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1. India's Jagjit Pavadia appointed Chairman of INCB (April 11, 2024)

1979 batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer Jagjit Pavadia won re-election to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) for his third term from 2025 to 2030.

An Overview of the News

- Pavadia previously served two terms on the INCB: 2015–2020 and 2020–2025. Notably, she held the position of President of INCB from 2021 to 2022.
- Prior to his tenure at the INCB, Pavadia held several senior positions within the Government of India, including roles in the Central Narcotics Bureau as Narcotics Commissioner of India (2006–2012), Commissioner of Legal Affairs (2001–2005), and . Chief Vigilance Officer at Power Finance Corporation (1996–2001).

About INCB:

- The INCB, established in 1968 in accordance with the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, acts as an independent and quasi-judicial monitoring body for the implementation of the United Nations (UN) international drug control conventions.
- Collaborating with governments around the world, INCB ensures adequate drug supplies for medical and scientific purposes while monitoring governments' control over chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs. Additionally, it helps prevent these chemicals from being trafficked.

About the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

- ECOSOC is a primary organ of the United Nations.
- It addresses economic, social, cultural and health issues as well as human rights.
- ECOSOC monitors the UN's subsidiary bodies and ensures follow-up on major UN conventions.
- Paula Narvaez is the current president.
- Its membership includes 54 countries including India.
- Established in 1945

2. Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB): (July 13, 2023)

Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)-01

On 13 July 2023, the 11th meeting of the Executive Board of the **Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)** was held in **Cartagena, Colombia**.

An Overview of the news:

- An International Conference on **“A Global Perspective on the Challenges of the Regional Elections 2023”** was also organized by the National Civil Registry, Colombia.
- In the Executive Board meeting, the participants discussed various issues including programs and activities to be undertaken by A-WEB during 2023-24, Annual Progress Report of A-WEB and its regional offices including A-WEB India Centre, budget and membership related issues were discussed.

India's leadership in A-WEB:

- A three-member delegation of the **Election Commission of India (ECI)** was led by **Chief Election Commissioner Rajeev Kumar** in the meeting.
- On the sidelines of the **11th A-WEB Executive Board** meeting, a bilateral meeting with the **National Election Commission of the Republic of Korea** on the ECI Electronic Postal Ballot System was also held.

A-WEB Chair in 2022:

- During the 5th General Assembly meeting of A-WEB in Cape Town in November 2022, after CEC Rajeev Kumar successfully led the EMB through the COVID pandemic (2019-2022), A-WEB from ECI to the Electoral Commission of South Africa was assigned the presidency.

Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB):

- It has become the largest global association of election management bodies giving a new impetus to the spread of electoral democracy.
- **Established:** 2013
- **Objective:** To make valuable contributions, professional support and advice by sharing innovations, experiences and skills with the participation and cooperation of its members.
- **Members:** 120 Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) from 111 countries and 21 international organizations.
- **Functions of A-web:**
 - A-WEB to organize capacity building programs for its member EMBs.
 - To study election management practices.
 - Conducting election visitor and observation programs in various countries for knowledge sharing with other member EMBs.

India A-Web Centre:

- In the A-WEB Executive Board meeting held in **Bengaluru** in September 2019, it was decided to set up an India A-WEB Center in **New Delhi**.
- It conducts documentation and research for sharing the best knowledge of A-WEB members and for training and capacity building of officials.
- Journal published by India A-Web Centre: **'A-Web India Journal of Election'**.

3. India and Panama agree on electoral cooperation (July 8, 2023)

India-and-Panama-agree-on-electoral-cooperation

On 7th July 2023, **The Election Commission of India (ECI)** and the **Electoral Tribunal (ET) of Panama** signed an MoU on **Electoral Cooperation**.

An Overview of the news:

- Under this agreement, both the countries will set up an institutional framework for ongoing cooperation in the field of election management and administration.
- A three-member Election Commission delegation led by Chief Election Commissioner of India **Rajeev Kumar** met with **Alfredo Junca Vendheke**, Presiding Magistrate of the Electoral Tribunal of Panama, to strengthen cooperation and exchange of knowledge between the Election Management Bodies (EMBs) of the two countries. discussed.
- This MoU reflects the commitment of the Election Commission to engage with election bodies around the world and strengthen democratic processes.
- The Election Commission is expanding its connectivity and collaboration with foreign Election Management Bodies (EMBs) through the 'International Cooperation Programme'.

Fourth agreement of ECI with Latin American countries:

- After signing MoUs with Mexico, Brazil and Chile in the past few years, this is the fourth MoU signed with an election management body in the Latin America region.
- ECI has so far signed a total of **31 MoUs** with election management bodies and international organizations across the globe.

Mutual cooperation by both the countries:

- Both the Election Commission of India and the Electoral Tribunal of Panama are members of the **Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB)**.
- ET of Panama officials also participated in the International Conference on '**Inclusive Elections and Electoral Integrity**' organized by the ECI in March 2023.
- It was a part of the operation of '**Cohort on Elections Integrity**' under the aegis of '**Summit for Democracy**'.
- Officials from the Electoral Tribunal of Panama also participated in the '**International Election Visitors Program**' organized by the ECI during the state assembly elections in April 2021.

Association of World Election Bodies (A-WEB):

- A-WEB is the largest association of Election Management Bodies (EMBs) worldwide.
- A-WEB has 119 election management bodies as members and 20 regional associations/ organizations as associate members.
- The ECI delegation will participate in the 11th Executive Board Meeting of A-WEB and an International Conference in Cartagena, Colombia.

4. Bidyut Bihari Swain takes Oath of Office and Secrecy as Member, UPSC (June 1, 2023)

Bidyut Bihari Swain, IAS (GJ:1988) was administered the oath of office and secrecy as a member of UPSC by **Dr. Manoj Soni, Chairman, UPSC**.

An Overview of the News

- Bidyut B. Swain joined the Indian Administrative Service in **1988 in the Gujarat cadre.**
- Between 1989 and 2018, he served the Government of Gujarat in various positions at the district and state levels.
- In 2018, he joined the Government of India as **Additional Secretary in the Department of Commerce**, overseeing Special Economic Zones and trade negotiations with CIS countries.
- He also served in positions such as **Chairman of the Kimberley Protocol and Commissioner General of India** for the World Expo-Dubai.
- In 2020, he was promoted to **Special Secretary in the Department of Commerce**, responsible for the Trade Policy Division and the CIS and OCEANIA Divisions.
- He also served as the **Director General of Trade Remedies.**
- From January 2021 to May 2023, he served as the **Secretary in the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.**

About UPSC

- It is the central recruitment agency in India for **Group 'A' officer posts** under the Government of India.
- It is established as a constitutional body under **Article 315** of the Indian Constitution.
- UPSC conducts competitive examinations for recruitment to various civil services including **IAS, IPS and IFS.**
- It is responsible for the selection and placement of candidates in All India Services like IAS, IPS and IFS.
- UPSC also conducts exams for recruitment to other central services like **IRS, IAS, IRTS and others.**

Establishment - **1 October 1926**

Founder - **United Kingdom Government**

Headquarters - **New Delhi**

5. New Liberation War Gallery Inaugurated at the Indian Cultural Centre in Dhaka (May 31, 2023)

New-Liberation-War-Gallery-Inaugurated-at-the-Indian-Cultural-Centre-in-Dhaka

On 30 May a new **Liberation War Gallery of 1971** was inaugurated at the **Indian Cultural Center of the Indian High Commission in Dhaka.**

An overview of the news

- Bangladesh Home Minister **Asaduzzaman Khan** was the chief guest on the occasion.
- India's High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pranay Verma joins **Home Minister in inauguration of Liberation War Gallery**
- The War Gallery houses some rare photographs of the **Liberation War of 1971**, which culminated in the liberation of then East Pakistan and its rise as the newest nation of South Asian countries.
- The inaugural program was attended by many freedom fighters, Bir Muktijodha, and distinguished guests, including many eminent personalities of Bangladesh, representatives of the cultural and educational fields of Bangladesh, and youth.
- The gallery displays heroic photographs and documents from the Bangladesh Liberation **War of 1971** as a testament to the enduring bond of friendship between India and Bangladesh.
- It pays tribute to the brave freedom fighters who fought against oppression and tyranny.
- The gallery honors the memory of the unknown millions who laid down their lives during the **Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971**.

Liberation War of 1971

- In the 1950s, Pakistan was ruled by a military-bureaucratic rule that ruled the entire **country (East and West Pakistan)** in an undemocratic manner.
- The Bengalites had no political representation in this system of governance.
- This dominance of West Pakistan was challenged by the Bengalis during the general elections of 1970.
- In the general election of **1970, the Awami League of East Pakistan's Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** got a clear majority.
- West Pakistan was not ready for any leader of East Pakistan to rule the country.
- On **March 26, 1971**, West Pakistan launched Operation Searchlight in East Pakistan.
- As a result, lakhs of Bangladeshis had to take refuge in India.
- The Pakistani army had to face defeat due to the bravery of the '**Muktiwahini Sena**' and Indian soldiers who fought for the independence of Bangladesh.
- On 6 December 1971, a new nation Bangladesh was born out of 13 days of war with the intervention of India.

6. Shirgaonkar elected as India Taekwondo Chief (May 24, 2023)

Namdev Shirgaonkar was elected unopposed as the **President of the executive committee of India Taekwondo** on 23 May.

An overview of the news

- The election was held at **2 Hotel Sun City Residency, Andheri (East)** in which 25 affiliated State Associations duly participated.
- With all the office bearers being elected unopposed, the entire election process was completed without any hitch.
- **Sharad D Madakare** (retd. Deputy Charity Commissioner) along with **Bhagwatrao Gaikwad (retd. Judge)** served as the Returning Officer.
- **Namdev Shirgaonkar**, President, India Taekwondo, who holds a **black belt in Taekwondo**, has accepted to be elected unopposed as the head of India Taekwondo.
- **Kiyarash Bahri** (Coordinator - World Taekwondo - WT) and **Wanyoung Lee** (Observer - Asian Taekwondo Union - ATU) and **Prashant Desai** (Observer - Paralympic Committee of India - PCI) moderated the election process.

7. SC made major changes in the appointment process of Election Commissioners (March 2, 2023)

The Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court gave an important judgement on 2 March 2023 that the Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners would be appointed by the President on the advice of a committee. The committee will consist of **the Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Chief Justice of India.**

An overview of the news:

- A **five-judge** constitution bench headed by **Justice KM Joseph**, in a unanimous judgement, said the rule would remain in force until Parliament enacts a law on the issue.
- According to the top court, if there is no Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, then the leader of the largest opposition party will be included in the committee on **appointment of election commissioners and chief election commissioner.**
- The Supreme Court agreed with the petitioners and made **five major** changes in the process of appointment of Election Commissioners. These are as follows:
 - The three officers will be appointed by the collegium of PM, LOP and CJI.
 - They can only be removed by impeachment in Parliament, a process similar to the removal of judges of the Supreme Court. Till now, he could be removed by the government.
 - The commission will have a separate budget. Till now, they used to get the share of the Union Budget allocated to the Law Ministry.
 - The Commission will have a separate secretariat like the Parliament.
 - The Commission will have the right to make its own rules wherever there is any vacancy or lack of clarity in the law.

Validity of the New Testament:

- A five-judge constitution bench (**Justice Ajay Rastogi, Justice Aniruddha Bose, Justice Hrishikesh Roy and Justice CT Ravikumar**) unanimously said in its decision that this rule will remain in force until Parliament enacts a new law on the subject.
- According to the apex court, elections in a democracy must undoubtedly be fair and it is the responsibility of the Election Commission to ensure its purity.

8. Sansad Ratna award, 2023 (Feb. 22, 2023)

names for the **Sansad Ratna Awards 2023** were released on 21 February.

An overview of the news

- A total of **thirteen Members of Parliament and two Parliamentary Committees** have been honoured with this award.
- The Jury Committee of eminent Parliamentarians and civil society, chaired by **Arjun Ram Meghwal** (State Minister of Parliamentary Affairs) and Co-Chaired by **T S Krishnamurthy** (Former Chief Election Commissioner of India) has nominated eight MPs from Lok Sabha and five from Rajya Sabha for the Sansad Ratna Awards 2023.
- Prominent CPI-M leader **T K Rangarajan** nominated for the lifetime achievement award.
- These nominations are based on cumulative performance in questions, private members' bills and members' debates from the beginning of the **17th Lok Sabha** till the end of the Winter Session 2022.

Sansad Ratna Awards 2023 from Lok Sabha

1. Bidyut Baran Mahato (BJP, Jharkhand),
2. Dr. Sukanta Majumdar (BJP, West Bengal),
3. Kuldeep Rai Sharma (INC, Andaman Nicobar Islands),
4. Dr Heena Vijayakumar Gavit (BJP, Maharashtra),
5. Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (INC, West Bengal),
6. Gopal Chinayya Shetty (BJP, Maharashtra),
7. Sudhir Gupta (BJP, Madhya Pradesh) and
8. Dr. Amol Ramsing Kolhe (NCP, Maharashtra)

Sansad Ratna Awards 2023 from Rajya Sabha

- Dr. John Brittas (CPI-M, Kerala),

- Dr. Manoj Kumar Jha (RJD, Bihar),
- Smt Fauzia Tahseen Ahmed Khan (NCP, Maharashtra) Vishambhar Prasad Nishad (Samajwadi Party, UP) and
- Smt Chhaya Verma (INC, Chhattisgarh)

Two Parliamentary Committees of Lok Sabha nominated for Sansad Ratna Award 2023

1. Lok Sabha's Parliamentary Committee on Finance, chaired by **Jayant Sinha**
2. Rajya Sabha's Standing Committee on Tourism, Transport, and Culture, chaired by **Vijay Sai Reddy**

Lifetime Achievement Award

- Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Lifetime Achievement Award - **T K Rangarajan**, (Former Rajya Sabha MP for two terms and a Senior CPIM Leader).

About Sansad Ratna Award

- Sansad Ratna Awards were instituted on the suggestion of **Dr APJ Abdul Kalam** to honour top performing Parliamentarians.
- He himself inaugurated the first edition of the award ceremony in **2010 in Chennai**.
- So far, 90 top performing parliamentarians have been honoured and all of them have received the award individually.
- The **13th edition of the award** ceremony will be held on 25 March 2023 in New Delhi.
- **K. Srinivasan** is the Founder Chairman of the Sansad Ratna Award Committee and **Ms. Priyadarshini Rahul** is the Chairman.

9. Eknath Shinde-led Sena faction gets 'bow and arrow' symbol (Feb. 21, 2023)

The **Election Commission of India** on 17 February ordered the **Eknath Shinde faction** to be renamed the **Shiv Sena**, the commission also said that the **arrow and bow** would be retained as election symbols by **Eknath Shinde's party**.

An overview of the news

- Both the Shiv Sena factions (**Eknath Shinde and Uddhav Thackeray**) are fighting for the party's bow and arrow symbol after Shinde (the current chief minister of Maharashtra) rebelled against Thackeray last year.
- The Election Commission, in its 78-page order, said the current constitution of Shiv Sena is "**undemocratic**".

- Uddhav Thackeray was the chief minister of Maharashtra before Shinde rebelled and took over in **June 2022**.
- Both the factions are fighting to keep the original name and symbol of the party to represent the "**real**" **Shiv Sena**.
- Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray said the Election Commission's order recognizing the Eknath Shinde faction as the real Shiv Sena was "dangerous for democracy", and he would challenge it in the Supreme Court.

How does EC decide who gets the symbol?

- The question of a split in a political party outside the legislature is decided by **para 15 of the Emblems Order, 1968**.
- Accordingly, the Election Commission of India (ECI) may take into account all available facts and circumstances and conduct a majority test.
- The decision of the Election Commission shall be binding on all such rival sections or groups that have emerged after partition.
- This applies to disputes between recognized national and state parties.
- For splits in registered but unrecognised parties, the Election Commission usually advises the two factions to resolve their differences internally or approach the court.

Election Commission of India

- It is a permanent and independent body established by the **Constitution of India** to ensure free and fair elections in India.
- It was established as per the Constitution on **25 January 1950**.
- It administers the elections to the **Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Assemblies, State Legislative Councils and the President and Vice President** of the country.
- It has nothing to do with elections to panchayats and municipalities in the states. For this the Constitution of India provides for a separate State Election Commission.
- Basically there is only **one Chief Election Commissioner** in the Election Commission.
- Currently it consists of **two Election Commissioners**.
- The **President** appoints Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.
- They have a tenure of **six years, or up to the age of 65 years**.

10. Mohammad Shahabuddin elected President of Bangladesh (Feb. 13, 2023)

According to the notification issued by the **Election Commission of Bangladesh** on **13th February** **Mohammad Shahabuddin** will be the next **President of Bangladesh**.

An overview of the news

- He will be the **22nd President of Bangladesh**.
- He was the only candidate to file his nomination after the time for nomination and withdrawal was over.
- Retired judge, Anti-Corruption Commission commissioner and freedom fighter Mohammad Shahabuddin was nominated for the post by the ruling **Awami League**.
- The term of current President **Abdul Hamid** ends on **April 23**.
- He served as the President of Bangladesh for two consecutive terms.
- The Constitution of Bangladesh does not allow any person to hold the presidency for more than two terms.

About Mohammad Shahabuddin

- He was born in **1949 in Pabna**. He took part in the **Liberation War of Bangladesh in 1971**.
- After the assassination of **Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman** on 15 August 1975 along with most of his family members, he was imprisoned for several years.
- He is a member of the **Awami League Advisory Council**.

People's Republic of Bangladesh

- Capital: **Dhaka**
- Prime Minister: **Sheikh Hasina Wazed**
- President: **Mohammad Shahabuddin**
- Currency: **Taka**