From SIO's Desk

Dear Readers,

As we step into the New Year, let me extend our collective warmest wishes to each and every one of you. May 2025 be a year filled with personal fulfillment, professional growth, and success in all our endeavors.

The year 2024 was truly remarkable for NIC, Odisha, as it marked significant milestones in our journey of learning, innovation, and collaboration. We commenced the year with the Tech Expo, exploring AI concepts, and concluded with the prestigious Gov.AI Expo, where we showcased 14 Proof of Concepts (PoCs). These efforts highlight our commitment to integrate AI into diverse domains of eGovernance.

We witnessed robust collaborations with reputed industries and academic institutions, including IIT, NISER, TCS, Capgemini, IIM, Trident, GIET, OUTR, IITTM, and ILS. These partnerships have significantly contributed to knowledge management, driving forward our vision of good governance.

The past years also brought us opportunities to share our achievements beyond state and national borders. Delegations from Punjab, Telangana, Assam, and Sikkim visited NIC, Odisha, to explore our innovative products, and NIC, New Delhi proudly hosted Vietnam delegates, who reviewed the SATHI project being developed here.

Our District Informatics Officers (DIOs) played a pivotal role in ensuring the seamless execution of electoral processes, earning well-deserved recognition from the Chief Electoral Officer, Odisha, and the Hon'ble Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly.

In 2024, several of our initiatives received national acclaim. Products like eDetection and BhuArjan were recognized as enterprise applications, while e-Panchayat Sabha earned the National Digital Transformation Award in the 'ICT Implementation in Rural Development' category. These accomplishments stand as a testament to our collective dedication and innovative spirit.

As we embrace 2025, I am confident that together we can achieve even greater heights. Let us continue to build on our successes, leveraging technology to transform governance and improve lives.

Wishing you and your loved ones a Happy and Prosperous New Year!

Warm regards,
Dr. Ashok Kumar Hota
Dy. Director General & SIO, Odisha

State Level E-Governance Workshop and Gov.AI Expo

A three-day State Level e-Governance workshop commenced at Dr. N. Sheshagiri Memorial Hall, NIC, Bhubaneswar, Odisha on 16th December 2024. The event was inaugurated by Shri Manoj Ahuja, IAS, Chief Secretary of Odisha. Shri Ahuja emphasized the transformative potential of artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies in accelerating various welfare schemes in the state.

Shri R. S. Gopalan, IAS, Chief Electoral Officer of Odisha, graced the occasion as the Guest of Honor. He shared his insights on artificial intelligence, particularly focusing on Policy Intelligence Powering Generative AI Safety & Governance.

Young scientists from NIC showcased their expertise and creativity across 14 topics using models and simulations powered by artificial intelligence. On this occasion, the Project Profile for the year 2025 and Compendium of Gov.AI Expo were unveiled by the distinguished guests.

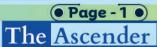## Hon'ble Minister of E&IT, Health, PA inaugurated "Future Gov AI Conclave"

On 18th December, 2024 the "Future Gov AI Conclave" was inaugurated by Dr. Mukesh Mahaling, Hon'ble Minister of Electronics & IT, Health & Family Welfare and Parliamentary Affairs, Govt. of Odisha at Guru Kelu Charan Mohapatra Odissi Research Centre, Bhubaneswar in the presence of Shri Vishal Kumar Dev, IAS, Principal Secretary, Electronics & IT and Energy Departments, Shri Amitabh Thakur, IPS, Additional Director General of Police & Transport Commissioner, Odisha and Ms. Sharmistha Dasgupta, DDG & HoG (CoE-AI), NIC, New Delhi.

The theme of the conclave was "AI for a Resilient and Inclusive Governance Ecosystem." On this occasion a brochure on "Empowering Governance with Advanced AI Capabilities" was released by the dignitaries.
The experts from IIT, Bhubaneswar, TCS (R&D), NISER, and Capgemini joined for panel discussion on "AI Governance vs AI-Driven Governance: Balancing Growth, Innovation and Security".

Happy New Year 2025

Workshop on Recruitment Examination Models: Challenges & Opportunities

A one-day workshop on "Recruitment Examination Models: Challenges & Opportunities" was held on 11th December 2024 at the Conference Hall, Police Commissionerate Headquarters, Bhubaneswar. The event was organized by the Odisha Sub-Ordinate Staff Selection Commission (OSSSC) and inaugurated by the Chief Secretary of Odisha, in the esteemed presence of Dr. Lalit Das, IPS (Retd.), Chairman, OSSSC, and other dignitaries.

The workshop witnessed active participation from officials of various recruitment bodies, including OPSC, OSSC, Odisha Police Recruitment Board, State Selection Board, NIC, and the IRMS team. Sri Malay Kumar Das, Sr. Director (IT) & ASIO, shared insights on the implementation of the Integrated Recruitment Management System (IRMS) at OSSSC and discussed the future roadmap for its enhancement.

The deliberations focused on formulating collaborative strategies to address challenges in recruitment processes by integrating cutting-edge technologies such as AI-based proctoring, data analytics, and blockchain. The workshop emphasized ensuring fairness and inclusivity while enhancing user experiences through advanced digital platforms. The event successfully paved the way for innovative and technology-driven solutions in recruitment examination models, fostering transparency and efficiency.

State-Level Orientation Programme on CPGRAMS

The Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) is an initiative by the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Government of India, designed to streamline the public grievance redressal mechanism. Developed in partnership with NIC as the technical partner, this online platform enables citizens to lodge grievances with public authorities regarding service delivery. It is accessible 24x7, ensuring effective and timely resolution of issues.

A State-Level Orientation Programme on CPGRAMS was conducted for the Nodal Officers (Grievance) of all state government departments on 11th December 2024, at the State Convention Centre, Lok Seva Bhawan, Bhubaneswar. The event was organized in hybrid mode using Bharat VC, facilitated by the General Administration & Public Grievance Department in collaboration with DARPG, Government of India, and NIC. District Nodal Officers from all districts of Odisha participated virtually, while 102 attendees joined in person at Lok Seva Bhawan.

The training was delivered virtually by the Senior Director (IT) & Head of the DARPG Informatics Division, NIC, New Delhi, along with his team. They provided an in-depth demonstration of CPGRAMS, highlighting its functionalities, user interface, and capabilities as a structured platform for addressing public grievances. Participants' queries were addressed ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the system.

e-Panchayat Sabha Recognized at 15th National Digital Transformation Awards 2024

"e-Panchayat Sabha", a digital workplace for Gram Panchayat (GP) meetings, is an innovative initiative by the Panchayati Raj & Drinking Water Department, Government of Odisha. This workflow-based solution streamlines GP-level meetings, enhancing communication, record-keeping, and data management while fostering inter- and intra-departmental convergence of schemes aligned with GP meeting agendas. The initiative aims to strengthen governance by ensuring effective monitoring and implementation of developmental schemes and social welfare measures.

The e-Panchayat Sabha mobile application complements the web platform, enabling GP officials to manage meeting-related functionalities seamlessly. Stakeholders can access meeting information and documents anytime, anywhere, ensuring transparency and accessibility. Currently operational in all 6,794 GPs of Odisha, this solution has significantly reduced paperwork and bolstered governance efficiency.

For innovative and impactful use of digital tools in the administration and governance of Gram Panchayats for GP level meetings, the e-Panchayat Sabha project was recognized at the 15th National Digital Transformation Awards 2024, organized by GovConnect. The NIC, Odisha State Centre, Bhubaneswar, was awarded the winner's title under the category of 'ICT Implementation in Rural Development' during the awards ceremony held on 13th December, 2024, in Guwahati.

International Conference on Data Science and Management ICDSM-2024 at GIET

Two days long ICDSM-2024 was organised at Gandhi Institute for Education and Technology (GIET), Bhubaneswar during 13th and 14th December 2024. Scientists and Research scholars from India, America, Serbia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland etc. joined physically as well as virtually to discuss and present papers on various aspects of Data Science.

Dr. A. K. Hota, DDG & SIO joined as Chief Guest to inaugurate the conference along with Dr. Milan Tuba, Head - Artificial Intelligence Project, Singidunum University, Serbia, Dr. Raghu C N, Reva University, Bengaluru, Dr. Samarjeet Borah, SMIT, East Sikkim, Smt. Sujata Das, Sr. Director (IT), NIC etc.

The proceedings of the conference comprising of abstracts of all papers to be presented was released by the Dignitaries on this occasion.

First State-level Workshop on Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA)

The first state-wide Citizenship Amendment Act workshop was inaugurated at the Directorate of Census Operations, Bhubaneswar on 17th December, 2024. All DIOs along with the senior officials of NIC, Odisha and Directorate of Census Operations, representatives from Directorate of Post and Officials of State Government participated in this workshop.

The workshop was inaugurated by Shri Uday Narayan Das, IAS, Director, Census Operations and Citizens Registration, Odisha. A brochure highlighting the Act and various measures undertaken in Odisha towards its implementation was released by the dignitaries.

Guidelines of the Citizenship Amendment Act, the role of District Level Committees, Census Operations, application of Geographical Information System (GIS) on Census Data, etc. were deliberated by Mr. Hardhan Karmi, Deputy Director, Mr. Hemant Kumar Singh, Joint Director and Dr. Ritesh Ranjan Pushkar, Senior Geographer.

Balangir District Onboards PM Gati Shakti to Develop District Master Plan

The PM Gati Shakti initiative, India's National Master Plan for Multi-modal Connectivity, has been extended to the district level to facilitate the creation of District Master Plans (DMPs). This extension aims to support district authorities in collaborative planning, identifying infrastructure gaps, and ensuring efficient scheme implementation.

Balangir district in Odisha, along with 27 other aspirational districts across India, has been selected for the first phase of this initiative. To prepare for the rollout, a two-day capacity-building program was organized at BISAG-N, Gandhinagar, on 9th and 10th December, 2024. Shri Manish Kumar, District Informatics Officer (DIO), Balangir, and Shri Sanjaya Kumar Deep, Assistant Director, Planning, DPMU, represented the district during the program.

The training sessions featured detailed presentations on utilizing geospatial tools for infrastructure planning, data integration, and real-time project monitoring. Practical demonstrations highlighted techniques such as data layering, resource optimization, and aligning projects with district-level development priorities. Interactive discussions provided participants with strategies to enhance inter-departmental coordination and implement evidence-based decision-making for sustainable development.

Photo Story

SIOs joined at All India IT Secretaries' meeting at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on 17th December, 2024

5 days Training Program for police officials on managing Immigration Check Post(ICP) using IVFRT to make them ready for observation of Prabasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

Officers from NIC with Hon'ble President at Rashtrapati Bhavan for the success of Upahaar Gift Auction using eAuction portal of NIC

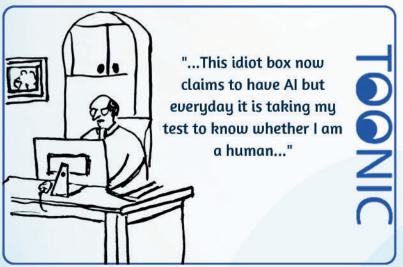State Level e-Governance conference for DIOs & ADIOs of NIC Odisha - 2024

NEARS: Fostering Strong Bonds Among Odisha NICians

NEARS – the NIC Employees' Association for Recreation & Sports, Odisha, brought its unique charm closer to all Odisha NICians through its Annual Family Get-Together on the evening of 18th December, 2024. This much-awaited event witnessed enthusiastic participation from NIC Odisha employees, including DIOs, ADIOs, superannuated officers, and their families, celebrating the spirit of camaraderie and social bonding.

The evening came alive with vibrant cultural performances. Members of NEARS, along with DIOs, ADIOs, and their family members, showcased their talents through chorus singing, solo performances, dancing, instrumental music, comedy acts, and more. The cheerful atmosphere turned the gathering into an unforgettable celebration.

The event concluded with a delicious dinner shared by all, leaving a lasting impression on everyone's hearts and ensuring the memories of this joyous occasion linger for years to come.

NIC Sports Meet 2024

The NIC Sports Meet 2024 was held from 14th to 17th December, 2024 in conjunction with the 3-day e-Gov Conference 2024. Officers, including DIOs and ADIOs, participated enthusiastically in various sports events such as cricket, badminton, table tennis, carrom, chess, musical chairs, and lemon race.

A friendly 20-over cricket match was also organized with the Regional Institute of Education (RIE), Bhubaneswar, a constituent unit of NCERT under the Ministry of Education, Government of India. Winners were honored with trophies and certificates during the Annual Function held on 18th December, 2024. Participation certificates were presented to all participants, recognizing their spirited involvement.

IT by Tea

Generative AI: Is it a black box?

Myth:

Generative AI, often seen as a black box, faces criticism for its opacity and lack of transparency in decision-making. Adhering to the "garbage in, garbage out" principle, it produces biased or unreliable outputs when fed with poor-quality data, raising concerns about trustworthiness.

Truth:

The myth that Generative AI is a "black box" overlooks advancements in Explainable AI (XAI) techniques, which unravel its decision-making processes. By leveraging tools like SHAP and LIME, we can decode model outputs, ensuring transparency and accountability, and provide clear insights into how specific inputs influence predictions. These techniques bridge the gap between complex AI models and human understanding, fostering trust and improving the responsible use of AI in critical sectors.

XAI explains why an AI system predicts a disease diagnosis or treatment plan, clarify decisions behind credit approvals, fraud detection, or stock recommendations, explain the reasoning behind navigation and safety decisions etc.

"...This idiot box now claims to have AI but everyday it is taking my test to know whether I am a human..."

TOONIC

Publications

Brochure on Citizenship Amendment Act-2019 and Status of implementation in Odisha

Table-top Projects profile focused on Technology

Compendium of 14 PoCs exhibited during Gov.AI Expo at NIC, Odisha