

**CEC Shri Gyanesh Kumar Delivers Keynote Address at the Stockholm International
Conference on Electoral Integrity
Highlights India's Electoral Integrity, Scale and Diversity**

Highlighting India's electoral integrity, scale and diversity, Shri Gyanesh Kumar, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India, while delivering his keynote address at the Stockholm International Conference on Electoral Integrity in Sweden last evening, reaffirmed the role of the Election Commission of India (ECI) in capacity building programmes for Election Management Bodies (EMB) of countries around the globe. Conducting elections with utmost integrity is a testament to our national resolve, he emphasized. Over 100 participants representing Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of around 50 countries are taking part in the Conference, which is being organised by the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA).

Shri Gyanesh Kumar also informed the participants about the massive scale of the election exercise that is undertaken by the ECI, especially during the parliamentary elections, which is done under the close watch of the political parties; candidates; general, police and expenditure observers and the media who, he stated, act akin to concurrent auditors at various stages. The CEC also highlighted the scale of coordination that underpins the conduct of elections in India. With over 20 million personnel, including polling staff, police forces, observers, and agents of political parties at the time of conduct of elections, ECI becomes the world's largest organisation, surpassing the combined workforce of several national governments and major global corporations and ensures that India's nearly one billion electors are freely able to exercise their franchise.

Further, speaking at this global platform, Shri Gyanesh Kumar traced the evolution of Indian elections over the decades, noting how the system has adapted to increasing complexity while staying rooted in constitutional values. From 173 million electors in 1951-52 to 979 million in 2024, and from just 0.2 million polling stations in the early years to over 1.05 million today, India's electoral journey has demonstrated both institutional foresight and unmatched scale. He noted that the 2024 General Elections saw the participation of 743 political parties, which comprised six national parties, 67 state parties and the other registered political parties. A total of 20,271 candidates contested elections conducted across the length and breadth of the country using 6.2 million Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), reaffirming the Commission's capability to conduct elections that are inclusive, efficient, and secure.

Shri Gyanesh Kumar underscored the statutory sharing of India's Electoral Roll with all recognized political parties every year during revision as well as before the elections since 1960 till today, with provision of claims, objections and appeals, as one of the world's most rigorous and transparent exercises, reinforcing the accuracy and integrity of the electoral process. He noted that this robust mechanism plays a vital role in upholding electoral credibility across the country, year after year.

Reflecting on the inclusive design of Indian elections, he stated that the electoral process serves first-time voters, senior citizens aged 85+, persons with special abilities, third-gender electors, and voters in the most inaccessible regions with equal care and commitment. From polling booths with a single elector to highest altitude stations like Tashigang in Himachal Pradesh, India's commitment to leaving no voter behind was reiterated as a constitutional principle rather than a logistical challenge.

On the sidelines of the conference, Shri Gyanesh Kumar held bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Mexico, Indonesia, Mongolia, South Africa, Switzerland, Moldova, Lithuania, Mauritius, Germany, Croatia, Ukraine and the United Kingdom. These engagements focused on voter participation, electoral technology, diaspora voting, and institutional capacity-building.

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