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Criticism of Policies on Kashmir: OIC

Why in News

India has 'strongly' **rejected the criticism of its Kashmir policy by the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).**

The **47th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers**, held at **Niamey (Niger)**, had made a reference to India over its **policies on Jammu and Kashmir.**

Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

- OIC is the **second largest intergovernmental organization** after the United Nations with a membership of **57 states.**
India is not a member of the OIC.
- It is the **collective voice of the Muslim world.** It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of **promoting international peace and harmony** among various people of the world.
- It was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in **Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, in 1969.**
- **Headquarters:** Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Key Points

- **47th Session of OIC:** A report submitted at the 47th session referred to the situation in Jammu and Kashmir.
 - It said that the decision of the Indian government to **repeal special status** (in 2019) was aimed towards **changing the demographic and geographic composition** of the territory.
 - The continuous blockade and restrictions together have **led to human rights abuses**.
 - The statement **acknowledged the support that Pakistan has been providing to keep the Kashmir issue** on the agenda of the organisation.
- **India's Stand:**
 - India strongly hit out at the OIC, accusing it of making "**factually incorrect and unwarranted**" references to Jammu and Kashmir in resolutions adopted by the grouping at the session.
 - India asserted that the **union territory is an integral and inalienable part of the country**.
 - India **advised the OIC to refrain from making such references in future** and said it is regrettable that the **grouping continues to allow itself to be used by a certain country** "which has an abominable record on religious tolerance, radicalism and persecution of minorities" in a **clear reference to Pakistan**.
 - After India revoked **special status** in Kashmir, Pakistan lobbied with the OIC for their condemnation of the move.
 - Over the last one year, Pakistan has tried to rouse sentiments among the Islamic countries, but only a handful of them, **Turkey and Malaysia** publicly criticised India.
 - **Saudi Arabia** and the **UAE**, both top leaders among the Muslim countries, were **not as critical** of India as Pakistan had hoped.

- **Significance of India's latest statement:**
 - India believes to bust the **double standard of OIC**, where it supports the agenda of Pakistan in the name of human rights.
 - India now sees the **duality of the OIC unjustifiable**, since many of the member countries of the OIC have **good bilateral ties** and convey to India to ignore OIC statements **but sign off on the joint statements** which are **largely drafted by Pakistan**.
 - India also wants to challenge this issue because of the possibility of the **Joe Biden administration in the US** which may have a strong view on human rights in Kashmir and may issue statements that **may complicate India's** image at the global stage.
 - With India preparing to take **over a non-permanent member's seat at the UN Security Council**, it wants to use its diplomatic clout and goodwill to bury this issue at the global body in the next two years and bring up the **Pakistan-sponsored cross-border terrorism** high on agenda.

India and OIC

- **India's relationship with OIC as an organisation:**
 - At the 45th session of the Foreign Ministers' Summit in 2018, Bangladesh, the host, **suggested that India**, where more than 10% of the world's Muslims live, **should be given Observer status**, but **Pakistan opposed** the proposal.
 - In 2019, India **made its maiden appearance** at the OIC Foreign Ministers' meeting, as a "guest of honour".

This **first-time invitation was seen as a diplomatic victory for India**, especially at a time of heightened tensions with Pakistan following the Pulwama attack.

- **Criticism of India's Policies by OIC:**

- It has been **generally supportive of Pakistan's stand on Kashmir**, and has issued statements criticising the alleged Indian "atrocities" in the state/Union Territory.
 - In 2018, the OIC General Secretariat had "expressed strong condemnation of the killing of innocent Kashmiris by Indian forces in Indian-occupied Kashmir".
 - It described the "**direct shooting at demonstrators**" as a "**terrorist act**", and "**called upon the international community to play its role in order to reach a just and lasting solution to the conflict in Kashmir**".
- OIC has criticised the Government of India over the **Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019**, and the **Babri Masjid verdict** of the Supreme Court.
- OIC has also criticised the Indian government for what it called "**growing Islamophobia**" in India.

- **India's Response:**

India has always maintained that **OIC has no locus standi in matters strictly internal to India** including that of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir which is an integral and inalienable part of India.

- **India's relationship with OIC member countries:**

- Individually, India has good relations with almost all member nations.
- Ties with the **UAE** and **Saudi Arabia**, especially, have improved significantly in recent years.

The **Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi (UAE)** was a special chief guest at the **68th Republic Day** celebrations in 2017.

- The OIC includes two of **India's close neighbours**, Bangladesh and Maldives.

Indian diplomats say both countries **privately admit that they do not want to complicate their bilateral ties with India on Kashmir**.

Source:TH

National Maritime Domain Awareness Centre

Why in News

The Navy's **Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC)**, the nodal agency for maritime data fusion set up after the **26/11 Mumbai terror attacks**, will soon become a **National Maritime Domain Awareness (NDMA) Centre**.

Key Points

- **Background:** One of the areas for enhancing coastal security is Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), which is extremely challenging since **India is located in one of the busiest maritime traffic regions of the world.**

The **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)** is the commercial highway for large traffic and critical for the prosperity of many nations. Hence, **threats** such as maritime terrorism, piracy, trafficking, illegal fishing etc. are required to be kept subdued at all times.

- **Maritime Domain Awareness:**

- It is defined by the **International Maritime Organization (IMO)** as the effective understanding of **anything associated with the maritime domain** that could impact the security, safety, economy, or environment.

The **maritime domain is defined** as all areas and things of, on, under, relating to, adjacent to, or bordering on a sea, ocean, or other navigable waterway, including all maritime-related activities, infrastructure, people, cargo, and vessels and other conveyances.

- Earlier this year in March, India joined the **Indian Ocean Commission (IOC) as Observer**. The Commission is an **important regional institution in Western/African Indian Ocean**.
- Previously in 2018, **the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean region (IFC-IOR)** was set up within the premises of the IMAC to **coordinate with regional countries on maritime security and act as a regional repository of maritime data**.

- **Proposed NDMA Centre:**

It will be a **multi-agency centre and provide information** to various stakeholders, from the fisheries department to local policing authorities on **development or movements across the coast**. This will make sure that any risk, especially transnational can be prevented.

- **Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC):**
 - It is the **main center of the Indian Navy for coastal surveillance and monitoring**. It is located in **Gurugram** (Haryana) and became **operational in 2014**.
 - It is a **joint initiative** of Indian Navy, Coast Guard and Bharat Electronics Ltd. and **functions under the National Security Adviser (NSA)**.
 - It is the nodal center of the **National Command Control Communications and Intelligence Network (NC3I Network)**.
 - **Functions:** It tracks vessels on the high seas and gets data from the coastal radars, white shipping agreements, Automatic Identification Systems (AIS) transponders fitted on merchant ships, air and traffic management systems and global shipping databases. Its functions in line with the principles listed under **'Security and Growth of All in the Region (SAGAR)'**.
 - **White Shipping Agreement:**
 - The white shipping information refers to an **exchange of relevant advance information on the identity and movement of commercial non-military merchant vessels**.
 - Ships are classified into **white (commercial ships), grey (military vessels), and black (illegal vessels)**.
 - **Automatic Identification System:** It is an automated tracking system installed on all commercial vessels of specific tonnage.
 - After the 26/11 terror attack, all fishing vessels **more than 20m long were mandated to have AIS transponders installed**, while efforts are on to have such a system on under 20m fishing vessels as well.
 - **Recent Initiatives by IMAC:**
 - In 2019, it conducted a coastal security workshop for **BIMSTEC** countries.
 - During the **MT New Diamond** (vessel) **fire incident off the coast of Sri Lanka**, **IFC-IOR** played a key role in the early mobilization of resources that resulted in a quick reaction.

National Command Control Communications and Intelligence Network

- The Indian Navy has established the NC3IN linking 51 stations, including 20 of the Navy and 31 of the Coast Guard, with a nodal Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC).
- The NC3I generates **a seamless real-time picture of the nearly 7,500-km long coastline**.

Source:TH

Fall in Manufacturing PMI

The **Purchasing Managers' Index** (PMI) for India's manufacturing shows that the **sector's expansion** as well as the **pace of new orders** slowed down while employment declined further **as business optimism faded** during the month of November.

PMI is an **indicator of business activity** in the **manufacturing and services sectors**.

Key Points

- **Data Analysis:**
 - India's **Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)** fell to a three-month low of 56.3 in November from an over 12-year high of 58.9 in October.
 - In PMI parlance, a print **above 50 means expansion**, while a score below that **denotes contraction**.
 - Although India's PMI is in the expansion zone, the **ongoing rise in Covid cases** in some states and **uncertainty about regional lockdowns** is denting confidence.
 - There were **slower increases** in factory orders, exports, buying levels and output.
 - Indian manufacturers are **refraining from hiring**. Employment **fell in November** as companies observed **social distancing guidelines**.

- **Calculation of PMI:**

- It is a survey-based measure that **asks the respondents about changes in their perception about key business variables** as compared with the previous month.
- The **purpose** of the PMI is to provide information about current and future business conditions to company decision-makers, analysts, and investors.
- It is **calculated separately** for the **manufacturing and services sectors** and then a composite index is also constructed.
- The PMI is a number from **0 to 100**.
 - **PMI above 50 represents an expansion** when compared to the previous month;
 - **PMI under 50 represents a contraction**, and
 - A reading **at 50 indicates no change**.
- If PMI of the previous month is higher than the PMI of the current month (as is the case mentioned above), it represents that the **economy is contracting**.
- It is usually released at the **start of every month**. It is, therefore, considered a **good leading indicator** of economic activity.
- PMI is **compiled by IHS Markit** for more than 40 economies worldwide. IHS Markit is a global leader in information, analytics and solutions for the major industries and markets that drive economies worldwide.
- As the official data on industrial output, manufacturing and GDP growth **comes much later**, PMI helps to make informed decisions at an earlier stage.
- It is **different from the Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**, which also gauges the level of activity in the economy.

Source:TH

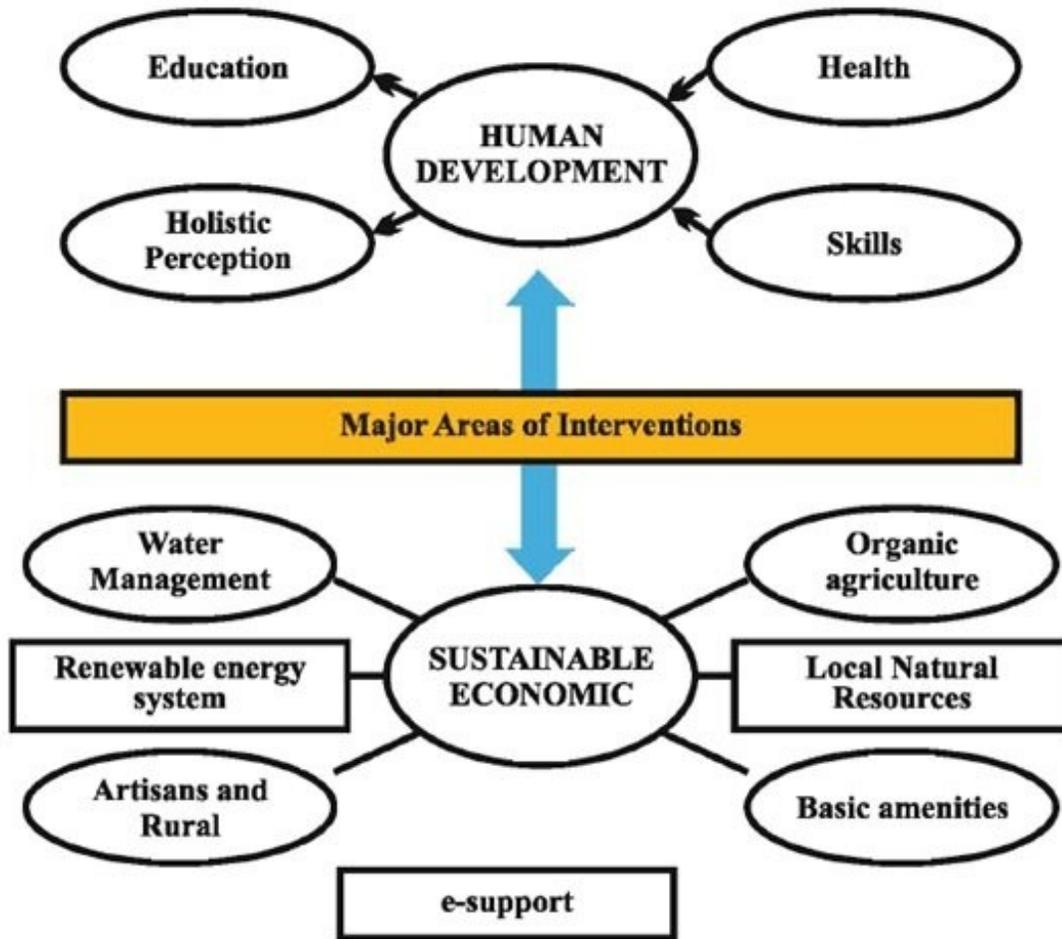
Unnat Bharat Abhiyan Scheme

Why in News

A review meeting regarding the progress of **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan Scheme (UBA)** was held via videoconferencing.

Key Points

- **Highlights of the Meeting:** The **Union Education Minister** emphasised on the following:
 - Identify **three to five core issues common amongst all the villages** and few issues based on **local conditions** and work on these.
 - Efforts should be made to maximise the number of **Higher Educational Institutions** under the scheme in order to benefit more villages.
 - UBA should be used in **sensitizing the school teachers regarding National Education Policy, 2020**.
 - **Need for a portal** was highlighted which will serve as an interactive platform for different institutions wherein they can share success stories and motivate each other.
 - Carry out a **state-wise study and set targets regarding the parameters under UBA** such as improvement in literacy, healthcare etc.
- **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan:**
 - It is a flagship program of the **Ministry of Education**. It was **launched in 2014**.
 - It aims to **link the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) with a set of at least (5) villages**, so that these institutions can contribute to the economic and social betterment of these village communities using their knowledge base.
 - It **covers two major domains** for holistic development of villages – **human development and material (economic) development** - in an integrated way.
 - The **Indian Institute of Technology Delhi** (IIT, Delhi) has been designated as the **National Coordinating Institute** (NCI) for the UBA scheme.
 - **Main Objectives:**
 - To **engage the faculty and students of HEIs in identifying development issues in rural areas** and finding sustainable solutions for the same.
 - Identify & select existing innovative technologies, enable customisation of technologies, or devise implementation methods for innovative solutions, **as required by the people**.
 - To allow HEIs to contribute to devising systems for smooth **implementation of various Government programmes**.
 - **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0:**
 - It is the upgraded version of **UBA 1.0**. It was **launched in 2018**.
 - **UBA 1.0** or UBA Phase-1 was the **Invitation Mode** in which Participating Institutions were invited to be a part of UBA.
 - Whereas **UBA 2.0 is the Challenge Mode** of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan programme where all HEIs are required to willingly adopt at least 5 villages. Currently, UBA 2.0 Mode is going on.



Source: PIB

Virtual Aadi Mahotsav

Why in News

The **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** has launched the **virtual edition of Aadi Mahotsav** - Madhya Pradesh.

The **next focus state** would be Gujarat, followed by West Bengal.

Key Points

- **Aadi Mahotsav:**
 - It is a **national tribal festival** and a **joint initiative** of the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs** and the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**. It **commenced in 2017** and is **held annually**.
 - It is an attempt **to familiarise the people** with the rich and diverse craft, **culture of the tribal communities** across the country, in **one place**.
 - In **2019**, the festival was held in **New Delhi** and featured an exhibition-cum-sale of tribal handicrafts, art, paintings, fabric, jewellery, etc.
- **Virtual Edition of Aadi Mahotsav:**
 - This year, TRIFED has **moved the event online** and will be **hosted on the Tribes India E-Marketplace**.
 - It will **bring the spotlight on all the major tribes one-by one**.

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India

- **Formation:** It was established in 1987 under the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 1984 by the Government of India as a National level Cooperative body.
- **Organisation:** It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs**.
It has its **head office in New Delhi**.
- **Objectives:** Socio-economic development of tribal people, empowerment of tribal people with knowledge, tools and information and their capacity building.

- **Initiatives and Involvement:**

- TRIFED, under the **brand name Tribes India**, markets the handcrafted products directly procured from the tribals in India through its 73 brick and mortar outlets all over India. Tribes India has its **own e-commerce platform**.
- **TRIFOOD Scheme** is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Food Processing Industry, Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED and it promotes value addition to Minor Forest Produce (MFP).
- It has organised the **Van Dhan Internship Programme**, to enhance the output of the Van Dhan Yojana.
- TRIFED helps in **implementation of the scheme** 'Mechanism for Marketing of MFP through **Minimum Support Price** (MSP) and Development of Value Chain for MFP' to ensure fair returns to forest dwelling **Scheduled Tribes** (STs) and other traditional forest dwellers.

MSP for MFP and Van Dhan program is in line with the **"The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Forest Rights Act, 2006)"**, a key forest legislation passed for securing protection & livelihood of poor tribals and concerns with the rights of forest-dwelling communities to land and other natural resources.
- It has also launched a transformational **Tech For Tribals program** in partnership with Institutes of National Importance (INIs) to develop tribal entrepreneurship.

Source: PIB

BSF Raising Day

Why in News

56th 'Raising Day' event of the **Border Security Force** (BSF) was held on **1st December 2020** in **New Delhi**.

Key Points

- The BSF was raised in **1965 after the India-Pakistan war**.
- It is one of the **five Central Armed Police Forces** of Union of India under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)**.

Other Central Armed Police Forces are: Assam Rifles (AR), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), National Security Guards (NSG) and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

- The 2.65-lakh force is deployed along the **Pakistan and Bangladesh borders.**
It is deployed on **Indo-Pakistan International Border, Indo-Bangladesh International Border, Line of Control (LoC) along with Indian Army** and in **Anti-Naxal Operations.**
- It has an **air wing, marine wing, an artillery regiment, and commando units.**
 - BSF has been **defending Sir Creek in Arabian Sea and Sundarban delta in the Bay of Bengal** with its state of art fleet of Water Crafts.
 - BSF has an instrumental role in helping state administration in maintaining Law and Order and conduct of **peaceful election.**
 - BSF has been crusading against **natural calamity** to save precious human lives as and when warranted.
- It contributes dedicated services to the **UN peacekeeping Mission** by sending a large contingent of its trained manpower every year.
- It has been termed as the **First Line of Defence of Indian Territories.**

Source:IE
