India is a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC

Part of: GS-II- UN General Assembly (PT-MAINS-PERSONALITY TEST)

UN General Assembly President Tijjani Muhammad-Bande has discussed options, including online voting, to conduct elections for five non-permanent members of the Security Council in June, as large in-person meetings at the world body stand postponed till at least end of June due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Important Points

- The 193-member General Assembly is scheduled to hold elections in June for five non-permanent members of the Security Council, members of the Economic and Social Council, the president of the 75th session of the General Assembly and the vice presidents of the 75th session.
- India is a candidate for a non-permanent seat in the UNSC elections this year and its victory is almost certain following the unanimous endorsement of its candidature by the 55-member Asia-Pacific grouping, including China and Pakistan.
- Elections for the five non-permanent members of the 15-nation Council for the 2021-22 terms were scheduled for June 17.
- Canada, Ireland and Norway are eying for two seats in the Western Europe and Other countries category. Mexico is the only candidate for the one Latin America and Caribbean seat and Kenya and Djibouti will contest the seat available for the African group.

Election criteria and procedure

Each year the General Assembly elects five non-permanent members (out of 10 in total) for a two-year term. The 10 non-permanent seats are distributed on a regional basis five for African and Asian States; one for Eastern European States; two for the Latin American and Caribbean States; and two for Western European and other States. The election is held by secret ballot.

The General Assembly is not holding meetings in person as UN staff and diplomats telecommute due to the pandemic. Resolutions are being adopted by the UN body through a silence procedure, under which if no member state raises any objections to the draft within a specified time period, the President of the General Assembly will circulate a letter confirming adoption of the text.

Past News

India has appointed T S Tirumurti as its Permanent Representative to the United Nations (UN).

- Permanent Mission to the United Nations
  - It is the diplomatic mission that every member state deputes to the UN.
  - It is headed by a Permanent Representative who is also referred to as the UN ambassador.
  - According to Article 1(7) of the Vienna Convention on the Representation of
States in their Relations with International Organizations of a Universal Character, 1975

It is a mission of permanent character, representing the State, sent by a State member of an international organization to the organization.

- Other important Vienna Conventions are the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961 and the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations of 1963.
  - According to the UN General Assembly resolution 257(III) of 3rd December, 1948, permanent missions assist in the realization of the purposes and principles of the UN.
  - They keep the necessary liaison between the Member States and the Secretariat in periods between sessions of the different organs of the UN.
  - UN Permanent Representatives are assigned to the UN headquarters in New York City, and at other offices in Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi as well.

Indian Permanent Mission at the United Nations

- There are currently eight Indians in senior leadership positions at the UN at the levels of Under Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General.
- The first Indian delegates at the UN included statesman Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar and freedom fighters Hansa Mehta, Lakshmi N. Menon and Vijayalakshmi Pandit
  - Mehta and Pandit were among the 15 women members of the Indian Constituent Assembly.
  - India was among the select members of the UN that signed the United Nations Declaration at Washington on 1st January, 1942.
  - India also participated in the historic UN Conference of International Organization at San Francisco from 25th April to 26th June, 1945.
  - As a founding member of the United Nations, India strongly supports the purposes and principles of the UN and has made significant contributions to implementing the goals of the Charter, and the evolution of the UN's specialized programmes and agencies.

Arcot Ramasamy Mudaliar (1887-1976)

- One of the prominent lawyers of his time and joined the Justice Party in 1917.
- Took part in Joint Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional Reforms in India and the Round Table Conferences.
- He was India’s delegate to the San Francisco Conference.
- In 1946 he was elected the first President of the United Nations’ Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- He also served as the chair of the executive boards of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Hansa Mehta (1897-1995)

- After studying Journalism and Sociology from England, she returned to India and served as the President of the Bhagini Samaj and played a crucial role during the campaign against the Simon Commission.
- She was the first woman to be elected to the Bombay Legislative Council in 1931.
- She represented India on the Nuclear Sub-Committee on the status of women in 1946.
As the Indian delegate on the UN Human Rights Commission (now known as the UN Human Rights Council) in 1947–48, she was responsible for changing the language Justice Party of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights from “all men are created equal” to “all human beings”, highlighting the need for gender equality.

Lakshmi Menon (1899-1994)

- She was one of the founder members of the All India Women’s Conference.
- She was India’s delegate to the Third Committee in 1948 and argued forcefully in favour of non-discrimination based on sex and “the equal rights of men and women” in the in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- In 1949-1950, she headed the UN Section on the Status of Women and Children.

Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit (1900-1990)

- She led the Indian delegation to the UN (1946-48 and 1952-53).
- In 1953, she became the first woman to be elected president of the UN General Assembly.
- In 1978, she was appointed the Indian representative to the UN Human Rights Commission.