



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INFORMATION COMMISSIONS IN INDIA

Minutes of 15th Special General Body Meeting held on November 16-17, 2022 at Goa

Chief Guest: Dr. Pramod Sawant, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa

Participants:

Board of Governors:

- Shri Y.K. Sinha, President, NFICI & Chief Information Commissioner, CIC New Delhi
- Shri R. Rajagopal, Vice President, NFICI & Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Tamil Nadu
- Shri Ajit Prasad Rout, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Assam Member.
- Shri Amrutbhai Patel, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Gujarat.
- Shri Pramod Kumar Thakur, Information Commissioner, SIC Bihar.
- Shri Ashok Kumar Agrawal, Information Commissioner, SIC Chhattisgarh.

Members Present:

- Shri Vishwas R. Satarkar, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Goa.
- Shri N.C. Srinivasa, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Karnataka.
- Dr. Vishwas Mehta, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Kerala.
- Shri Sumit Mullick, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Maharashtra.
- Shri Oinam Sunil Singh, Chief Information Commissioner (I/c), SIC Manipur.
- Shri H. Nongpluh, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Meghalaya.
- Shri I. Meyionen Jamir, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Nagaland.
- Shri Jalada Kumar Tripathy, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Odisha.
- Shri Devendra Bhushan Gupta, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Rajasthan.

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- Shri Anil Chandra Punetha, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Uttarakhand.
- Shri Gote Ete, Information Commissioner, SIC Arunachal Pradesh.
- Shri Genom Tekseng, Information Commissioner, SIC Arunachal Pradesh.
- Shri Sanjay N. Dhavalikar, Information Commissioner, SIC Goa.
- Dr. K.L. Vivekanandan, Information Commissioner, SIC Kerala.
- Shri A. Abdul Hakim, Information Commissioner, SIC Kerala.
- Smt. Srilatha P.R. Information Commissioner, SIC Kerala.
- Shri Khushwant Singh, Information Commissioner, SIC Punjab.
- Shri C.P. Dhakal, Information Commissioner, SIC Sikkim.
- Shri Virendra, Information Commissioner, SIC West Bengal.

Also Present:

- Shri R.C. Besra, Secretary, State Information Commission, Jharkhand.

NFICI's officers:

- Shri Sidh Kumar, Honorary Secretary, NFICI, New Delhi
- Shri Sarvottam Kumar, Executive Secretary, NFICI, New Delhi.

Shri Sanjay Dhavalikar, Information Commissioner, SIC Goa commenced the proceedings with a warm welcome and thanked the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa, Dr. Pramod Sawant for his presence in the inaugural ceremony and also welcomed and thanked all the guests present at the function. Shri Dhavalikar then requested Shri Vishwas Satarkar, Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner, Goa to address the gathering. Shri Satarkar welcomed the Hon'ble Chief Minister, Dr Pramod Sawant, and thanked him for sparing his valuable time. He also welcomed all the guests and expressed his gratitude to the President NFICI, Shri YK Sinha, and NFICI members for reposing faith in the Goa State Information Commission and giving them an opportunity to organise such an important meeting in his state. He affirmed that the meetings of NFICI provide a platform to exchange and adopt best practices being followed by various Information

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Commissions. He further stated that Goa State Information Commission is striving for effective implementation of the RTI Act, by adhering to its objectives. He was happy to intimate that there was no pendency of Second Appeals / Complaints with the Goa State Information Commission.

Thereafter, Shri Y.K. Sinha, Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner, Central Information Commission and the President, NFICI delivered his speech. Shri Sinha thanked the Chief Guest, Dr. Pramod Sawant, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Goa for his presence. He also conveyed his thanks and appreciation to Shri Vishwas R. Satarkar, Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Goa and his team in the Goa State Information Commission for organising the meeting meticulously. Shri Sinha underlined the need to adopt best practices to deliver information on time and added that the meetings of NFICI provide a platform to discuss and inculcate the best practises being followed by various Information Commissions. Meetings of NFICI help to deliberate on, interact, and exchange views and opinions for a more effective implementation of the sunshine legislation.

Hon'ble Chief Minister Dr. Pramod Sawant, while addressing the 15th Special General Body Meeting of National Federation of Information Commissions in India (NFICI), stated that Goa has a good and positive culture of voluntary disclosure of information which makes his Government transparent and accountable. He also said that the RTI legislation was passed in Parliament and Government bodies were brought under the ambit of this Act with the sole objective of enhancing transparency and accountability of Govt. towards its citizens. The Chief Minister said that implementation of said Act has made the public administration more accountable and transparent, and helped reducing corruption. While noting that the Parliament passed this Act in 2005, Goa had its own RTI Act prior to 2005 and his Govt. had a very positive attitude towards effective implementation of this Act and voluntary disclosure of information. He stressed that although this Act is an effective tool for the public to make the public authority accountable, at the same time, the Information Commissions should



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also ensure and curb its misuse. He once again thanked the organisers and wished the participants all success in their deliberations.

At the end of the inaugural ceremony, Shri R. Rajagopal, Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner, Tamil Nadu SIC & Vice President, NFICI delivered the vote of thanks.

Members re-assembled for the next session after the lunch break.

Shri Y.K. Sinha, Chief Information Commissioner and President, NFICI, who presided over the session, once again welcomed all the participants to the NFICI's 15th Special General Body meeting. The following agenda points were discussed.

1. **Confirmation of Minutes of last Meeting:** The 14th Special General Body meeting was held on 10.06.2022 at Central Information Commission, New Delhi. All members of NFICI confirmed the minutes of the meeting.

2. **Election of Members of the Board of Governors:** The two-year tenure of Members of the Board of Governors from Haryana, Gujarat, Mizoram & Chhattisgarh State Information Commissions was over. As per zone-wise and rotational basis, the members of the Federation unanimously elected the following members as Board of Governors for two years w.e.f. 18.11.2022:

| S.No. | State Info. Commission | Zone | In place of |
|-------|---|------|--|
| 1. | Uttarakhand State Information Commission | II | Haryana State Information Commission |



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|----|---|-----|---|
| 2. | Maharashtra State Information Commission | IV | Gujarat State Information Commission |
| 3. | Manipur State Information Commission | VI | Mizoram State Information Commission |
| 4. | Odisha State Information Commission | VII | Chhattisgarh State Information Commission |

The President felicitated the newly elected members of the BOG and also expressed his gratitude to the outgoing members who had completed their tenure for their invaluable contribution.

3. **Status of Annual Membership Fee from SICs:** The members of the Federation were apprised that the Annual Membership fee up to the financial year 2021-22 has been received in respect of all member State Information Commissions except Sikkim and Jharkhand. It was also brought to the notice of members of the Federation that Annual Membership fee for SIC Sikkim is pending for FY 2018-19 to 2021-22 (Rs. 4.00 lakhs). Fee in respect of SIC Jharkhand is pending for the FY 2015-16 to 2021-22 (Rs. 7.00 lakhs). The President advised State Information Commissions of Sikkim and Jharkhand that the outstanding annual membership fees till financial year 2021-22 as well as 2022-23 should be deposited as early as possible.

Shri C.P. Dhakal, Information Commissioner, SIC Sikkim conveyed that his Commission has taken up the issue with the State Govt to release funds to make payment of the outstanding dues and assured that once the funds are released by the State Govt., all outstanding dues would be cleared.



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Shri R.C. Besra, Secretary, State Information Commission, Jharkhand represented SIC Jharkhand as there was no Information Commissioner in position. Shri Besra informed the members that he would take up the issue with his State Government.

Members unanimously decided that all the member State Information Commissions would deposit their annual membership fee for the financial year 2022-23 at the earliest.

4. **Status of outstanding UCs and vouchers from SICs:** All members of the Federation were apprised of the status of NFICI's outstanding Utilization Certificates and Vouchers for the first, second and third grants. It was decided that the respective State Information Commissions once again be requested to submit their outstanding UCs and supporting vouchers.

Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner, Odisha stated that UCs and vouchers for the 2nd grant released to State Information Commission, Odisha have been misplaced/lost. He requested that the requirement of submission of said UCs and vouchers for 2nd grant released to SIC, Odisha may be waived **as a special case** this time. The same was discussed and it was unanimously decided that, as a special case, the requirement of production of UCs and Vouchers in respect of SIC Odisha may be waived off as a one-time measure on production of a certificate from the SIC Odisha clearly stating the circumstances of the loss and certifying the utilization of the grant.

5. **Release of 3rd Grant of NFICI:** A total of 11 members were eligible to get the third grant. However, willingness to receive the grant from Central Information Commission, New Delhi from the State Information Commission, Telangana has not been received. Hence the same has not been released to them. The third grant has been released to the following member Commissions:



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| S.No. | State Information Commission | Favouring | Amt. Released (in Lakhs) | Cheque No. & Date | Remarks |
|-------|------------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------|---------|
| 1. | Arunachal Pradesh | Secretary, Arunachal Pradesh State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507220 08.09.2022 | |
| 2. | Assam | Secretary, Assam State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507221 08.09.2022 | |
| 3. | Chhattisgarh | Secretary, Chhattisgarh State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507222 08.09.2022 | |
| 4. | Manipur | Secretary, Manipur State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507223 08.09.2022 | |
| 5. | Meghalaya | Secretary, Meghalaya State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507224 08.09.2022 | |
| 6. | Mizoram | Secretary, Mizoram State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507225 08.09.2022 | |



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| 7. | Nagaland | Secretary, Nagaland State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507226 08.09.2022 | |
| 8. | Punjab | Secretary, Punjab State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507227 08.09.2022 | |
| 9. | Tamil Nadu | Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Information Commission | 4.00 | 507228 08.09.2022 | |

6. **Status of NFICI's Current Account and FDs:** The members of the Federation were apprised of the status of NFICI's account being maintained in State Bank of India, Bhikaji Cama Place, New Delhi. A detailed statement was read out showing a balance of Rs. 12,83,613/-, in the current account as on 10.11.2022.

The details of Fixed Deposits (FDs) were presented before the members which provided details regarding the 18 Fixed Deposits amounting to Rs. 2,09,96,103/- as on 16.09.2022. Out of these 18 FDs, 03 have been prematurely withdrawn to release the 3rd grant @Rs. 4.00 lakh each to nine member State Information Commissions.

It was also conveyed to the members that a sum of Rs. 8 lakhs has been released to the Goa State Information Commission to organize the 26th BOG and 15th SGB meeting, as decided in the 14th Special General Body meeting held on 10.06.2022 at New Delhi.



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7. **Any other item with the permission of the Chair:**

(i) Members raised the issue regarding a committee that was constituted to consider making recommendations to the Central Government on matters pertaining to the RTI Act. Members requested that Shri Suresh Chandra, Information Commissioner, Central Information Commission should be nominated as Convenor of the Committee so that his expertise be utilised for finalisation of the report.

(ii) Members opined that meetings of NFICI have provided a platform to exchange and adopt best practices being followed by various Information Commissions. Members requested that NFICI meetings should be conducted at least once in six months. This matter was discussed and it was agreed that the NFICI meetings be held once in six months.

There was a discussion about the venue for holding the next Annual General Body meeting. Shri Amrutbhai Patel, Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Gujarat volunteered to host the next meeting to be held tentatively in February 2023 in Gujarat. This was unanimously agreed to by all the members of the Federation.

The meeting concluded with a vote of thanks to all participants.

(Y.K. Sinha)
President, NFICI



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November 16-17, 2022 at Goa

CORRIGENDUM

Line No. 7 and 8 at page No. 6 in Agenda No. 4 of the minutes of the 15th Special General Body Meeting held on November 16-17, 2022 at Goa stand amended as under:-

'Vouchers for the 2nd grant (in line 7 and 8)'

Should be read as

Vouchers for the 1st grant (in line 7 and 8)

This has the approval of the President, NFICI

Date: 27.01.2023

(Sarvottam Kumar)
Executive Secretary, NFICI