India to UNSC: A Diplomatic Victory

Why in news?

India's election to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as a non-permanent member is a significant diplomatic victory for the country.

What is the UNSC?

- The United Nations Charter established six main organs of the United Nations, including the Security Council.
- It gives primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security to the UNSC, which may meet whenever peace is threatened.
- It has **15 members**, and each Member has **one vote**.
- Out of the 15 members, 5 are permanent and 10 are non-permanent members with 2-year tenure.
- Only the UNSC has the power to make decisions that member states are then obligated to implement under the Charter.
- It dispatches military operations, imposes sanctions, mandates arms inspections, deploys election monitors, etc.

Why is this election seen as a victory?

- India has long been pushing for reforms at global institutions.
- The victory was not unexpected as India was the only contestant for the Asia Pacific seat.
- In the UN General Assembly, the election would be done by secret ballot where India needed two-thirds of the votes for victory.
- India secured the seat with 184 votes in the 193-strong UNGA.

What are the other countries that were elected?

- Mexico, Norway and Ireland were also elected as non-permanent members.
- Mexico won the Latin American seat uncontested.
- But, Norway and Ireland emerged victorious from a three-way contest for the Western Europe and Others Group seat.
- Neither Kenya nor Djibouti, which were contesting the seat from Africa, won a two-thirds majority. They will face another vote.

How did India seek support?

- India sought the support of member countries by highlighting its commitment to **multilateralism and reforms**.
- Ahead of the vote, India had launched a campaign brochure which,
    1. Highlighted India's demand for transparency in mandates for UN peacekeeping missions and push for the India-led Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism,
    2. Called for joint efforts for UN reform and expansion of the UNSC

What would be India's objective?

- New orientation for a reformed multilateral system (NORMS) would be India's overall objective during its tenure that will begin next year.
- NORMS was laid out by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.
- Achieving this would depend on how India will conduct diplomacy in the global body, build alliances and raise issues that go beyond the interests of the big five.

What is the impact of the pandemic on the geopolitics?

- India has long been of the view that the structure of the UNSC does not reflect the realities of the 21st century.
- It has got increasing support from member countries for its push for reforms.
- But the five permanent members of the UNSC have resisted it.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has already shaken up the global order and sharpened the rivalry between the U.S. and China.
- It has also opened up fresh debates on strengthening multilateralism and multilateral institutions.
- In this context, the challenges before India are many.

What should India do?

- The UNSC is one of the most important multilateral decision-making bodies where the contours of global geopolitics are often drawn.
- India should avoid the temptation of taking sides at a time when the UNSC is getting more and more polarised.
- India should adopt value-based positions that are not transactional.
- India should aspire for the leadership of the non-permanent members of the Council and be the voice of the weaker nations.

Source: The Hindu



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