

INTERNATIONAL RELATION**Understanding the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation**

CONTEXT: The General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) “condemned and denounced” the comments on Prophet Muhammed made by two erstwhile national spokespersons of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)

❖ **What is the OIC?**

- The OIC claims to be the “collective voice of the Muslim world”.
- It was established at a 1969 summit in Rabat (Morocco) after what it describes as the ‘criminal arson’ of Al-Aqsa Mosque in the disputed city of Jerusalem.
- The OIC endeavours to establish solidarity among member states, support restoration of complete sovereignty and territorial integrity of any member state under occupation; protect, defend and combat defamation of Islam, prevent growing dissension in Muslim societies and work to ensure that member states take a united stand at the UN General Assembly, Human Rights Council and other international fora.
- The OIC has consultative and cooperative relations with the UN and other inter-governmental organisations to protect the interest of Muslims, and settle conflicts and disputes involving member states, among them being the territorial conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan and the status of Jammu & Kashmir.
- Presently based in Jeddah, the organisation plans to permanently move its headquarters to East Jerusalem once the disputed city is ‘liberated’.
- Moreover, it aspires to hold Israel accountable for ‘war crimes’ and violations of international law.
- The organisation adheres to a charter that lays out its objectives, principles and operating mechanism.
- First adopted in 1972, the charter has been revised multiple times in line with emerging conditions in the developing world.
- The present charter was adopted in March 2008 at Dakar in Senegal. It enshrines that all members be guided and inspired by the noble Islamic teachings and values alongside committing themselves to the purposes and principles of the UN charter.
- Member states are expected to uphold and promote good governance, democracy, human rights, fundamental freedom and the rule of law — settling disputes through peaceful means and refraining from the use of threat or force.
- The OIC carves out a 10-year Programme of Action (PoA). Last instituted for the decade ending 2025, the PoA calls for measures to combat all aspects of terrorism globally.
- It also talks of implementing social schemes to eliminate two-thirds of extreme poverty and spurring industrialisation, investment, trade and overall economic and social growth among member states.

❖ **How does the OIC function?**

- The Islamic Summit, composed of Kings and heads of state, is the supreme authority of the organisation.
- Convening every two years, it deliberates, takes policy decisions, provides guidance on issues relevant to the organisation and considers issues of concern to the member states. The Council of Foreign Ministers is the chief decision-making body and meets annually to decide on how to implement the OIC’s general policies.
- This council also appoints, for a period of five years, the Secretary General, who is the chief administrative officer of the grouping.
- The Secretary General follows up on implementation of the decisions, directs attention to competent organs’ specific issues of concern, creates a channel for coordination among the varied organs and submits annual reports on the work undertaken.
- Former Foreign Affairs Minister of Chad, Hissein Brahim Taha, is the current Secretary General, taking up the role in November 2021.
- UN members with a Muslim majority can join the organisation.

- The membership is to be ratified with full consensus at the OIC's Council of Foreign Ministers. The same provisions apply for acquiring an observer status.
- All decision-making in the forum requires a quorum defined by the presence of two-thirds of the member states and complete consensus. In case a consensus cannot be reached, decisions shall be made by a two-thirds majority of members present and voting.
- The OIC is financed by the member states proportionate to their national incomes. Should a member fail to meet their obligations such that the amount of arrears equals or exceeds the amount of contributions due from it for the preceding two years, their voting rights are suspended.
- The member is only allowed to vote if the Council of Foreign Ministers is satisfied that the failure is due to conditions beyond the member's control.
- The OIC also has standing committees for cooperation on information and cultural affairs, economic and commercial matters, scientific and technological initiatives and for Jerusalem.
- ❖ **What has been the nature of India's relationship with the OIC?**
 - India's association with the 57-nation grouping has not been easy.
 - Even though the country has good relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia, its membership and engagement has been constantly challenged by Pakistan.
 - In 1969, Islamabad's opposition to Indian participation at the first OIC Plenary resulted in the Indian delegation being turned back from the venue at the last minute.
 - About 50 years later, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj addressed the OIC Plenary of Foreign Ministers in Abu Dhabi as a guest of honour. The invitation was extended by the UAE's Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. In 2018, Bangladesh had proposed India be given the observer status at the OIC considering its sizeable Muslim population – a move which received support from Turkey but was opposed by Pakistan.
 - That Pakistan's apprehension stems from the fear that India's involvement in the grouping could influence the opinion of other Muslim states — not boding well for its influence.
- ❖ **What have been the criticisms against the OIC grouping?**
 - That the OIC had become a premise for 'window dressing', more interested in the rights of Muslim minorities in places such as Palestine or Myanmar than the human rights violations of its member states.
 - The author noted that the body lacks power and resources to investigate human rights violations or enforce its decisions through signed treaties and declarations.
 - Experts have also pointed to the fact that the organisation is largely restricted to arbitrating in conflicts where both parties are Muslims. This is because the organisation is centred around Quranic values, which, it believes, makes it a qualified arbitrator.
 - The according of observer status at the UN to the Palestine Liberation Organisation is considered among its major successes.
 - The 50th anniversary of the organisation— noted that the OIC has failed to establish a cooperative venture among its members, who were either capital-rich and labour-scarce countries or manpower-rich and capital scarce. "...the organization has not evolved to become a significant player either in international politics or in the area of economic cooperation.

PRELIMS

1. **FATF(Financial Action Task Force)**

CONTEXT: Ahead of the plenary session of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the global financial crime watchdog, from June 14 to 17 in Berlin, Pakistan which continues to face an economic crunch, is hoping for some respite in the form of its removal from the FATF's 'grey list' or the list of countries presenting a risk to the global financial system.

❖ **What is the FATF?**

- The Financial Action Task Force is an international watchdog for financial crimes such as money laundering and terror financing.

- It was established at the G7 Summit of 1989 in Paris to address loopholes in the global financial system after member countries raised concerns about growing money laundering activities.
- In the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attack on the U.S., FATF also added terror financing as a main focus area.
- This was later broadened to include restricting the funding of weapons of mass destruction.
- The FATF currently has 39 members.
- The decision-making body of the FATF, known as its plenary, meets thrice a year.
- Its meetings are attended by 206 countries of the global network, including members, and observer organisations, such as the World Bank, some offices of the United Nations, and regional development banks.
- The FATF sets standards or recommendations for countries to achieve in order to plug the holes in their financial systems and make them less vulnerable to illegal financial activities.
- It conducts regular peer-reviewed evaluations called Mutual Evaluations (ME) of countries to check their performance on standards prescribed by it.
- The reviews are carried out by FATF and FATF-Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs), which then release Mutual Evaluation Reports (MERs).
- For the countries that don't perform well on certain standards, time-bound action plans are drawn up.
- Recommendations for countries range from assessing risks of crimes to setting up legislative, investigative and judicial mechanisms to pursue cases of money laundering and terror funding.
- ❖ **What are FATF's 'grey' and 'black' lists?**
 - While the words 'grey' and 'black' list do not exist in the official FATF lexicon, they designate countries that need to work on complying with FATF directives and those who are non-compliant, respectively.
 - At the end of every plenary meeting, FATF comes out with two lists of countries. The grey countries are designated as "jurisdictions under increased monitoring", working with the FATF to counter criminal financial activities. For such countries, the watchdog does not tell other members to carry out due-diligence measures vis-a-vis the listed country but does tell them to consider the risks such countries possess. Currently, 23 countries including Pakistan are on the grey list.
 - As for the black list, it means countries designated as 'high-risk jurisdictions subject to call for action'. In this case, the countries have considerable deficiencies in their AML/CFT (anti-money laundering and counter terrorist financing) regimens and the body calls on members and non-members to apply enhanced due diligence. In the most serious cases, members are told to apply counter-measures such as sanctions on the listed countries.
 - Currently, North Korea and Iran are on the black list.
 - Being listed under the FATF's lists makes it hard for countries to get aid from organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the European Union. It may also affect capital inflows, foreign direct investments, and portfolio flows.

2. **Ramsay Hunt Syndrome**

CONTEXT: Pop sensation Justin Bieber revealed that a viral disease has temporarily paralysed one side of his face

❖ **What is Ramsay Hunt Syndrome?**

- Ramsay Hunt Syndrome is neurological disease in which a virus – Varicella Zoster – causes inflammation of the nerves involved in facial movements. When the nerves get inflamed, they lose their ability to function, leading to temporary facial palsy or paralysis. What it means is that facial muscles in the infected person cannot receive necessary signals to function properly.
- There are 12 cranial nerves in the body. Ramsay Hunt Syndrome is the viral infection impacting the 7th cranial nerve that is involved in facial movements.

- The inflammation caused by the Varicella Zoster Virus makes the nerve ineffective
- ❖ **What are the symptoms of Ramsay Hunt Syndrome?**
- The symptoms include painful, red rash and blisters in and around the ear, and facial paralysis on the same side. Patients also report hearing loss in the ear that has been impacted apart from Tinnitus or ringing sounds. Inability to close the eye causes dryness.
- Rash on the eardrum, the ear canal and the earlobe.
- Rashes can also appear inside the mouth, on the tongue.
- It causes weakness of one side of the face and causes difficulty in closing one eye and eating as food falls off from the affected side. There is drooping of the face.
- ❖ **What is the virus that causes Ramsay Hunt Syndrome?**
- The Varicella Zoster Virus (VZV) is the same virus that causes chickenpox and shingles.
- According to the US Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, this virus belongs to the herpesvirus group and can stay in the body as a latent infection.
- The virus can stay dormant in a person's body and can reawaken to attack the nerves. According to doctors, VZV can get reactivated due to weakening of the immune system. Stress is also considered a trigger, according to some studies, as it depresses the immune system. Some reports also suggest that T-cell dysfunction caused by corona virus infection can reactivate VZV..
- ❖ **How is Ramsay Hunt Syndrome treated?**
- It is treated using anti-viral drugs, steroids and physiotherapy. Steroids and anti-viral drugs are the cornerstone of the treatment, Facial exercises are very important. Patients need to protect their eyes. When one eye doesn't close, there is a chance of developing corneal aberration. Patients must use tear drops and use eye protection. They should wear glasses when they go out, and tape the eye that has been impacted when they sleep at night.
- ❖ **Is Ramsay Hunt Syndrome contagious?**
- The disease is not contagious but can lead to chickenpox in those not vaccinated for the disease. Till the blister scabs fall off, the patients are advised to avoid contact with those with low immunity and the ones who have not had chickenpox, or are not vaccinated against it.

ANSWER WRITING

Q. The aviation sector has seen steady growth in the last few years, however continues to face multiple challenges. Comment (150)

Introduction

The civil aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing industries in India. It has undergone a huge transformation following the liberalization of the aviation industry in India. According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, India's air passenger traffic has grown from 14 million in 2000-01 to 140 million in 2017. Despite such meteoric rise, airlines in India are still finding it difficult to sustain operations due to various structural issues.

Problems afflicting the aviation sector in India:

- **Policy paralysis:** The successive governments did not come up with a long-term vision for the airline industry. The airline industry has been left to fend for itself and serve the elite class in select metros.
- **High Taxes:** High Taxes on aviation turbine fuel and Maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO).
- **Rupee depreciation:** Since airlines pay in dollar terms for service utility, rupee depreciation, and exchange rate fluctuations reduce their profitability.
- **Price-sensitive market:** India is a price-sensitive market where competing airlines find it difficult to hike ticket prices.
- **The sustainability of the Udan scheme:** UDAN has spurred a host of regional airlines to come up and existing operators to enter regional flying. The Udan scheme is funded by a levy on passengers flying metro routes. The funds collected are then used to subsidize Udan routes. Recent indications are that if all Udan routes that have been bid are flown, there is likely to be a funding deficit.

- The Centre allows 100% FDI in airlines but has capped it at 49% if a foreign carrier wants to invest in an Indian firm. Aviation is a highly capital-intensive business and FDI curbs prevent it from acquiring new technology and best practices.
- Archaic rules like the Route Dispersal Guidelines (RDG) that mandate airlines to fly a certain percentage of flights in smaller, unprofitable air routes drive up costs and introduces inefficiencies.

Conclusion

- As India positions itself to lead and play a dominant role globally, its aviation sector cannot be overlooked. Especially as this sector acts as a growth multiplier including economic output, jobs, and trade – all enabled via better connectivity. But for this growth to materialize sustainably, policy interventions are necessary, the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016 was a right step in this direction but the aviation sector needs more reforms in existing rules for addressing the prevalent issues.

MCQs

1. Consider the following statements with reference to Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).
 1. All decision-making in the forum requires complete consensus only
 2. UN members with a Muslim majority can join the organization
 3. The OIC carves out a 10-year Programme of Action (PoA) ending in 2025, which calls for measures to combat all aspects of terrorism globally

Choose the correct statement using the codes given below

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 1 and 3 only
- d) All of the above

2. With reference to Financial Action Task Force (FATF) consider the following statements

1. The decision-making body of the FATF, meets once in every a year
2. Currently, North Korea and Iran are the only countries in black list of FATF.
3. Currently, Pakistan and Libya are the only countries in grey list of FATF.
4. The words 'grey' and 'black' list do not exist in the official FATF lexicon

Choose the correct statement/s using the codes given below

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) 3 and 4 only
- d) 2 and 4 only

3. With reference to Ramsay Hunt Syndrome consider the following

1. Ramsay Hunt Syndrome is a neurological disease, which caused by a virus
2. It can be treated by Steroids and anti-viral drugs.
3. It can lead to can lead to chickenpox in those not vaccinated for the disease.

Which of the above statements are not correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 and 3 only
- c) All of the above
- d) None of the above

4. Consider the following statements with reference to recently developed Animal Vaccine for COVID 19 known as Ancovax

1. It is an inactivated vaccine developed using an infectious part of the Delta variant.
2. It can prevent transmission from companion animals to the humans.
3. This is the first Covid-19 vaccine for animals developed in the world.

Choose the correct statement using the codes given below

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 1 and 2 only
- d) 1 and 3 only

5. Under which of the following scheme should an expectant mother register herself to avail of quality healthcare at no cost during pregnancy as well as in the postpartum period?
 - a) Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan
 - b) Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram
 - c) **Surakshit Matritva Aashwaasan**
 - d) LaQshya
6. Which of the following controlled environment agriculture technology must be used when there is very high water scarcity and highly degraded soil?
 - a) **Atmoponics**
 - b) Organoponics
 - c) Geoponics
 - d) Xeriscaping
7. With respect to the "Open Skies Treaty", consider the followings statements:
 1. A member state can "spy" on any part of the host nation, with the latter's consent.
 2. All UN member states are the signatories of the Open Skies Treaty.
 3. The USA and Russia have withdrawn from this Treaty.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) **1 and 3 only**
 - d) 1, 2 and 3
8. With respect to the "United Nations Security Council", consider the following statements:
 1. Under the Charter of the United Nations, all member states are obligated to comply with the Council's decisions.
 2. Each member of the Security Council shall have one vote.
 3. The decisions of the Security Council on procedural matters shall be made by an affirmative vote of 10 members.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a) **1 and 2 only**
 - b) 2 and 3 only
 - c) 1 and 3 only
 - d) 1, 2 and 3
9. Which among the following South American country/ies is/are parts of Lithium triangle?
 1. Argentina
 2. Chile
 3. Bolivia
 4. Peru
 5. Brazil

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- a) **1, 2 and 3 only**
- b) 1, 2 and 4 only
- c) 2, 3 and 4 only
- d) 3, 4 and 5 only

10. Consider the following statements about the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India (LASI):

1. The National Programme for Health Care of Elderly has undertaken the Longitudinal Ageing Study of India.
2. LASI is a full-scale national survey of scientific investigation of the health, economic and social determinants and consequences of population ageing in India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 only
- b) 2 only
- c) **Both 1 and 2**
- d) Neither 1 nor 2