

OIC

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 the Al-Aqsa Mosque in the disputed city of Jerusalem.
- It endeavors 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 organizations 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 organization plans to permanently move its headquarters to East Jerusalem once the disputed city is ‘liberated’.

How does the OIC function?

- The Islamic Summit, composed of Kings and heads of state, is the supreme authority of the organization.
- Convening every two years, it deliberates, takes policy decisions, provides guidance on issues relevant to the organization, 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. In addition, 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 the 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.
- UN members with a Muslim majority can join the organization. The membership is to be ratified with full consensus at the OIC’s Council of Foreign Ministers.
- The OIC is financed by the member states proportionate to their national incomes.

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CRITICISM OF THE CONSERVATION BILL

- The need for criminal laws to assist wildlife conservation has remained unchallenged since its conception.
- From regulated hunting to complete prohibition and the creation of ‘Protected Areas (PA)’ where conservation can be undertaken without the interference of local forest -dwelling communities, State and Forest Department control over forests.
- The recent move to increase penalties by four times for general violations (from ₹25,000 to ₹1, 00,000) and from ₹10,000 to ₹25,000 for animals receiving the most protection should raise questions about the nature of policing that the WPA engenders.

- Hunting offenses that were primarily filed against Schedule III and IV animals (wild boars) which have lesser protection than tigers and elephants formed over 17.47% of the animals 'hunted' in 2016-20.
- Among the animals hunted the highest, only one in top five belonged to Schedule I (peacock).
- Surprisingly, fish (only certain species relegated to Schedule I) formed over 8% of the cases filed.
- A whopping 133 cases pertaining to fishing (incorrectly classified as Schedule V species) were filed in the last decade in Madhya Pradesh.
- Forest rights, individual and collective, as part of the Forest Rights Act (FRA) were put in place to correct the injustice meted out by forest governance laws in recognizing forest- dependent livelihoods.
- The natural overlap of recognizing forest rights in intended- as -inviolate PAs was quickly resolved by making the FRA subservient to the WPA, thereby impeding its implementation.
- Recent data from the Annual Survey of Industries for 2019-20 shows that the rural segment is a significant contributor to the manufacturing sector's output.
- While 42% of factories are in rural areas, 62% of fixed capital is in the rural side.
- This is the result of a steady stream of investments in rural locations over the last two decades. Several causes for the relatively steady rise and presence of rural manufacturing.
- Rural areas have generally been more attractive to manufacturing firms because wages, property, and land costs are all lower than in most metropolitan areas.
- Locations get more urbanized and congested, the greater these space constraints are.
- In cities, factories just cannot be expanded as opposed to rural areas.
- Thus, increased capital intensity of production is one reason for this trend.
- Many firms experience substantially higher operating costs in cities than in rural areas, with inevitable consequences for the firm's profitability and competitiveness.
- Big firms deliberately shift production from cities to take advantage of the availability of less skilled, less unionized, and less costly rural labor.
- The shift in manufacturing activities from urban to rural areas has helped maintain the importance of manufacturing as a source of livelihood diversification in rural India.

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RISE OF RURAL MANUFACTURING

- There is growing evidence to suggest that the most conspicuous trend in the manufacturing sector in India has been a shift of manufacturing activity and employment from bigger cities to smaller towns and rural areas.
- This 'urban- rural manufacturing shift' has often been interpreted as a mixed bag, as it has its share of advantages that could transform the rural economy, as well as a set of constraints, which could hamper higher growth

CHALLENGES AHEAD

- The shift towards rural manufacturing faces two major challenges.
- First, though firms reap the benefits of lower costs via lower rents, the cost of capital seems to be higher for firms operating on the rural side.

- This is evident from the shares in rent and interest paid.
- Second, there exists an issue of “skills shortage” in rural areas as manufacturing now needs higher-skilled workers to compete in the highly the second-largest global ‘new economy.

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CHINA VS USA

- China rose to the status of the second-largest economy and got itself ingrained into the global economy.
- This eventually translated into China’s growing economic competence as well as its rising political ambition and might.
- China then started to systematically undermine U.S. global dominance through military and diplomatic means.
- The administration’s imposition of tariffs on China’s exports turned into a “trade war” which started to reverse the trajectory of U.S.-China relations.
- China’s crackdown in Xinjiang and Hong Kong, its “wolf warrior diplomacy” during the COVID-19 blame game, its evident support to Russia during the Ukraine crisis, and its escalating offensive posturing towards Taiwan made it imperative for the U.S. to continue with a confrontational posture towards China.
- The year 2022 witnessed the relations descend into an abysmal trajectory with the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi visiting Taiwan
- In order to undercut China’s growing technological prowess, the U.S. imposed a series of restrictions on China targeting its semiconductor chip industry.

- China has not moved away from its path to attain its long-term goal of centrality in the international system.
- In fact, Xi Jinping has at multiple times underlined China’s time-bound aspiration to achieve such a goal through phased modernization of the country. China’s more specific objectives like the reunification of Taiwan with the mainland.
- On the other hand, the Biden administration has continued intensifying the U.S.’s rivalry with China by expanding it beyond trade and into avenues like technology and political freedoms.
- It has also utilized multilateral approaches like strengthening the Quad in the Indo-Pacific, and the founding of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework.

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6th SCHEDULE

- The sixth schedule contains provisions related to the Administration of Tribal Areas in the States of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram.
- The Sixth Schedule provides for the administration of certain tribal areas as autonomous entities.
- The provisions of the sixth schedule are provided under Articles 244(2) and 275(1) of the Indian Constitution.
- The tribal areas in the four states of Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, and Mizoram have been constituted as autonomous districts. But, they do not fall outside the executive authority of the state concerned.
- If there are different tribes in an autonomous district, the governor can divide the district into several autonomous regions.
- Each Autonomous District shall have a District Council consisting of not more than

thirty members, out of which four are nominated by the Governor while the rest are elected on the basis of adult franchise.

- The elected members hold office for a term of five years (unless the council is dissolved earlier) and nominated members hold office at the pleasure of the governor.
- Each autonomous region also has a separate regional council.
- The Sixth Schedule has provision for the creation of Autonomous District Councils, and Regional Councils endowed with certain legislative, executive, judicial, and financial powers.
- However, the administrative powers and functions of these District Council and Regional Council differ from State to State.
- One of the most important features of the Sixth Schedule is the empowerment of District Councils to make laws.
- They can make laws on certain specified matters like land, forests, canal water, shifting cultivation, village administration, inheritance of property, marriage, divorce, social customs, and so on.
- The District and Regional Councils are also empowered to constitute Village and District Council Courts for the trial of suits and cases where all parties to the dispute belong to Scheduled Tribes within the district.
- And no other courts except the High Courts and the Supreme Court have jurisdiction over such suits or cases of the Council Courts.

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ASSAM ACCORD

What is Assam Accord?

- The Assam Accord (1985) was a Memorandum of Settlement (MoS) signed

between representatives of the Government of India and the leaders of the Assam Movement in New Delhi on 15 August 1985.

- The accord brought an end to the Assam Agitation and paved the way for the leaders of the agitation to form a political party and form a government in the state of Assam soon after.
- Some of the key demands were All those foreigners who had entered Assam between 1951 and 1961 were to be given full citizenship, including the right to vote.
- Those who had done so after 1971 were to be deported; the entrants between 1961 and 1971 were to be denied voting rights for ten years but would enjoy all other rights of citizenship.
- A parallel package for the economic development of Assam, including a second oil refinery, a paper mill, and an institute of technology, was also worked out.
- The central government also promised to provide 'legislative and administrative safeguards to protect the cultural, social, and linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.

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