

CEC Gyanesh Kumar delivers address at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) in Stockholm

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Begins tenure as Chair of Council of Member States of International IDEA

1. Chief Election Commissioner of India, Shri Gyanesh Kumar today held a round-table discussion themed on the topic 'Inside India's Democracy' at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) in Stockholm, Sweden today. Former Foreign Minister of Sweden, Ms. Ann Linde was the other speaker in the round-table.
2. CEC Gyanesh Kumar had assumed the Chairship of the Council of Member States of International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA) for the year 2026 yesterday. He will conclude his official visit of Sweden later today.
3. India's Chairship marks a significant milestone, reflecting global recognition of the Election Commission of India as one of the world's most credible and innovative Election Management Bodies (EMBs). India, a founding member of International IDEA, has consistently contributed to the organisation's governance, democratic discourse and institutional initiatives.
4. Upon his arrival in Stockholm, CEC Gyanesh Kumar was received by the Ambassador of India to Sweden, Sh. Anurag Bhushan. He also had a discussion with the Secretary-General of IIDEA, Dr Kevin Casas-Zamora.
5. In his acceptance speech at Stockholm, Sweden, CEC Kumar highlighted the scale of India's democratic exercise, noting that India has over 900 million electors across 28 states and 8 Union Territories.
6. Reflecting upon the 2024 General Elections, he informed that India witnessed a breathtaking democratic spectacle where over 20,000 candidates from 743 political parties, including 6 national and 67 state parties, participated. Over 20 million election personnel including over 1 million Booth Level Officers and 5 million polling staff were engaged in the exercise.
7. Observing that India has seen 18 general elections to Parliament and more than 400 general elections to State Legislatures since independence in 1947, CEC stated that India envisions to share with all not only the learnings of the world's largest, the most diverse and inclusive modern democracy, but also the democratic values and principles deeply enshrined in India's civilizational heritage.
8. Affirming the direction ahead, CEC pledged that India's Chairmanship will be decisive, ambitious and action oriented. As Chair, Shri Gyanesh Kumar will steer the Council's work around India's overall theme for the Chairship – "Democracy for inclusive, peaceful, resilient and sustainable world" and focus on two key pillars namely - Reimagining Democracy for the Future and Independent & Professional Election Management Bodies for Sustainable Democracy.
9. The CEC concluded his acceptance speech by stating that India will endeavour to ensure that every vote counts, every voice matters and that democracies worldwide become more inclusive, peaceful,

resilient and sustainable.

10. Alongside India in the Chairship, Mauritius and Mexico will take over as the Vice Chairs of the International IDEA Council for the year 2026.

PK/GDH/RP

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