

News 1 - 2016 Indian Intellectual Property Panorama Released



Government released the Indian Intellectual Property Panorama by offering a single window interface for information and guidance on intellectual property for competitive advantage.

The Indian IP Panorama is a customized version of IP Panorama Multimedia toolkit developed by World Intellectual Property Organization headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, encourages and provides assistance to all its 188 member countries in formulating a national IPR policy. The portal will strive for an expansion of awareness and to build sensitivity towards IP among stakeholders in the SME sector, Information, Communication Technology & Electronics (ICTE) sector, academia and researchers.

News 2 - Online Portal and Mobile App launched for Startup India Initiative



The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry launched the Startup India portal and mobile app to provide timely information on various notifications and circulars issued by various Government ministries and to solve queries with the help of a list of FAQs available.

The user friendly app involves a single page application form that a user can fill either through a web interface or through mobile app. A real time recognition certificate will be provided to Startups on completion of the application process through the portal and mobile app. The certificate of recognition is verifiable through the portal and mobile app by entering the Startup Recognition and Certificate Number.

News 3 - Inclusiveness and Accessibility Index for Persons with Disabilities launched by DEPwD



The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) launched the Inclusiveness and Accessibility Index to help industries and corporates participate in the Accessible India Campaign (AIC) by voluntarily evaluating their readiness for making the workplace accessible for Persons with Disabilities.

The Index, prepared in collaboration with The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). The Index toolkit is based on research, and the best examples and experiences of organisations that have taken initiatives to increase accessibility of persons with disabilities and have benefited from such initiatives.

News 4 - Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan launched by Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment



The Minister of Social Justice & Empowerment, Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot launched “Accessible India Campaign” that will enable persons with disabilities to gain universal access, equal opportunity for development, independent living and participation in all aspects of life in an inclusive society. The Awards will be presented to individuals for "outstanding" contributions towards the empowerment of disabled persons.

The campaign is aimed at making three verticals disabled-friendly: built environment, public transport sector and IT field. The government further aims to convert 50 per cent of all government buildings in the national and state capitals into "fully accessible" structures by July, 2018. The government also plans to make 50 per cent of all the stations in the country disabled-friendly by March, 2018.

News 5 - India and Sri Lanka inked MoU to present 150 boats to fishermen



The Government of India will gift 150 boats and other fishing equipment to 300 beneficiaries in Mullaitivu by signing MOU in Colombo, Srilanka.

Fishermen in the North have been accusing Indian fishermen of poaching in Sri Lankan waters which in turn has affected the livelihood of local fishermen. The Indian High Commission will float a tender to procure the items through a competitive bidding process.

News 6 - Japan provides loan of JPY 242.2 billion for various Indian projects

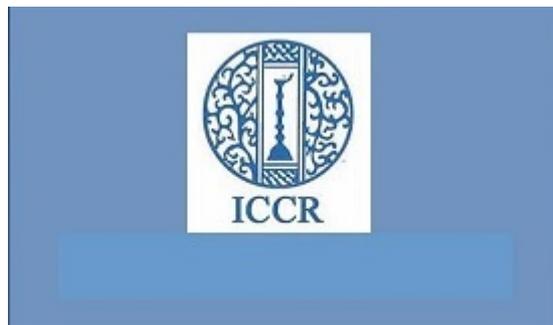




Japan committed a loan of JPY 242.2 billion (around Rs. 14,251 crore) for various projects across India, including Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and the North East.

It is meant for strengthening project in Madhya Pradesh, an integrated sanitation improvement project in Odisha, a dedicated freight corridor project, a road network connectivity improvement project in the North East, and a micro drip irrigation project in Jharkhand. The Government of Japan has committed a total of JPY 390 billion in the current financial year which is the highest amount committed in a year.

News 7 - First Indian Chair established by Indian Council for Cultural Relations at Cairo



India introduced first Indian chair in the Arab world at Egypt's prestigious Ain Shams University (ASU). An MoU inked between India's Ambassador to Egypt Sanjay Bhattacharyya on behalf of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Prof. Abdel Wahab Ezzat, Acting President of ASU.

Taking note of the technological advancements in India and the growing demand in Egypt, the first visiting Indian Professor will be in the Faculty of Information and Communication Technology. The agreement also provides flexibility to appoint professors in other disciplines, as per the requirements of the university.

News 8 - MoU Inked for IMPRINT Program at Kanpur



In order to promote research in premier technical institutions through Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) initiative, an MOU was inked among 25 different ministries at Kanpur.

The Minister announced that there was no sustainability in the technology related work as it was totally dependent on the funds released by Ministry of HRD. The programme also aims at synergizing with all major initiatives of the Government of India like 'Make in India', 'Digital India', 'Skill India', 'Namami Gange', 'Unnat Bharat Abhiyan', 'Swachh Bharat Mission' etc.

News 9 - Space Technology to be made available by ISRO for Indian Airport Authority



The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) by signing MoU with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) will provide scientific parameters for construction of airports. It will also provide data on the landscape around the airports. In the field of aviation sector, the minister said that the use of space technology is being done on pilot basis in the Hyderabad and Port Blair airport.

The MoU signed with Ministry of Railways will help in construction of railway tracks and managing the railway crossings. Space technology will be helpful in agriculture sector in the areas of crop damage assessment, soil health, blue revolution and irrigation etc.

News 10 - India, Saudi Arabia inked 5 MoUs



India and Saudi Arabia signed five agreements to boost trade ties and strengthen anti-terror co-operation during PM Modi's two-day visit to the Gulf nation.

MoU on Labour Co-operation between the Ministry of External Affairs, India and Ministry of Labour, Saudi Arabia for recruitment of general category workers.

The details of these five agreements are –

- MoU was signed between the financial intelligence units of India and Saudi Arabia to co-operate in the exchange of intelligence related to money laundering, terrorism financing and related crimes.
- India and Saudi Arabian General Investment Authority (SABIA) signed a framework agreement on investment promotion cooperation.
- A fourth agreement was signed for promotion of tourism and handicrafts between the Export Promotion Council for Handicraft (EPCH), India and Saudi Commission for Tourism and National Heritage.
- MoU on Technical Cooperation Program between the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) and the Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO).

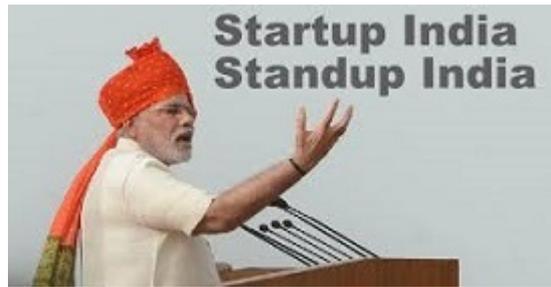
News 11 - Government launched "Vidyut PRAVAH" Mobile Application



The Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Piyush Goyal, launched a mobile application 'Vidyut PRAVAH- Electricity, Price Availability and Highlights'. The mobile application provides highlights of the power availability in the country on real time basis and will empower common people to demand 24x7 power from the states.

The Web application can be accessed through vidyutpravah.in and the mobile version will be freely available for download from the Playstore for both Android and iPhones.

News 12 - Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Stand Up India Scheme



The Prime Minister has launched the “Stand up India scheme” and a Web portal for the scheme on 05th April, 2016.

The scheme will promote entrepreneurship among Scheduled Caste/Schedule Tribe and Women for loans in the range of Rs. 10 Lakhs to Rs. 100 Lakhs. Under the scheme, at least two such projects per bank branch (Scheduled Commercial Bank) on an average one for each category of entrepreneur will be done. At the event, the Prime Minister flagged off 5,100 e-rickshaws.

News 13 - Union Government launched “Transnational Skill Standards” in India



The Union Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister, Rajiv Pratap Rudy along with National Skill Development Corporation and UK-India Education and Research Initiatives announced the launch of Transnational Skill Standards in India.

2 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between National Skill Development Council (NSDC) and Association of Colleges (UK) and NSDC and UK Awarding Organization City & Guilds and Pearsons Education in order to enable sharing of best practice, staff exchange and development of new models to increase employer engagement and investment in skills in India. These standards in skill development are benchmarked to United Kingdom across 82 identified job roles.

News 14 - India’s first semi-bullet train Gatimaan Express flagged off by Suresh Prabhu



The Union Rail Minister Suresh Prabhu flagged off the first semi-bullet train, Gatimaan Express, India's fastest train, from Delhi's Hazrat Nizamuddin station to Agra Cantt which the train covered in about 100 mins.

The Gatimaan Express is indigenously built and runs at a speed of 160 kms per hour. It is powered by a 5400 HP electric locomotive and has two Executive AC Chair cars and eight AC chair car coaches. The fare for AC chair car is 750 rupees, while the fare for the Executive class is 1500 rupees.

News 15 - More than 100 crore Indians enrolled for Aadhaar



More than a 100 crore Indians till date have registered for Aadhaar card numbers in five- and half years since the first Aadhaar was issued in 2010. This unique Aadhaar 12-digit number serves as a proof of identity and address, anywhere in India.

Aadhaar marking the 100-crore number is a success story to the government's initiative of bringing transparency in the way services. Subsidies and benefits will be directly delivered to the beneficiaries.

News 16 - Government releases Food Subsidy of Rs. 25,834 crores



The Centre released Rs. 25,834 crores subsidy to Food Corporation of India and wage advance of Rs. 10,000 crores to be released shortly. In 2015-16, original Food Subsidy allocation was Rs. 97,000 crores which was increased to Rs. 1,12,000 crores at RE stage. This helped to bring down the arrears of subsidy to Rs. 58,650 crores. During 2016-17 also the Government may consider additional food subsidy over and above budgetary provision, if required, towards the end of financial year to further bring down the subsidy arrears.

To manage resources for Rabi procurement which has just started, FCI is raising short term loans from banks up to a maximum limit of Rs. 30,000 crores.

News 17 - National Summit on Family Planning 2016 concluded in New Delhi



The two-day National Summit on Family Planning concluded in New Delhi. The theme of the summit was "New Choices, New Horizons".

The Union Health Minister launched the new revamped logo for Family Planning media awareness campaign along with the 360-degree communication plan for enhanced awareness regarding various issues surrounding family planning in the country. The new packaging of contraceptive Nirodh and the mobile app for Mission Indradhanush were the other highlights. Amitabh Bachchan was announced as the brand ambassador and anchor for the new IEC campaign.

News 18 - Union Cabinet approved National Hydrology Project



The Union Cabinet gave its approval for implementation of the National Hydrology Project. It will be a central sector scheme with a total outlay of Rs. 3679.7674 crore. This includes Rs. 3,640 crores for National Hydrology Project (NHP) and Rs. 39.7674 crore for National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC) to be taken up in two stages.

The NHP will help in gathering Hydro-meteorological data which will be stored and analyzed on a real time basis and can be seamlessly accessed by any user at the State/District/village level. The project envisages to cover the entire country as the earlier hydrology projects covered only 13 States.

News 19 - Funding of exports to Iran from India through the Export Development Fund of Exim Bank



The Union Cabinet gave its approval for increasing the framework agreement between Exim Bank of India and a consortium of Iranian banks lead by Central Bank of Iran for financing the purchase of goods and services from India to Rs.3000 crores from Rs. 900 crores. This will be done by utilizing the Export Development Fund (EDF).

The proposal will promote the country's exports with Iran and also deepen India's relationship with Iran as a strategic partner.

News 20 - Union Cabinet gave ex-post facto approval for implementation of OROP



The Union Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval for implementation of One Rank One Pension (OROP).

Financial implications on account of grant of OROP including Pre-Matured Retirees (PMR) cases would be Rs. 10925.11 crores for payment of arrears and annual financial implication would be Rs. 7488.7 crores.

The details are as follows :

- The benefit will be given with effect from 1 July 2014 and be extended to family pensioners including war widows and disabled pensioners.
- Personnel who opt to get discharged henceforth on their own request under Rule 16B of the Army Rule, 1954 or equivalent Navy or Air Force Rules will not be entitled to the benefits of OROP. It will be effective prospectively.

- Arrears will be paid in four half-yearly installments.
- In future, the pension would be re-fixed every 5 years.

News 21 - Union Cabinet approved recommendations of 14th Finance Commission on fiscal deficit targets



The Union Cabinet gave its approval to Recommendations on Fiscal Deficit Targets and Additional Fiscal Deficit to States during Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) award period 2015-20.

FFC has adopted the fiscal deficit threshold limit of 3 per cent of Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) for the States. Further, FFC has provided a year-to-year flexibility for additional fiscal deficit to States. FFC has though provided additional headroom to a maximum of 0.5 per cent over and above the normal limit of 3 per cent in any given year to the States that have a favorable debt-GSDP ratio and interest payments-revenue receipts ratio in the previous two years.

News 22 - HRD Minister unveils bronze bust of Aryabhata at UNESCO HQ



A bronze bust of ancient Indian mathematician and astronomer Aryabhata has been unveiled at the UNESCO Headquarters, sculpted by renowned Indian sculptor Ram Sutar at a two-day conference, organized by the Permanent Delegation of India to UNESCO.

The two-day conference was held to share the rich and remarkable history of mathematics through participation of some of the brilliant minds, resonating with the UNESCO's mandate to advance, transfer and share knowledge.

News 23 - NTPC Suspends Power Generation from Farakka in West Bengal



Considering water shortage in West Bengal's Murshidabad district, there will be partial suspension of power generation at the NTPC's Farakka plant till April 10.

The water level at Farakka feeder canal receded due to "diversion of water to Bangladesh as per the international treaty and one unit of 500 MW is under operation. Total allocation to West Bengal from NTPC stations is 786 MW, which can be fully met by the company from its stations, if power is requisitioned by the state.

News 24 - Union Cabinet Approved MoU between India and Sweden on Technical Cooperation in the Railway Sector



The Union Cabinet approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Sweden on Technical Cooperation in the Railway Sector. The MoU was signed in the fields of exchange of knowledge, innovation, technology, technical expertise, sustainable solutions and research.

The MoU envisages benchmark of railways policy development, regulations, organization and specific characteristics for each country. It will also facilitate bilateral exchange of knowledge, technical expertise, innovation, technology, sustainable solutions and research in railways.

News 25 - Funding released of 12,230 crores under MGNREGA Scheme



Funds of Rs. 12,230 crores have been given to the states for implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). This is the largest amount released for the scheme at one time by the ministry.

It will provide pending wage liability of the States for the previous Financial Year (2015-16) and for the new Financial Year (2016-17). States have also proposed to construct 33 lakh individual household toilets as part of the Swachh Bharat Mission and 63,000 anganwadi centre buildings to strengthen rural infrastructure.

News 26 - International Standard Book Number Portal Launched by HRD



E-portal launched by the government will facilitate publishers as well as the authors to register for ISBN online to book and enhance information among authors and publishers. 13-character identification allotted by International ISBN Agency provides access to bibliographic data bases used by the book industry and libraries to provide information and eliminates the problem of free download of works of authors from the Internet.

A mobile app will be soon launched in regional languages to ease registration, enhanced accessibility, wider transparency and greater efficiency for the book writing fraternity in India.

News 27 - Uma Bharti Inaugurates Water Films Festival





The Union Minister for water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Uma Bharti inaugurated the Water Film Festival for the growth and prosperity of a nation where Films can prove to be an effective tool of communication to spread the message of water conservation.

The theme for this year's India Water week is "Water for all: Striving together. The film festival is organized by the Water and Power Consultancy Services (WAPCOS), a PSU under Ministry of Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

News 28 - Union Government approved country's first Metrino Pod Taxi project for Gurgaon



The Union Government gave its approval for country's first personal rapid transit (PRT) network (Metrino Pod project) for Gurgaon, work for which is expected to start by 1 June 2016.

The groundwork of the project is being laid by the National Highways Authority of India with an estimated budget of Rs 850 Cr. It will cover a stretch of 13 kilometers from the Gurgaon-Delhi border to Badshapur Mod on Sohna Road with a total of 16 stations.

A single Metrino Pod can accommodate upto five passengers and the fare is likely to be that of Metro rail in Delhi.

News 29 - Corporate Affairs Ministry exempts housing finance companies from XBRL filings



The Union Corporate Affairs Ministry exempted the housing finance companies from filing financial statements in XBRL format after it amended the Companies (Filing of Documents and Forms in Extensible Business Reporting Language) Rules. XBRL, or Extensible Business Reporting Language is a data-rich dialect of XML (Extensible Markup Language) and provides a common, electronic format for business reporting via the internet.

The companies having paid up capital of at least Rs 500 crore or those with a turnover of Rs 100 crore or more have to follow XBRL rules. However, banking, insurance, power sector and non-banking finance companies were already exempted.

News 30 - Union Government Recommends Rs. 1,304 Crore for Drought Relief to Uttar Pradesh





Under the National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF), a high-level committee headed by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi, has recommended Rs 1,304 crore for drought relief to Uttar Pradesh. The committee took review of drought situation in Bundelkhand, Vidharbha and Marathwada. The first review meeting was about Bundelkhand.

As part of the relief, the working day under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) in the Bundelkhand for financial year 2016-17 was extended from 100 to 150. Apart from that the government also decided that water tanks, building of dug wells, farm ponds would be taken up on priority under various projects and schemes for Bundelkhand.

News 31 - Union Government to Issue Universal ID-Cards for physically challenged People



The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment is planning to issue Universal ID-cards to the physically challenged people to help the differently-able ones have easy access to various benefits being extended by the government.

Currently, such cards are issued at the state level and some states do not accept cards of other states leading to inconvenience. The government plans to distribute modern motorized wheelchairs with British financial assistance and was also taking up the manufacturing of tricycles with German technological backup.

News 32 - BSNL Testing Wi-Fi Technology to Connect 1 Lakh Panchayats in a Year



BSNL has started a pilot to test broadband connectivity to about 1 lakh village panchayats using Wi-Fi network. It has tied up with Vihaan Networks for implementation of the project. The sustainability of the project is being tested in three villages, Karenda, Phalsa and Bahadri, of Alwar district of Rajasthan.

Under the project, a wireless network over 6 kilometers has been set up connecting Wi-Fi towers with BSNL's exchange in Bhiwadi. About 500 test connections have been provided to various users, including schools. The government has approved NOFN (National Optical Fibre Network) project worth Rs 20,100 cr in 2011 to facilitate at least 100Mbps bandwidth in all the estimated 2.5 lakh gram panchayats.

News 33 - India offered an investment of \$20 Billion in Iran





India has offered to invest up to \$20 billion in oil, petrochemicals and fertilizer projects in a joint venture with Iran. The announcement was made during the two-day visit by Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan.

Indian companies are interested in setting up petrochemical and fertilizer plants, including in the Chabahar SEZ. The two parties also discussed on the long pending rights to develop Farzad-B gas field in the Persian Gulf discovered by ONGC Videsh as well as clearing of the \$6.5 billion oil dues Indian refiners owe to Iran.

News 34 - India, Maldives signed six agreements



India and Maldives inked six agreements in different sectors. The agreements were signed during the two-day official visit of Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom to India.

The six Agreements/MoUs are :

- Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation of income derived from International Air Transport.
- Agreement for the Exchange of Information with respect to Taxes.
- Bilateral Agreement related to Orbit Frequency Coordination of "South Asia Satellite" proposed at 48oE.
- MoU for Cooperation in the area of conservation and restoration of ancient mosques and joint research and exploratory surveys in Maldives.
- MoU on cooperation in the field of Tourism.
- Action Plan for Defence Cooperation.

News 35 - NRDC signs agreement for commercializing "NEMHARI"



The National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), under Ministry of Science & Technology, has entered into a license agreement with M/s Rainbow Agrilife India Private Limited, Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh for commercialization of "NEMHARI-A Plant based Formulation for Management of Mulberry Root Knot Disease" developed at Central Sericulture Research and Training Institute (CSR & TI), Central Silk Board (CSB), Mysuru.

The formulation is safe to the native soil micro flora and fauna but effective against the nematodes causing the root knot disease in mulberry. Tests conducted in the field revealed reduction of disease severity by about 84% and prevented loss of leaf yield by 24%.

News 36 - Union Cabinet gave its approval for India adopting the Statute of the SAWEN

Cabinet accepts law to curb South Asia wildlife crime

The Union Cabinet gave its approval for India adopting the Statute of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) and becoming its formal member in order to strengthen ties with the member countries.

SAWEN, a Regional network is consisting of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka as members. Its aim is to work as a strong regional intergovernmental body for combating wildlife crime by attempting common goals and approaches for combating illegal trade in the region.

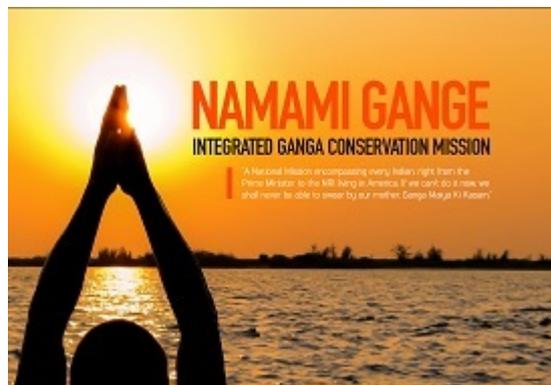
News 37 - India to sign MoU with UAE to curb Human Trafficking



Union Cabinet gave its approval to sign a MoU between India and the UAE to curb the danger of human trafficking to Middle East.

The MoU is expected to strengthen cooperation to prevent all forms of human trafficking. The repatriation of victims would be done as promptly as possible and the home country will undertake the safe and effective re-integration of the victims. It will also ensure speedy investigation and prosecution of traffickers.

News 38 - India signed agreement with Germany on Namami Gange



An Implementation Agreement for Ganga Rejuvenation under the Namami Gange Program was signed in New Delhi between the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and German International Cooperation (GIZ) of Germany. 'Namami Gange' Program, is a flagship program of Government of India with a renewed impetus to conserve the revered river 'Ganga'.

Based on Indo-German Knowledge exchange, the objective of the agreement is to enable responsible stakeholders at

National and State level to apply integrated river basin management approach for the rejuvenation of the river Ganga. The project duration is three years i.e. from 2016 to 2018 and the German contribution in the project will be to the tune of Rs. 22.5 crore.

News 39 - India, US agreed on sharing military logistics



India and the United States have agreed in principle to share military logistics. The agreement will make it easier for both militaries to share each other's facilities. The Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA) will be ready in a month.

Besides LEMOA, the other fundamental agreements are Communications Interoperability and Security Memorandum of Agreement (CISMOA) and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA). The two countries also agreed to set up a new Maritime Security Dialogue.

News 40 - Dr. Ambedkar's 125th birth anniversary- Launch of Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan



Gram Uday se Bharat Uday Abhiyaan was launched on the occasion of 125th birth anniversary of Babasaheb Ambedkar at his birthplace Mhow, Madhya Pradesh to strengthen Panchayati Raj in villages and ensure social harmony in villages so that the farmers could be benefitted from such campaigns.

The 11-day campaign (from 14 April to 24 April 2016) is a joint effort by the Ministries of Rural Development, Agriculture, Social Justice, Labour and Information and Broadcasting along with the States. The series of events include 'Social Harmony Program' from 14 to 16 April, Gram Kisan Sabha from 17 to 20 April and 'Gram Sabha' from 21 to 24 April.

News 41 - South Korea and India ink MoU for port related matters



An MOU was signed in Mumbai between Union Road, Transport and Highways and Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari and South Korea Oceans and Fisheries Minister Kim Young Suk for cooperation and mutual assistance between India and Republic of Korea in port related matters and their developments.

This MOU is expected to encourage both countries for the development of ports, port related industry, and maritime relationship. There will be exchange of information on construction, building, engineering and related aspects in the field of port development.

News 42 - E-Bidding & E-Reverse Auction Portal launched by Power Ministry



The Power Ministry has launched an e-bidding platform to make the bidding more efficient and transparent by bringing power procurement contract details to the public domain. The Discovery of Efficient Electricity Price (DEEP), e-bidding reverse auction portal, will cover short-term power purchase of less than a year. In the near future it will also start offering the option for longer-term power purchase. Kerala, Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, have already sought 1,000 megawatt (MW) of short-term power through the power trading portal.

News 43 - The SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Rules, 2016 notified



The Union Government on 14 April 2016 notified the Scheduled Castes (SC) and the Scheduled Tribes (ST) (Prevention of Atrocities (PoA)) Amendment Rules, 2016. The amendments are done in the principal rules of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Rules, 1995.

For key features of the SC and ST (PoA) Amendment Act, 2015, please click on the following links – <http://pib.nic.in>

News 44 - PM Narendra Modi launched National Agriculture Market



The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, launched the pilot of e-NAM - the e-trading platform for the National Agriculture Market on 14th April, 2016. Union Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Shri Radha Mohan Singh said that 21 mandis in 8 states have been linked to National Agriculture Market today. By September 2016, 200 mandis will be included and by March 2018, 585 mandis.

The project will operate through an online portal which is being linked to the mandis of the States. Its software will be

provided to all the willing states without cost. Under this Project, Government of India is providing a grant of Rs. 30 lacs to the proposed agriculture mandis of the states.

News 45 - Google extends free internet service through Wi-Fi to 10 railway stations



Google, as part of its tie up with Railtel - the internet provider arm of Indian Railways, has extended free internet service through Wi-Fi to 10 railway stations across the country to provide internet to over 1.5 million people. The 10 Railway Stations are: Pune, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Raipur, Ranchi, Vijayawada, Kacheguda (Hyderabad), Ernakulum Jn (Kochi) and Vishakhapatnam.

Google and RailTel will take the total number of covered stations to 100 within this year. The service will be free for a reasonable amount of time. The first such kind of service was launched at Mumbai Central in 2015.

News 46 - Indian Railways used drone for the first time to inspect Dedicated Freight Corridor project



Indian Railways used drones for the first time to inspect the ongoing work on the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) project. The drone was used for 3 days on a trial basis to ascertain the progress on the 42 km long track between Baghega to Srimadhapur in Rajasthan in the Western DFC and also the 56 km long line between Durgawati and Sasaram in Bihar.

The drone was hired from a private operator and it cost Rs 3,000 per km for undertaking the aerial survey.

News 47 - New Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies



18/04/2016. National Mission for Clean Ganga under the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation in collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur (IITK) announced the formal launch of Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (CGRBMS) in New Delhi. The Ministry signed a 10-year Memorandum of Agreement with IITK for provision of continual scientific support in the implementation and dynamic evolution of the Ganga River Basin Management Plan.

The government has decided to implement Effluent Treatment Plants (ETPs) and Sewage Treatment Plants (STP's) using a specific Public Private Partnership (PPP) framework called hybrid annuity model.

News 48 - India, Afghanistan and Iran finalize draft of Trilateral Chabahar Agreement



The second meeting of experts from India, Afghanistan and Iran was held in New Delhi on April 11 to finalize the text of the Trilateral Agreement among the three countries on Transport and Transit Corridors (Chabahar Agreement).

The draft Agreement envisions trilateral cooperation for providing alternative access to seas to Afghanistan, inter alia for Afghanistan's trade with India. When the Agreement comes into force it will significantly enhance utilization of Chabahar Port, contribute to economic growth of Afghanistan, and facilitate better regional connectivity, including between India and connections to Afghanistan and Central Asia.

News 49 - Government released Commemorative Coin and Circulation Coin on Taty Tope on his Martyr Day



Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State for Culture and Tourism (I/C) and Civil Aviation released a Commemorative Coin of Rs. 200/- and a Circulation Coin of Rs. 10/- on Taty Tope on the occasion of his Martyr Day.

One of the most outstanding leaders of India's First War of Independence, Taty Tope was a patriot of the highest order. He was captured by the British Forces on 07 April, 1859 and after a hurried trial for waging war against the East India Company, he was hanged to death on 18 April 1859 at Shivpuri, Madhya Pradesh.

News 50 - India and Mauritius sign MoU to promote cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicine and Homoeopathy



India has signed an MoU with Mauritius on cooperation in the field of traditional system of medicine and Homoeopathy during the recent visit of Minister of State for AYUSH (Independent Charge) and Health & Family Welfare, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik to Mauritius.

This MoU will promote cooperation in the field of traditional system of health and medicine between the two countries and popularize the various Indian traditional systems which fall under AYUSH. It envisages exchange of experts, supply of traditional medicinal substances, joint research and development and recognition of the traditional systems of health and medicine in both countries.

News 51 - Union Government released Report of Technical Committee on Large Scale Integration of Renewable Energy





The Union Government released Report of the Technical Committee on Large Scale Integration of Renewable Energy, Need for Balancing, Deviation Settlement Mechanism (DSM) and associated issues. The Committee has put forth a 15-point Action Plan for facilitating large scale integration of renewables in the country, in a secure and reliable manner.

The committee had extensive deliberations and has recommended several actions, such as bringing flexibility in the conventional generation, frequency control, generation reserves, ancillary services, forecasting, scheduling, deviation settlement mechanism, balancing requirement, data telemetry and communication, Renewable Energy Management Centres (REMCs), Transmission system augmentation and strengthening as well as certain compliance actions at renewable generation front.

News 52 - Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme launched in 61 more districts



Smt. Maneka Gandhi formally launched the Beti Bachao, Beti Padho scheme in additional 61 districts at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development and was initially launched in 100 districts with adverse Child Sex Ratio. The key elements of the scheme include awareness and advocacy campaign, multi-sectoral action in selected districts (low on CSR) and effective enforcement of Pre-Conception & Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC & PNDT) Act.

News 53 - Maneka Gandhi inaugurated the Regional Conference of the North Eastern States on Child Adoption



The Union Minister for Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi inaugurated the Regional Conference of the North Eastern States on Child Adoption in Shillong, Meghalaya. The Conference was organized by the Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) of the WCD Ministry.

The conference had been organized with a view to familiarize the stakeholders with the adoption program in the North Eastern States. Secondly, orient them about the provisions of Adoption Guidelines - 2015 as well as the online adoption process through Child Adoption Resource Information and Guidance System (CARINGS).

News 54 - India, US to Collaborate On Tackling Offshore Tax Evasion



The Union Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley and U.S Treasury Secretary Mr. Jacob J. Lew met for the Sixth Annual U.S.–India Economic and Financial Partnership (EFP) in Washington D.C. The two sides have agreed to enhance collaboration on tackling offshore tax evasion and increase cooperation in sharing of cross-border tax information.

The two sides also noted the progress in sharing of financial information between the two countries under the Inter-Governmental Agreement pursuant to Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act (FATCA).

News 55 - India ranked 133rd in World Press Freedom Index



India was ranked 133 out of 180 countries in the 2016 World Press Freedom Index published by Reporters Without Borders (RSF). India scored 43.17 this year as compared to 40.49 in 2015. It was ranked 136 out of 180 countries in 2015. India's poor ranking is mainly due to the number of journalists killed and the impunity for crimes of violence against the media.

Pakistan ranks 147, Sri Lanka (141), Afghanistan (120), Bangladesh (144), Nepal (105) and Bhutan (94). China is ranked 176. The United States is ranked 44th and Russia is placed at the 148th place.

News 56 - Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bhutan on Technical Cooperation



The Union Cabinet gave its approval for signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Bhutan on technical cooperation in the field of capacity building, benchmarking and bilateral exchange in infrastructure engineering.

The MoU is in furtherance of Article 2,7 and 8 of the India-Bhutan friendship treaty. The MoU will provide an Umbrella for educational, scientific & technical research and environment protection which are also stated aim of the India-Bhutan foundation established in August 2003.

News 57 - Cabinet Approves Signing the Paris Agreement



The Union Cabinet gave its approval for signing the Paris Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of Parties held in Paris in December 2015. Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Prakash Javadekar, will sign the agreement on behalf of India on 22 April 2016 at the high level signature ceremony convened by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-moon.

The Paris Agreement on climate change is a milestone in global climate cooperation. India had advocated a strong and durable climate agreement based on the principles and provisions of the Convention. The Paris Agreement addresses all the important concerns and expectations of India.

News 58 - Competition Appellate Tribunal sets aside Rs 258-crore fine on Jet Airways, IndiGo, SpiceJet



The Competition Appellate Tribunal (Compat) set aside Competition Commission of India's order of imposing a Rs 258 crore fine on Jet Airways, IndiGo and SpiceJet in the case of alleged cartelisation in relation to cargo fuel surcharge. It also directed the regulator to pass a fresh order. COMPAT has given the airlines one more chance to defend themselves before the final order is passed.

In Nov 2015, CCI had imposed Rs 151 crore on Jet Airways, Rs 63 crore on IndiGo and Rs 42 crore on Spice Jet as penalty for the reason.

News 59 - President of India inaugurated Second Edition of Global Exhibition on Services



The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee inaugurated the Second Edition of a Global Exhibition on Services -2016 at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida on April 20, 2016.

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry in association with Services Export Promotion Council and Confederation of Indian Industries organizes this Global Exhibition annually with the aim to enhance international trade in services between India and the world.

News 60 - Prime Minister confers awards for excellence in implementation of priority program



The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi conferred awards for excellence in implementation of priority program on the occasion of 10th Civil Services Day today.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister also released two books namely: The Change Makers and Transforming India.

The winners for various categories are :

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJSY) – Nagaon, Assam was awarded in North East and Hill States category, Chandigarh in UTs and North 24 Parganas, West Bengal in Other States group.
- Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) – West Sikkim and Bikaner, Rajasthan were awarded in North East & Hill states and Other States category respectively.
- Swachh Vidyalaya program – Anantnag, Jammu and Kashmir, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Ananthapuramu, Andhra Pradesh were awarded in North East & Hill states, UTs and Other States group respectively.
- Soil Health Card Scheme – Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh and Balrampur, Chhattisgarh were conferred award in North East and Hill states and Other States respectively.

News 61 - First Meeting of All India Handloom Board held



The first meeting of the recently constituted All India Handloom Board was held in New Delhi, on 19th April, 2016. The 'India Handloom' Brand registration has so far been granted to 170 handloom producing agencies and weavers in 41 product categories.

The brand producers have reported a sale of more than Rs.15 crores within a period of about four months. The Government has significantly expanded its support to handloom clusters, in terms of Common Facility Centres (CFCs) and skill upgradation. Life insurance and health insurance benefits to handloom weavers will now be provided through national social security schemes.

News 62 - Commerce and Industry Ministry launched Twitter Seva



The Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry launched a new service named Twitter Seva. It will be used to address

issues and grievances of startups, exporters and importers and other stakeholders on matters relating to Department of Commerce and Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) will be answered through this service.

The ministry will try to respond to the queries within 48 to 72 working hours. Anyone who is desirous of assistance from the ministry can use the hashtag, #mociseva on Twitter.

News 63 - India's first Cellulosic Alcohol Technology Demonstration Plant at Kashipur, Uttarakhand



Union Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated India's 1st Second-Generation (2G) Ethanol plant at Kashipur in Uttarakhand.

The technology is projected to be capable of converting all types of agricultural residues like Bagasse, Rice Straw, Wheat Straw, Bamboo, Cotton Stalk, Corn Stover, Wood chips etc. to ethanol in less than 24 hours, with optimum product yields. The Technology Demonstration plant has a capacity to consume 10 tons of biomass per day.

News 64 - India and France launch \$1 Trillion Potential Solar Program under ISA



India and France have launched \$1 trillion potential solar finance program that aims to lower the cost of finance and facilitate the flow of more than \$1 trillion investment to members of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). Power Minister Piyush Goyal and French Environment Minister Segolene Royal made the announcement.

A second program launched at the ISA meeting aims to make available solar technology for farmers.

News 65 - Indo-Thai Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)



INS Karmuk, an indigenously built Missile Corvette based at the Andaman and Nicobar Command, alongwith a Dornier Maritime Patrol Aircraft, are participating in the 22nd Indo-Thai Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT).

The 22nd edition of the CORPAT would include participation of one warship and one Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both sides with the Closing Ceremony being held at Port Blair. The two navies have been carrying out CORPATs twice a year with the aim of keeping the Indian Ocean Region safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade.

News 66 - India banned milk and mobile phones import from China



India has banned import of milk and milk products (including chocolates and chocolate products and candies/ confectionary/ food preparations with milk or milk solids as an ingredient) from China till 23.6.2016 or until further orders, whichever is earlier as their quality was unacceptable.

Further some mobile phones, which do not carry International Mobile Station Equipment Identity number or other security features, and some steel products have also been banned from importing from China.