

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](#)