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India Launchs SHANTI Campaign for 2028–2029 UNSC Seat While Reinforcing Long-Term Push for Permanent Membership

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Recent Developments:

- **External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar** officially launched **SHANTI (Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity)** as India's campaign for a **non-permanent seat** in the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)** for the **2028–2029** term.
- The campaign reflects India's vision of **reformed multilateralism**, a stronger **Voice of the Global South**, future-ready peacekeeping, maritime security, responsible **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** governance and counter-terrorism, while simultaneously reiterating India's long-standing demand for **permanent membership** of the UNSC.

SHANTI Campaign:

About SHANTI:

- **SHANTI** stands for **Securing Holistic Advancement through Norms, Trust and Integrity**.
- The campaign serves as India's diplomatic framework for securing election to the **UNSC** for the **2028–2029** term.
- The initiative projects India as a responsible stakeholder committed to a **rules-based international order**, inclusive multilateralism and peaceful conflict resolution.
- India will contest the **sole Asia-Pacific Group seat** against **Tajikistan** in the **2027** elections for the **2028–2029** term.

Major Priorities under SHANTI:

- Promoting **reformed multilateralism** and comprehensive **UN reforms**.
- Strengthening the **Voice of the Global South** in global governance.
- Enhancing **UN Peacekeeping** through technology-driven and future-ready approaches.
- Advancing **maritime security** and protection of global commons.
- Promoting **human-centric Artificial Intelligence governance**.
- Strengthening international cooperation against **terrorism** and **terror financing**.

India's Quest for Permanent UNSC Membership:

Meaning and Objective:

- India's demand for **permanent membership** seeks to reform the post-1945 global governance architecture to reflect present-day geopolitical, demographic and economic realities.
- Permanent membership would enable India to participate continuously in decisions relating to **international peace and security, sanctions, peacekeeping mandates** and the **authorisation of military action**.

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- India considers permanent representation essential for making the **UNSC** more representative, credible and effective.

United Nations Security Council (UNSC):

Composition:

- The **UNSC** is one of the six principal organs of the **United Nations** entrusted with maintaining international peace and security.
- The Council presently consists of **15 members**, including **5 Permanent Members (P5)** and **10 Non-Permanent Members** elected for **two-year terms**.
- The **Permanent Members (P5)** are **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States**.
- Each **Permanent Member** possesses the **Veto Power**, enabling it to block any substantive resolution irrespective of majority support.

Major Functions:

- Maintaining international peace and security.
- Authorising **peacekeeping operations** and military interventions.
- Imposing economic and diplomatic sanctions.
- Recommending the appointment of the **Secretary-General of the United Nations**.
- Recommending admission of new member states to the **United Nations**.

Evolution of UNSC Reform:

Important Milestones:

- **1945:** The **United Nations Security Council** was established under the **United Nations Charter**, with permanent seats reserved for the victorious powers of the Second World War.
- **1965:** The number of **Non-Permanent Members** increased from **6** to **10**, raising the total Council membership to **15**, while the permanent membership remained unchanged.
- **1993:** The **United Nations General Assembly** established the **Open-ended Working Group** to examine proposals for **UNSC reform**.
- **2005:** **India, Brazil, Germany and Japan** formed the **G4** grouping to jointly advocate expansion of permanent membership.
- **2008:** **Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN)** commenced in the **United Nations General Assembly** to discuss comprehensive **UNSC reforms**.
- Despite decades of negotiations, no amendment to the composition of the **Permanent Members** has yet been adopted.

India's Strengths for Permanent Membership:

Demographic, Economic and Strategic Credentials:

- India represents the **world's most populous country**, accounting for over **18%** of the global population.
- India has emerged as the **world's fourth-largest economy** with sustained long-term growth prospects.
- India possesses significant strategic capabilities as a **nuclear weapon state**, major maritime power and leading Indo-Pacific stakeholder.
- India maintains one of the world's largest diplomatic networks and actively contributes to multilateral institutions.

Peacekeeping and Diplomatic Contributions:

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- India has deployed nearly **300,000 peacekeepers** across around **50 UN Peacekeeping Missions** since **1948**, making it one of the largest cumulative troop contributors.
- India has served **eight terms** as an elected **Non-Permanent Member** of the **UNSC**, most recently during **2021–2022**.
- India has consistently promoted dialogue, consensus-building and peaceful dispute settlement in multilateral forums.

Leadership of the Global South:

- India actively articulates the concerns of developing countries in international institutions.
- India's foreign policy philosophy of **Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** supports inclusive, equitable and cooperative global governance.
- India's leadership in platforms such as the **G20, BRICS, Quad** and the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)** has strengthened its global diplomatic influence.

Major Challenges to India's Permanent Membership:

Institutional Constraints:

- Amendment of **Article 108** of the **United Nations Charter** requires approval by a **two-thirds majority** in the **United Nations General Assembly** and subsequent ratification by all **Permanent Members**, allowing any **P5** country to block reform.

Geopolitical Challenges:

- **China** continues to oppose India's permanent membership, limiting regional consensus within Asia.
- The **Uniting for Consensus (Coffee Club)** group opposes the creation of additional permanent seats and instead favours expansion only in the non-permanent category.
- Existing **Permanent Members** remain reluctant to dilute their exclusive privileges or extend **Veto Power** to new entrants.
- Differences among regional groups regarding suitable representatives from **Asia, Africa** and **Latin America** continue to delay consensus.

Way Forward:

Strengthening India's Diplomatic Strategy:

- India should utilise campaigns such as **SHANTI** to build broad-based support across the **United Nations General Assembly**.
- India should continue advocating **text-based Intergovernmental Negotiations** to accelerate institutional reforms.
- Coordination between the **G4** and the **African Union's Ezulwini Consensus** should be strengthened to secure wider political support.
- India may consider a phased model of **permanent membership without immediate veto powers** as an interim compromise.
- Continued engagement through plurilateral platforms such as the **Quad, BRICS, G20** and the **International Solar Alliance** can further enhance India's diplomatic leverage.

Conclusion:

Need for Comprehensive UNSC Reform:

- India's demographic weight, economic strength, peacekeeping record and responsible global engagement make it a strong candidate for **permanent membership** of the **UNSC**.
- A **United Nations Security Council** that excludes a substantial proportion of the world's population cannot fully reflect contemporary global realities.
- Comprehensive reform of the **UNSC** remains essential for strengthening the legitimacy, representativeness and effectiveness of the multilateral system.

Value Addition for UPSC:

Important Facts for Prelims and Mains:

- **Current UNSC Composition: 5 Permanent Members + 10 Non-Permanent Members = 15 Members.**
- **Permanent Members (P5): China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States.**
- **Article Governing Charter Amendment: Article 108** of the **United Nations Charter**.
- **Election of Non-Permanent Members:** Conducted by the **United Nations General Assembly** for **two-year terms**.
- **India's Previous UNSC Terms: 1950–51, 1967–68, 1972–73, 1977–78, 1984–85, 1991–92, 2011–12, 2021–22.**
- **G4 Members: India, Brazil, Germany and Japan.**
- **Coffee Club (Uniting for Consensus):** Led by **Italy** and supported by countries including **Pakistan**, opposing the expansion of permanent membership.
- **Ezulwini Consensus (2005):** The **African Union's** common position demanding **at least two permanent seats with veto powers** and **five non-permanent seats** for Africa in a reformed **UNSC**.
- **India's Constitutional Principle in Global Governance: Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam** and commitment to **reformed multilateralism** remain central pillars of India's foreign policy