

India's Role as UNSC Non-Permanent Member

What is the issue?

- India recently won the unanimous support of all countries in the 55-member Asia-Pacific Group at the UN in support of its bid for a [non-permanent seat](#) at the UNSC for a 2-year term in 2021-22.
- India must leverage this latest opportunity to project itself as a responsible nation.

How has India's presence in the UNSC been?

- India's representation in the UNSC has become rarer.
- India has already held a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for 7 terms.
- In total, India has been in the UNSC for 14 years.
- This represents roughly a fifth of the time the United Nations (UN) has existed.
- India is to re-enter the Council now, after a gap of 10 year (the previous time, in 2011-12, followed a gap of 20 years).
- This is significant given the geopolitical developments in the Asian region and the world.

How disturbed is the Asian region?

- India finds itself in a troubled region between West and East Asia.
- This region is highly disturbed with insurgencies, terrorism, human and narcotics trafficking, and great power rivalries.
- The Gulf is in turmoil.
- Though the [IS has been defeated](#), Iraq and Syria are not going to be the same as before.
- Surviving and dispersed IS foot soldiers are likely preparing new adventures, many in their countries of origin.
- The turbulence in West Asia is echoed in North and South Asia as well. E.g. -
 - i. the nuclear and missile tests by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea
 - ii. Afghanistan's slow but unmistakable separation from the support provided to groups such as the Haqqani network, the Taliban, and al-Qaeda
- Other problems in Asia include -

- i. the strategic mistrust or misperception
- ii. the unresolved borders and territorial disputes
- iii. the absence of a pan-Asia security architecture
- iv. the competition over energy and strategic minerals

How is the world order changing?

- The western world is now consumed by primitive, almost tribal instincts.
- It is disregarding the universal values it once espoused as western values.
- The western world is currently grappling with the rise of new nationalism.
- The kind and supportive international system that followed the Cold War has all but disappeared.
- At the beginning of this century, the words 'national interest' had acquired almost a negative connotation.
- They are now back in currency.
- Fear, populism, polarisation, and ultra-nationalism have become the basis of politics in many countries.

How has the UN role been?

- Despite the above, the world is in a better place today than when the UN was first established.
- The record on maintaining international peace and security, one of the prime functions of the UNSC, has been positive.
- However, the world has been distracted from its other shared goals, especially international social and economic cooperation.
- Although coordination between 193 sovereign member nations will be difficult, it is well worth trying.
- The permanent members (P-5) as also other UN members must consider this to reform the UN Security Council.

What should India's priorities be?

- India's growing importance in the global stage due to its consistent economic performance is largely unrecognised by the great powers and other countries.
- So, India should once again become a consensus-builder, instead of being detached as it has become to be.
- India's singular objective as a non-permanent member should be to help build a stable and secure external environment.
- In doing so, India will promote its own people's prosperity, regional and global security and growth, and a rule-based world order.
- It could emerge a partner of choice for developing and developed countries

alike.

- There is a deficit of international leadership on global issues, especially on security, migrant movement, poverty, and climate change.
- Given this, India has an opportunity to promote well-balanced, common solutions.

What is the way forward?

- **Rules-based global order** - As a member of the UNSC, India must help guide the Council away from the threat of invoking the principles of humanitarian interventionism or 'Responsibility to Protect'.
- There is a fragile and complex international system, which can become even more unpredictable and conflict-ridden.
- So, India should work towards a rules-based global order.
- Sustainable development and promoting peoples' welfare should become its new drivers.
- **Terrorism** - Multilateral action by the UNSC against terrorism and terrorists has not been possible because of narrowly defined national interest.
- India should push to ensure that the UNSC Sanctions Committee targets all those individuals and entities warranting sanctions.
- **Cooperation** - India has good relations with almost all the great powers.
- Given this, India must lead the way by pursuing inclusion, the rule of law, constitutionalism, and rational internationalism.
- A harmonized response is crucial for dealing with global problems of climate change, disarmament, terrorism, trade, and development.

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