Press Brief for TPR and AFS **js.nafta** < js.nafta@commerce.gov.in >

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Mon, 20 Jul 2026 5:24:24 PM +0530

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Dear Sir/Madam,

I am directed to attach press brief approved by Competent Authority for Trade Policy Review and Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies.

Regards,
Sai Krishna Prasad ,
Joint DGFT,
TF Desk,
Department of Commerce

2 Attachment(s)

Final Press brief for AFS .docx
16.3 KB

Final Press brief for TPR .docx
22.1 KB

Urgent / Immediate

ADG ([illegible] Media)

Dir (RKS)

for publication today pl

20/7/2026

PPS

To notify both.

20/7/2026

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PIB Release (Pre-TPR)

India's 8th Trade Policy Review (TPR) meeting at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is scheduled to be held on 21st and 23rd July 2026. India's official delegation for the TPR is headed by Commerce Secretary, Shri Rajesh Agarwal.

The TPR is an important transparency mechanism under the WTO. It entails a comprehensive peer-review of a Member's trade policies, consisting of a multitude of border and behind the border measures, to enhance transparency, predictability, and understanding in the WTO. Trade policy reviews are conducted by the Trade Policy Review Body (TPRB), which comprises the entire membership of the WTO.

The review is carried out on the basis of two principal documents: a policy statement submitted by the Member under review (which is called the Government Report) and a report prepared by the WTO Secretariat, which is circulated to all Members. All WTO Members are subject to review at regular intervals, although at varying frequencies, determined by their share of world trade. India's TPRs take place once in five years. The 8th TPR covers the period of 01 January 2021 – 31 December 2025.

The TPR process for India began in June 2025. Over the fourteen month period, Department of Commerce in consultation with more than 100 Ministries/Departments/Organisations participated in the process.

India's performance during the period under review has shown remarkable resilience. Following the pandemic-induced contraction and increased global uncertainties, the economy nevertheless staged a strong rebound and has since sustained high growth rates, establishing itself as the fastest-growing among major economies.

India's external trade has remained resilient despite challenging global conditions. In 2025-2026, total exports of merchandise and services reached an all-time high of US$ 863.1 billion, growing at 6.3% from US$ 676.5 billion in 2021-2022.

The Secretariat and Government reports point to many achievements of India. These achievements include India's strong engagement with its trading partners through various Free Trade Agreements, tax reforms such as the rationalisation and simplification of Goods and Services Tax structure, and numerous digital initiatives such as UPI (Unified Payments Interface) and incorporation of digital tools for trade facilitation.

WTO Members have asked more than 900 questions as on 20 July 2026 for India's written responses, which reflects the significant interest among the Members in India's growing economy and trade profile. The Members took keen interest in digitisation and reforms associated with it, MSME and women's participation in the economy, Viksit Bharat, and Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan.

It is anticipated that more than 40 WTO Members will be delivering statements on the occasion. The delegation will present India's position and point of view on various areas of interest of the Members. The delegation will also share India's perspective and vision for the future.

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Press Brief: India and the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

India Becomes a Party to the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies by Depositing its Instrument of Acceptance

India deposited its Instrument of Acceptance of the WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies (AFS) on 20th July 2026, thereby becoming a Party to the Agreement. The Instrument of Acceptance, was formally handed over by the Commerce Secretary, Government of India to the Director-General of the World Trade Organization (WTO). India's decision reaffirms the country's commitment to sustainable fisheries management while preserving marine resources as a source of food security, livelihoods and employment for coastal communities.

Background

The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies, adopted by consensus at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference in Geneva in June 2022, is the first multilateral WTO agreement with an environmental sustainability objective. It prohibits government support to illegal fishing activities and overexploitation of stocks, contributing to the protection of marine life. The Agreement entered into force on 15 September 2025 after acceptance by two-thirds of WTO Members. India is the 123rd Member of the WTO to deposit its Instrument of Acceptance. The Agreement focuses on subsidies related to marine wild capture fishing and fishing related activities at sea. **Importantly, aquaculture and inland fisheries remain outside the scope of this Agreement.**

Benefits for India

- Protects the livelihoods of traditional and small-scale fishers by promoting sustainable fisheries. The Agreement prohibits subsidies linked to illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing and fishing of overfished stocks, thereby addressing unsustainable fishing practices that threaten marine resources and safeguarding the long-term interests of traditional and small-scale fishing communities.
- Creates a more equitable global fisheries regime by disciplining harmful subsidies that support large, heavily subsidised industrial fishing fleets being operated by distant water fishing nations. This benefits countries like India, where fisheries are predominantly small-scale and which are not major participants in industrial fishing.
- Enhances India's credibility as a responsible seafood exporter, thereby supporting improved access to premium markets that increasingly value sustainability and traceability.

- The predominance of aquaculture-based shrimp in India's seafood exports, which falls outside the scope of the Agreement, ensures the continued resilience and competitiveness of the country's seafood export sector.

India's Preparedness

India has a robust fisheries management framework, strengthened through the Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Rules, 2025 and the Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the High Seas by Indian-Flagged Fishing Vessels, 2025. These measures, together with the ongoing capacity-building initiatives under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) and other fisheries management, monitoring and conservation programmes, provide a strong foundation for the effective implementation of the Agreement. These regulatory, institutional and developmental ecosystem positions India to implement the Agreement effectively while preserving policy space for traditional and small-scale fishers.

Conclusion

The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies seeks to promote the conservation and sustainable use of marine fisheries resources while providing appropriate flexibilities for developing and least-developed country Members. India's acceptance of the Agreement reflects its commitment to sustainable fisheries management and responsible marine resource governance. India's domestic fisheries management framework is in alignment with the Agreement and safeguards the interests of traditional and small-scale fishers while contributing to global efforts to promote sustainable fisheries. Above all, by becoming a party to this Agreement, India reinforces its unwavering commitment to the rules-based trading system with the WTO at its core.

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