International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance

Prelims: *Current events of national and international relations | International Organization*

Why in news?

Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar assumed charge as Chairman of the Council of Member States of the International IDEA for 2026.

- **IIDEA –** It is an ***intergovernmental organization*** that supports to strengthen democratic institutions and electoral processes worldwide.
- **Established in –** 1995.
- **UN Observer -** It has been granted ***UN observer*** status in 2003.
- **Mandate –** It is explicitly tasked with supporting democracy globally, backed by diverse membership that reinforces legitimacy.
- **Membership –** Began with 14 founding states in 1995; now has **35 Member States and 2 Observers** (US, Japan) from all regions of the world.
    - India joined International IDEA in 1995 as a ***founding member***.
- **Secretariat –** Stockholm, Sweden.
- **Governance –** Consists of a Council of Member States, a Steering Committee, a Finance and Audit Committee, a Board of Advisers and a Secretariat.
- **Chairmanship –** Each December, Member States elect new Chairs and Vice Chairs, as the Council's Chairmanship ***rotates annually*** by region.
- **Focus areas**
    - Electoral Processes
    - Constitution-Building
    - Democracy Assessment
    - Political Participation & Representation
    - Climate Change & Democracy
    - Digitalization & Democracy
    - Gender equality, inclusion

    - Money in politics
- **Partnerships –** Works with organizations such as UNDP, European Commission, African Union, Human Rights Watch, and universities like Gothenburg, etc.

International IDEA, 2026
• **Chairmanship -** India • **Vice Chairs -** Mauritius & Mexico. • **Theme, 2026** – Democracy for an inclusive, peaceful, resilient and sustainable world. • **2 key pillars** – Reimagining democracy for the future & independent and professional election management bodies for sustainable democracy. • **Key aspects of India's Chairship** - **Global Recognition -** This chairship is a significant acknowledgment of India's reputation for conducting free, fair, and transparent elections on a massive scale. - **Priorities -** The focus will be on promoting democratic innovation, strengthening global partnerships, and advancing inclusive and resilient democratic systems worldwide. - **Knowledge Sharing -** India plans to share best practices and innovations in electoral administration with other Election Management Bodies (EMBs) globally. - **Key Activities -** Hosting EMB Leaders Summits, policy dialogues, joint research projects, and capacity-building initiatives through collaborations with the India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM).

References

1. The Hindu | Gyanesh Kumar appointed as head of IIDEA council
2. International IDEA | IIDEA

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