India's non-permanent seat at UNSC

Why in news?

India has been backed by 54 nations of Asia-Pacific Group for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) non-permanent seat.

How are countries elected?

- Each year, the **General Assembly elects** five non-permanent members out of a total of 10, for a two-year term.
- These **10 seats** are distributed among the regions thus:
    1. 5 for African and Asian countries (3 are for Africa and 2 for Asia);
    2. 1 for Eastern European countries;
    3. 2 for Latin American and Caribbean countries;
    4. 2 for Western European and other countries.
- The Africa and Asia Pacific group takes turns every two years to put up an **Arab** candidate based upon an informal understanding.
- Terms beginning in **even-numbered years** select 2 African members, and one each within Eastern Europe, Asia-Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Terms beginning in **odd-numbered years** consist of 2 Western European and Other members, and one each from Asia-Pacific, Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean.
- Irrespective of whether a country is a “clean slate” candidate and has been endorsed by its group, it needs to **secure the votes of two-thirds of the members** present and voting at the General Assembly session.
- **Formal balloting** takes place at elections to all the main UN bodies.
- The 55-member Asia-Pacific Group gets to nominate one of its members for the June 2020 elections to a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for two- year term of 2021-2022.
- India has been nominated for this term.
- India has already held a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for **seven terms**.

How are countries elected among Asian contestants?

- There is no formalised a system of rotation of seats as per the region, as followed in Africa.
- The Asia-Pacific grouping often seen contests. Last year, there was a contest

between Maldives and Indonesia.
- When contested, the elections for non-permanent seats can be fraught and can go on for several rounds. In 1975 and 1996, India lost the contest to Pakistan and Japan respectively.

What is the significance?

- The development is significant as **Pakistan and China**, with which India has had diplomatic challenges at the UN, supported the move.
- This endorsement means that India has a **"clean slate" candidature** i.e. there is no other contestant from the group for the elections.

Why is India keen to hold the seat?

- India has been keen because it wants it to coincide with the **75th anniversary of Independence in 2022**.
- It will also be hosting the **G-20 meeting** in New Delhi in that year.

Source: The Hindu, The Indian Express

Quick facts

United Nations Security Council (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 Security Council, which may meet whenever peace is threatened.
- It has **15 Members**, and each Member has **one vote**.
    1. Permanent members - 5 countries
    2. Non-Permanent members - 10 elected members - 2-year terms.
- 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.

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