Ministry of Electronics & IT

Signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Digital India BHASHINI Division and Survey of India for Toponymic Data Digitisation

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The **Digital India BHASHINI Division (DIBD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY),** signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Survey of India (SoI)** on **20 January 2026** to support the **digitisation, transcription and standardisation of geographical place names (toponyms)** using **AI-based speech and language technologies**. The collaboration will strengthen the creation of accurate, multilingual and standardised toponymic datasets aligned with the **National Geospatial Policy, 2022**.

The **Survey of India**, as the **national nodal agency for standardisation and maintenance of geographical names**, undertakes large-scale **toponymic field surveys** to collect place names in local vernacular languages for integration into national mapping systems. Under this collaboration, **BHASHINI's speech-to-text and language processing capabilities will be used to convert large volumes of audio recordings of place names into structured digital text**, supporting the creation of a comprehensive and validated **Toponymy Database covering more than 16 lakh locations**.

The collaboration will support the development of the **National Geographical Name Information System (NGNIS)** by enabling efficient processing of field-collected audio data into **local language scripts, Devanagari, Roman and other formats**, ensuring consistency across national maps, digital platforms and governance systems. The integration of **automatic speech recognition, language normalisation and validation workflows** will significantly enhance the speed, accuracy and scale of toponym data processing.

The initiative will also strengthen **audio documentation of place names**, preserving correct pronunciation and local linguistic variations, while enabling systematic standardisation through alignment with the **Survey of India Toponymy Manual and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) code of practices**. This will improve the reliability of place-name datasets used across **Open Series Maps, governance platforms and public information systems**.

Through this partnership, the **Digital India BHASHINI Division will contribute its speech and language AI portfolio to support data creation, annotation and validation pipelines**, enabling large-scale conversion of human speech into high-quality geospatial language datasets. The

collaboration reflects BHASHINI's approach of embedding **language AI across national digital public infrastructure systems** where linguistic accuracy is critical for service delivery and decision-making.

The MoU reinforces the role of **language technologies in strengthening India's geospatial ecosystem**, ensuring that **place names across regions and dialects are accurately captured, preserved and standardised** for governance, disaster management, infrastructure planning and citizen services. The collaboration aligns with the **Government of India's vision of building indigenous, AI-enabled digital infrastructure rooted in Indian linguistic realities**.

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