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"Reforming the UNSC: India's Path to Permanent Membership"

This article covers "Daily Current Affairs" and topic details of the UNSC reforms.

Syllabus mapping:

GS-2: International Relations: International Organizations and its mandate.

For Prelims:

What are the annual summits of the UN, Credential Committee, UNSC, and its mandate?

For Mains:

What is the mandate of various UN organs and its present working, challenges, and way forward?

Why in the News?

UK PM Keir Starmer backs India's bid for permanent UNSC seat, joining US and France: 'Security Council has to change...'



United Nations Security Council (UNSC)

- **Established:** Founded in 1945 as part of the UN Charter, the UNSC is the UN's most powerful organ.
- **Composition:** Comprises 15 members—5 permanent (P5) and 10 non-permanent members.
- **Permanent Members:** The P5 includes the United States, United Kingdom, France, Russia, and China, each holding veto power over substantive resolutions.
- **Non-Permanent Members:** Elected for two-year terms, five non-permanent members rotate off annually, with elections conducted by the General Assembly.
- **Primary Responsibilities:** The UNSC maintains international peace and security, investigates conflicts, and authorizes peacekeeping missions.
- **Resolutions:** UNSC resolutions are binding on member states and capable of imposing sanctions or authorizing the use of force.
- **Veto Power:** The P5's veto power can lead to political gridlock and significant implications for decision-making.
- **Meetings:** The UNSC meets regularly; decisions require a majority of present members, except for those needing a veto.
- **Peacekeeping Operations:** The UNSC authorizes peacekeeping missions, typically led by the Department of Peace Operations.



Demand for UNSC Reforms: Key Reasons

Post-Dated Cheque: The UNSC is often seen as outdated, reflecting a world order that no longer aligns with current geopolitical realities.

Growing Conflicts: Ongoing conflicts, such as those between Israel and Palestine, highlight the Council's inability to effectively mediate and resolve crises.

Ukraine-Russia Conflict: The UNSC's paralysis during the Ukraine-Russia conflict underscores its limitations in addressing contemporary security threats.

Vested Interests of P5 Members: The permanent members (P5) often prioritize their national interests over global security, impeding impartial decision-making.

Intra-Council Divisions: Significant divisions between blocs, particularly between Russia and the US-led West, hinder cohesive action on critical issues.

Exclusion of Africa and Latin America: The current structure marginalizes voices from Africa and Latin America, which are underrepresented in discussions affecting global peace.

Overrepresentation of the EU: The disproportionate representation of European nations in the UNSC fails to reflect the diversity of global perspectives and interests.

Failure to Address Emerging Threats: The UNSC has struggled to respond effectively to non-traditional security threats, such as climate change and terrorism.

Inconsistent Peacekeeping Efforts: The Council's inconsistent approach to authorizing peacekeeping missions raises questions about its commitment to global security.

Public Discontent: Growing public awareness and dissatisfaction with the UNSC's effectiveness have led to calls for reform from various nations and civil society groups.

Need for Greater Accountability: Current members of the UNSC often evade accountability for their actions, highlighting the need for a more transparent decision-making process.

Changing Global Power Dynamics: The rise of new powers, particularly in Asia and Africa, necessitates a reevaluation of the UNSC's composition to include these emerging voices.

Support for India's Claim for Permanent UNSC Membership

1. **Largest Democracy:** India is the world's most populous democracy, embodying the values of a rule-based democratic nation that upholds human rights and governance.
2. **Major Contributor to UN Peacekeeping Forces:** India is the second-largest contributor to UN peacekeeping missions, demonstrating its commitment to global peace and stability.
3. **Growing Economy:** As one of the fastest-growing major economies, India's economic influence positions it as a key player in global development and trade.
4. **Military Power:** India boasts the third-largest military in the world, contributing to regional and global security.
5. **Leader of the Global South:** India plays a vital role in representing the interests of developing countries, advocating for their concerns on international platforms.
6. **International Initiatives:** India leads several significant global initiatives, such as the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), showcasing its commitment to sustainable development.
7. **Vocal for a Rules-Based Order:** India consistently advocates for a rules-based international order, promoting peace and stability through multilateral cooperation.
8. **Transparent Nuclear Policy:** India maintains an open and transparent nuclear policy, contributing to regional security and global non-proliferation efforts.
9. **Adherence to International Law:** India has a strong track record of adhering to international laws and norms, reflecting its commitment to a fair and just global system.
10. **Diverse and Inclusive Society:** As a multicultural nation, India exemplifies inclusivity and respect for diverse viewpoints, enriching global dialogue and cooperation.

Challenges to India's UNSC Membership and UNSC Reforms

1. **Rough Attitude of P5 Members:** The existing permanent members often exhibit reluctance to accept new members, prioritizing their own interests over a more representative Council.
2. **Opposition from Pakistan:** Pakistan actively opposes India's bid for permanent membership, leveraging its influence to rally support against India within various international forums.
3. **Coalitions Against Consensus:** Groups of nations often unite to block reforms, creating obstacles to India's ambitions and broader UNSC restructuring.
4. **Lower Contribution to UN Funds:** India's relatively lower financial contributions to the UN compared to some other nations may be seen as a liability in its bid for membership.

5. **Ambiguous Foreign Policy:** India's perceived ambiguity on certain international issues can raise concerns about its reliability as a UNSC member.
6. **Questions of Responsibility:** Critics, including some like CR Mohan, question whether India is ready to assume the larger responsibilities that come with permanent membership.
7. **Domestic Policy Challenges:** The rise of majoritarianism in India's domestic policies may lead to apprehensions among other nations regarding its commitment to international norms.
8. **Diverse Internal Challenges:** India faces various internal challenges, including socio-economic disparities and regional tensions, which may affect its foreign policy stability.
9. **China as a Main Opponent:** China remains one of the principal opponents of India's UNSC membership, seeking to maintain its own regional influence and counterbalance India's rise.
10. **Non-Cooperation from Many Countries:** Several nations are either indifferent to or actively resist the push for UNSC reforms, complicating India's aspirations for membership.

Way Forward for UNSC Reform and India's Membership Bid

1. **Consensus Among Potential Members:** Building a united front among potential new members, such as India, Germany, and Argentina, is crucial for strengthening collective bargaining power in reform discussions.
2. **Evaluation of Membership Bids:** Monitoring and adapting to the evolving bids of these potential members can help create a strategic framework for effective advocacy.
3. **Passing a UNGA Resolution:** Advocating for a resolution in the UN General Assembly that outlines specific reforms to the UNSC can catalyze change and attract broader support.
4. **Non-Veto Permanent Members:** Establishing a category of non-veto permanent members can help balance power dynamics and increase the Council's legitimacy.
5. **Increased Contributions from Members:** Encouraging greater financial and military contributions from potential members will enhance their claims to membership and strengthen the UNSC's capabilities.
6. **Support for Conflict Resolution:** Shifting the focus from a block mentality to collaborative problem-solving can foster a more productive environment within the UNSC.
7. **Ceding Absolute Power by P5 Members:** Acknowledging the need for shared power and responsibilities among all members can lead to a more equitable decision-making process.
8. **Prioritizing Africa and Latin America:** Ensuring that Africa and Latin America receive adequate representation in the UNSC is vital for addressing the concerns of the Global South.
9. **Enhancing Transparency and Accountability:** Improving the decision-making processes of the UNSC can increase its credibility and make it more responsive to global challenges.
10. **Engaging Civil Society and Public Opinion:** Involving civil society organizations and public opinion can create pressure for reform and highlight the need for a more representative UNSC.



Conclusion:

As the world's third-largest military power and a nation representing 1.4 billion voices, India's presence in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is not just desirable; it is essential. With India being the second-largest contributor to UN peacekeeping forces, its involvement in the UNSC would ensure that the diverse perspectives of its populace are reflected in global decision-making.

Prelims Question:

Q. With reference to the United Nations Credential Committee (UNSCC) Consider the following statement:

1. The UNSCC is appointed for regular and emergency sessions by the UNSC.
2. The UNCC checks the credentials of the representatives of the UN members representing at the session.
3. The UNCC must include one of the permanent members of the UNSC in its 9 members.

How many of the above-given statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

ANSWER: A

Mains Question:

India's claim for permanent membership at The UNSC is full of challenges and opportunities. Explain in context the growing support for India's permanent membership.

(Answer in 250 words)

[Munde Dhananjay Navnath](#)

INDIA AND UZBEKISTAN SIGN BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY

SYLLABUS MAPPING:

GS-2-International relations-India and Uzbekistan Sign Bilateral Investment Treaty

FOR PRELIMS:

Analyze the potential impact of the BIT on sectors such as trade, infrastructure, and technology cooperation between India and Uzbekistan.

FOR MAINS:

Explain the key objectives of the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) signed between India and Uzbekistan. How does it aim to enhance economic cooperation between the two nations?

RECENT CONTEXT:

The recent signing of the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between India and Uzbekistan marks a significant development in the realm of international trade and investment, particularly in the context of India's growing engagement with Central Asia. This agreement, designed to promote and protect investments, comes at a time when both nations are looking to bolster their economic ties in a rapidly changing geopolitical landscape. As global economic dynamics shift, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and rising geopolitical tensions, such treaties are pivotal for fostering stability and growth.

WHY THIS TREATY MATTERS NOW:

The timing of the BIT is crucial given the current global economic climate. Many countries are looking to recover from the pandemic, which has disrupted supply chains and economic stability. As nations seek to diversify their economic partnerships, India's push into Central Asia aligns with its broader strategic objectives. Uzbekistan, on the other hand, has been undergoing significant economic reforms aimed at liberalizing its economy and attracting foreign investment. This treaty not only formalizes the commitment of both nations to enhance trade relations but also positions them as potential partners in a region that is often overshadowed by other geopolitical interests.

INDIA AND UZBEKISTAN SIGN BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY:

The Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) signed between India and Uzbekistan is an agreement aimed at promoting and protecting investments made by investors from both countries. The treaty establishes a legal framework to ensure that investments are safeguarded against various risks, providing assurance to investors regarding the stability and security of their investments.

OBJECTIVES OF THE BILATERAL INVESTMENT TREATY:

- 1. Investment Protection:** The treaty aims to protect investments from expropriation, discrimination, and unfair treatment, ensuring that investors can operate without undue interference.
- 2. Dispute Resolution:** It includes provisions for resolving investment disputes, often through international arbitration, which enhances investor confidence by providing a clear mechanism for addressing grievances.
- 3. Promotion of Economic Cooperation:** The BIT is designed to encourage bilateral trade and investment flows, facilitating closer economic ties between India and Uzbekistan.
- 4. Sectoral Focus:** It identifies key sectors where both countries can collaborate, such as technology, agriculture, energy, and infrastructure.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVE:

The Indian government has been proactively seeking to strengthen its relations with Central Asian countries through various initiatives. The “Connect Central Asia” policy is one such initiative, aimed at enhancing economic and cultural ties. The BIT is a natural extension of this strategy, reflecting India’s intent to play a more significant role in Central Asia while providing Indian businesses with a framework for secure investments in Uzbekistan.

BILATERAL TRADE AND INVESTMENTS

India is among top 10 trade partner of Uzbekistan with bilateral trade USD 756.60 million (as per Uzbek statistics-2023) is well below potential. The major items of India’s exports are pharmaceutical products, mechanical equipment, vehicle parts, services, frozen buffalo meat, optical instruments and equipment and mobile phones. India’s import from Uzbekistan consists largely of fruit and vegetable products, services, fertilizers, juice products and extracts, and lubricants.

S. No.	Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25 Till June-24
1	Export	423	460.60	654.90	648.50	363.60
2	Import	19.70	29.90	35.60	108.10	50.00
3	Total Trade In \$ Million	442.60	490.50	690.50	756.60	388.50

Total Indian investments in Uzbekistan amount to US\$ 61 million. Notable Indian investments by Indian companies include those in the field of pharmaceuticals, amusement parks, automobile components, and hospitality industry. Investments in various fields, including pharma and healthcare, textiles and auto components, agriculture and food processing, and mining and jewellery sector are in various stages of discussion. Indian company GMR have expressed interest in investment in airports, development of air corridor, Navoi cargo complex in Uzbekistan In October 2019, Amity University and Sharda University have opened campuses in Tashkent and Andijan respectively and Sambhram University in Jizzakh region & Acharya University in Bukhara. India and Uzbekistan have signed a Joint Statement in September 2019 to set up a joint feasibility study for entering into negotiations for a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and Bilateral Investment Treaty is fully negotiated between both countries and is ready for signature.

DEFENCE & SECURITY COOPERATION

India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Uzbekistan in the field of defence. Bilateral defence cooperation is carried out through the Joint working Group format, established in 2019 and the fourth JWG meeting having took place in Uzbekistan in April 2024. India-Uzbekistan military technical cooperation has evolved over time encompassing fields of military training, military education and defence industrial interaction. India & Uzbekistan participate in joint military exercises across the under the title “DUSTLIK”, with the fifth edition held in April 2024 and attended by COAS General Manoj Pande during his visit to Uzbekistan.

CURRENT ISSUES AND CHALLENGES:

1. Implementation Hurdles: While the treaty lays down a framework, the real challenge lies in its execution. Both countries need to establish efficient mechanisms for dispute resolution and enforcement of treaty provisions. Delays in judicial processes or bureaucratic hurdles could undermine investor confidence.

2. Regulatory Environment: Differences in regulatory frameworks between India and Uzbekistan may complicate the investment landscape. Investors often face challenges in understanding local laws, compliance requirements, and navigating the regulatory maze.

3. Political Stability: Uzbekistan's political landscape, although relatively stable, can be unpredictable. Any shifts in government policy or political unrest can affect investment decisions, making it imperative for both countries to maintain a stable environment.

4. Infrastructure Limitations: Despite progress, Uzbekistan still faces challenges related to infrastructure development. Inadequate transportation, energy supply, and logistical support can hinder the establishment and growth of Indian businesses in the country.

5. Cultural and Language Barriers: The differences in culture and language may present obstacles for Indian companies looking to enter the Uzbek market. Understanding local customs and business practices is essential for successful operations.

6. Geopolitical Dynamics: The region is influenced by various geopolitical factors, including the interests of major powers like Russia and China. Navigating these dynamics will be crucial for the success of the BIT and the broader India-Uzbekistan relationship.

WAY FORWARD:

1. Enhancing Diplomatic Engagement: Continuous dialogue between government officials and business leaders can help build trust and address concerns. Regular high-level visits and business forums can facilitate direct communication and collaboration.

2. Capacity Building Initiatives: Both countries should invest in training programs and workshops aimed at equipping investors with knowledge about regulatory frameworks, market conditions, and cultural nuances. Such initiatives can ease the entry of Indian businesses into Uzbekistan.

3. Focus on Key Sectors: Identifying and promoting specific sectors for investment—such as renewable energy, information technology, agriculture, and pharmaceuticals—can yield better outcomes. Joint ventures in these areas can foster innovation and economic growth.

4. Infrastructure Development: Uzbekistan must continue to improve its infrastructure to attract foreign investment. Public-private partnerships can play a vital role in enhancing infrastructure while providing opportunities for Indian companies to engage in significant projects.

5. Regular Monitoring and Evaluation: Establishing mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of the BIT will help identify challenges and areas for improvement. Feedback from investors can provide valuable insights into the implementation process.

6. Public-Private Collaboration: Encouraging collaboration between public entities and private businesses can enhance the effectiveness of projects and create a supportive ecosystem for investment. Joint initiatives can also mitigate risks associated with investment.

CONCLUSION:

The signing of the Bilateral Investment Treaty between India and Uzbekistan represents a significant milestone in the economic relationship between the two nations. In the context of current global challenges and shifting geopolitical dynamics, this treaty offers a framework for cooperation that can benefit both countries.

While the BIT lays the groundwork for increased investment and economic collaboration, realizing its potential will require addressing the challenges that lie ahead. Through strategic engagement, capacity building, and targeted investments, India and Uzbekistan can create a favorable environment for investors, contributing to mutual growth and regional stability.

As both countries navigate the complexities of the modern global economy, the India-Uzbekistan BIT stands as a testament to their commitment to fostering deeper economic ties. The road ahead

may be fraught with challenges, but the opportunities for collaboration and growth are substantial, making this treaty a cornerstone of future bilateral relations in a rapidly evolving world.



PRELIMS QUESTION:

Q. What is the primary objective of the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) signed between India and Uzbekistan?

- A. Promote cultural exchanges
- B. Facilitate military cooperation
- C. Protect and promote investments
- D. Strengthen diplomatic ties

ANSWER: C

MAINS QUESTION:

Q. Analyze the significance of the India-Uzbekistan Bilateral Investment Treaty in the context of India's broader foreign policy towards Central Asia. How does it align with India's strategic interests in the region?

[Ritik singh](#)

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