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1. 13th "National Voter's Day" (Jan. 25, 2023)

13th "National Voter's Day"

On **January 25, 2023**, the country's **13th "National Voters' Day"** is being celebrated.

An overview of the news

- The **theme of this year's** National Voters' Day (NVD) is '**Nothing Like Voting, I Vote for Sure**'.

Background Of The Day

- **It was started in the year 2011** in the context of the establishment of the Election Commission of India.
- The **Election Commission came into existence on January 25, 1950**, on the eve of the first Republic Day of independent India.

Purpose

- The main objective of National Voters' Day is to create electoral awareness among the citizens and encourage them to participate in the electoral process.

Organising Events

- A national function will be organised by the Election Commission in New Delhi in which President Draupadi Murmu will attend as the chief guest and present the National Awards for the year 2022.
- The **first copy of the book 'Electing the First President - An Illustrated Chronicle of India's Presidential Election', published by ECI, will be presented to the President** by Chief Election Commissioner Rajeev Kumar on the occasion.
- The **song "Main Bharat Hoon - We are the Voters of India"** produced by ECI in association with Subhash Ghai Foundation **will also be launched**.

2. KCR launches Bharat Rashtra Samithi party after ECI approves name change of TRS (Dec. 9, 2022)

KCR launches Bharat Rashtra Samithi party after ECI approves name change of TRS

The Telangana Chief Minister and president of the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi, **K Chandrasekhar Rao** formally launched the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) on 9 December 2022 in Hyderabad.

The [Election Commission of India \(ECI\)](#) on 8 December 2022 had approved the change of name of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) as Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS).

The change in the name of the party is seen as an attempt by K Chandrasekhar Rao to make his party play a bigger role at the national level and emerge as a national party.

K Chandrasekhar Rao formed the TRS in **2001** to fight for the formation of a separate state Telangana out of undivided Andhra Pradesh.

Political Parties in India

Under the **Representation of People's act 1951** the Election Commission of India (ECI) facilitates and regulates political parties in India. According to the ECI, the recognised political parties in India are of two types. They are either regional or **state political parties** or **national parties**.

Criteria to be a National Political parties

As per the guidelines of the ECI Political Parties and Election Symbols, 2019 handbook, a political party would be considered a national party if:

- It is 'recognised' in four or more states; or
- If its candidates polled at least 6% of total valid votes in any four or more states in the last Lok Sabha or Assembly elections and has at least four Member of Parliament in the last Lok Sabha polls; or
- If it has won at least 2% of the total seats in the Lok Sabha from not less than three states.

National political parties in India

The Election Commission of India has recognised the following parties as National Party's till date. They are:

Bharatiya Janata Party(BJP), Congress(I), Bhajan Samaj Party(BSP), Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India(Marxist),Nationalist Congress Party(NCP),Trinamool Congress and National People's Party (NPP).

NPP received national party status on June 7, 2019.

Chief Election Commissioner: **Rajiv Kumar**

3. Election commission set up a polling booth for a single voter in Gujarat (Dec. 1, 2022)

Election commission set up a polling booth for a single voter in Gujarat

The [Election Commission of India](#) has set up a [polling booth](#) for a single voter in the Gir forest of Somnath district. This center has been built for **Mahant Haridas Udasin of Baneshwar** Mahadev Temple, situated in dense forests.

Gir is the **only sanctuary for Asiatic lions** in the world.

The election to elect the **15th Legislative Assembly** of Gujarat is being held on 1st and 5th of December 2022 and the counting will be done on 8 December 2022. The term of the current and 14th Legislative Assembly will end on 18 February 2023.

4. President appoints Arun Goel as the member of the Election Commission of India (Nov. 19, 2022)

President appoints Arun Goel

President Droupadi Murmu on 19 November appointed retired IAS officer **Arun Goel** as the Election Commissioner with effect from the date he assumes the office.

A Punjab cadre officer of the 1985 batch, Goel will join Chief Election Commissioner **Rajiv Kumar** and Election Commissioner **Anup Chandra Pandey** in the poll panel.

Terms of Office

- The Election commission members hold office for **six years or up to 65 years** of age, whichever is earlier.
- Once he joins his new responsibility, Goel would become the Chief Election Commissioner in February 2025.
- Goel will demit office in December 2027 on attaining the age of 65 years.

Election Commission of India

- The Election Commission of India was constituted by the Government of India on **25 January 1950** under article 324 of the constitution. 25 January is also observed as **National Voters Day** in India
- The Election Commission of India is an autonomous constitutional authority responsible for administering Union and State election processes in India. The body administers elections to the **Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, Legislative Councils** in India, and the offices of the **President** and **Vice President** in the country.

Members of the Election Commission of India

- The Election Commission of India can be single member or Multi member.
- Article 324 gives the **President power** to appoint members to the Election Commission as he desires.
- Initially the Election Commission was a single member body with the Chief Election Commissioner post, but on **16 October 1989** President appointed two new members to the body making it a multi member body for the first time.
- However the President again issued an order on 1 January 1990 to make it a single member body.
- It was again made a multi member body on **1 October 1993** as the President appointed 2 new members.
- Since then the Election Commission of India has been a three member commission.

Other things to Remember

- The first Chief Election Commissioner of India was **Sukumar Sen**.
- The first **woman** Chief Election Commissioner of India was **V.S. Rama Devi**. She was the **9th** Chief Election Commissioner of India and was appointed in 1990.
- The **current and the 25th Chief Election Commissioner of India is Rajiv Kumar**.

5. India has 2.49 lakh voter aged above 100 years: Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar (Nov. 9, 2022)

India has 2.49 lakh voter aged above 100 years

According to the Chief Election Commissioner of India **Rajiv Kumar** there are 2.49 lakh voters aged above 100 in India and 1.80 crore voters are over 80 years of age.

He was speaking after flagging off a bicycle rally in Maharashtra's **Pune city** on 9 November 2022 to create an awareness about voter registration as part of the national level launch of a special summary revision of the voters' list.

He also mentioned the first voter of Independent India **Shyam Saran Negi** who died at the age of 106 years after casting his postal ballot for the forthcoming [Himachal Legislative Assembly election](#).

What is Special summary revision of voters list?

Election commission of India prepares the voters list of eligible Indian citizens who are 18 years or above of age.

Any eligible citizen who has attained the age of 18 years **on 1 January** of that year (for this year it will be 1 January 2022) can enrol himself/herself as General Voter by filling form number 6.

To include anyone who has been left and not included as a voter, are included through the Special Summary Revision initiative.

The [Election Commission of India](#) conducts Special Summary Revision to enrol unenrolled eligible citizens during the month of Oct-Nov every year.

This year the Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls with reference to January 01, 2022 as qualifying date, will start from 01.11.2021.

Important points to Know

Whenever an election takes place, a public holiday is announced by the government on the polling day to encourage people to vote. The holiday is given under the **Negotiable Instrument Act 1881**.

National Voters day is observed in India on 25 January. It was on this day in 1950 the Election Commission of India came into being.

6. ECI announces two phase election to elect 15th Gujarat Legislative Assembly (Nov. 3, 2022)

Election in Gujarat

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on 3 November 2022 has announced that the election to constitute the 15th Legislative Assembly of Gujarat will be held on **1st and 5th of December** 2022 and the counting will be done on 8 December 2022. The term of the current and **14th Legislative Assembly** will end on 18 February 2023.

Election in Gujarat

The Gujarat Assembly has **182** seats with 13 seats reserved for Scheduled Caste (SC) and 27 seats are reserved for Scheduled Tribes (ST).

In the first phase, 89 seats will go to the polls and elections will be held in 93 seats in the second phase.

According to the election commissioner around 4 crore 92 lakh people are eligible to vote in the election.

Announcing the schedule of the Assembly poll the Chief Election Commissioner **Rajiv Kumar** said that counting of the Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly and Gujarat Legislative Assembly polls will be conducted on 8 December and the process will be completed by 10 December 2022.

The [Himachal Pradesh Assembly](#) goes to poll on 12 November 2022 to constitute the 14th Legislative Assembly.

Gujarat Legislative Assembly

The first Gujarat Legislative Assembly was constituted on 1 May 1960 when the Bombay State was bifurcated into Marathi speaking state of Maharashtra and Gujarati speaking state of Gujarat.

The Bombay State Legislative Assembly which was constituted in 1957 consisted of 389 members.

Out of this Gujarat Legislative Assembly was created with 132 members.

The first election to constitute the **2nd Gujarat Legislative Assembly election was held in 1962**

The 14th and current Legislative Assembly was constituted on 19 February 2018.

7. Election Commission of India host an International Conference on the Role, Framework & Capacity of EMBs' at New Delhi (Oct. 31, 2022)

Election Commission of India

Chief Election Commissioner of India (ECI) **Rajiv Kumar** along with Election Commissioner Anup Chandra Pandey inaugurated a two day international conference (31 October and 1

November) on 31 October 2022 on the theme '**Role, Framework & Capacity of Election Management Bodies (EMB)**'.

The conference is organized by Election Commission of India at New Delhi under Cohort on Election Integrity led by ECI, which was established as a follow on to the 'Summit for Democracy' held in December, 2021.

Nearly 50 Participants from Eleven EMBs from 11 countries including Armenia, Mauritius, Nepal, Cabo Verde, Australia, Chile, Federal States of Micronesia, Greece, Philippines, Sao Tome & Principe, USA and three international organisations namely, IFES, International IDEA and UNDP(United Nation Development Programme) India are expected to join the Conference..

'Summit for Democracy', an initiative of the **US President Joe Biden** was hosted by him in December 2021. Following this Summit, a "Year of Action" was proposed with events and dialogues on themes related to Democracy.

As part of the 'Summit for Democracy' Year of Action, India through the ECI, is leading the 'Democracy Cohort on Election Integrity' to share its knowledge, technical expertise, and experiences with other democracies of the world.

8. Former German Chancellor Angela Merkel wins UN refugee award (Oct. 5, 2022)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on 4 October honoured former **German Chancellor Angela Merkel** with the **UNHCR 'Nansen' Refugee Award for the year 2022** for her '**moral and political courage**' during the refugee crisis in Syria.

Important facts

- The award selection committee said she was chosen for her leadership, courage and compassion, which helped ensure the protection of millions of desperate asylum seekers.
- Merkel will be honoured with the award on **October 10 in Geneva.**

Merkel's efforts for refugee protection

- Under the leadership of former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Germany gave asylum to more than **1.2 million refugees** and asylum seekers in **2015 and 2016.**
- These refugees had reached **Germany** to save lives from violent conflict in **Syria and other places.**
- UN Refugee Agency High Commissioner **Filippo Grandi** praised the former chancellor's resolve to stand up for the protection of refugees, human rights and international law.

About UNHCR Nansen Refugee Award

- This award was established in **1954.**
- This award is given every year in memory of **Fridjof Nansen**, devoted to Norway's scientific, diplomatic and human welfare work.

- This award is awarded to an individual, group or organisation that has made efforts to protect refugees, displaced and homeless people.

9. Election Commission launched Matadata Junction (Oct. 3, 2022)

The Election Commission launched **Matadata Junction**, a year-long voter awareness program on All India Radio on October 3.

Important facts

- Matadata Junction was launched in a program organised at **Akashvani Rang Bhawan, New Delhi**.
- Chief Election Commissioner of India **Rajiv Kumar** inaugurated the program in the presence of Election Commissioner of India **Anoop Chandra Pandey**, CEO Prasar Bharati **Mayank Kumar Agarwal**.
- DG AIR News Vasudha Gupta and actor Pankaj Tripathi, who is an ECI state icon, were present on the occasion.

About Matadata Junction

- Under this, **52 episodes of 15 minutes** duration will be telecast every Friday on **Vividh Bharati stations, FM Rainbow, FM Gold and primary channels of All India Radio**.
- Each program will be based on a specific **theme** on the electoral process.
- All 52 themes aim to encourage all eligible citizens, especially young and first-time voters.
- Quiz, interviews with experts, and songs produced by EC's **SVEEP (Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation)** team will be played in every episode.
- The program includes a Citizens' Corner where any citizen can ask questions or make suggestions on any aspect of voting.

Matadata Junction will be conducted in 23 languages

- **23 languages are** - Assamese, Bengali, English, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santhali, Maithili & Dogri.

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. Senior IAS officer Ajay Bhadoo appointed as Deputy Election Commissioner (Oct. 2, 2022)

The Appointment committee of the Union Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 2 October 2022, has approved the appointment of **Ajay Bhadoo** as the Deputy Election Commissioner of the Election Commission of India.

Ajay Bhadoo is a 1999-batch Indian Administrative Officer (IAS) officer of the Gujarat cadre. He has been appointed as the deputy election commissioner until July 24, 2024 or till further order, whichever is earlier.

Election Commission of India

It is a constitutional body which was set up on 25 January 1950, under article 324 of the constitution.

It is the main body which conducts election of the President, Vice-President, Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha and the State Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council.

It **does not conduct** elections of the Panchayats and the municipalities.

The Election Commission of India consists of the Chief Election Commissioner and two other members.

Current Chief Election commissioner: Rajiv **Kumar** (25th Chief Election Commissioner)

Other members: **Anup Chandra Pandey**