

10 May 2019: UPSC Exam PIB Summary & Analysis

WTO Ministerial Meeting of Developing Countries

Context:

- A WTO Ministerial meeting of developing countries is being hosted by India in New Delhi on 13-14 May 2019.

Details:

- Sixteen developing countries, Six Least Developed Countries (LDC) (Argentina, Bangladesh, Barbados, Benin, Brazil, Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, China, Egypt, Guatemala, Guyana, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Malawi, Malaysia, Nigeria, Oman, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Turkey, Uganda) and DG, WTO are participating in the meeting.
- The two-day meeting will be interactive in order to provide an opportunity for the Ministers to discuss various issues and the way forward.
- On the first day, there will be a meeting of senior officers of the participating countries followed by a dinner hosted by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry for the heads of delegations. On the 2nd day, the Ministerial Meeting will be held.
- The meeting is being held at a time when the multilateral rule-based-trading system is facing serious and grave challenges.
- In the recent past, there have been increasing unilateral measures and countermeasures by members, deadlock in key areas of negotiations and the impasse in the Appellate Body, which threaten the very existence of Dispute Settlement Mechanism of the WTO and impacts the position of the WTO as an effective multilateral organisation. The current situation has given rise to demands from various quarters to reform the WTO.
- This meeting at New Delhi is an effort to bring together the developing countries and Least Developed Countries on a platform for sharing common concerns on various issues affecting the WTO and work together to address these issues.
- The two-day meeting also provides an opportunity to the developing countries and LDCs to build consensus on how to move forward on the WTO reforms, while preserving the fundamentals of the multilateral trading system enshrined in the WTO.
- The deliberations will aim at getting a direction on how to constructively engage on various issues in the WTO, both institutional and negotiating, in the run-up to the Twelfth Ministerial Conference of the WTO to be held in Kazakhstan in June 2020.

World Trade Organization (WTO)

- The World Trade Organization (WTO) is an intergovernmental organization that is concerned with the regulation of international trade between nations.
- The WTO officially commenced on 1 January 1995 under the Marrakesh Agreement, signed by 124 nations on 15 April 1994, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), which commenced in 1948.
- Its headquarter is in Geneva, Switzerland. At present, it has 164 members.
- The WTO deals with regulation of trade in goods, services and intellectual property between participating countries by providing a framework for negotiating trade agreements and a dispute resolution process aimed at enforcing participants' adherence to WTO agreements, which are signed by representatives of member governments and ratified by their parliaments.
- The WTO prohibits discrimination between trading partners but provides exceptions for environmental protection, national security, and other important goals. Trade-related disputes are

resolved by independent judges at the WTO through a dispute resolution process.

