

India's IIAS Presidency - Proposal to Introduce an International Governance Index

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India's IIAS Presidency Latest News

- India, as the current president of the **International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)**, has proposed the development of a new International Governance Index.
- This initiative comes **amid India's declining rankings** in several existing global indices, which the government has often criticized for being **perception-based and lacking transparency**.

International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS)

- **About:**
 - The IIAS is **an international non-profit organization** created in 1930.
 - It is a Federation of **31 Member Countries** (including India, Japan, China, Germany and Saudi Arabia), 20 National Sections and 15 Academic Research Centres jointly **collaborating for scientific research on public administration**.

- **Working relationship with the UN:** While the **Brussels** (Belgium)-based IIAS is not a formally affiliated body of the UN, it actively engages with the UN's work in public administration.
- **India's participation:** The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (**DARPG**) represents India as a Member State of the IIAS since **1998**.

India's IIAS Presidency

- **Many firsts:** This is the first time in the history of IIAS that the election to the post of President was held by **ballot process** and it is the first time that **India has secured the historic mandate** for the Presidency (for 2025-2028) of the IIAS.
- **DARPG involvement:** It is spearheading the proposal, with IIAS President V. Srinivas highlighting the agenda for strengthening scientific strategy in governance measurement.

Key Developments

- **Proposal of International Governance Index:**
 - Plans to leverage existing frameworks of the **World Bank (WB)**, **OECD** (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and **UN DESA** (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs).
 - **A working group will be formed**, and the agenda will be part of the IIAS Annual Conference 2026.
- **India's criticism of existing indices:**
 - In its reports, the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) Institute of the University of Gothenburg, Sweden, has **listed India as an electoral autocracy** since 2017. The latest report (2025) ranked India **100** out of 179 countries.
 - **Freedom in the World Index** and **EIU Democracy Index** placed India at levels comparable to the emergency period.
 - **Economic Advisory Council to PM (2022)** highlighted lack of transparency in methodologies.
- **World Governance Indicators (WGI):**
 - It **covers over 200 economies with 6 parameters** – voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption.
 - The 2023 WGI gives India the percentile rank of –
 - 51.47 for voice and accountability;
 - 21.33 for political stability;
 - 67.92 for government effectiveness;
 - 47.17 for regulatory quality;
 - 56.13 for rule of law and
 - 41.51 for control of corruption.

Concerns with Current Global Indices

- **Subjectivity:** Reliance on perception-based data and expert opinions without adequate on-ground presence.
- **Transparency issues:** Unclear weighting in credit rating agency assessments.
- **Bias:** Concentration of assessment by **Western institutions**, raising questions of contextual accuracy.

India's Strategic Objectives

- **Rebalancing narratives:** Challenge dominance of Western-centric governance assessments.
- **Bridging North-South divide:** Promote **inclusivity** and balanced representation of developing nations.
- **Governance reform agenda:** Align with the Indian government's vision of "**maximum governance, minimum government.**"

Way Forward

- **Establishing methodology:** Ensure evidence-based, transparent, and inclusive metrics for governance.
- **International collaboration:** Engage with global bodies (World Bank, OECD, UN DESA) for credibility.
- **Strengthening domestic research:** Encourage **Indian think tanks** to develop independent indices.
- **Promoting inclusivity:** Incorporate perspectives from both developed and developing nations.

Conclusion

- India's proposal for an International Governance Index under its IIAS presidency reflects its bid to **shape global governance discourse** and reduce dependence on Western perception-based indices.
- If implemented effectively, this initiative could **strengthen transparency, inclusivity, and credibility** in global governance rankings, providing **a balanced platform for both developed and developing countries.**

Source: **IE**

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