IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

Kenya – Election

What is the issue?

A free, fair and peaceful election process in Kenya will consolidate democratic gains in the country and serve as a symbol for the rest of the continent.

What is remarkable about Kenya upcoming elections?

- Kenya is one of Africa's major democracies.
- It goes to the polls on August 9, 2022, to elect the country's 5th President, besides national lawmakers, governors and assemblies of its 47 counties.
- The elections revolve around political dynasties, tribal power-brokers, and changing inter-ethnic alliances.
- This time the leading contenders are Vice President William Ruto and the perennial challenger Raila Odinga.
- In Kenyan politics, the Kikuyu, Luhya, Kalenjin and Luo are the four dominant tribes who have practically ruled the country since independence.
- This is the first time since Kenya's independence a Kikuyu has not emerged as the main presidential candidate.
- Mr. Ruto is a Kalenjin, the third largest ethnic group, and Mr. Odinga is a Luo, the fourth largest ethnic group.
- The two leading candidates have chosen running mates from the vote-rich Kikuyu ethnic group, the support of which could be vital in determining the outcome.

How alliances got changed over years?

- Mr. Ruto had been President Uhuru Kenyatta's running mate for the last two elections.
- However this time Mr. Kenyatta has endorsed long-time rival Mr. Odinga who was the leading contender in the 2017 elections.
- Their friendship began in 2018 when they declared a truce after post-election violence in 2017 and has lived up to the dictum that politics is the art of the possible.
- This changing alliance has led to a considerable unpredictability in the outcome of this election.

On what issues the campaign revolves around?

- Mr. Ruto has framed the elections as a contest between "hustlers" and "dynasties".
- Hustlers refers to those who struggle to make both the ends meet.
- He has proposed a 'bottom-up' economic model in which the structure of the economy will be geared to help the common man.

- Mr. Odinga’s campaign, on the other hand has imposed corruption allegations against Mr. Ruto during his time as Deputy President.

What issues will decide the election results?

- Ethnicity
- Economic issues
- Inclusivity of all communities in government positions
- Foreign debt

How Kenya Elections are similar to that of India?

- Democratic values, pluralism and the rule of law are important for both countries.
- Much like caste-based politics that has remained centre stage in India’s political landscape for decades, ethnic politicking is common in Kenyan politics.

How does the Indian diaspora fit into this election activity?

- In 2017, Kenyans of Indian descent were officially recognised as the 44th tribe in Kenya because of their contribution to the country since independence.
- However, there is no candidate of Indian origin contesting for the presidential election.
- Nonetheless, there are a few candidates of Indian origin in some constituencies running for parliament.
- It is difficult to gauge who the Indian diaspora may support in the presidential elections.

Why Kenya is important for India?

- India and Kenya has a long history of political, economic and cultural relationships forged between the two countries.
- Kenya serves as a gateway to the wider Indian Ocean Region.
- Kenya’s friendship is important to India to curb China’s growing aspirations in the region.
- Also, India faces a number of security threats in the backdrop of a dramatic rise of piracy and terrorist activities in the region.
- Kenya has a vibrant community of Persons of Indian Origin presently numbering 80,000, including 20,000 expatriates.
- Indians in Kenya are a successful community who favour a closer bonding between the two countries.

Reference

1. https://www.thehindu.com/opinion/op-ed/an-epic-contest-between-ruto-and-odinga/article65476220.ece



IAS PARLIAMENT

Information is Empowering

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative