NIC at Maha Kumbh 2025

The Digital Framework Behind the World's Largest Gathering

I n the heart of Prayagraj, from 13 January to 26 February 2025, the Maha Kumbh Mela emerged as a monumental convergence of ancient tradition and cutting-edge technology. With over 66 crore pilgrims gathering for spiritual liberation at the Triveni Sangam—the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati—Maha Kumbh 2025 became a global symbol of faith, unity, and innovation. For the first time in history, the event was designated as India's first "Digital Maha Kumbh", with the NIC at its helm, weaving the threads of spirituality and smart governance under the vision of Digital India.

Recognized by UNESCO as an Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, the Maha Kumbh is not just a festival; it is a civilizational continuum. Occurring every twelve years, it reflects India's spiritual pulse—a place where millions seek moksha by immersing themselves in the sacred waters, transcending caste, creed, and borders. This year, the anticipated attendance of 45 crore was far exceeded as the event crossed 66 crore visitors in under a month, reaffirming its global magnetism.

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In Maha Kumbh 2025, Prayagraj became a global symbol of spiritual devotion and digital innovation. Over 66 crore pilgrims experienced India's first "Digital Maha Kumbh," powered by the NIC. From AI-driven crowd management to multilingual assistance via BHASHINI and smart surveillance systems, NIC transformed the sacred event into a benchmark of smart governance, inclusivity, and digital infrastructure under the vision of Digital India.

Pilgrims, scholars, saints, and tourists from across the globe arrived not just to participate in rituals, but to witness a spiritual spectacle that was also a technological milestone. The convergence of ancient wisdom and 21st-century infrastructure turned Prayagraj into a living, breathing case study of how innovation can complement tradition without replacing it.

The sheer scale of the event required seamless cooperation among various government bodies, volunteers, religious institutions, and digital platforms. Behind the scenes, the NIC emerged as the backbone—designing, integrating, and executing an array of digital solutions that not only empowered administrative efficiency but also amplified pilgrim experience.

The significance of the Maha Kumbh lies not just in the numbers, but in the stories shared, the prayers whispered, the chants resonated across ghats, and the memories created by families and individuals who come from different corners of the world. In 2025, those stories were not only etched in the sands of Prayagraj but also digitized, streamed, and shared in real time. The event was a living embodiment of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam'—the world is one family.

Through every act of digital service—from facial recognition for safety to multilingual chatbots for information—NIC's role reflected an understanding of faith's sensitivities and technology's possibilities. No code overshadowed the chants, and no drone hovered above without reverence for the tradition unfolding below. It was a balance delicately achieved, one that might set a precedent for mega-events across the world.

Digital Infrastructure: The Nervous System of the Kumbh

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 stood as a beacon of global spiritual unity, effectively marrying India's rich cultural heritage with its growing digital capabilities. From the very beginning of January, the event began to attract global attention. In the first week alone, the official Maha Kumbh portal recorded a massive 33 lakh visitors from 183 countries, signaling its expansive digital reach.

Users from more than 6,206 cities around the world accessed the site, with India, the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Germany leading in online traffic. This unprecedented level of international engagement highlighted not only the spiritual magnetism of the Kumbh but also India's emergence as a global leader in e-governance and public digital infrastructure.

The Maha Kumbh digital platform, developed and managed by the NIC, became a global window into the sacred event. The website offered multilingual access to mythological stories, bathing schedules, logistics, transport

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arrangements, accommodation options, and spiritual insights, all delivered in an intuitive, user-friendly format.

Through a blend of robust hosting, dynamic content, and responsive design, the site empowered devotees—both onsite and remote—to immerse themselves in the spiritual essence of the Kumbh from wherever they were. Daily traffic surged into the millions as users accessed event details, devotional media, and even virtual darshans (viewings) of key rituals and processions.

Key Digital Assets Deployed During Maha Kumbh 2025

Platform	Purpose
kumbh.gov.in	Central info portal: schedules, rituals, updates
kumbhlostandfound.in	Lost-and-found service with facial recognition
E-Pass Portal & App	Movement regulation for vehicles and officials
FRB & Attendance System Apps	Management of personnel and volunteers
Kumbh Rail Sewa App	Real-time train and transit updates
Sanitation Monitoring Portal	Civic feedback for 25,000+ toilets
Tentage Monitoring System	Camp quality tracking
Land Allotment System	Transparent digital space allocation

Smart Governance in Action

Managing a crowd of over 66 crore devotees is a logistical marvel. For this, the Maha Kumbh 2025 relied on the seamless integration of smart technologies:

• Over 2,750 AI-powered CCTV cameras were deployed to monitor activities across the Mela grounds

• RFID wristbands allowed authorities to track entry and exit timings of pilgrims, enabling efficient crowd management

• Drone surveillance, including anti-drone and tethered drone systems, provided an aerial view to manage footfall in congested areas

• Mobile app tracking enabled real-time updates for on-ground coordination

The Google Maps integration added to the convenience, mapping over 300 key landmarks including ghats, akhadas, temples, and camps, allowing pilgrims to navigate the Mela with ease. Information kiosks and mobile help centers supplemented digital tools to guide on-ground visitors.

Immersive Digital Experiences and Visual Storytelling

Storytelling in the digital age found a new expression at Maha Kumbh 2025.

• Visitors experienced 360-degree virtual reality installations showcasing royal processions such as Peshwai, spiritual discourses, and traditional rituals

• Drone shows lit up the skies narrating epics like Prayag Mahatmyam and Samudra Manthan, captivating audiences with light, sound, and animation

These innovative experiences created emotional and intellectual connections, especially for the younger generation and international visitors experiencing the Kumbh for the first time.

Real-Time Support and Digital Assistance

For an event of this scale, real-time support and digital help were crucial:

• Facial recognition-based surveillance ensured safety by instantly alerting authorities to anomalies

• A dedicated Digital Lost and Found Centre,

integrated with Facebook and X (formerly Twitter), reunited missing persons and helped retrieve belongings.

• Portals like kumbh.gov.in and kumbhlostandfound.in remained active 24/7 to assist pilgrims in navigating services and finding aid

Digital dashboards provided at control rooms allowed the government and local authorities to monitor the entire site, optimizing emergency responses and logistics.

Multilingual Outreach with BHASHINI

The BHASHa INterface for India (BHASHINI), an initiative by MeitY under Digital India, ensured inclusivity through multilingual access.

• Pilgrims could receive announcements, safety guidelines, and schedules in 11 Indian languages, eliminating communication gaps

• Speech-to-text and text-to-speech tools helped differently-abled and elderly devotees

• Integrated chatbots and kiosks translated user queries into the local language, bridging digital literacy divides

• The CONVERSE feature helped pilgrims access emergency services via 112 helpline in their mother tongue

• Lost and found forms were voice-enabled, allowing users to report or retrieve items without typing

Kumbh Sah'AI'yak Chatbot: Your Virtual Companion

Launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the Kumbh Sah'AI'yak chatbot stood at the forefront of AI-enabled services.

• Built on advanced Llama LLM technology and seamlessly integrated with BHASHINI, the chatbot delivered information in Hindi, English, and 9 other languages

• It provided updates on event timings, safety alerts, nearest facilities, and navigation—accessible through both web and mobile apps

• Voice-enabled, multilingual, and available round-the-clock, it empowered users from all demographics to navigate the Kumbh with confidence

Surveillance and Security Infrastructure

To ensure that the faith and fervor of the Kumbh remained undisturbed:

• A seven-tier security grid was established

• Underwater drones were deployed for the first time to monitor sub-surface river activity up to 100 meters deep

• Intelligence squads inspected hotels, dharamshalas, vendors, and transit points

• Cybersecurity experts from NIC and CERT-In collaborated to prevent misuse of digital platforms

• AI tools monitored real-time social media chatter, alerting officials about suspicious trends.

In the Integrated Command Control Centre (ICCC), a dedicated NIC team managed the security and digital systems in shifts, ensuring 24/7 vigilance

Fortified Cybersecurity Backbone

NIC ensured digital sanctity through advanced cyber protocols:

• A central monitoring team comprised of MHA, DoT, CERT-In, NCIIPC, IB, and NeGD's SeMT coordinated cybersecurity efforts

• Over 9,000 suspicious IPs and 100+ malicious domains were blocked via the ISRP (Information Sharing and Response Portal)

• All CCTV cameras were secured using IP, MAC, and Protocol Binding

• Network zones were isolated using segmentation and L2 port binding to minimize unauthorized access

• Public-facing applications were hosted in a DMZ to insulate critical systems

• Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) mechanisms ensured tiered user privileges

Infrastructure and Service Management

The Mela's digital infrastructure was divided into two operational domains:

• Surveillance System: 2,750 AI cameras, 80 Variable Messaging Displays (VMDs), 206 Public Address (PA) systems. Around 150 personnel managed the helpline 1920

• Public Service Portals:

  • kumbh.gov.in, kumbhlostandfound.in, Maha Kumbh Mela App, and Kumbh Rail Sewa App served as digital gateways

  • Hosted on UP State Data Centre (SDC) and STPI Mohali, with Disaster Recovery at Nxtra Data Centre (Bangalore) and Oracle Cloud

Mobile towers were increased by 50 units to decongest networks and support high-speed internet access.

Government Engagements and VC Integration by NIC

eCabinet

On January 22, 2025, a special e-Cabinet meeting of the Uttar Pradesh Government, chaired by Hon'ble Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, was held in the Mahakumbh area of Prayagraj with 54 ministers in attendance.

Developed by NIC, the e-Cabinet portal enables digital, paperless cabinet meetings via tablets. Key decisions included in-principle approval for the 320 km Vindhya Expressway and the 100 km Vindhya–Purvanchal Link Expressway, boosting connectivity to Prayagraj.

The NIC officers ensured seamless technical support for the meeting's smooth execution.

Snan Parv Monitoring

NIC established a secure IPSec VPN tunnel to stream live security footage from ICCC to the CM Office for Mauni Amavasya and Basant Panchami.

Kumbh Global Summit 2025

Held between 21–23 February 2025, the Kumbh Global Summit on Development & Sustainability brought global attention to climate-conscious governance:

● Key themes included net-zero growth, energy-neutral infrastructure, and LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)

● Eminent voices like Shri Sher Bahadur Deuba and H.E. Arya Ali joined via NIC's video conferencing platform, set up by NIC Prayagraj in coordination with NIC HQ

Landmark Events and Visits Supported by NIC

● Inauguration by Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi: Projects such as Shringverpur Dham Corridor, Bhardwaj Rishi Corridor, and Kumbh Sah'AI'yak were launched through NIC-supported VC setups.

● Immigration Services at Prayagraj International Airport: NIC facilitated real-time implementation of the IVFRT system

● Hon'ble PM's Holy Dip: NIC coordinated digital security and logistical setup for the Hon'ble Prime Minister's ceremonial visit on 5 February 2025

● Ministerial Visits:

  ● Shri Jitin Prasad, MoS, MeitY – 7 February 2025

  ● Shri Rajesh Singh, JS & FA, MeitY – 25 February 2025

● NIC Camp Office: A functional base with accommodation was set up for NIC officers and families

● Kumbhvani Channel Launch: Hon' CM Yogi Adityanath virtually launched FM 103.5 – Kumbhvani and KumbhMangal Dhwani, using NIC's video conferencing tech

NIC Prayagraj District Team

● Shri Lal Chand Yadav, Senior Technical Director, ASIO, NIC UP State Centre

● Shri Rajesh Patel, DIO

● Smt. Pratima Mishra, ADIO

● Shri Manoj Yadav, Scientist-C

● Shri Rahul Yadav, STA-B

NIC UP Leadership and Paryagraj Core Team

The successful realization of this vision was made possible through the valuable support and guidance of Shri Lal Chand Yadav (Scientist-F), Shri Vijay Kumar (Scientist-E), and Shri Markendey Srivastava (Scientist-D) and the core team from NIC Prayagraj, whose dedication and efforts were instrumental, includes:

NIC has played a pivotal role in the successful organization of the Mahakumbh Mela 2025, the largest spiritual congregation in the world. The team's exemplary dedication, unwavering integrity, and commitment to duty reflect the highest standards of public service. Their technical expertise and operational excellence have significantly contributed to the seamless execution of this grand event.

NIC's sincere and wholehearted involvement is deeply appreciated and deserves special recognition. Team Members Recognized: Shri Lalchandra Yadav (Sr. Technical Director), Shri Rajesh Patel (DIO, Prayagraj), Sushri Pratima Mishra (ADIO, Prayagraj), Shri Sumit Srivastava (Network Engineer), Shri Ajit Yadav (Network Engineer) and Shri Jamuna Sagar.

I convey my heartfelt appreciation and best wishes for your continued success.

Vijay Kiran Anand, IAS
Mela Adhikari, Mahakumbh, Prayagraj

● Shri Rajesh Patel, DIO,

● Smt. Pratima Mishra, ADIO,

● Shri Manoj Yadav, Scientist-C

● Shri Rahul Yadav, STA-B

Bridging Tradition and Technology

Maha Kumbh 2025 was a testament to the harmonious coexistence of heritage and innovation. With NIC's robust leadership, this sacred event became a benchmark of digital transformation, cultural preservation, and global inclusivity.

It was not only about the sacred dip-it was about plunging into a future where tradition flows through fiber optics, where devotion is guided by digital maps, and where India's soul finds new resonance in a connected world. This was not just the Maha Kumbh. This was Digital Dharma in motion.

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