

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.1755
TO BE ANSWERED ON 15.12.2025

INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE BILL

1755. MS. DOLA SEN:

Will the Minister of Statistics and Programme Implementation be pleased to state:

- (a) the criteria which is used in the draft Bill to select recommendations of the adopted 2020 Mashelkar Committee;
- (b) whether Government has conducted or disclosed any impact assessment on how a nominated Board may affect ISI's academic autonomy and research independence if not, the reasons thereof; and
- (c) whether Government will publish the comments and suggestions received during the public consultation process before finalising the Bill?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE [RAO INDERJIT SINGH]

(a) The draft 'Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) Bill, 2025' intends, *inter-alia*, to address several structural and governance issues identified by the Mashelkar Committee constituted in 2020. Under the existing review framework of the Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959, four Review Committees (RCs) from time to time, have examined the functioning and progress of ISI. It has emerged from these reviews that the governance structure of ISI is characterized by several legacy issues. The second, third and fourth RCs have suggested reduction in the large size of the ISI Council, which is the governing body of ISI.

The fourth ISI RC under the Chairmanship of Dr. RA Mashelkar, which submitted its Report in 2021 identified several structural issues in the governance of the ISI which allude to institutional inefficiencies, lack of accountability, and resistance to reform. In this regard, the fourth RC has noted that internal issues and interests overtake the visionary leadership role that the Council is expected to play, and status quo often becomes the only viable option and, therefore, recommended sweeping modifications to the existing structures in the Institute. Owing to large size of the ISI Council and greater internal representation in it, the fourth RC recommended downsizing and restructuring of the Council.

The ISI governance system is heavily reliant on elections, with multiple positions filled by internal voting rather than appointments based on merit. In this regard, the fourth RC has recommended discontinuance of elections for Heads of Divisions and Dean. The Mashelkar Committee was also concerned to note that accountability amongst the workers of the Institute, including the scientific workers, is low, work norms are scant, non-performance goes unpunished, and proposals on any fundamental reforms (including some suggested by the previous review committees) have so far proved difficult to implement.

In view of all the above, the draft ISI Bill 2025 is prepared to introduce a comprehensive new legislation, for upscaling the existing legislation Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959 to the level of governing legislations of other peer Institutions of National Importance (INIs) such as IITs/IIMs with the objective of overhaul and modernization of the Institute's governance framework by enhancing its autonomy and accountability. The new Act reiterates the declaration of Indian Statistical Institute as an Institution of National Importance, and provides for incorporation of Indian Statistical Institute as a body corporate, and also introduces framework of statutory bodies for effective governance. The statutory authorities of the Institute namely the Visitor, the Board of Governors with 11 members, an Academic Council, the Director, Centre-Directors and the Registrar and their roles and responsibilities have been incorporated in the proposed statute.

(b) The introduction of an empowered Board of Governors in draft legislation is based on best practices, well-established and proven model of peer INIs such as IITs/ IIMs. In line with statutory provisions of Boards in IITs and IIMs, the Board of Governors will be the principal policy making executive body of the Indian Statistical Institute and its composition, power and functions have been provided in the draft ISI Bill, 2025. The Board will be responsible for the general superintendence, direction and control of the affairs of the Institute. The Board of Governors will be leaner body consisting of 11 members and having a balanced representation of internal and external members. The statutory Academic Council is recognized as the principal academic body with wide-ranging responsibilities for courses, eligibility, examination systems and promotion of interdisciplinary research. Collectively, these provisions strengthen academic autonomy. In addition, Centers are also given administrative and academic autonomy and will be functioning through their respective Management Councils.

(c) The pre-legislative consultation on the draft ISI Bill 2025 has been done and the public comments and suggestions so received have been examined in the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. Further revisions in the draft Bill have been made and copy of the revised draft 'The Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2025' has been placed on Ministry's website for further pre-legislative consultation till 15 December 2025.
