



Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative

India's [Right to Information Act](#) turned 11 this week. This is an appropriate moment to test compliance with a [June 2016 directive](#) of the [Cabinet Secretariat](#) requiring all Ministries and Departments of the Central Government to publish their performance reports on their official website, every month. **Our quick survey of the official websites shows, more than 92% of the Central Ministries and more than 82% of the Central Departments have not displayed their monthly performance reports as required by this directive.**

Under Rule 10 of the [Rules of Procedure in Regard to Proceedings of the Cabinet, 1987](#), every ministry and department is required to send a report of the work done every month, to the Council of Ministers. These reports are required to be submitted through the Cabinet Secretariat by the 10th of the next month. Such a monthly report may have a classified portion (labelled "top secret" or "secret" or "confidential") containing 'sensitive matters' and an unclassified portion. **With the exception of the Ministry of Coal, no other ministry or department proactively publishes any part of these monthly summaries prepared under Rule 10.**

The June 2016 circular of the Cabinet Secretariat to all ministries and departments required them to do the following:

"In order to ensure greater transparency and availability of information in public domain about the activities of the Ministries/Departments, it has been decided that henceforth, all Ministries/Departments may upload, on a monthly basis, the major achievements, significant developments and important events for the month in respect of their Ministry/Department, on their official websites."

After allowing a quarter (3 months) for the ministries and departments to put in place systems for publishing the required monthly reports, CHRI (?) checked their websites for compliance. **The following gives an assessment of the situation:**

Ministries that have published their monthly reports:

1) **Ministry of Home Affairs:** <http://mha.nic.in/MHAMajorAchievements> (June – August 2016)

2) **Ministry of Medium Small and Micro**

Enterprises: <http://www.msme.gov.in/mob/ArchivesNews.aspx> (June - August 2016)

3) **Ministry of Rural**

Development: http://rural.nic.in/netrural/rural/sites/Monthly_Achievements.aspx (June - July 2016)

4) **Ministry of Textiles:** <http://www.ministryoftextiles.gov.in/documents/monthly-major-activities> (August 2016 only)

Departments that have published their monthly reports:

1) **Department of Personnel and Training** (nodal department for implementing the RTI Act): http://ccis.nic.in/WriteReadData/CircularPortal/D2/D02adm/Monthly_DO_August_2016.pdf (currently available for August 2016 only)

2) **Dept. of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances:** <http://darpg.gov.in/relatedlinks/monthly-major-achievements> (June 2016 only)

3) **Dept. of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries:** <http://dadf.gov.in/division/achievements-0> (common report for August and September 2016)

4) **Dept. of Health and Family**

Welfare: <http://mohfw.gov.in/index1.php?lang=1&level=1&sublinkid=6202&lid=4040> (April – July 2016)

5) **Dept. of Industrial Policy and**

Promotions: http://dipp.gov.in/English/AboutUs/achievements/MajorAchievements_AprilJuly2016_23August2016.pdf (April – July 2016)

6) **Dept. of Investment and Public Investment**

Management : http://dipam.gov.in/Major_Achievement.asp (2 bullet points of achievements for August 2016)

7) **Dept. of Public**

Enterprises : http://dpe.nic.in/sites/upload_files/dpe/files/MONTHLY_ACHIEVEMENTS_SEPTEMBER.pdf (covers August and September 2016)

8) **Dept. of Social Justice and**

Empowerment: <http://socialjustice.gov.in/writereaddata/UploadFile/ACHIEVEMENT-JULY%202016.pdf> (July 2016 only)

The research shows, only 7.6% (4 out of 52) of the Central Ministries and 17.4% (8 out of 46) of the Central Departments have complied with this directive. Even where there is compliance, all reports due since the date of the Cabinet Secretariat's circular are not uploaded on their website. We checked not only the homepage of every website, but also the "Sitemap" and the sections on "Media/Press", "RTI" and "Citizen" on each website to ascertain the status of compliance.

Other performance reports:

During our survey, we came across other kinds of progress reports. The Central Government publishes a **Fortnightly report of the NDA Government**. In addition to this report, several Ministries and Departments have uploaded other kinds of performance reports. Apart from the regular publication of annual reports which are tabled in Parliament in relation to the discussion on the demand for grants presented in the annual budget, some have published e-books or two-years reports on their official websites. A few others publish fortnightly and weekly reports. A sampler of these reports is given below:

Department of Defence: *Key achievements under NDA Government-* <http://mod.nic.in/writereaddata/accomplishments.pdf> (July 2016)

Ministry of Earth Sciences: *Two-year achievements-* <http://moes.gov.in/content/two-years-achievements-2014-2016> (document updated in June 2016)

Ministry of Food processing Industries: *Handbook on two-year achievements-* http://mofpi.nic.in/H_Dwld.aspx?KYEwmOL+HGqTV0f1VSVZLW3VIDC+YHsvTxu0wQ5UZV59bmv+3VtDGg= (May 2014 - May 2016)

Department of Sports: *Achievements-* <http://yas.gov.in/sites/default/files/achievements-sports2016.PDF> (2014 - 2016)

Ministry of New and Renewable Energy: *E-book of two-year achievements-* <http://mnre.gov.in/file-manager/UserFiles/e-book.htm> (May 2014-May2016)

Ministry of Railways: *Status of Rail Budget Implementation-* <http://www.indianrailways.gov.in/IMPLEMENTATION1.pdf>

Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals: *Six-monthly report-* <http://chemicals.gov.in/initiatives-and-achievement> (first 6 months of NDA government)

Department of Fertilisers: *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics-* <http://fert.nic.in/page/monthly-bulletin> (accessible from December 2014 to August 2016)

Ministry of Corporate Affairs: *Monthly Bulletin on the Corporate Sector-* <http://www.mca.gov.in/MinistryV2/monthlyinformationbulletin.html> (available from March 2015 – February 2016)

Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas: *Monthly Newsletter-* <http://petroleum.nic.in/mopng-newsletters/current/website.html> (September 2016 with archives for some months of 2015)

Ministry of External Affairs: *Weekly Media Briefing-* [http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?49/Media Briefings](http://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?49/Media%20Briefings)

Department of Atomic Energy: *Important Events -* <http://www.dae.nic.in/?q=node/28> (individual events reported)

Standardising the reporting format and periodicity

While the efforts made by the Ministries and departments to inform the public about the progress of their work must be appreciated, there is a need for standardising the format and the periodicity of these reports. To start with, it may be advisable to publish on the websites, the "unclassified" portions of the monthly reports submitted to the Council of Ministers through the Cabinet Secretariat under Rule 10 of the [Rules of Procedure in Regard to the Proceedings of Cabinet](#). This will reduce the burden on the ministries and departments of preparing a separate report to comply with the Cabinet Secretariat's Directive. **If the Ministry of Coal can publish the unclassified portion of their monthly reports soon after sending them to the Cabinet Secretariat, there is no reason why other ministries and departments cannot do the same.**

Rule 10 reports of the Ministry of External Affairs- RTIed

Recently, we have obtained copies of the monthly reports prepared by the Ministry of External Affairs under Rule 10 for the period, June 2015 - January 2016 ([see attachments](#)). Readers will realise how much more comprehensive Rule 10 reports are in comparison with the monthly reports that are being published under the Cabinet Secretariat's recent directive at the links cited above. Experts and foreign affairs analysts may find these reports useful in their work.

Second, the Central Government and all State Governments have a statutory obligation under **Section 26(1)(c) of the RTI Act** to require all public authorities under their jurisdiction to **disseminate accurate information about their activities in a timely and effective manner.** **Section 23(1)(c) of the Jammu and Kashmir RTI Act, 2009 places a similar obligation of disclosure on the Government in J&K.** However, compliance with these provisions is poor. A good way of ensuring compliance with this statutory requirement is to publish the Rule 10 reports every month. Perhaps a beginning can be made by encouraging the Central Ministries and departments to comply with these provisions and other public authorities that have websites may follow this practice later on. Regular reporting in this manner has the potential of reducing the number of RTI applications that are submitted to public authorities and achieving one of the primary objectives of the RTI Act, namely, reducing people's need to make formal requests for information .