



NATIONAL FEDERATION OF INFORMATION COMMISSIONS IN INDIA

Minutes of 30th Board of Governors Meeting held on August 1st, 2024

At CIC Bhawan, New Delhi

Participants:

Board of Governors:

- Shri Heeralal Samariya, President, NFICI & Chief Information Commissioner, CIC New Delhi.
- Shri Tripurari Sharan, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Bihar.
- Shri Bhaskar Jyoti Mahanta, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Assam.
- Shri R. Mahaboob Basha, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Andhra Pradesh.
- Shri Kojam Radhashyam Singh, Chief Information Commissioner, SIC Manipur.
- Shri Vivek Sharma, Chief Information Commissioner (I/c), SIC Uttarakhand.
- Shri Samir Sahai, Chief Information Commissioner (I/c), SIC Maharashtra.

NFICI's officers:

- Shri Sarvottam Rana, Executive Secretary, NFICI, New Delhi.

At the beginning of the 30th BOG meeting, Shri Sarvottam Rana, Executive Secretary, on behalf of the NFICI President, welcomed all the Hon'ble members present at the meeting. He also conveyed special thanks to Shri Tripurari Sharan, Hon'ble CIC Bihar, as he was attending the BOG meeting for the first time.

The Executive Secretary then proceeded with the following agenda items with the permission of the President and Members:-

1. Confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting:

The 29th meeting of the Board of Governors was held on February 03-04, 2024 at Bhubaneswar, Odisha. The minutes of the meeting were confirmed by the members of the Board of Governors.

2. Election of Vice President of NFICI for the present BOG:

The Executive Secretary informed the members that Shri Anil Chandra Punetha, Vice President of NFICI & CIC Uttarakhand had already retired and requested the members to elect the Vice President from amongst the BOG members. The members unanimously elected Shri Tripurari Sharan, CIC Bihar, as the Vice President of NFICI.

3. Publication of the journal for important and landmark decisions selected by the editorial board:

The Executive Secretary informed the members that at the 12th Annual General Body Meeting on 09.09.2023 it was decided that, in addition to uploading the selected decisions of various Commissions to the NFICI website, an annual journal would be published in which the decisions selected by the NFICI Editorial Committee would be published. Enough copies of the journal should be dispatched to members for reference and for the Commission's academic research. The journal would be a valuable academic reference tool for Commissioners and the public at large. All members welcomed the initiative and unanimously agreed to it.

He further informed that in this context, an Editorial Board meeting was held on July 28, 2023 at CIC Bhawan, New Delhi, where after detailed discussion, 35 out of 122 decisions were selected as important and landmark decisions.

The Executive Secretary also informed that a publishing house named "The Browser" has been contacted for publishing the journal who in turn has sent an quotation for the publication as follows:

- a) Print run of 250 Copies = Rs. 725 per copy (Total budget Rs. 1,81,250/-).
- b) Print run of 300 Copies = Rs. 625 per copy (Total budget Rs. 1,87,500/-).
- c) Print run of 500 Copies = Rs. 425 per copy (Total budget Rs. 2,12,500/-).



The above costs include all editing, proofreading, layout, cover design and printing on 80 gsm superfine white paper, 7.25 x 9.5 inches, with up to 8 colours pages at the beginning on 100 gsm art paper, 300 gsm cover, finished as a perfect bound book. Estimated word count is approx. 80k, page count approx. 200 pages based on material.

After much deliberation, the members of the Board of Governors decided that initially 250 copies of the journal could be published, which would be enough to send one or two copies to each State Information Commission.

4. Status of NFICI's application for tax exemption pending with the CIT (Exemptions):

The members were informed that NFICI had filed Form 10A & 10G with the Commissioner Income Tax (Exemption), Hyderabad on 30.11.2015 seeking registration under Section 12AA and 80G of the Income Tax Act, 1961. The application to consider NFICI under Section 80G of the IT Act was rejected by the Commissioner of Income Tax (Exemptions) on 31.05.2016. Subsequently, NFICI had filed an appeal before the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Hyderabad against the order of the Commissioner of Income Tax (Exemptions) dated 31.05.2016. The ITAT referred the matter back to the CIT (Exemptions) for reconsideration by order dated 29.03.2021.

The case of NFICI claiming tax exemptions under section 12AA and 80G r.w.s. 254 of the Income Tax Act, 1961 has now been approved by the Commissioner Income Tax (Exemptions), Hyderabad vide DIN & Order No. ITBA/EXM/F/EXM41/2023-24/1059786192(1) dated 16.01.2024.

The Commissioner Income Tax (Exemptions), Hyderabad has approved the registration under Section 12AA and 80G of the Income Tax Act from the financial year 2016-17 up to 31.03.2021.

The order directed that for further continuation of registration under the Income Tax Act and for grant of Unique Registration Number (URN) after 31.03.2021, the taxpayer shall apply through e-filing portal under section 12A(1)(ac) U/s 80G(5) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 and obtain fresh registration under section 12AB and 80G of the Income Tax Act. Accordingly NFICI's CA has filed the applications.



5. Status of the Audited Annual Accounts for the FY 2023-24:

The financial statements of NFICI for the year 2023-24 have been prepared by M/s Ankit Malik & Associates, Chartered Accountant. The audited accounts, comprising the Income and Expenditure Account, Revenue and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet, were presented at the meeting.

The members of the Board of Governors approved the audited accounts for the financial year 2023-24.

6. Status of NFICI's Current Accounts and FDs:

The Executive Secretary informed the BOG members that the current account and fixed deposits of NFICI are maintained with State Bank of India, NIHFV Munrika Branch New Delhi. The current account has a balance of Rs. 8,53,221/- as on 31.07.2024.

In addition, the Federation has 14 fixed deposits (FDs) amounting to Rs. 1,96,68,945/- (principal amount) as on 31.07.2024 maintained in the same branch.

7. Raising of demand for Annual Membership Fee for the FY 2024-25.

The Executive Secretary informed that all member Information Commissions have paid the annual membership fee up to the financial year 2023-24. The Information Commissions of Mizoram and West Bengal have also deposited the annual membership fee for the financial year 2024-25.

It was decided to write to all the Information Commissions except Mizoram and West Bengal to deposit the annual membership fees for the financial year 2024-25.

8. Status of release of 3rd grant of NFICI amounting to Rs. 4.00 lakhs to members Information Commissions:

The members of the BOG have been informed that the third grant of NFICI amounting to Rs. 4.00 lakhs has so far been disbursed to the following Information Commissions of the members:



S.No.	State Information Commission	Favoring	Amt. Released (in Lakhs)	Cheque No. & Date	Status of UC & Vouchers
1.	Andhra Pradesh	A.P. Information Commission, Mangalagiri	4.00	038095 18.01.2024	Received
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	Secretary, Arunachal Pradesh State Information Commission	4.00	507220 08.09.2022	Received
3.	Assam	Secretary, Assam State Information Commission	4.00	507221 08.09.2022	Received
4.	Chhattisgarh	Secretary, Chhattisgarh State Information Commission	4.00	507222 08.09.2022	Pending
5.	Gujarat	Secretary, Gujarat State Information Commission	4.00	038056 20.02.2023	Received
6.	Goa	Goa State Information Commission	4.00	038075 24.07.2023	Pending
7.	Himachal Pradesh	Secretary, State Information Commission, Himachal Pradesh	4.00	038074 24.07.2023	Pending
8.	Kerala	Secretary, Kerala State Information Commission	4.00	038055 20.02.2023	Pending
9.	Karnataka	Secretary, Karnataka State Information Commission	4.00	507240 09.12.2022	Received
10.	Meghalaya	Secretary, Meghalaya State Information Commission	4.00	507224 08.09.2022	Pending
11.	Manipur	Secretary, Manipur State Information Commission	4.00	507223 08.09.2022	Received
12.	Mizoram	Secretary, Mizoram State Information Commission	4.00	507225 08.09.2022	Pending
13.	Nagaland	Secretary, Nagaland State Information Commission	4.00	507226 08.09.2022	Received
14.	Odisha	Secretary, Odisha State Information Commission	4.00	038059 14.03.2023	Received
15.	Punjab	Secretary, Punjab State Information Commission	4.00	507227 08.09.2022	Pending
16.	Rajasthan	Secretary, Rajasthan State Information Commission	4.00	038063 20.02.2023	Received



17.	Sikkim	Secretary, Sikkim Information Commission	4.00	094441 26.02.2024	Pending
18.	Tamil Nadu	Secretary, Tamil Nadu State Information Commission	4.00	507228 08.09.2022	Pending
19.	Uttarakhand	Secretary, Uttarakhand State Information Commission	4.00	507239 09.12.2022	Received
20.	West Bengal	Secretary, West Bengal Information Commission	4.00	094439 08.02.2024	Pending

The members of the Board of Governors expressed happiness that the third grant of 4.00 lakhs has been released to most of the State Information Commissions and they are availing the grant.

9. Status of outstanding UC and vouchers from members Information Commissions.

The status of outstanding utilization certificates and supporting vouchers against the 1st, 2nd & 3rd grants were apprised to all the members of the Board of Governors.

The BOG members directed Executive Secretary to approach the concerned members for submission of their outstanding Utilization Certificates and Supporting Vouchers in respect of the grants released to them by NFICI.

10. Releasing of 4th grant to eligible members of the Federation.

Members of the BOG were informed that it was decided by members of the Federation in the NFICI's 14th Special General Body meeting held on 10.06.2022, that future grants of Rs. 4.00 lakh will be released only to those State Information Commissions which have submitted utilization certificates and vouchers of the funds/grants released to them earlier. Some State Information Commissions have requested the NFICI to release the 4th grant to them. They have utilized their 3rd grant and submitted the utilization certificates and vouchers for the same. Matter for releasing 4th grant of Rs. 4.00 lakh was discussed in detail by the BOG members, and it was decided that the 4th grant of NFICI should be released to the eligible members.

11. Agenda points received from State Information Commissions:

(1) Assam State Information Commission:-

- (I). Make Rule/amendment to
 - (a) Deal with non-compliance of the orders passed by the Commission and the complaints received thereof.
 - (b) Receive complaints from Public Authorities against unscrupulous activities and
 - (c) Curb the growth of “professional” information seekers.
- (II). Amendment to increase the RTI fees from Rs. 10/-
- (III). Make rule to fix charges for 1st and 2nd appeal also.

A detailed deliberation was made on the above points.

(2) Odisha State Information Commission:

- (I) Sanction of 4th Grant in favour of Odisha Information Commission for ongoing process of Digitalization of Case Records and archiving of old records since the year 2005 in this Commission.

Point was discussed in the agenda point No. 10.


(3) Manipur Information Commission: -

- (I) Proposal for amending Section 20 of the RTI Act pertaining to Penalties so as to bring the FAA within the ambit of the Section.
- (II) [The role of FAA under Section 19(6) of the RTI Act 2005 is crucial as it provides an internal review mechanism to provide information to the citizen when they are not satisfied with the response received from PIO. The non-activation / inactivity of the FAA undermines the very purpose of the Act, which is to empower citizen with information and to ensure responsiveness of Public Authority to citizen's request. Failure of FAA in its due discharge of the mandated role as FAA is one of the main reasons for piling up of second appeal / complaint cases before the Information Commissions.]

A detailed deliberation was made on the above points.

12. Any other item with the permission of the Chair.

There being no other point, Hon'ble Chief Information Commissioner, Assam, Shri B.J. Mahanta delivered a vote of thanks, and the meeting was concluded.


(Heeralal Samariya)
President, NFICI