

## **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 minister 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**

