

India Abstains From Voting On Resolution On Islamophobia

Why In News

- India abstained in the U.N. General Assembly on a draft resolution introduced by **Pakistan and co-sponsored by China on Islamophobia**, asserting that the prevalence of “religiophobia” against Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and other faiths facing violence and discrimination must also be acknowledged rather than singling out just one religion.



What Is Islamophobia

- **Islamophobia is an extreme fear of and hostility toward** Islam and Muslims which often leads to hate speech, hate crimes, as well as social and political discrimination. It can be used to rationalize policies such as mass surveillance, incarceration (imprisonment), and disenfranchisement, and can influence domestic and foreign policy.
- **Islamophobia is a fear, prejudice and hatred of Muslims that leads to** provocation, hostility and intolerance by means of threatening, harassment, abuse, incitement and intimidation of Muslims and non-Muslims, both in the online and offline world.



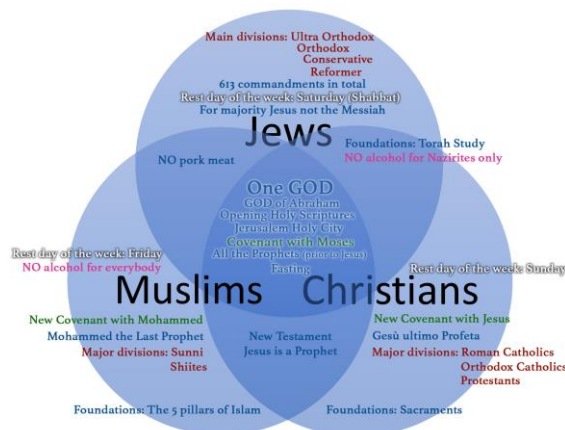
- Motivated by **institutional, ideological, political and religious hostility** that transcends into structural and cultural racism, it targets the symbols and markers of being a Muslim.
- This **definition emphasises the link between institutional levels** of Islamophobia and manifestations of such attitudes, triggered by the visibility of the victim's perceived Muslim identity. This approach also interprets Islamophobia as a form of racism, whereby Islamic religion, tradition and culture are seen as a 'threat' to the Western values.
- Some experts prefer the label '**anti-Muslim hatred,**' fearing that the term 'Islamophobia' risks condemning all critiques of Islam and, therefore, could stifle freedom of expression. But international human rights law protects individuals, not religions. And Islamophobia may also affect non-Muslims, based on perceptions of nationality, racial or ethnic background.

All You Need To Know

- The **193-member General Assembly** adopted the resolution 'Measures to combat Islamophobia', introduced by Pakistan on Friday, with 115 nations voting in favour, none against and 44 abstentions, including India, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Ukraine and the UK.
- **India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador** Ruchira Kamboj voiced condemnation of all acts motivated by anti-Semitism, Christianophobia and Islamophobia but asserted that it is crucial to acknowledge that such phobias extend beyond Abrahamic religions.



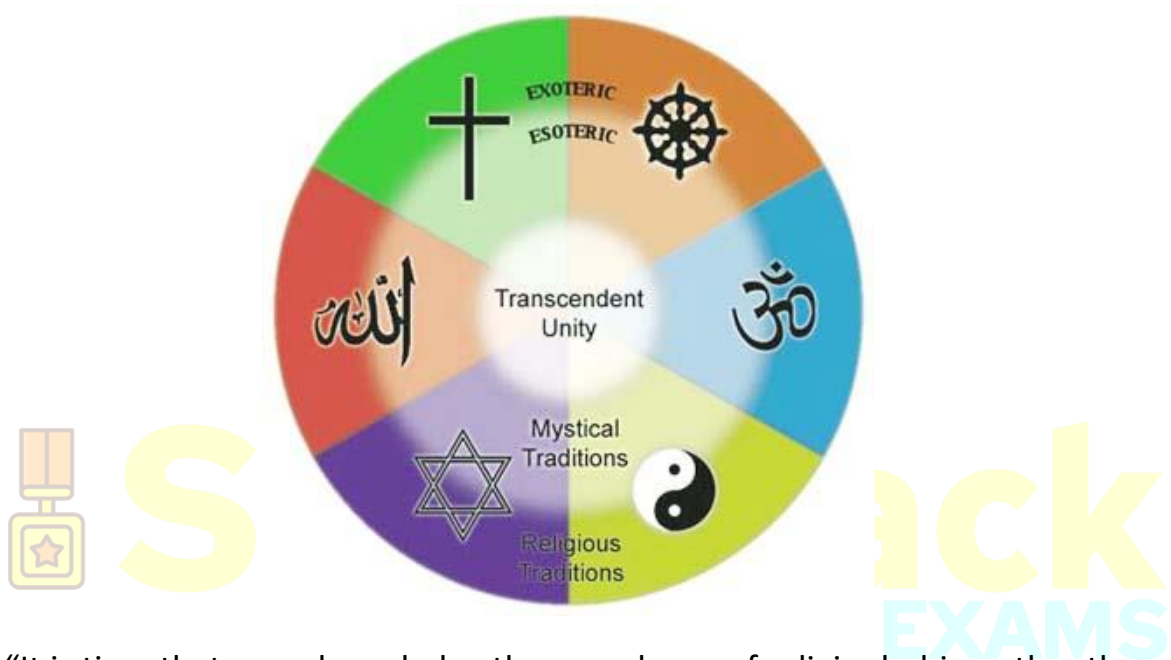
- Kamboj delivered a statement in explanation of India abstaining from a resolution introduced by Pakistan to combat Islamophobia, which was adopted by the **UNGA, with 15 nations voting in favour**, none against and 44 abstentions, including India, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, Ukraine and the UK.
- Kamboj highlighted that the **prevalence of "religiophobia" against Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and other faiths** facing violence and discrimination must also be acknowledged rather than singling out only one religion. She condemned all acts motivated by **anti-Semitism, Christianophobia and Islamophobia**, but asserted that it was crucial to understand that such discrimination extended beyond Abrahamic religions.



- “Clear evidence shows that over decades, followers of non-Abrahamic religions have also been affected by religiophobia. This has led to the emergence of contemporary forms of religiophobia, particularly anti-Hindu, anti-Buddhist and

anti-Sikh sentiments,” she said, in an explanation of India’s position on the resolution.

- The Indian Ambassador to the UN highlighted that it was crucial to recognise **that Hinduism, with more than 1.2 billion followers, Buddhism with over 535 million and Sikhism with over 30 million** followers are all subject to religiophobia, as evident in the increasing attacks on places of worship such as gurudwaras, monasteries and temples.



- “It is time that we acknowledge the prevalence of religiophobia, rather than single out just one,” she said.
- Kamboj said the **contemporary forms of religiophobia** are evident in the increasing attacks on religious places of worship such as gurudwaras, monasteries and temples, as well as the spreading of hatred and disinformation against non-Abrahamic religions in many countries.



- **The General Assembly adopted a resolution in 2022** proclaiming March 15 as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia in the wake of the 2019 mass shootings in two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand that had killed over 50 people.
- In his remarks to mark the day, Guterres said that around the world, there is a rising tide of anti-Muslim hate and bigotry in many forms such as structural and systemic discrimination, unequal immigration policies, unwarranted surveillance and profiling and restrictions in accessing citizenship, education, employment and justice.

