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INDIA BEGINS UNSC TENURE



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INDIA BEGINS UNSC TENURE

INTRODUCTION

With the start of the New Year, India officially began its two-year term as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council. The country's flag will be installed at the UNSC stakeout on Monday, which is the first working day of 2021. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T S Tirumurti will install the tricolor. He is also expected to make brief remarks at the special ceremony. India will sit in the 15-nation United Nations Security Council for the 2021-22 term as a non-permanent member. This is the eighth time that the country has had a seat on the powerful horseshoe table. Later, in August this year India will be the UNSC President, and will preside over the Council again for a month in 2022. On this edition of The Big Picture, we will discuss India's two-year term at the UNSC and its priorities during its membership.

EDITED EXCERPTS FROM THE DEBATE



What are going to be India's priorities in two-year term forward?

- Counter terrorism: India's main priority during its membership will be counter-terrorism. India will strive to achieve a "concrete and result-oriented action at the security council for an effective response to international terrorism,"
- More transparency in listing and de-listing of individuals by UN sanction committee: India is also expected to call for more transparency in listing and delisting of entities and individuals by the UN sanction committees. Getting permanent membership in an expanded council is also high up on the agenda.

- Peacekeeping: India will push for a comprehensive approach to peace and security, guided by dialogue, mutual respect, commitment to international law, for which we also hope to help streamline UN Peacekeeping.

- India is the fourth-highest troop-contributing country at the United Nations.
- A total 6,700 Indian troops are deployed in UN peacekeeping currently and over 200,000 Indians have served in several such UN missions since 1948.
- As many as 160 Indians have lost their lives serving under the UN flag.
- In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women contingent to a UN peacekeeping mission.

- Women and youth and developmental issues, especially in the context of peace-building
- Maritime security: Maritime security will be a major focus area for India.
- Reformed multilateralism: Reform of the Security Council would be another part of India's agenda, which basically favours a multilateral system. India needs to go beyond the 1940s multilateral architecture and provide for greater representation of developing countries.
- Technology for the people: Lastly, India will be promoting technology with a human touch as a driver of solutions.



What is going to be different this time?

- India will sit in the 15-nation United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for the 2021-22 term as a non-permanent member - the eighth time that the country has had a seat on the powerful horseshoe table.
- However, this time, things will be different. The global environment has changed so dramatically. Today, multilateralism is under stress.
- 2020 has witnessed a marked shift in the geopolitical tides marked by an intense and persisting trade war between the United States and China.
- Sino-Indian relations have also soured over the last six months following a bloody clash between Chinese and Indian forces at Galwan Valley in mid-June.
- This will be a critical occasion for India to take initiatives whether it will be on the Indo-Pacific region or it is about addressing terrorist threats.



What values India will hold at UNSC?

- India comes into the Security Council as the largest democracy representing 1/6th of humanity and with a strong commitment to reformed multilateralism, rule of law, a fair and equitable international system and to peace, security and development.
- From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, the country stands united as one, bound by its ethos of democracy, pluralism and commitment to fundamental rights.
- In UNSC, India's approach will be guided by **5s**:
 - ▶ **Samman (respect)**

- ▶ *Samvad (dialogue)*
- ▶ *Sahyog (cooperation)*
- ▶ *Shanty (peace)*
- ▶ *Samriddhi (prosperity)*



Will India become a permanent member?

- With these values in mind, India vows to emerge as a mediating force as frictions between world powers emerge.
- Whenever India takes a seat at the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), there is excitement about the possibility of it translating into permanent membership.
- When holding one of the rotating seats, it is a sensible ambition to make the case, through diplomatic accomplishments, for being a permanent member.
- But expanding SC is a tortuous process. At present, the window of opportunity for SC reform is closed.
- Not one of the Permanent Five (P5) members is interested in its expansion.
- After a year of battling with nature, much of the world sees multilateral responses to climate and health as the heart of UN reform and SC expansion as a quixotic quest.

CONCLUSION

The UNSC tenure is a good moment for India to intensify India's engagement on peace and security issues at bilateral, regional and global levels. India has plenty of room to lead from the front and strengthen its case to grab permanent membership.

VALUE ADDITION

The UNSC structure

- The UN Security Council is one of the six main organs of the UN, and is primarily responsible for maintaining international peace and security.
- The other five organs of the UN are
 - ▶ the General Assembly
 - ▶ the Economic and Social Council
 - ▶ the Trusteeship Council
 - ▶ the International Court of Justice
 - ▶ the Secretariat
- The UNSC held its first session on 17 January 1946 in Westminster, London. Since then, the main headquarters for the council has been in New York City at the UN Headquarters.
- The UN Security Council has five permanent members – **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**

- Ten non-permanent members are elected by the General Assembly for a term of two years.
- **Seat allocation:** There are:
 - ▶ five seats for African and Asian countries
 - ▶ one for Eastern European countries
 - ▶ two for Latin America and the Caribbean
 - ▶ two for Western Europe and other countries

What are the powers of permanent and non-permanent members?

■ Permanent members

- The permanent members of the UNSC have a veto power. This veto allows any of these five countries to block the adoption of a resolution.
- However, they cannot end or prevent a debate through this power.

■ Non- Permanent members

- Unlike permanent members of the council, the non-permanent members do not have veto power.
- However, they have “**collective right of veto**” — any resolution of the UNSC has to be passed by at least seven non-permanent members even if all the permanent members support it.
- Every member-country of the council, including the non-permanent members, also assumes the presidency of the council every month.
- The presidency is determined in an alphabetical order.
- This allows them to decide the content and theme of the debates, which can draw attention to important issues for each member country with respect to international peace and security.

India's tenure

- India will be UNSC President in August 2021 and will preside over the council again for a month in 2022.
- Besides India, Norway, Kenya, Ireland and Mexico will also join **non-permanent members** Estonia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia and Vietnam and the five permanent members China, France, Russia, UK and the US.

- India won the eighth term in an election last June securing 184 of the 192 votes cast. It was last on the council in a two-year term ending 2012.
- Its previous terms were **1950-1951, 1967-1968, 1972-1973, 1977-1978, 1984-1985 and 1991-1992.**

Which Committees will be chaired by India?

- **Taliban Sanctions Committee:** Also called the 1988 Sanctions Committee, it has always been a high priority for India.
 - ▶ Chairing this Committee at this juncture will help keep the focus on the presence of terrorists and their sponsors, threatening the peace process in Afghanistan.

- **Libya Sanctions Committee:** The Committee is a very important subsidiary body of the council, which implements the sanctions regime, including a two-way arms embargo on Libya, an assets freeze, a travel ban, measures on illicit export of petroleum.
 - ▶ India will be assuming the Chair of this Committee at a critical juncture when there is an international focus on Libya and on their peace process.
- **Counterterrorism Committee:** India will also chair the Counterterrorism Committee in **2022**, which coincides with the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence.
 - ▶ It was formed in September 2001 soon after the tragic terrorist attack of 9/11 in New York.
 - ▶ India had chaired this committee in the Security Council in 2011-12

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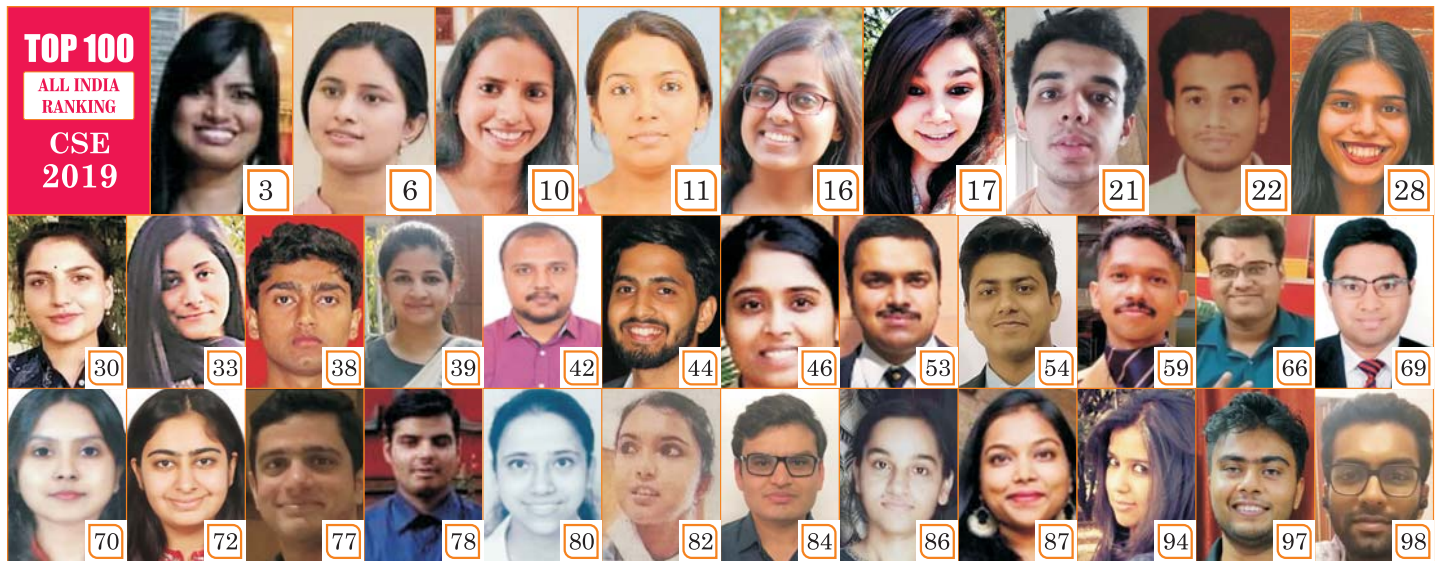
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