

Exclusive | India seeks to challenge Western indices, pitches new governance index through body in Brussels

After its critique of indices on freedom, democracy, governance

Written by Damini Nath

New Delhi | Updated: October 4, 2025 07:35 AM IST

🕒 5 min read

As Trusted
Source on



1



India, which won the presidency of the Brussels-based IIAS (in picture) for the first time in June this year, has pitched for research on establishing this index. (Photo: iisa.org)

OVER the past few years, several global indices have portrayed India in a negative light and the government has questioned their methodology. Now, as the current president of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (IIAS), India has proposed a new international governance index, The Indian Express has learnt.

India, which won the presidency of the Brussels-based IIAS for the first time in June this year, has pitched for research on establishing this index. As India completed 100 days of its three-year presidency, IIAS released Friday a list of achievements that included advancing this research agenda through initiatives such as the international governance index.

When reached for comment, Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) secretary and IIAS president V Srinivas said: “On September 25, 2025, the Indian presidency discussed with the Research Advisory Committee of IIAS the agenda for strengthening the scientific strategy by developing an international governance index and trend analysis as a core activity for IIAS. The study methodology, the collaborations by leveraging existing work of World Bank, OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) and potential partnerships with UN DESA (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs), will be pursued by the Research Advisory Committee.”

Also Read | Trump orders Israel to stop bombing Gaza after Hamas partially accepts his peace plan

He added that the committee would establish a working group to develop the index . The topic would be incorporated into the agenda for the IIAS annual conference in 2026, he said.

This move at IIAS comes at a time when India’s rank has slipped on global 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 in 2025 ranked India 100 out of 179 countries on the “liberal democracy index”, in which Denmark was ranked one.

In 2022, the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister had published a working paper on the Freedom in the World Index, the V-DEM indices and the EIU Democracy Index.

“Freedom in the World Index and V-DEM indices have placed India at the same level as during the Emergency of the 1970s...There are serious problems with the methodology used in these perception-based indices...Since these indices are inputs into the World Governance Indicators,

the World Bank should ensure greater transparency and accountability from these institutions,” said an EAC-PM statement on November 22, 2022.

Independent Indian think tanks should be encouraged to do “similar perception-based indices for the world in order to break the monopoly of a handful of western institutions,” the statement said.

Also Read | 2025 Index of Economic Freedom: Top 10 ‘economically free’ countries worldwide, and where does India rank?

Speaking at a seminar organised by the Finance Ministry on November 15, 2023, Chief Economic Adviser V Anantha Nageswaran had called for greater transparency in the Worldwide Governance Indicators, which he said are used by credit rating agencies in making their assessments.

“This World Governance Index itself is a composite of several sub-indices, which are purely based on the subjective opinions of some so-called expert institutions which do not have presence on the ground nor do they understand whether the context in which they are making these judgements is appropriate or apt for the member countries. But these indices become an important part of the assessment methodology of the credit rating agencies and they do not reveal the extent to which these indices are implanted in their assessment process, the weights they carry, because there seems to be qualitative overlays on top of qualitative assessments,” he had said.

The WGI covers over 200 economies and includes six indicators: voice and accountability; political stability and absence of violence/terrorism; government effectiveness; regulatory quality; rule of law; and control of corruption. The 2023 WGI, the most recent report available, gives India the percentile rank of 51.47 for voice and accountability; 21.33 for political stability and absence of violence/terrorism; 67.92 for government effectiveness; 47.17 for regulatory quality; 56.13 for rule of law and 41.51 for control of corruption.

Zero is the lowest and 100 the highest rank.

The IIAS, established in 1930, has 31 member countries, including India, Japan, China, Germany and Saudi Arabia. While it is not affiliated with the UN, it actively works with it. An international non-profit, IIAS organises events for public servants and academics and produces research on

public governance. India had won the presidency for 2025-2028 after the first-ever election for the post, defeating Austria.

Announcing the win, a government statement in June had said the Indian presidency of IAS would work on Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#)'s vision for "maximum governance, minimum government". "The Indian presidency will seek to bridge the North-South divide with focus on unity and inclusivity," the statement had said.

FROM THE HOMEPAGE



Trump orders Israel to stop bombing Gaza after Hamas partially accepts his peac...



Two foreign coaches bitten by stray dogs at World Para Athletics Championships i...



Damini Nath

Follow

