Communication satellite GSAT-6 successfully positioned in orbital slot: GSAT-6, the country’s latest communication satellite has been successfully positioned in its orbital slot and collocated with INSAT 4A, GSAT 12, GSAT 10 and IRNSS1C. The satellite was launched from the spaceport at Sriharikota on 27\textsuperscript{th} August 2015 with GSLV-D6 rocket having indigenous cryogenic engine. GSAT – 6 is the 25th geostationary communication satellite of India built by ISRO and 12th in the GSAT series. The mission life of the satellite is nine years.

\textbf{INS Kochi commissioned:} Naval warship INS Kochi was commissioned on 30\textsuperscript{th} September 2015. INS Kochi is the second ship of the Kolkata-class Guided Missile Destroyers. It has been designed by the Directorate of Naval Design, and constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders in Mumbai. It incorporates new design concepts for improved survivability, stealth, sea-keeping and maneuverability. With a displacement of 7,500 tonnes, the ship spanning 164m in length and 17m at the beam, is propelled by four gas turbines and designed to achieve speed of more than 30 knots.

\textbf{India launched its first ever Astronomical Satellite “ASTROSAT” into Space:} India’s space program added yet another feather to its cap on 28\textsuperscript{th} September 2015 when it launched successfully the country’s first space-based astronomical observatory into earth’s orbit. The observational satellite, christened ASTROSAT, was launched from Sriharikota by using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-XL) rocket. PSLV-XL while taking ASTROSAT into space also carried six foreign satellites, including four from the U.S., one
from Canada and one from Indonesia. With the launch of ASTROSAT, India has become the fifth global power having an observatory in space. ASTROSAT is expected to be operational for the next five years and it contains an Ultraviolet Imaging Telescope and is capable of studying celestial bodies and cosmic phenomenon across a variety of electromagnetic wavelengths.

**Digital India Programme:** Digital India is an ambitious programme of Government of India (GOI) to transform India into digital empowered society and knowledge economy. The programme aims to prepare the India for the knowledge based transformation and delivering good governance to citizens by synchronized and co-ordinated engagement with both Central Government and State Government. This programme has been envisaged by Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) and will impact ministry of communications & IT, ministry of rural development, ministry of human resource development, ministry of health and others. This programme will also benefit all states and union territories. The existing/ ongoing e-Governance initiatives would be revamped to align them with the principles of Digital India. It would ensure that government services are available to citizens electronically. It would also bring in public accountability through mandated delivery of government’s services electronically.

The Digital India vision provides the intensified impetus for further momentum and progress for e-Governance and would promote inclusive growth that covers electronic services, products, devices, manufacturing and job opportunities. Digital infrastructure will focus on providing high speed secure Internet. Governance and services on demand will stress on integrating services across departments and jurisdictions and making services available in real time for both online and mobile platform.

Digital empowerment of citizens will pay emphasis on universal digital literacy and availability of digital resources/services in Indian languages. The programme will be implemented in phases till 2018. To implement this, the government is planning to strengthen National Informatics Center (NIC) by restructuring it to support all
central government departments and state governments.

As a part of the project, the Govt of India has taken several initiatives. Some of which are as under:

(i) **Electronic Development Fund Policy**: To promote electronics manufacturing in India, Govt. of India has formulated this policy that envisages setting up an Electronics Development Fund (EDF) to foster R&D and innovation in electronics, IT and nano electronics. CANBANK Venture Fund Ltd (CVCFL) is the designated Fund Manager for EDF. Further details are available on [www.canbankventure.com](http://www.canbankventure.com)

(ii) **Initiative to encourage tourism in India**: GOI has launched web based E-ticketing for important monuments such as Tajmahal, Humayun’s Tomb etc. Archeological Survey of India (ASI) has identified 25 model monuments for e-ticketing as well as for making free wi-fi available. Free wi-fi is already available in some touristic places of India. Google has announced to partner with GOI to make free wi-fi available in 500 India Railway Stations.

(iii) **Initiative in the area of Education**: Govt. has launched schemes such as e-Book and e-Basta which provides books including freely downloadable books in various Indian languages in digital form. More details are available on [www.ebasta.in](http://www.ebasta.in)

**Andhra Pradesh government launched e-Pragati**: The Andhra Pradesh govt. as a part of expansion of its Digital India initiative, has launched AP State Enterprise Architecture (APSEA) or e-Pragati on 6th September 2015. In a first, in the country, e-Pragati will enable people in the state to avail government services and schemes of 33 departments and over 300 agencies under one roof covering around 745 services. It consists of 72 projects grouped into 14 packages whose estimated outlay is Rs 2,358 crores, which will be funded and implemented over a three-year period. While the government will invest Rs 1,528 crore, the balance would be mobilized through PPP mode.

“ePragati focuses on achieving a unified and connected government with citizen-centricity at its core. Implementation of ePragati will lead to free-flow of information among departments, paving the way for an integrated, outcome-driven and accountable government. The major
components of e-Pragati revolve around 7 missions, 5 grids and 5 campaigns which include, AP Fibre Grid (to all gram panchayats), AP State Data Centre (to host all the data and applications), e-Highway (to seamlessly connect all the departments digitally), People Hub (to house all the socio-economic data of the citizens of the state which will be used to implement welfare schemes and development programs), Lab Hub (that contains details of all types of land parcels in the state), Dial AP (a unified contact/call centre that the citizens can use to access a wide range of services), e-Learning platform (that provides learning and online material/education aid to enhance quality of education), Social benefits management system (that includes all benefits schemes), APcan (comprehensive system for management of cancer), mSeva (a platform for providing a wide range of citizen services on mobile), e-AgriMarket (a platform that enables farmers to sell their produce online to get the best price) and e-Panchayat (enhances efficiency of Panchayat Raj institutions).

The project is scheduled to be implemented in three phases and set for completion by December 2017.

India announced more troops for UN Peacekeeping Missions: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in his address at Leaders’ Summit on UN Peacekeeping announced for contribution of additional troops to the UN Peacekeeping Missions around the world. These include additional battalion of up to 850 troops in existing or new operations; additional three police units with higher representation of female peacekeepers; commitment to provide critical enablers; deployment of technical personnel in UN missions; and, additional training for peacekeepers at our facilities in India and in the field.

Around 1,80,000 Indian troops have participated in various UN peacekeeping Missions which is more than from any other country. India has participated in 48 of the 69 UN peacekeeping missions so far. 161 Indian peacekeepers have made the supreme sacrifice while serving in UN missions.

Prime Minister while addressing the summit also pushed for long-awaited reforms of the UN Security Council. Prime Minister stated that the success of UN peacekeeping “ultimately depends not on the weapons
that the soldiers carry, but on the moral force that decisions of the UN Security Council command”. Prime Minister added that we must complete the long-pending task of reforms of the UN Security Council within a fixed time frame to preserve the relevance and effectiveness of the UN.

Prime Minister also said that India is ready to contribute monetarily to a memorial for slain UN Peacekeepers. Prime Minister further stated that India’s commitment to UN Peacekeeping remains strong and will grow.

27 countries, 2000 participants at world Hindi Conference held in Bhopal: Around 2,000 participants from India and 27 countries attended the 10th edition of the Vishwa Hindi Sammelan held on September 10-12 in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. It was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in association with the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The conference was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. During its three day course, the conference was attended by noted Hindi scholars from across the country and the world who deliberated on universalisation of Hindi language.

Public Advisory for Handwritten Passports: The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has set a deadline of the 24th November, 2015 for globally phasing out of all non-Machine Readable Passports (MRPs). From the 25th November, 2015 onwards, foreign Governments may deny Visa or entry to any person travelling on a non-Machine Readable Passport. The Government of India has been issuing Machine Readable Passports since 2001. The Passports, however, issued before 2001 and particularly those issued during mid 1990s with a validity of 20 years will fall in the category of non-MRPs. All handwritten passports with pasted photographs are also considered non-MRPs. Indian citizens residing in UAE and holding such passports with validity beyond the 24th November, 2015 are hereby advised to apply for re-issue of their passports well before the deadline in order to avoid any inconvenience in obtaining valid visa or international travel.