Pak spoke in Tharoor race

K.P. NAYAR

New York, June 16: The campaign for the first Indian bid for the post of UN secretarygeneral has begun in earnest here even as the possibility emerged vesterday that Shashi Tharoor may face a rival, who was born in India.

Pakistan is trying to persuade Nafis Sadik, who was born in Jaunpur, near Varanasi, to be its candidate to rival India's unexpected formal nomination of Tharoor.

Sadik is the special adviser to the UN secretary-general as



Tharoor: Tough job

well as his special envoy for HIV/AIDS in Asia and the Pacific. She is also a member of the secretary-general's High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change.

When Sadik was appointed executive director of the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) in 1987, she became the first woman in the UN's history to lead one of its major voluntarily funded programmes.

She had the rank of undersecretary-general, the same position that Tharoor has in the UN system now.

Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, Munir Akram, indicated at a news conference here yesterday that

the nomination of a candidate to succeed Kofi Annan.

Diplomats of Muslim countries at the UN said Akram would like to be that candidate, but tactically, he had proposed to Islamabad that Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz should enter the fray.

Aziz, who is disinclined to do so, is said to have suggested to Pervez Musharraf that Sadik, an old friend from his days in New York as a banker. should be Pakistan's choice.

As developments surrounding the selection of Annan's successor gathers pace here, it has turned out that India's campaign on behalf of Tharoot actually began at UN headqua rters even before his candida ture was officially announced in New Delhi yesterday.

On Wednesday, India's per manent representative to the UN, Nirupam Sen, told the 116 member co-ordinating burea of the Non-Aligned Movemer (NAM) that Delhi was movin towards nominating Tharoo as its candidate to succee Annan on January 1, 2007.

According to diplomats fi om a large cross-section of co untries which attended tha meeting, NAM members appr eciated Sen's gesture in takin them into confidence ahead of the formal announcement.

Sen's strategy was crucia because the NAM meeting ha been called precisely to discu ss the process of selecting th next secretary-general.

The UN's single biggest gr our wants a decisive say in th is process. Many NAM memb ers believe the Security Coun cil has hijacked the process and has been choosing chie executives of the world body without adequate consultati ons among members.

Sen anticipated vesterday that Tharoor would begin his

official campaign by meeting permanent members of the Security Council to present his vision on where he would lead the UN if he was chosen to succeed Annan. He would then have to repeat the exercise with regional groups of UN members like the Asian group.

the Africa group and so on.
At the same time, Indian missions across the world would lobby with governments in support of him.

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Sen rejected Pakistan's contention that by nominating Tharoor, India had given up its efforts to become a permanent member of the

India visit

Tharoor will be in Delhi on Sunday. He is expected to meet the Prime Minister during his first visit after being fielded by India for the UN top job.

'Anyone unacceptable to P-5 cannot get UN top job'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 20

NYONE "unacceptable" to any of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council cannot make it to the top UN post, India's nominee Shashi Tharoor today said. He explained that a Secretary-General needed to cooperate with the US and other four big powers for effective functioning.

Tharoor, the UN Undersecretary-General for Communications and Public Information, said that if a Secretary-General clashes with or antagonises a permanent member, it will affect his work.

"The dynamics of this election are such that anyone unacceptable to one of the five permanent members cannot be elected. The real election is the one in the Security Council," he told reporters here.

"No one unacceptable to the US, China, Britain, France or Russia, which have veto powers, can become Secretary-General," he said, adding "but, thereafter, what kind of Secretary-General a person is, will, I am sure, transcend the factors that lay behind his or her election."

A veteran at the United Nations, Tharoor said "the job of the Secretary-General is to get along with permanent members, including the US but not the US only."

Elaborating, he said "if tomorrow, the Secretary-General openly clashes with or antagonises a permanent member on one issue, day after tomorrow he will have to go again to the same permanent member for support on another issue. As a practical

proposition, you need to work in cooperative conditions." Underlining that a Secretary-General needed to cooperate with the permanent members of the UNSC for "practical reasons", Tharoor said, "by definition, an effective Secretary-General is one who can work with all countries, in particular with the permanent members."

The Indian nominee for the top UN post said, "I think the

'If I go into this job, I will go as a leader of an organisation accountable to all 191 countries and would not be consciously seeking, in any of my actions, to benefit only my own country

practical reason why a Secretary-General needs to cooperate with these member states is because you can't achieve results without them. Ultimately we are an organisation of member states. The UN has no resources other than what member states will give. So if somebody wants this job in order to attack the member states, he or she is being very foolish because their effectiveness in delivering results on a whole range of issues will be undermined."

Tharoor, who met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and senior officials of the External Affairs Ministry to chalk out his course of action, however, favoured independence of international civil ser-

vice, like the post of Secretary-General, saying such a scenario will be more useful to member states.

To a question, he said if he is elected, whatever benefits it brings to India may be "intangible" because the job is meant to be accountable to 191 countries and not to any one country alone.

"I would expect, if I go into this job, I will go in as a leader of an organisation that is accountable to all 191 countries and I would not be consciously seeking, in any of my actions, to benefit my own country alone," he said.

On the issue of principle of rotation, Tharoor said he supported it. But there are countries which do not accept it, he said, citing the example of the US which is in favour of the "best person" suited for the job.

On his own candidacy, he said he had an advantage over the others as he has been worked at the UN for many years and had gained experience in working in a number of fields like peacekeeping and refugee issues.

"All put together, I have the view from inside," he said.

Tharoor said he was vying for the post not for a comfortable chair but was in fact risking the one he already had.

"I already have a comfortable chair. I have a long career at the UN and I could have comfortably stayed on there and not taken the risk. Obviously both success and failure shorten the security quotient," he said. He said if he loses the race for the top post, he may have to resign from his present position as the person who wins may not like to give him the same assignment.

UN reforms can benefit New Delhi's aspirations: Tharoor



India's nominee for the UN top post Shashi Tharoor meeting leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha LK Advani in New Deihi on Tuesday. Express photo

▶ NEW DELHI: Acknowledging that the UN Security Council did not reflect present day realities, Shashi Tharoor, India's nominee for the Secretary-General's post, today said the world body was looking at reforms that will enable New Delhi to fulfil its "legitimate aspirations".

"The debates amongst member states on the issue are fundamentally important. And what is more, we are looking at a reform, which will have to be a formula that will allow many countries, including India, to fulfil their legitimate aspirations," he told reporters after an hour-long meeting with leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, L K Advani, here.

Pitching for urgent reforms of the UNSC, he said the Council reflected geopolitical realities that existed six decades ago. "The question of reform of the Security Council is one that is fundamental to a large number of countries, not just India, because it reflects the geopolitical realities of 1945 and not of today,". Tharoor, who is the UN's Undersecretary-General, said.

Tharoor, who had also met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last evening, maintained that the UNSC reform process would not change because of "one race" for the Secretary-General's post.

"The secretary generalship is very much a matter of today. We have to settle it one way or the other in the next few months." he said.

"We discussed a number of matters of mutual interest, above all, of course, the question of my candidacy for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations. I sought his blessings and I have them." he said.

India's UN bid irks Pak, rest of Asia

Chidanand Rajghatta | TNN

Washington: India's sudden decision to propose writer-diplomat Shashi Tharoor for the post of UN secretary-general has set off a virtual scramble in Turtle Bay, the Manhattan neighbourhood where the UN is located. The campaigns of hitherto slow-moving Asian contenders

'Aziz not in race'

Islamabad: Pakistan has termed as "speculation" reports that it plans to field PM Shaukat Aziz or some highprofile candidate against Shashi Tharoor.

US watchful

Washington: The US has said that it would be "looking very carefully" at the nominees but avoided an official comment on the nominees. TNN & AGENCIES

—Thailand, South Korea and Sri Lanka—have been galvanised, while predictably, Pakistan is threatening to jump into the fray to play spoiler amid hopes it can somehow in the process extract concessions from India and the world community.

The Tharoor bid also got off to a rather inauspicious start in Turtle Bay with his current boss Kofi Annan suggesting that any internal candidate needs to focus on his work as long as he remains at his current job.

Procedurally, New Delhi has kicked off the process by writing to the current rotating president of the 15-member body, Denmark's ambassador to the UN, Ellen Margrethe Loj, proposing Tharoor's name.

Senior Bush administration officials in Washington also confirmed to TOI that Delhi had also formally intimated the US about Tharoor's nomination.

Although US officials have previously suggested that they prefer candidates from outside the UN system, Washington does not seem averse to Tharoor. But there was surprise and consternation in Thailand's UN mission and in Bangkok where the Thai government had apparently taken for certain India's support for its candidate, Asean-backed Deputy PM Surakiart Sathirathai.

Thailand though was still confident Surakiart would come out on top "since India might not win support from China while the US might not reverse its position that it would not back any candidates from the UN," the 'Bangkok Post' reported quoting unnamed government sources.

There were similar debates in the Sri Lankan and South Korean camps regarding the prospects of its candidates, Jayantha Dhanapala and Ban Ki-moon, respectively. But it was Pakistan that seemed apoplectic and indicated it might throw its candidate into the ring. Names of its former banker PM Shaukat Aziz, the UN secretary-general's special envoy on HIV/Aids Nafiz Sadiq, and its UN envoy Munir Akram were bandied about.

"There's never been a tradition of a large country fielding a candidate," Akram said in New York. "Obviously you cannot ask for a Security Council permanent seat as well as the secretary-general's post."

'If the UN wants to change the world, it has to change itself' and it has to change itself' I don't think at this.

A CAREER UN diplomat and eminent writer, Shashi Tharoor has been nominated by the Indian Government for the post of United Nations Secretary General. At present he is Under-Secretary General for Communications and Public Information at the UN Headquarters. If elected, Tharoor would be the first Indian to make it to the top UN position. At 50, he would also be the youngest Secretary General ever. Excerpts from an interview with LALIT K JHA:

■ What was your first reaction on hearing that the Indian Government had nominated you for UN Secretary General's post?

I am honoured.

■ What has been your experience at the United Nations?

I have worked for the United Na-

FIRING LINE SHASHI THAROOR INDIA'S NOMINEE FOR UN SECY GEN

tions for 28 years now in a variety of fields—refugee work, humanitarian, peacekeeping, the office of the Secretary General and now the management of a rather large department. So I have seen from inside and from the ground up the major issues and challenges facing the Secretary General of the United Nations. So it is a terrific opportunity to be given a chance to lead this institution.

■ At a time when there is talk about reforms at the UN, what do you feel are the major challenges facing a new UN Secretary General?

I think reform is certainly a major challenge. Mahatma Gandhi said: "You must be the change you wish to see in the world." What is true for individuals is also true for institutions. If



the UN wants to change the world, it has to change itself.

■ Reforms?

We need to reform ourselves not because the UN has failed, but because we have accomplished enough over the several decades that we have driven the UN....

■ And your objective?

I am determined to help make the United Nations a more nimble, more flexible and more effective and efficient moment that India's bid to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council is linked to my election. This election will be over in a matter of months. The challenge of reforms of the Security Council would have to be solved in months and years ahead"

organisation to face the challenges of the 21st century.

■ Can you specify a bit more?

It is a question, for example, of our management challenges. You have a situation wherein as many as 191 governments do micro management on a day-to-day basis for the organisation. It would be better to have systems in place such as those which Kofi Annan is recommending which allow the managers or the staff more of a free hand to do their work while inviting the governments to judge us and make us accountable for what we do. Instead of a system presently where our hands are rather tied by a series of rules, procedures and regulations. This is the internal structure reform that we are talking about.

■ Are you also talking about financial reforms at the UN?

The second kind of reforms is the financial dependence the organisation has on sources of (funding from) various different governments which sometimes are not paid in full or on time, and (come) not without conditions as the saying goes.

■ Any other challenges?

The third challenge in many ways is the challenge of political will, trying to get governments to flex their own muscles behind various drafts at the United Nations. The world is full of problems of people like passports, problems like no one country however powerful can solve on its own. Problems like terrorism, drug trafficking, human rights, refugee movement and so on. These are problems that, quite honestly, only the United Nations can tackle, as these are by definition international problems and therefore require international solutions. To do these things, we need political will of governments behind us. The governments provide the mandate, provide the means and provide the resources.

■ One of the other reforms high on the agenda at least for India is the reforms and expansion of the UN Security Council.

Expansion of the Security Council or reform of the Security Council has been on the anvil since early 1992. So this is not a new problem. The Indian Government has taken a clear and strong position as have the other governments, who have also expressed their views on the subject. Clearly the solution would require a majority—in fact a two-third majority-under the rules to find a framework, some formula through which India and other countries can find their place in the new reformed council. Until that formula is found the work of the organisation must go on

■ Is India's bid to be a permanent member of the UN Security Council linked to your election or nomination as the UN Secretary General?

I do not think at this moment that issue is linked with the question of the election of the Secretary General. This election will be over in a matter of months. The challenge of reforms of the Security Council would have to be solved in months and years ahead

■ What do you feel about India's demand to be made a permanent member of the Security Council?

It is not appropriate for me to comment on it as a Secretariat official. I think the Indian Government should speak for itself.



ndia to make U.N. rights council a strong body milia war mil

The election is a recognition of the country's "diplomatic standing," says the Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson

Diplomatic Correspondent

of its "diplomatic standing" in the comity of nations and its day that its election to the first-Rights Council was a recognition ever United Nations Human commitment to promotion and NEW DELHI: India said on Wednes-

spokesperson told presspersons 173 votes out of a possible 190 in New York on Tuesday - the high-The External Affairs Ministry that India had secured a total of number of votes among the protection of human rights.

contested seats to the 47-member Council.

tive to the new body during its formative phase," the spokesistic country, committed to the "As a democratic and pluralrule of law, Indian presence on the new Human Rights Council would bring a unique perspec-

He revealed that following the elections a draw of lots was held to determine the length of each successful member's term on the man said.

Rights Council is important since the work methods and pro-

Pakistan two.

got a one-year term India

sions and mechanisms from the cedures would be lecided and the review of the special provi-

• The council has 47 members

freedoms for all

* India's solidarity with G-77, NAM key to garnering votes

Council's first meeting to be held on June 19 in Geneva

CHR [the old Commission on Human Rights] would be carried while China got three years and "The first year of the Human

He pointed out that all the G-4 group nations - India, Brazil, Germany and Japan - which curity Council - had all been elected to the Human Rights were trying to enter the U.N. Se-

electing it to the Council.

snowledged

According to the spokesperson, India attached great imporwould work to make it a strong, effective and efficient body capatance to the new Council and out."

Council by impressive margins.

Asked whether India's election was a function of American cial replied that this was not the Movement (NAM) had been the key to the votes garnered by New support to New Delhi, the officase. India's solidarity with the G-77 and the Non-Aligned Delhi, the official said. In a related development, a ble of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental commitment to human rights by senior official said on background that the world had ac-India's

On whether India believed that some "unclean" nations had the official responded that all elected members had received the support of a simple majority the United Nations General managed to get into the Council

ing of the new Council would Assembly.

He added that the first meet-Asked about the reform of other U.N. bodies, the official stated that India had already ing Commission as New Delhi take place in Geneva on June 19 made it to the new Peace-Build was one of the largest troop con-

Since the process of entry of other members into this Commission was not yet complete India's membership had not yer tributors to U.N. missions. been announced

> MAITER 1 1

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India wins big at UN

Chidanand Raighatta | TNN

Washington: India emerged as the top vote-getter in Tuesday's elections to the newly-established UN Human Rights Council, a massive victory that is seen to augur well for New Delhi's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.

In what was described as the largest-ever

polling exercise in the United Nations, India won 173 out of 191 votes in a secret ballot to elect the 47-member Council. It was the biggest tally for any country, surpassing Japan (158) and China (146) in Asia.

"It is a vindication of India's long history and tradition of democracy and plurality, for the kind of international causes we have straddled," a delighted Nirupam Sen, In-

dia's Permanent Representative to the UN, told TOI. "It shows that we can mobilise not just two-thirds but even three-fourths of the world as we move toward the larger objective of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council."

The new Human Rights Council replaces the 60-year old, largely discredited Human Rights Commission, which was elected by a smaller 54-nation Economic

and Social Council and most contenders ran unopposed after nomination by regional blocs. The Commission was disbanded after a number of countries with dubious HR records manipulated elections to win seats and began to work together as a bloc to defeat resolutions critical against any one of them.

Not that this election was without flaws.

The US initially opposed even this Council and declined to run for a seat citing inadequate correctives. But it participated in the process that at least expanded the election process to involve all 191 member nations and set a benchmark of at least 96 votes (50 per cent votes) to win a seat on the council.

Despite this, several habitual rights abusers won seats. The New York-

based Human Rights Watch identified Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, China, Cuba and Russia among the worst elected.

Separately, the human rights group UN Watch published a list of 28 countries it described as human rights abusers unfit to sit on the council. The General Assembly voted for 17 of these countries, including Cuba, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Russia, China and Indonesia.

It is a vindication of India's long history and tradition of democracy and plurality, for the kind of international causes we have straddled
Nirupam Sen | ENVOY TO UN

1 1 MAY 2000

THE TIMES OF INDIA

Blair supports India's Security Council bid

permanent seat in an expanded United Nations Security Council but the United States appeared to be lukewarm to the idea "at this point."

"A Security Council which has Tony Blair has come out strongly in favour of India's candidature for a

n not Germany; Britain, but not Japan; in China, but not India — to say nothing a of absence of proper representation we from Latin America or Africa — can a not be legitimate in the modern the world," Mr. Blair told students of Germs or orgetown University here on Friday. WASHINGTON: British Prime Minister France as a permanent member, but

are so strong. But I am now sure that Si we need reform. If necessary, let us we agree of some form of interim change or that can be a bridge to a future settle- U ment. But we need to get it done," Mr. re Blair said to a question. 1.80 V. I used to think this problem was intractable. The competing interests

s statement, U.S. State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said while discussions were taking place on a number of aspects related to the U.N., there was no change in the current American policy — of pushing only for Japan at the present. — PTI Asked to comment on Mr. Blair's

28 MAY 2008

India, Britain to collaborate in "world-class" research

Research initiative will link centres of academic excellence in both countries

Hasan Suroor

LONDON: India and the United Kingdom will collaborate in "world-class" research under a new major initiative launched here on Tuesday to boost cooperation in higher education between the two countries.

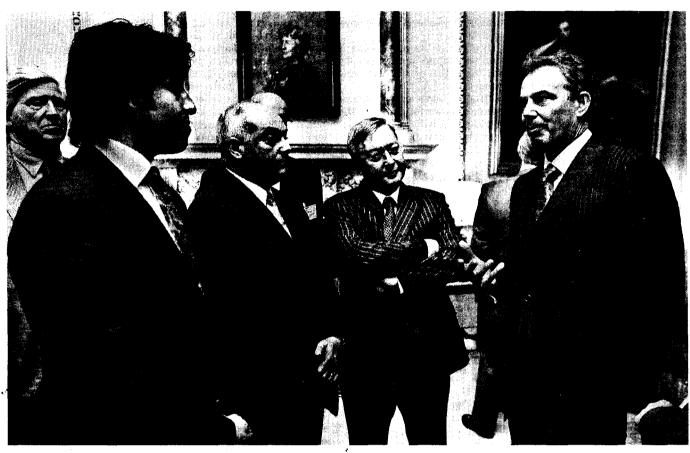
The U.K.-India Education and Research Initiative, backed by British Government funding, will link centres of academic excellence in India and the U.K. through 70 new research projects over the next five years. It will also offer fellowships to Indian students in partnership with universities there.

Partners of choice in education

Prime Minister Tony Blair. who first announced the initiative during his visit to India last September, said it would lay the ground for the two countries to become "each other's partners of choice in education," and to collaborate on "world-class research."

"Backed by a £12 million of Government money, and nearly £5 million in cash or kind from private sector partners, the initiative will allow split PhDs and research fellowships, and increased academic exchanges," Mr. Blair said.

Writing in The Guardian ahead of the launch, he said: "No one who visits India can fail to be impressed by the huge advances the economy and education system are making, and I returned determined that we needed radically to improve our links with a



WOOING FOREIGN STUDENTS: British Prime Minister Tony Blair talks with (from left) Ifty Nasir director, New Markets, BP Plc, Mike Mendoza of BAE Systems, and Bob Frith, president of Shell Technology India in London on Tuesday. - PHOTO: AFP

dreds of thousands of graduates each year."

Mr. Blair also launched a campaign to attract overseas students, increasingly becoming a major source of earning for Britain's cash-strapped universi-

country that is producing hun- attracting 100,000 more foreign students from outside the European Union over the next five

Facing competition

He acknowledged that British universities were facing competies. The campaign aims at tition from countries such as

Australia and New Zealand. Besides countries such as China, Malaysia and Singapore which traditionally sent students to Britain now had their own bourgeoning" higher education sectors.

Recently, Chris Patten, Chancellor of Oxford University, vis-

ited India to tap into the booming education market there. There is concern that American universities are overtaking their British counterparts in attracting Indian students. There are nearly 80,000 Indian students on American campuses compared to 17,000 in Britain.

They draw strength from party's good work

CPI(M) candidates, though new to elections, are well known at grassroots level in West Bengal



Akkel Ali Khan, CPI (M) candidate.-PHOTO: ARUNANGSU ROY CHOWDHURY

K.V. Prasad

BAGNAN: In an election that appears to be devoid of any political issues, the ruling Left Front in West Bengal is running an intensive campaign its candidates describe as "positive." The focus is on work done by successive Left Front Governments and seeking votes for development.

And in doing so what strikes is the seamless transition by the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in particular of fielding nearly one-third new candidates across 294 constituencies.

For instance in Howrah district's Bagnan constituency, the CPI (M) has decided to field a school teacher and

mittee member Akkel Ali Khan. 53, in place of Social Welfare Minister, Nirupama Chatterjee, 76. Similarly in the Domjur constituency it replaced septuagenarian Padmanidhi Dhar with local committee secretary Mohanta Chatterjee, 46.

Unlike other parties which face dissidence or rebellion especially from those who have been denied re-nomination, the Left party legislators who are Left Front in general and the making way for the next generation continue to work for the organisation. Both Mr. Khan and Mr. Chatterjee refer to their predecessors as "leader." They do not forget to mention the role of their seniors who initiated

that these two may be new candidates, but are known in the areas they have been selected to contest. Their strength lies in their association and work in the area for the party.

"Look at the development our party has undertaken," Mr. Khan shows in Patuapara in Uluberia and mentioned that he as a member of the district committee has taken active role in achieving it. The work done includes a hand-pump, a bricklined pathway or a new school building in the hamlet. Uluberia MP Hannan Mollah who campaigned for Mr. Khan on Tuesday told The Hindu that these candidates drew strength from

Similarly, Mr. Chatterjee shares a similar political background. Like Mr. Khan, he too was a student activist who joined the party and worked in the local committee and the Zila Panchayat. He too has been associated with party work at the grassroots and is confident that it would stand him in good stead.

Job opportunities

Besides the work, these candidates talk of the need to create employment opportunities and how the Left Front Government is pushing for more industries in the region and promoting selfhelp groups. Mr. Khan talks of having food-processing industry area grows toma-