

## 1. Historic First: Woman and African Leader for IOC

### Introduction

Kirsty Coventry, 41, has become the first woman and the first African to lead the International Olympic Committee (IOC). She is also the youngest president since the IOC's founder, Pierre de Coubertin. Hand-picked by outgoing president Thomas Bach, she was initially seen as a continuation of his legacy. However, insiders believe she will bring her own approach to the role.

### A Unique Background

Coventry is a former Olympic swimmer from Zimbabwe, and served as a Minister under President Emmerson Mnangagwa. Her experiences as a white woman in a racially tense country and her political career may shape a more inclusive and collaborative leadership style, contrasting with Bach's stricter approach.



### Geopolitical Hurdles and Big Decisions

Her role goes beyond sports administration. She must also navigate:

- Russia's potential return to the Olympics
- Interactions with U.S. President Donald Trump ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Games
- Global conflicts, such as the Russia-Ukraine war and tensions in West Asia, affecting future Olympic bids
- Possible bids from India, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia for the 2036 Olympics

### Support and Early Steps

On her first day, IOC member Nita Ambani was seen as a close ally. Coventry will lead a two-day closed-door session with IOC members to share ideas and gather early feedback.

### A Bold Start

With limited experience in global sports administration, Kirsty Coventry is diving into the deep end. But her background, values, and early actions suggest she is ready to reshape the future of the Olympic movement.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: Indian Express

## 2. Banakacherla Reservoir Sparks Fresh AP-Telangana Water Dispute

## Introduction

A new water project planned by Andhra Pradesh (AP) has triggered strong opposition from Telangana, reviving long-standing tensions over river water sharing. Telangana CM Revanth Reddy has challenged former CM K. Chandrashekar Rao to a debate on who truly protected the state's water interests.

### What Is the Banakacherla Reservoir Project?

AP Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has proposed a major plan to:

- Link the Godavari, Krishna, and Penna rivers
- Build a large reservoir at Banakacherla in Nandyal district
- Transform drought-hit Rayalaseema into fertile farmland



### Why Is Telangana Opposing the Project?

- The Banakacherla project may threaten Telangana's own water projects and overall water security.

### Political Significance of the Dispute

- For Andhra Pradesh:

Naidu aims to strengthen his Telugu Desam Party (TDP) in Rayalaseema, where rival YSR Congress dominates. Solving the water crisis could win political support.

- For Telangana:

Water-sharing has always been a sensitive issue, especially since the state's formation in 2014 after decades of protest over resource inequality.

The project is seen as reopening old wounds of regional injustice.

This latest clash shows how interstate water sharing, especially involving the Godavari and Krishna rivers, remains a complex and politically charged issue in southern India.

Relevance: GS Prelims; Governance

Source: The Hindu

## 3. Rajnath Singh Refuses to Sign SCO Statement: What Happened and Why It Matters

### Introduction

At the SCO Defence Ministers' meeting in China, Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh refused to sign a joint statement. This decision highlights India's firm stance against selective treatment of terrorism within the China-led group.

**Rajnath Singh Refuses To Sign SCO Document As Pak-China Snub Pahalgam**



**India Refused To Sign The SCO Statement Over Diluted Terror Language As Rajnath Singh Slammed Pakistan-backed Groups For The Pahalgam Attack.**

**What is the SCO?**

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a 10-nation regional group formed in 2001 to promote security, political, and economic cooperation.
- Members include India, China, Russia, Pakistan, Iran, Belarus, and four Central Asian countries.
- Originally born out of the 1996 "Shanghai Five", the SCO addresses terrorism, extremism, and regional cooperation through mechanisms like RATS (Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure).

**What Happened at the SCO This Year?**

- Rajnath refused to sign the final statement because it excluded any mention of the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu & Kashmir.
- However, the draft did mention the hijacking of the

Jaffar Express in Pakistan's Balochistan.

- India found this one-sided and unfair. MEA spokesperson said one country (likely Pakistan) blocked India's concerns.

**• In his speech, Rajnath:**

- Condemned the Pahalgam attack, carried out by a LeT proxy
- Stressed zero tolerance for terrorism
- Urged SCO to call out countries that shelter and support terrorists

**Why Rajnath's Refusal is Significant**

- The SCO is dominated by China, especially now with Russia focused on the Ukraine war.
- Pakistan, a close ally of China, often gets diplomatic cover at global forums.

**Rajnath's refusal:**

- Signaled India's strong stand against terrorism
- Showed India won't support biased narratives
- Underscored India's view that terrorism and diplomacy can't go hand-in-hand

As a result, no joint statement was issued from the SCO meeting.

**What's Next?**

The SCO Heads of State Summit will take place later this year in Tianjin, China. India's strong stance now sets the stage for a more intense diplomatic face-off in upcoming discussions.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: Indian Express

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