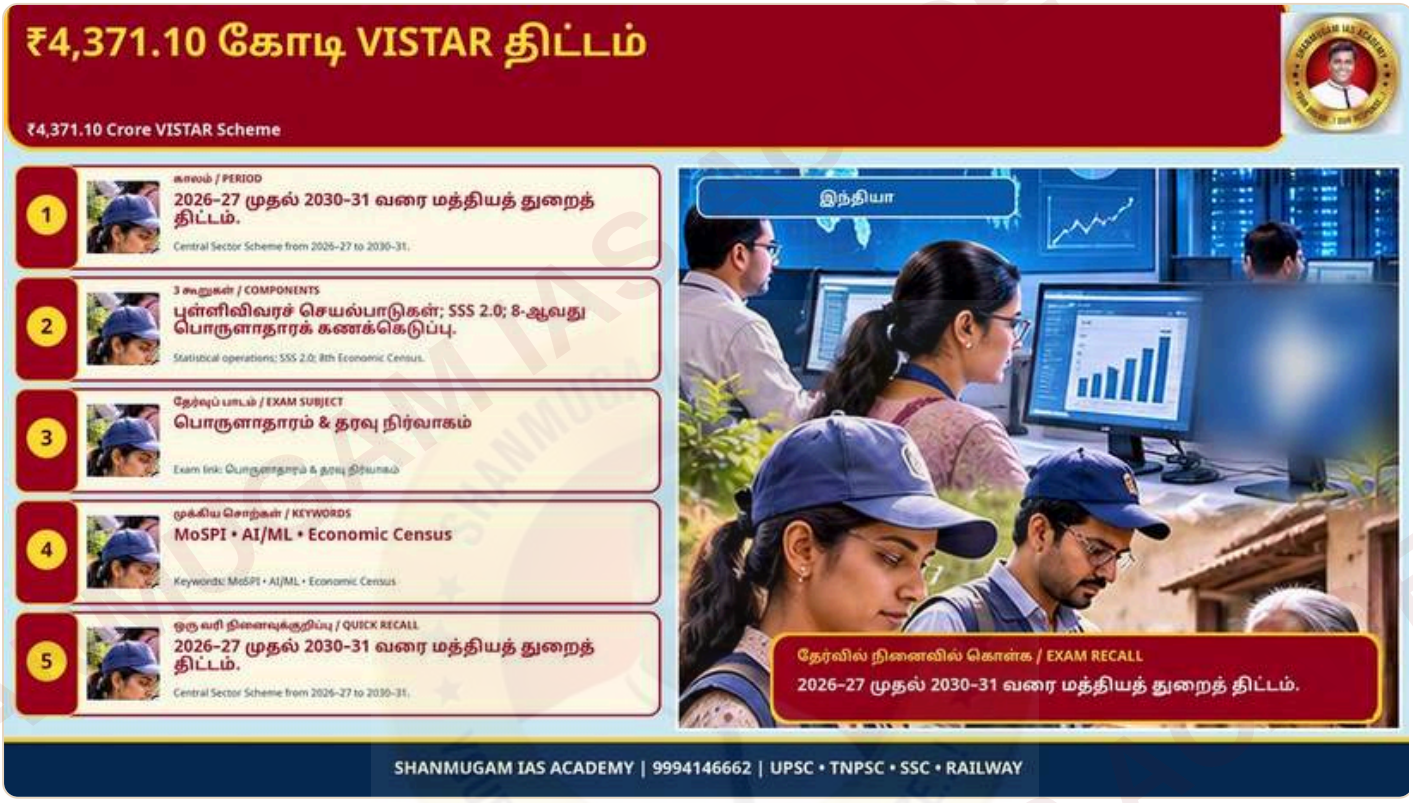
Union Cabinet approves ₹4,371.10-crore 'VISTAR' scheme to modernise India's statistical system

Governance · 4 November 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/11/04



News

On 4 Nov 2026 the Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi approved 'VISTAR' (Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics & Research), a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), with an outlay of ₹4,371.10 crore for 2026–27 to 2030–31 (the 16th Finance Commission cycle). It brings all of MoSPI's surveys, data work and the Economic Census under one umbrella – 59 surveys instead of the earlier 43 major ones, the 8th Economic Census, and use of AI/ML. Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw briefed the media.

Key facts

Full name	Viksit Bharat Initiative for Statistical Transformation, Analytics & Research
Outlay / period	₹4,371.10 crore; 2026–27 to 2030–31; Central Sector Scheme
Ministry	Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)
Components	(1) Statistical operations & ecosystem strengthening (2) Support for Statistical Strengthening to States (SSS 2.0) (3) Economic Census
Surveys	59 (earlier 43); 8th Economic Census – non-farm establishments down to panchayat/ward level

New indices	Headline Index of Services Production; Index of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises
Previous scheme	Capacity Development scheme – ₹3,179 crore (Feb 2022, 15th FC cycle)

Background

- Aim: a 'real-time, future-ready' official statistical architecture using alternative data (mobile phone, scanner, e-commerce) and AI/ML in processing and validation. Under SSS 2.0, funds to States are deliverable-linked and support district-level and million-plus-city estimates (e.g. PLFS) and State/district GDP compilation.
- Institutions: MoSPI was formed in 1999. In 2019 the Central Statistical Office (CSO) and the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO, 1950) were merged to form the National Statistics Office (NSO). Dadabhai Naoroji made the first estimate of national income (1867–68); Mahalanobis chaired the National Income Committee of 1949.
- P.C. Mahalanobis (1893–1972): founded the Indian Statistical Institute (ISI), Kolkata, in 1931; devised the 'Mahalanobis distance'; his model, prioritising heavy industry, was the basis of the Second Five-Year Plan (1956–61). His birthday, 29 June, is observed as National Statistics Day (since 2007).

Tamil Nadu link: SSS 2.0 will give central support for State/district GDP compilation, which in Tamil Nadu is done by the Department of Economics and Statistics (DES), Chennai. The 8th Economic Census will be conducted together with State governments.

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