

**Regarding Need to accord 'Institution of National Importance' status to Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST), Thiruvananthapuram-Laid**

**DR. SHASHI THAROOR (THIRUVANANTHAPURAM):** I wish to draw the attention of the Hon'ble Minister of Education to the need to accord the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST), Thiruvananthapuram, the status of an Institution of National Importance and a Centrally Funded Technical Institute. The first of its kind in India and Asia, IIST imparts cutting-edge higher education in space science and technology. It also serves the vital national interest of providing the Department of Space and ISRO with outstanding space scientists and engineers, for the foundational vision of IIST was to 'nurture exceptional human resource[s]' for India's space programme. Declared autonomous under the Department of Space, IIST secured 51st place in the 2024 NIRF Engineering rankings and earned A+ accreditation from NAAC. In 2020, the Space Commission recommended its elevation to an Institution of National Importance, yet this remains unrealized. By definition, such institutions serve as pivotal players in developing highly skilled personnel, a role IIST has already fulfilled and surpassed. I, therefore urge the Minister to recognise IIST as an INI and a CFTI, so that with greater autonomy and resources it may emerge as a world-class institution and offer students the opportunity to seamlessly join other CFTIs for Master's and PhD programmes and strengthen India's capacity to reach new frontiers in space exploration.