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News: India hits out at OIC chief for visit to LoC from Pakistani side

- India recently strongly condemned the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) saying the organisation had “lost its credibility”.
- The comment from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) came after OIC Secretary General Hissein Brahim Taha visited the Line of Control (LoC) from the Pakistani side and was briefed by the situation by the Pakistan military.

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)

- Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is an international organization of **53 Muslim majority countries spread over four continents (Africa, Asia, Europe and South America) and is the second largest inter-governmental organisation after UN.**
- Founded in **1969** the headquarters of OIC is in **Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.**
- Motto: "**To safeguard the interests and ensure the progress and well-being of Muslims**".
- Collective Population: 1.8 billion.
- GDP: US \$27.949.

The OIC system consists of

- **Islamic Summit:** The largest meeting, attended **by the kings and Heads of state and governments, convened once in every 3 years.** Most recent was conducted in Mecca, Saudi Arabia on 2019.
- **Council of Foreign Ministers:** Meeting **annually.**
- **Secretary General:** The Secretary General is **elected by the Council of Foreign Ministers for a period of five years, renewable once.** The Secretary General is elected from among nationals of the Member States in accordance with the principles of equitable geographical distribution, rotation and equal opportunity for all Member States with due consideration to competence, integrity and experience. **Hussein Ibrahim Taha from Chad** was selected as the new secretary general. He will replace Yousef Ahmed Al-Othaimen, who will leave the post in November 2021.
- India is not a **member of the OIC.** However, India was invited as a guest of honor at 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Minister in 2019. 2019 is the 50th anniversary of OIC. India's application of membership was strongly opposed by Pakistan at the time of its formation. Currently, even though India is home to 32crore Muslims, is not a Member of OIC since Muslims are minority in India and **Membership of OIC is confined only to Muslim-major Countries.**

- Recently, the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has criticised Government of India over the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, and the Babri Masjid verdict of the Supreme Court.

International Day to Combat Islamophobia

- Recently, the UN General Assembly approved a resolution for setting **March 15th as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia**.
- The resolution was **introduced by Pakistan on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**.
- Though the resolution has been passed at UNGA, **India has highlighted several concerns**.
- The term **Islamophobia does not have any agreed definition** in international law, contrary to the freedom of religion or belief.

Key Points of the Resolution

- The resolution, **adopted by consensus by the 193-member world body** and cosponsored by 55 mainly Muslim countries.
- The resolution asks all countries, U.N. bodies, international and regional organisations, civil society, private sector and faith-based organisations **“to organise and support various high-visibility events aimed at effectively increasing awareness of all levels about curbing Islamophobia”**.

- The resolution emphasizes the right to freedom of religion and belief and recalls a 1981 resolution calling for “the elimination of all forms of intolerance and of discrimination based on religion or belief”.

India’s Stand

- India expressed concern over phobia against one religion being elevated to the level of an international day, saying there are growing contemporary forms of religiophobia, especially anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist and anti-Sikh phobias.
- It also cited that that word ‘pluralism’ finds no mention in the resolution.
- India hopes the resolution adopted "does not set a precedent" which will lead to multiple resolutions on phobias based on selective religions and divide the United Nations into religious camps.