India in Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's Meet

Why in news?

India's External Affairs Minister has been invited to address the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation's (OIC) meet as the “Guest of Honour”.

What is OIC?

- The OIC describes itself as “the collective voice of the Muslim world”.
- Its objective is to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world.
- It is the 2nd largest inter-governmental organisation in the world after the UN, with a membership of 57 states in 4 continents.
- It has reserved its membership for Muslim-majority countries.
- Russia, Thailand, and couple of other small countries have Observer status.
- India is neither a member nor an observer.
- The upcoming 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC will be held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

What has OIC's stance on J&K issue been?

- The OIC has been generally supportive of Pakistan’s stand on Kashmir.
- It has earlier even issued statements criticising the alleged Indian “atrocities” in the state.
- The 2017 session of Council of OIC Foreign Ministers had adopted a resolution reaffirming the unwavering support for the Kashmiri people in their just cause.
- Recently in December 2018 too, the OIC expressed strong condemnation of the killing of innocent Kashmiris by Indian forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir.
- It called upon the international community to play its role in order to reach a just and lasting solution to the conflict in Kashmir.

Why is the invite significant now?

- This is the first-time invitation to India to be a Guest of Honour at the Plenary of the OIC.
- At the 45th session of the Foreign Ministers’ Summit in 2018, host country Bangladesh noted that India had more than 10% of the world’s Muslims live.
- Bangladesh thus proposed that India be given the Observer status, but

Pakistan opposed the proposal.

- So the present invite is a welcome recognition of the presence of 185 million Muslims in India and of their contribution to its pluralistic ethos.
- Especially, it comes at the time of heightened tensions with Pakistan following the Pulwama terrorist attack.
- Hence, it is seen as a significant diplomatic victory for New Delhi.
- It also signals India's improved ties with both Saudi and the UAE, and the Gulf region as a whole.
- It indicates their desire to go beyond the bilateral ties and forge a true multifaceted partnership at the multilateral and international level.

How does the future look?

- The Abu Dhabi meeting would likely discuss on the issues regarding peace and stability in the Muslim world.
- India's minster is expected to bring up the terrorist attacks in India in her address at the session.
- Certainly, Pakistan would be making every effort to counter the objections raised against it by the OIC.
- The stance that OIC would take on the Jammu and Kashmir issue in the current meet would be watched closely.
- The meeting will thus have implications at a wider level in terms of diplomacy, regional relations, terrorism, etc.

Source: Indian Express

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