

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3020  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 11.03.2026**

**INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE BILL, 2025**

**3020. SHRI JAGANNATH SARKAR:**

**Will the Minister of STATISTICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION be pleased to state:**

**(a) whether the Government is aware that the existing governance framework of the Indian Statistical Institute under the Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959 has been characterised by outdated, election-driven structures, excessive internal representation and weak accountability and if so, the details thereof;**

**(b) whether multiple Review Committees, including the Mashelkar Committee (2021), have recorded concerns relating to institutional inefficiency, resistance to reform, lack of performance norms and non-punishment of non-performance and if so, the details thereof;**

**(c) whether the proposed ISI Bill, 2025 has been introduced to replace these legacy practices with a lean Board of Governors, merit-based leadership and clearer accountability on the lines of IITs and IIMs;**

**(d) whether the Bill is intended to strengthen academic autonomy through modern governance mechanisms and if so, the details thereof; and**

**(e) the present status of the ISI Bill, 2025, including the stage of pre-legislative consultation, Cabinet approval and the proposed timeline for its introduction and passage in Parliament?**

**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) & (b). Yes, Sir. Under the existing framework of the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) 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 many legacy issues. The fourth ISI Review Committee under the Chairmanship of Dr. R A 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.**

**The second, third and fourth RCs have suggested reduction in large size of the ISI Council, which is the governing body of ISI. On the other hand, the size of the ISI Council has actually increased from time to time and has now become 33. At present, there are 13 employees of the ISI within its Council, in addition to the Director and three General Body members who are closely associated with ISI. This implies that 17 out of 33 members of the Council are internal and Council discussions are heavily influenced by internal opinions, preventing independent governance. 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, which was not implemented by the Institute.**

**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, which was not implemented by the Institute. 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.**

**While concluding, the fourth Review Committee was of the view that ISI can rise to its true potential and effect a turnaround, if it can bring in certain fundamental changes, some of which are not just incremental, but truly radical in its structure, systems and processes backed up by much higher aspirational levels, from top leadership, down to every worker. ISI must reimagine, reinvent and reposition itself to regain its leadership position and remain relevant in changing times and as ISI**

**reaches its centenary year in 2031, it should aim to create a new ISI@100 vision, transitioning from the current good to the very best, one of the foremost institutes globally.**

**(c). Yes, Sir. The draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2026 has been prepared to introduce a comprehensive new legislation, for upscaling the existing legislation ISI Act, 1959 to the level of governing legislations of other peer 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 draft Bill inter alia intends to address structural and legacy issues identified by Review Committees over the past decades.**

**The proposed Bill provides for incorporation of Indian Statistical Institute as a body corporate, and also introduces framework of statutory bodies for effective governance. The Board of Governors will be an empowered and leaner body consisting of 11 members. The Board has been provided wide-ranging regulation making powers on institutional matters. The proposed Bill also introduces and streamlines the channels of accountability at various level.**

**(d). Yes Sir. The draft ISI Bill 2026 provides more robust and contemporary governance framework which enables ISI to emerge as a globally recognised centre of excellence in statistical and allied disciplines. The draft legislation is founded upon the guiding principles of Excellence, Effective Governance, Autonomy and Accountability. The statutory authorities of the Institute namely the Visitor, the Board of Governors, an Academic Council, the Director, Management Councils, Centre-Directors and the Registrar and their roles and responsibilities have been incorporated in the proposed statute. The Board of Governors will be an empowered and leaner body consisting of 11 members and having a balanced representation of internal and external members. There would be only one government nominee on the Board, five external experts (including Chairperson) and five internal members of the Institute including two members of the Academic Council. This would provide academic and governance autonomy to the Institute.**

**All full time Professors and other full-time faculty (as may be determined by the Board) are proposed to be included in the Academic Council. This will make the Academic Council broader and more representative, and entrenches the participation of senior faculty in academic governance, thereby strengthening the academic autonomy of the Institute. The**

**proposed statutory Academic Council is given mandatory as well as recommendatory powers, while the existing Academic Council can only make recommendations to ISI Council.**

**The Bill provides for recognition of the Centres of the Institute (which will be approved by the Board) and grant them a degree of autonomy. The Centres of the Institute will be given adequate financial, administrative and academic powers, so as to enable them to attain autonomy in their decision making and functioning through their respective Management Councils.**

**Collectively, the abovementioned provisions will strengthen the academic autonomy. The Bill introduces and streamlines the channels of accountability at various level. It provides provisions for review and inquiry by the Visitor, review of medium-term and long-term plan by the Board, and submission of annual performance report and annual financial report by the Director. By aligning ISI with the legal and governance framework of other peer Institutions of National Importance, the ISI Bill 2026 intends to enhance institutional autonomy and accountability and also strengthen its capacity to deliver world-class education, research, and policy support.**

**(e) The pre-legislative consultation, including inter-ministerial consultation, on the draft ISI Bill has concluded. Legal vetting of the draft has also been completed. The process of Cabinet approval has been initiated. The matter is under consideration in accordance with the prescribed procedure.**

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