

**INDIAN PATENT OFFICE RECOGNISED AS INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AUTHORITY  
[ISA] AND INTERNATIONAL PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY [IPEA]**

Businesses in India today are largely conforming towards the requirement of knowledge economy which is also evident in the negotiations on intellectual property assets in any merger & acquisition deal. The contributing factor is the appreciation of intellectual property issues and unabated evolution of IP regime, particularly in the last 10 years. The government playing a critical role laid down milestones and actively pursued it thus working towards consolidation of IP laws and their administration and implementation.

In the Patent domain, as a first step, The Patent Act was amended in 2005 to meet TRIPS obligations and is marked by the arrival of product patent regime for pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals. On the administrative front, a massive modernization program including introduction of IT enabled efficient system has launched e-filing facilities for patent and trademark applications.

The Intellectual Property Office modernization program of the Government of India has added a new feather in its cap. The recently concluded General Assemblies of World Intellectual property Organization [WIPO] recognized India as an International Searching Authority (ISA) and an International Preliminary Examining Authority (IPEA). This recognition of India as an ISA/IPEA puts her in a coveted league of only 15 nations and organizations currently recognized as ISA/IPEA and is also reflective of the efforts made towards achieving milestones.

The Indian Patent Office will enter into an agreement with the International Bureau of WIPO under the Patent Cooperation Treaty [PCT] to function as International Searching and International Preliminary Examination Authorities from January 01, 2008 conducting prior art search and preliminary examination, and preparing written opinions. The status of Indian Patent Office as ISA and IPEA may attract several international applications received by WIPO under the PCT for search and preliminary purposes as India being the only English speaking nation in the Asian region.

The ISA & IPEA status may also influence foreign investments as the new position for Indian patent office may boost investor confidence through the strengthening of knowledge economy.