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.

Source: The Hindu

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