keeladi that they unearthed over 7,500 ancient artifacts, including wall structures, drainage systems, and wells – all evidence of a sophisticated urban society that thrived. What was even more compelling was the carbon dating, which revealed that these elements are over 2,800 years old, dating back to the 2nd century BCE, which is the time of the Sangam period in Tamil history.



K. Anamath Ramakrishna at the Keeladi excavation site. FILE PHOTO

**What made the findings significant?** Archaeologists were stunned by a few findings. Most importantly, there was evidence of religious symbols at the excavation site, which hinted at the secular nature of the civilisation.

So, naturally, the excitement around Keeladi's discoveries was palpable. Tamil historians and enthusiasts saw it as proof of an advanced ancient Tamil civilisation, but soon after, things took a sharp turn.

**What did political critics accuse the Centre of doing?** It all began in 2017, when the ASI transferred Mr. Ramakrishna to Assam just as the excavations were ramping up after the first two phases. Back then, political critics accused the Centre of deliberately derailing the excavations. It was because the Centre had promised funding and support for further digs delayed both after the second phase.

The local political climate grew tense with some alleging that the Centre was trying to suppress Tamil heritage. By 2017, the excavations had entered its third phase, this time, under archaeologist P.S. Srinaman. After excavating just around 400 square meters, he reported a lack of continuity in the brick structures previously discovered.

**Did State's findings resolve the issue?** The Madras High Court stepped in, with judges visiting the excavation site. The court then directed the ASI to continue the excavations and allowed the Tamil Nadu State Department of Archaeology to get involved. The department, in 2019, published a report asserting that Keeladi was an urban settlement dating back to the Sangam era between the 6th century BCE and the 1st century CE.

Since the third phase, the State Archaeology Department has continued the project, but these findings have not helped resolve the issue; instead, the drama has escalated. In January 2023, Mr. Ramakrishna, who was transferred back to Tamil Nadu, submitted his report on the first two phases of excavation.

**What did the ASI ask Ramakrishna to do with the report?** For about two-and-a-half years, this report remained with the ASI, and just last month, the ASI sent Mr. Ramakrishna a letter to revise the report. The ASI questioned the dating and depth of certain findings, suggesting the evidence for the earliest period, which it "appeared to

be very early," and said it needed further analysis. Mr. Ramakrishna, however, stood firm and refused to rewrite his conclusions, defending his work as scientifically sound, based on rigorous archaeological standards. He argued that the report's chronology was backed by stratigraphic sequences, material culture and even Accelerator Mass Spectrometry.

**Why did the ASI's decision spark political outrage?** Against this backdrop, many political parties in Tamil Nadu have slammed the ASI's decision. They have termed it a blatant attempt to suppress Tamil heritage. They argued that the Centre's refusal to acknowledge Keeladi's significance was not just about science but also about politics. Amid the backlash, the Union Minister for Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, said Mr. Ramakrishna's findings were not technically well-supported and further scientific studies were required to validate the findings. He sought more results, data, and evidence because he said a single finding cannot change the entire discourse.

**Why did AIADMK stay silent initially?** Interestingly, the AIADMK, which was in power when the Keeladi report was published, remained silent for a long time on the current controversy. However, on June 18, senior leader R.R. Udayakumar said that the Centre had sought more information by way of ensuring "additional corroboration." He also said, "if the Keeladi report is rejected, the AIADMK will be the first party to express its voice of protest."

The controversy is not just about one report or one excavation; it is a clash of narratives. The Centre insists on scientific validation while Tamil Nadu views it as a matter of historical recognition. The State government is pressing on with its excavations, which are under way, and it has already set up a new museum at Keeladi, drawing thousands of visitors.

#### THE GIST

Archaeologist Anamath Ramakrishna's transfer from New Delhi to Greater Noida and the ASI's demand to revise his 982-page Keeladi excavation report sparked renewed controversy.

The ASI questioned the dating and depth of the findings, but Ramakrishna defended his conclusions as scientifically sound, citing stratigraphy and Accelerator Mass Spectrometry.

The move drew political outrage in Tamil Nadu, with parties accusing the Centre of suppressing Tamil heritage, turning Keeladi into a flashpoint between science, politics, and identity.

