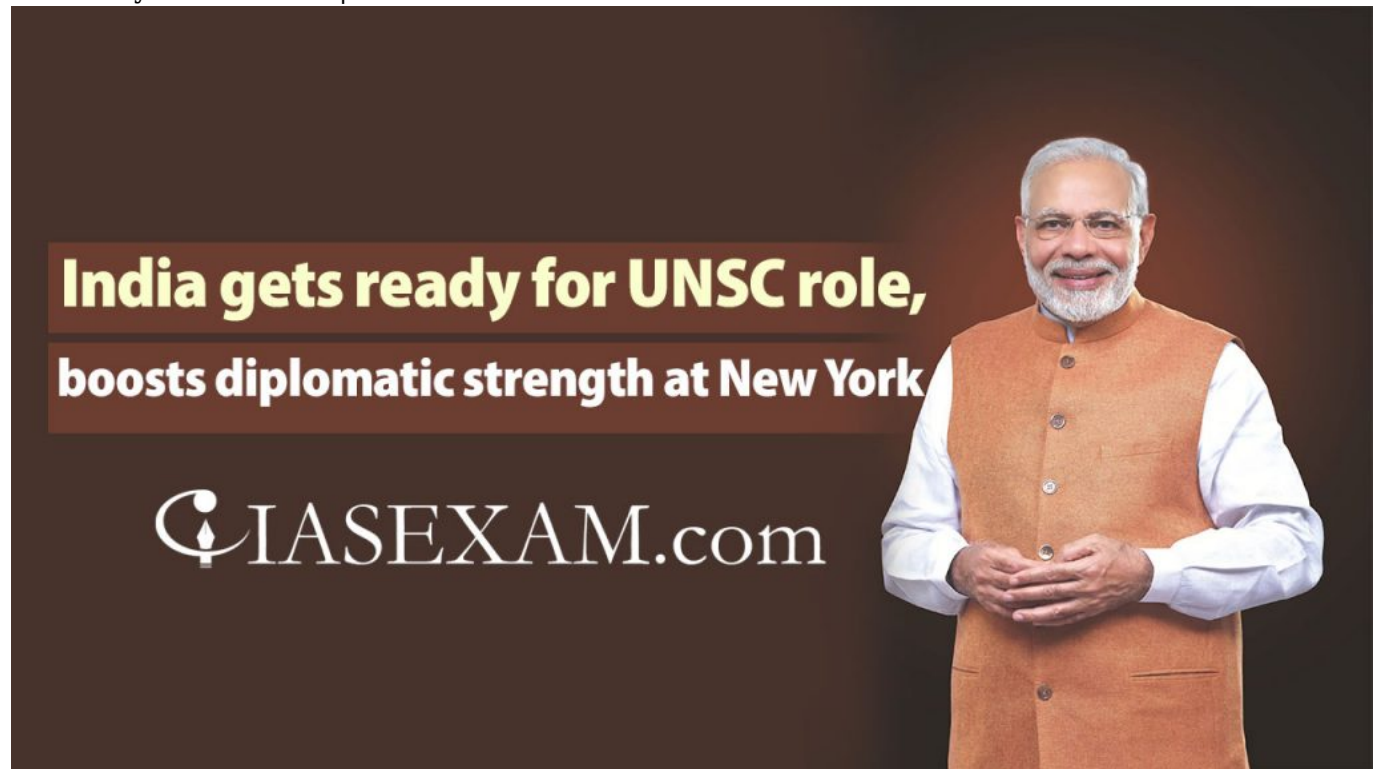


India gets ready for UNSC role, boosts diplomatic strength at New York

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India has decided to upgrade its diplomatic presence at the United Nations in preparation for taking over as a non-permanent member of the Security Council in January 2021 with an additional deputy permanent representative (DPR) and a counsellor appointed to handle the UNSC matters. External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar will personally review India's stint at the UNSC every month.

According to South Block, R Ravindran, a 1999 batch Indian Foreign Service officer posted as Joint Secretary (Central and West Africa), will join at a rank equivalent of DPR at the Indian Permanent Mission to UN at New York. Pratik Mathur, a 2007 IFS officer and Deputy Secretary (PMO), will join as Counsellor (UNSC).

While the mission already is headed by TS Tirumurti and has Nagaraj Naidu as DPR, the two officers will join the group before the 75th UN General Assembly opens on September 15, 2020. Preparatory work for the new non-permanent members begins months before the formal joining of UNSC.

Ravindran had served in the UNPR under Hardeep Singh Puri, now Minister of Civil Aviation, Urban Development and Commerce, who headed the mission when India was a non permanent member in 2011-2012.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has already spelled out Indian approach at the UNSC, describing it as the '5S' or Samman (Respect), Samvad (Dialogue), Sahyog (Cooperation), Shanti (global peace) and Samridhi (global prosperity) with an overall objective of "New Orientation of a Reformed

Multilateral System.”

While India got 184 out of 192 valid votes cast for the UNSC seat, the vote numbers surprised New Delhi as India’s adversaries particularly Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia and backed by Islamabad’s all weather friend China had run a shrill campaign targeting India over the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir.

“Our understanding is that India got these many votes as its forces stood up to China at Galwan in East Ladakh in June. Although only 129 votes are required, India got additional votes for having the capacity to fight for its territory,” said a senior government official.

It was a reference to the violent brawl that took place in Galwan on June 15 in which heavily outnumbered Indian soldiers fought back against Chinese troops. India lost 20 men in the skirmish and China suffered an unspecified number of casualties.

But diplomats underline that as New Delhi prepares to play a constructive role at UNSC, it hasn’t forgotten that it is still waiting to become a permanent member 75 years after the world body was founded.

Source: Hindustan Times