

MCQ Question · mcqquestion.com

Nagendra Singh: President of the International Court of Justice

Free · Share

Nagendra Singh: President of the International Court of Justice

Nagendra Singh ran India's national elections, then left to judge the world's biggest disputes between nations. Within thirteen years, he went from Chief Election Commissioner of India to President of the International Court of Justice. He was India's fourth Chief Election Commissioner and the first Indian President of the ICJ.

> **1914** Born in Dungarpur, Rajasthan.
> **1972-73** India's 4th Chief Election Commissioner.
> **1973** Judge at the ICJ; Padma Vibhushan.
> **1985-88** President of the ICJ.

ICJ: International Court of Justice, The Hague.

CEC: Chief Election Commissioner.

ICS: Indian Civil Service.

Nicaragua v. US: 1986 landmark ICJ case.

1 Chapter 1: Life and Offices

Must Know

Born in Dungarpur

- Nagendra Singh was born on 18 March 1914 in Dungarpur, Rajasthan.
- He died on 11 December 1988, in The Hague, Netherlands.

From Mayo College to the ICS

- He was educated at Mayo College and at St John's College, Cambridge.
- He then joined the Indian Civil Service (ICS).

The big offices

- 1966-1972: Secretary to the President of India.
- 1 October 1972 to 6 February 1973: India's 4th Chief Election Commissioner.
- 1973: judge at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.
- 1976-1979: ICJ Vice-President.
- 1985-1988: ICJ President.
- 1973: Padma Vibhushan, India's second-highest civilian honour.

Remember: CEC 1972-73 · ICJ judge 1973 · VP 1976-79 · President 1985-88.

> **Quick check 1.** Nagendra Singh was India's 4th Chief Election Commissioner. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

2 Chapter 2: Career and the Nicaragua Case

Good to Know

Earlier civil service posts

- Before the ICJ, Singh held several senior civil service posts.
- They included Regional Commissioner for the Eastern States, Joint Secretary in the Defence Ministry and Director-General of Transport.

- He was also a member of the Constituent Assembly of India, which drafted the Constitution.
- See The Constituent Assembly's Drafting Committee.

At the UN and beyond

- Singh represented India at the UN General Assembly in 1966, 1969 and 1975.
- He served part-time on the UN International Law Commission from 1967 to 1972.
- He was elected Secretary of the International Bar Association.
- He was a prolific author on international law, and taught at several leading universities.

The biggest case: Nicaragua v. United States (1986)

- As ICJ President, Singh presided over this landmark case.
- The Court ruled the US had broken international law.
- It had backed Contra rebels against Nicaragua's government and mined its harbours.
- Singh voted with the majority, and also wrote his own separate opinion.

Only four Indian ICJ judges, ever

- B.N. Rau (1952-53).
- Nagendra Singh (1973-88).
- R.S. Pathak (1989-91), also India's 18th Chief Justice.
- Dalveer Bhandari (since 2012).
- Singh succeeded ICJ President Taslim Elias, and was succeeded as President by José Ruda.

Quick check 2. Nagendra Singh served as a judge in the Indian judicial system before the ICJ. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

3 Chapter 3: An Unusual Path

Great to Know

Civil service to ICJ

- Singh moved from Secretary to the President, to Chief Election Commissioner, to ICJ judge, all in a single decade.
- He never served as a judge in the Indian judicial system first.

A different route than Pathak

- R.S. Pathak reached the ICJ only after serving as India's Chief Justice.

- Singh's route ran through India's civil service and administration instead.
- See Judges of the Supreme Court of India.

A rare dual perspective

- He ran one country's elections, then adjudicated disputes between nations.
- For the institution he once led, see The Election Commission and Electoral Reforms.
- His honour belongs to the system in Padma Awards.

> **Think it through: Why is a former election chief a good world judge?**
>
> Both jobs need neutrality and respect for rules. Running a national election builds trust in fair process. That habit carries into judging disputes between states.

Quick Q&A

- **Born?** 18 March 1914, Dungarpur.
- **CEC term?** 1 October 1972 to 6 February 1973.
- **ICJ President years?** 1985 to 1988.
- **Landmark case?** Nicaragua v. United States, 1986.
- **Indian ICJ judges?** Rau, Singh, Pathak, Bhandari.

Practice MCQs

1. Nagendra Singh was India's 4th Chief Election Commissioner before moving on to which international role in 1973?

A. Secretary-General of the United Nations

B. Judge at the International Court of Justice (ICJ)

C. President of the International Bar Association

D. Judge at the International Criminal Court

See answer ↓

2. Nagendra Singh served as President of the International Court of Justice from 1985 to 1988. What made this appointment historically significant for India?

A. He was the youngest ICJ President in history

B. He was the first Asian to hold that position

C. He was the first non-lawyer to hold that position

D. He was the first Indian to hold that position

See answer ↓

3. Before his international law career, Nagendra Singh served as Secretary to the President of India, from 1966 to which year?

A. 1966

B. 1975

C. 1972

D. 1969

See answer ↓

4. Besides Nagendra Singh, which of these Indians also served as a judge of the ICJ, after first serving as Chief Justice of India?

A. R.S. Pathak

B. Dalveer Bhandari

C. Nagendra Singh himself

D. B.N. Rau

See answer ↓

5. In which Indian princely state was Nagendra Singh born, in 1914?

A. Jaipur

B. Dungarpur

C. Jodhpur

D. Udaipur

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **B.** Singh became a judge of the ICJ in 1973, after his term as Chief Election Commissioner. He was not the first Indian at the Court, since B. N. Rau served there in 1952-1953. Singh later became the first Indian President of the ICJ. ↑ Q1
2. **D.** Singh was the first Indian to serve as ICJ President, capping a career that began in India's civil service. ↑ Q2
3. **C.** He served as Secretary to the President from 1966 to 1972, just before becoming Chief Election Commissioner. ↑ Q3
4. **A.** R.S. Pathak served as India's 18th Chief Justice before joining the ICJ in 1989, a different path from Singh's. ↑ Q4
5. **B.** Singh was born in Dungarpur, Rajasthan, into the state's royal family. ↑ Q5

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2

Curated by Arsalan Zuberi · mcqquestion.com

Scan to read online

https://mcqquestion.com/articles/polity0197-nagendra-singh-president-of-the-international-court-of-justice/