

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

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.4358
TO BE ANSWERED ON 18.03.2026**

DRAFT INDIAN STATISTICAL INSTITUTE BILL, 2025

4358. DR. D RAVI KUMAR:

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

(a) whether the Government is aware that the Draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill, 2025, circulated for public comments in 2024-25, has raised serious concerns among Members of Parliament, faculty associations alumni and statistical experts regarding the repeal of the ISI Act, 1959 and if so, the details thereof;

(b) the rationale for proposing major changes in governance, composition of the Council, and administrative control of an Institution of National Importance without prior consultation with ISI's statutory bodies, academic staff and stakeholders;

(c) whether the Government has assessed the potential impact of the draft provisions on ISI's academic autonomy, research independence and public-interest mandate in national data systems and if so, the details thereof; and

(d) whether the Government proposes to review, amend or withdraw the Draft Bill and undertake wider, transparent consultations before introducing any revised legislation in Parliament and if so, the details thereof?

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) to (c) As per the pre-legislative consultation policy, the public/ stakeholder consultation on the draft Indian Statistical Institute (ISI)

Bill, 2025 was done during the period from 25.09.2025 to 03.11.2025. In response, comments were received from diverse stakeholders including Members of Parliament, current and former faculty members, employees, students and alumni of ISI, members of the General Body of ISI Society, members of ISI Council, and the ISI Workers Organisation (ISIWO). After receipt of these comments, a revised draft of Bill was placed in public domain for second round of pre-legislative consultations during 28.11.2025 till 05.01.2026. In light of continued pre-legislative consultation, further revisions were made in the revised draft Bill.

Furthermore, a press release was issued on 24.12.2025 whereby Frequently Asked Questions-Answers on revised draft Bill were placed in public domain to extend clarity on the proposed legislation. (available at https://www.mospi.gov.in/uploads/announcements/announcements_1766569183756_57ee3fdd-d5ef-4067-a779-15028689a6ac_FAQs_on_draft_ISI_Bill.pdf)

The draft Bill was prepared after preliminary consultation with the stakeholders and it seeks to provide incorporation of ISI as a body corporate and codify an empowered governance framework with statutory bodies and, and it will replace and repeal the ISI Act, 1959.

Four previous Review Committees have examined functioning and progress of ISI. It has emerged from these reviews that the governance of ISI is characterized by legacy issues such as large size of ISI's Governing Council and excessive internal representation in it, institutional inefficiencies, lack of accountability, and resistance to reform. The 4th 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. The 4th Review Committee recommended that '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.' However, any fundamental reforms (including some suggested by the four Review Committees) have so far proved difficult to implement by ISI due to structural rigidity and complex governance structure.

In order to address legacy issues and to enable deeper institutional reform, the Indian Statistical Institute Bill is proposed for bringing governance reform in ISI. The draft Bill seeks to provide incorporation

of ISI as a body corporate and codify an empowered governance framework with statutory bodies and, and it will replace and repeal the outdated ISI Act, 1959.

The draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill is based on best practices, well-established and proven model of peer Institutions of National Importance (INIs) such as IITs/ IIMs and it has been customized, wherever necessary, considering the specialized nature of the ISI. The proposed legislation is founded upon four guiding principles – Excellence, Effective Governance, Autonomy and Accountability.

The draft ISI Bill 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 public-interest mandate of ISI will remain fully safeguarded as the Institute will continue to be an Institution of National Importance. 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 Bill.

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 – only one government nominee, 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 intends to enhance institutional autonomy and accountability and also strengthen its capacity to deliver world-class education, research, and policy support.

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