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India and the WTO Relation: The Complete Explainer (2026)

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International Trade / Economy · 22 min read India's food subsidy is measured against 1988 prices. That single design choice explains most of India's thirty-year argument with the World Trade Organization — and why a country that helped build the system now spends its energy negotiating outside it. **Agri-Policy Desk** Updated 2026-08-12 4200 words UPSC GS 3 · NABARD · RBI Grade B

WTO established 1 January 1995, under the Marrakesh Agreement WTO membership 166 (Comoros and Timor-Leste admitted at MC13) De minimis ceiling, developing countries 10% External reference price base period 1986–88, not indexed to inflation Appellate Body non-functional since December 2019 MC14 Yaoundé, Cameroon, 26–30 March 2026 — no ministerial declaration

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01 — Stakes

A rulebook India helped write, and now fights inside

India is a founding member of both the GATT in 1948 and the WTO in 1995. It is not an outsider to this system. It is an insider with a long list of unresolved grievances.

India's trade-to-GDP ratio makes external rules a domestic policy constraint, not a foreign-policy abstraction. What the WTO permits determines how India may support its farmers, what duties it may levy on electronics, whether it can subsidise fishers, and whether a partner can retaliate when it does. For a country running large public procurement and food distribution programmes, the trade rulebook and the food security architecture are the same conversation.

The system is under visible strain: 166 members, an appeals mechanism non-functional since 2019, a ministerial conference that closed in March 2026 without a declaration, and a largest economy imposing tariffs its own partners describe as inconsistent with MFN obligations.

- **WTO membership** 166 (Comoros and Timor-Leste admitted at MC13)
- **Appellate Body non-functional since** December 2019
- **External reference price base period** 1986–88, not indexed to inflation
- **De minimis ceiling, developing countries** 10%

02 — Foundations

Principles, agreements, and how decisions actually get made

Core principles

- **Most-Favoured Nation (MFN)** A concession given to one member must be given to all. FTAs are a carved-out exception under GATT Article XXIV.

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- **National Treatment** Once an import clears customs it must not be treated worse than a like domestic product.
- **Binding and transparency** Tariffs are bound at ceiling rates in a member's schedule; policies must be notified.
- **Special and Differential Treatment** Longer timelines, lighter obligations and technical assistance for developing countries. India treats this as foundational; several developed members want it narrowed.

The agreements that matter to India

Agreement	What it governs	India's stake
AoA	Agriculture: domestic support, market access, export competition	The central battleground — MSP, procurement, stockholding
SCM	Subsidies and countervailing measures for industry	Export incentive schemes successfully challenged here
TRIPS	Intellectual property	Patents and access to medicines; Section 3(d) of the Patents Act
GATS	Services trade	Mode 4 movement of professionals is India's biggest unrealised ask
SPS & TBT	Food safety and technical standards	Where non-tariff barriers to Indian agri exports actually live
DSU	Dispute settlement procedure	The enforcement arm — currently half-disabled

How decisions get made

The WTO decides by consensus, so any one of 166 members can block. This protects India from imposed rules and simultaneously explains why nothing has concluded multilaterally for years. The Doha single-undertaking principle compounded the paralysis.

The plurilateral argument

Frustrated members have turned to plurilateral negotiation — Investment Facilitation for Development, the e-commerce Joint Statement Initiative. India objects that plurilateral outcomes cannot enter the rulebook without full consensus and that the practice hollows out multilateralism. The objection is principled and it costs India goodwill.

03 — Agriculture

Three pillars, three boxes

Three pillars

- Domestic support
- Market access
- Export competition

Three boxes

Box	What goes in it	Ceiling
Amber	Trade-distorting support — market price support such as MSP, plus input subsidies on power, fertiliser, irrigation, seed and credit	Capped Aggregate Measurement of Support
Blue	Payments under production-limiting programmes tied to fixed area, yield or livestock numbers	No ceiling Designed around the European Community's early-1990s reform path
Green	Minimally distorting support — research, extension, pest control, infrastructure, decoupled income support, environmental payments, public stockholding acquired at market prices	No ceiling No ceiling

De minimis, explained

Support up to 10% of value of production for developing countries (5% for developed) need not count towards a reduction commitment. Countries with large Amber Box support in the base period additionally received a Final Bound Total AMS entitlement above de minimis and were only required to reduce from it. India, whose base-period support was low or negative, took no such entitlement.

The asymmetry

Countries subsidising heavily in the late 1980s got permanent uncapped headroom and a schedule to reduce from. Countries too poor to subsidise then got a 10% ceiling and nothing else. The rules did not create a level field; they froze an existing one.

The drawing that explains the argument

The three boxes of the Agreement on Agriculture rendered as bordered boxes, with a dashed 10% de minimis ceiling cutting across the Amber Box. Select any part of it.

Lid = a legal ceiling

No lid = no ceiling at all

04 — The core grievance

Measuring today's subsidy against a 1988 price

If you understand nothing else about India at the WTO, understand this calculation. Every Indian negotiating position on agriculture flows from it.

How market price support is measured

Market price support

=

(administered price

—

external reference price

)

×

eligible production

The external reference price is frozen at 1986–88. It is not indexed to inflation. Four decades of price change sit inside that one term.

Why that breaks

- The external reference price is the average world price in a fixed base period of 1986–88, not indexed to inflation, and calculated in the currency of the schedule.
- An MSP that merely keeps pace with the cost of cultivation therefore appears as a large and growing subsidy.
- 'Eligible production' is often read as total production of the crop rather than the quantity actually procured, inflating the measured figure further.

What India asks for

- Update the reference period
- Exclude public stockholding for food security from the AMS calculation
- Agree a permanent solution shielding these programmes

The counter-argument you must acknowledge

Exporters argue that large procurement at above-market prices does distort trade regardless of intent, and that surplus stock eventually reaches world markets. A good answer states this before qualifying or rejecting it.

05 — Food security

The peace clause: a temporary fix that turned thirteen

India runs one of the world's largest public stockholding programmes: procurement at MSP, storage by FCI, distribution under the NFSA to around 800 million people. Procurement at an administered price counts as market price support and lands in the Amber Box.

At MC9 Bali in 2013 members agreed an interim peace clause: no dispute would be brought against a developing country whose PSH programme for food security breached its de minimis limit, subject to transparency, notification and a safeguard that stocks must not distort trade or affect other members' food security. The General Council made it open-ended in November 2014.

India has invoked it for rice since the 2018–19 marketing year. Notifications since have drawn questions from other members, particularly on exports from stocks.

Why an interim fix is not enough

The peace clause covers only programmes existing at the time and only traditional staples, carries heavy notification burdens, and rests on political forbearance rather than legal exclusion. It does not cover newer programmes. India seeks a permanent solution — a change in AMS methodology or a clean carve-out for PSH.

Where it stands after MC14

At MC14 India placed the permanent solution, a Special Safeguard Mechanism and cotton at the top of long-pending mandated issues for the Global South. The conference ended without movement on any of them.

06 — Enforcement

The court that lost its judges

How it was meant to work

A panel hears a complaint; either side may appeal to a standing seven-member Appellate Body; the

report is then adopted automatically unless every member objects. That reverse-consensus rule made the system enforceable.

What broke it

Since 2017 the United States has blocked all appointments, citing overreach, treatment of precedent and delays. By December 2019 the bench fell below the three members needed to hear an appeal.

Appeal into the void

The 'appeal into the void' — a losing party appeals to a body that cannot hear it, the report is never adopted, nothing is enforceable. India has both used the manoeuvre and had it used against it.

The workaround

- **Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement** Created 2020 under Article 25 of the DSU.
- **Participation** 61 members, ≈60% of world trade.
- **India** Does not participate — An interim plurilateral arrangement reduces the pressure to restore the permanent system.

For joining

India would gain enforceable outcomes now, and the arrangement is explicitly interim.

Against joining

Every member who joins reduces the cost of the blockage to the party causing it, entrenching a two-tier system.

The cost of staying out

India's cases can be appealed into the void with no remedy at all.

07 — Track record

What India has actually won and lost

Case	Issue	Outcome
EC — Generalised Tariff Preferences win	EU's differentiated preferences for a selected group of countries	India largely successful; established that GSP schemes must be non-discriminatory
US — Countervailing Measures (hot-rolled steel) win	US methodology on subsidy determination for Indian steel	India substantially successful
US — Section 301 / unilateral measures ongoing	Unilateral trade measures outside WTO procedure	Long-standing Indian objection; the principle remains live in 2026
India — Solar Cells loss	Domestic content requirements under JNNSM	India lost; measures found inconsistent with national treatment
India — Agricultural Products (poultry) loss	Avian influenza import restrictions	India lost on SPS grounds
India — Export Related Measures loss	MEIS, EOU and SEZ incentives challenged by the US	Panel ruled against India; appealed into the void
India — Sugar and Sugarcane loss	Brazil, Australia and Guatemala on cane price support and export subsidies	Panel ruled against India; appealed into the void

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Case	Issue	Outcome
India — Tariffs on ICT Goods loss	Duties on phones and components said to exceed bound rates	Panel ruled against India; appealed into the void

The pattern

India wins on procedural fairness and non-discrimination — where a partner has applied a rule unevenly. India loses on domestic content requirements, import restrictions and industrial subsidies — where it has used trade-restrictive instruments for industrial policy. In recent losses the paralysed Appellate Body has functioned as a shield: a short-term convenience with a long-term cost.

08 — Fisheries

Fisheries subsidies: who pays for whose overfishing?

Where the agreement stands

Adopted at MC12 in June 2022 — the WTO's first agreement with an environmental sustainability objective at its core. Disciplines subsidies for IUU fishing, overfished stocks and unregulated high seas fishing. Entered into force September 2025 after two-thirds acceptance.

The unfinished half

Disciplines on subsidies contributing to overcapacity and overfishing.

India's two arguments

- **Per-capita fairness** India's subsidy per fisher is a small fraction of what distant-water fishing nations provide. Disciplining aggregate subsidies without accounting for the number of people supported penalises the country with many small fishers rather than the one with a large industrial fleet.
- **Polluter pays** Those who depleted global stocks through decades of industrial distant-water fishing should accept deeper cuts first. India has proposed a long moratorium on subsidies by distant-water fishing nations and substantial S&DT for developing coastal states.

MC14 outcome

Members could only commit to continuing the negotiation towards MC15.

09 — Digital trade

The e-commerce moratorium finally lapsed

Background

Since 1998 members renewed at each ministerial a moratorium on customs duties on electronic transmissions — software, films, music, games, e-books, design files. Extended at MC13 on terms running until MC14 or 31 March 2026, whichever came earlier.

India's position

India, with Indonesia and South Africa, argued the moratorium costs developing countries growing customs revenue as trade shifts from physical to digital form, that its scope was never properly defined, and that it constrains policy space in the sector where developing countries are trying to build capability.

The counter-position

Duties on digital flows would be near-impossible to administer, would fall on the consumers and small firms the policy claims to help, and would fragment the internet.

What happened at MC14

The moratorium was not extended. A proposal to carry it to 31 December 2030 was blocked, and the failure took the rest of the package down with it, including the reform declaration. Separately, 66 members covering ~70% of global trade agreed to implement a first set of digital trade rules among themselves.

Accuracy note

India's stated ask at MC14 was a careful reconsideration of the moratorium alongside bridging the digital divide. The extension was blocked by other members — an answer attributing the lapse solely to India is factually wrong, though India has been among the most persistent sceptics.

10 — The ministerials

Abu Dhabi to Yaoundé: two conferences, thin outcomes

MC13 — Abu Dhabi, February–March 2024

Agreed

- Admitted Comoros and Timor-Leste, taking membership to 166
- Extended the e-commerce moratorium once more
- Produced a work programme

Not agreed

- No permanent solution on public stockholding
- No Special Safeguard Mechanism
- Appellate Body not restored

MC14 — Yaoundé, Cameroon, 26–30 March 2026

Only the second WTO ministerial hosted in Africa; chaired by Cameroon's Trade Minister Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana

Closed without an overall ministerial declaration and without agreement on core priorities

Agreed

- Commitment to continue fisheries subsidies negotiations towards MC15
- Decision on the integration of small economies
- Decision on operationalising S&DT provisions in the SPS and TBT agreements
- MPIA expansion to 61 members and reaffirmed commitment to restoring a permanent dispute system

Not agreed

- No reform work plan
- E-commerce moratorium not extended
- Agriculture deferred again — PSH, domestic support, market access, SSM

India's framing of reform

WTO reform must be transparent, inclusive and member-driven with development at its core; MFN and S&DT remain foundational; the organisation must 'reform, perform and transform'.

11 — New frontier

CBAM, deforestation rules, and trade policy by regulation

The next generation of trade friction will not arrive as tariffs. It will arrive as environmental and regulatory measures with extraterritorial effect.

EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism

- **Coverage** Iron and steel, aluminium, cement, fertiliser, electricity, hydrogen
- **Status** Definitive regime from January 2026, after a transitional reporting phase

India's objections

- It is a unilateral measure applied without WTO agreement
- It disregards the UNFCCC principle of common but differentiated responsibilities
- Its burden falls hardest on developing-country exporters of exactly the listed goods

Beyond CBAM

The EU Deforestation Regulation raises parallel questions for coffee, rubber, leather and other Indian exports. Alongside sit SPS and TBT measures, pesticide residue limits, aflatoxin standards and certification requirements — where India's real market-access problem now lives, not in bound tariff rates.

Three options, one workable

- **Litigate** Runs into a broken appeals system
- **Retaliate** Invites escalation with a major export market
- **Build capacity** Means building carbon accounting and traceability capacity across thousands of small exporters — expensive, slow, and the only durable option

Recommended stance

Negotiate-and-build rather than pure confrontation.

12 — The pivot

Why India now does its trade policy in bilaterals

Partner	Agreement	Status
UAE	CEPA	Operational since 2022
Australia	ECTA	Operational since 2022
EFTA	TEPA	Notable for an investment commitment rather than only tariff lines
United Kingdom	CETA	Signed July 2025
European Union	FTA	Concluded early 2026 after nearly two decades of talks
United States	Interim framework toward a BTA	Announced 6 February 2026

The United States case

Through 2025 tariffs on Indian goods reached roughly 50%, including a 25% penalty tied to purchases of Russian oil. The February 2026 framework reduced the reciprocal rate to 18% and removed the oil-linked penalty, with India committing to eliminate or reduce duties on US industrial goods and a range of food and agricultural products while protecting dairy and core agriculture, and stating intent to purchase

around \$500 billion of US energy, aircraft, technology and other products over five years. On 20 February 2026 the US Supreme Court struck down reciprocal duties imposed under IEEPA, after which the administration turned to other statutory routes; the first-phase legal text was still unsigned through mid-2026.

Exam caution

This is the fastest-moving part of the topic. Write it as a trend with dated anchors — 'as of the February 2026 framework' — rather than settled fact, and verify before the exam.

The analytical point to carry into an answer

A 50% tariff imposed outside WTO procedure and negotiated down bilaterally to 18% is power-based bargaining replacing rules-based trade. Small economies have no equivalent leverage. India's defence of multilateralism is therefore not only principle — a rules-based system is what a middle power uses instead of raw market size.

13 — Framework

India's WTO agenda in five Fs

The 5Fs of India at the WTO

Food security

Permanent solution on public stockholding; revise the 1986–88 reference price; Special Safeguard Mechanism.

Fisheries

Effective S&DT, per-capita fairness, deeper cuts first from distant-water fishing nations.

Fairness

S&DT as a right rather than a concession; resistance to graduation criteria and plurilateral rule-making.

Fixing disputes

Restore a fully functional two-tier Appellate Body rather than settling for interim arrangements.

Future issues

Caution on e-commerce, investment facilitation and unilateral green measures like CBAM.

India's quarrel is not with trade rules but with rules written from a 1988 snapshot of who was already subsidising — and its task now is to defend a multilateral order while quietly buying, bilaterally, the market access that order no longer delivers.

14 — Answer writing

How to write this in the exam

UPSC GS 3 (effects of liberalisation, agricultural subsidies and MSP, food security, buffer stocks, WTO and India); also GS 2 as an international-institutions question. NABARD Grade A on agricultural trade and policy. RBI Grade B ESI on globalisation, trade agreements and international institutions.

Where this appears in the syllabus

Exam	Paper	Topics it answers
UPSC CSE	GS Paper 3	effects of liberalisation; agricultural subsidies and MSP; food security and buffer stocks; WTO and India
UPSC CSE	GS Paper 2	important international institutions; bilateral and global groupings affecting India
NABARD Grade A/B	Agriculture & Rural Development / ESI	agricultural trade policy; MSP and procurement; international agreements
RBI Grade B	Economic and Social Issues	globalisation; trade agreements; international economic institutions

Word budget for a 250-mark answer

Part	Words	What goes in
Introduction	25-30	India as a founding member of GATT and WTO — an insider seeking reform, not an opponent of trade rules.
The structural grievance	60-70	AoA boxes; de minimis at 10%; Final Bound Total AMS entitlements for early subsidisers; the 1986-88 external reference price.
The live issues	60-70	Public stockholding and the Bali peace clause; Appellate Body paralysis since 2019 and MPIA at 61 members; fisheries S&DT; the lapsed e-commerce moratorium.
Recent developments	40-45	MC14 at Yaoundé closing without a declaration; the FTA pivot; CBAM and unilateral green measures.
Balanced critique	30-35	India's own losses on domestic content and industrial subsidies; the cost of blocking plurilaterals; reliance on appeals into the void.
Conclusion	25-30	Reform the measurement, restore the appeals bench, keep S&DT — multilateralism as the middle power's best instrument.

Practice questions

"India's engagement with the WTO reflects the tension between food security and trade liberalisation." Examine.

UPSC GS 3 · 250 words

Set up the tension precisely: NFSA obligations towards roughly 800 million people versus AoA disciplines that classify MSP procurement as trade-distorting Amber Box support. Explain the AMS formula and the 1986-88 reference price so the tension is shown to be a measurement artefact, not merely a values clash. Cover the Bali peace clause, its conditions and India's invocation for rice since 2018-19, then the unfinished permanent solution and MC14's deferral. Present the counter-view — that large procurement at administered prices affects world markets and stock disposal can spill into trade. Conclude that the two objectives are reconcilable through methodological reform and a PSH carve-out.

Discuss the causes and consequences of the crisis in the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism.

UPSC GS 2/3 · 250 words

Causes: sustained US blocking of Appellate Body appointments since 2017 over alleged overreach, treatment of precedent, Rule 15 continuation of outgoing members and procedural delays; the deeper cause is a shift from rules-based to power-based trade politics. Consequences: no appellate review since December 2019; appeals into the void rendering panel reports unenforceable; erosion of the reverse-consensus rule; fragmentation via MPIA at 61 members and ~60% of world trade; a return to

unilateral measures such as Section 301 tariffs and CBAM; disproportionate harm to smaller economies. Add India's position — outside MPIA on principle, but consequently without remedy in its own losing cases. Conclude on reform pathways.

"Special and Differential Treatment has outlived its usefulness." Critically evaluate from India's perspective.

NABARD / RBI Grade B · 200 words

State the developed-country case first: self-designation allows large competitive economies to claim developing status; blanket flexibilities weaken reciprocity and stall negotiations; graduation criteria based on income, trade share or systemic weight are proposed. Then India's counter: per-capita income and structural indicators, not aggregate GDP, measure development capacity; hundreds of millions of smallholders and informal workers face genuine adjustment costs; the Uruguay Round bargain assumed S&DT as compensation for accepting TRIPS and other disciplines; the asymmetric AoA entitlements show formal equality can entrench substantive inequality. Conclude with a middle path — needs-based, issue-specific flexibilities with transparent criteria.

Figures to memorise

- WTO established 1 January 1995 after the Uruguay Round 1986–94
- 166 members
- De minimis 10% for developing and 5% for developed countries
- External reference price fixed at 1986–88
- Bali peace clause MC9 2013, made open-ended by the General Council in 2014
- Appellate Body non-functional since December 2019
- MPIA at 61 members and roughly 60% of world trade
- Fisheries Subsidies Agreement adopted MC12 2022, in force September 2025
- E-commerce moratorium since 1998, not extended at MC14
- MC14 Yaoundé, 26–30 March 2026, no ministerial declaration

If you remember seven things

1. India is a founding member seeking reform, not an opponent of the trading system.
2. The Agreement on Agriculture's three boxes froze the 1980s status quo rather than levelling it.
3. The 1986–88 reference price is the single technical fact behind India's entire agriculture position.
4. The peace clause is forbearance, not entitlement — the permanent solution is still unfinished business.
5. The Appellate Body has been dead since December 2019, and 'appeal into the void' now shields losers, including India.
6. MC14 at Yaoundé closed with no declaration, no reform plan and a lapsed e-commerce moratorium.
7. The FTA pivot is hedging, not exit — but a 50%-to-18% bilateral negotiation shows how far power has displaced rules.

15 — Reference

Questions and terms

Frequently asked

Why does India oppose WTO rules on agricultural subsidies?

Because the Aggregate Measurement of Support is calculated against an external reference price fixed at 1986–88 levels with no adjustment for four decades of inflation or exchange rate movement. India's

minimum support prices are compared against a 1980s benchmark, which inflates the measured subsidy even when real support is modest, and can push it past the 10 per cent de minimis limit.

What is the peace clause and has India used it?

An interim understanding from the 2013 Bali Ministerial, made open-ended by the General Council in 2014, under which members will not bring a dispute against a developing country whose public stockholding programme for food security breaches its de minimis limit, subject to transparency and safeguard conditions. India has invoked it for rice since the 2018-19 marketing year.

Why is the WTO Appellate Body not working?

The United States has blocked appointments to the seven-member body since 2017. It fell below the three members needed to hear an appeal in December 2019. Members can therefore appeal a panel report into a void where it cannot be adopted or enforced. The MPIA workaround had expanded to 61 members covering roughly 60 per cent of world trade by MC14.

What happened at WTO MC14 in 2026?

The 14th Ministerial Conference in Yaoundé, Cameroon, from 26 to 30 March 2026 closed without an overall ministerial declaration or agreement on core priorities. There was no reform work plan and no extension of the e-commerce moratorium. Limited outcomes included continuing fisheries negotiations towards MC15 and decisions on small economies and on S&DT in the SPS and TBT agreements.

Is India moving away from the WTO towards bilateral trade agreements?

India continues to defend the multilateral system and push for reform, but has accelerated bilateral negotiation — UAE CEPA, Australia ECTA, the India-UK CETA signed in July 2025, an India-EU agreement concluded in early 2026 and an interim framework with the United States in February 2026. The reading is hedging rather than abandonment.

Does the WTO ban minimum support prices?

No. MSP is not prohibited. It is classified as market price support in the Amber Box and counted towards the AMS, which for India must stay within 10 per cent of the value of production of the crop concerned. The dispute is about how that percentage is calculated, not about India's right to operate an MSP.

Could India simply leave the WTO?

It could, but it would be self-harming. Membership guarantees MFN treatment in every other member's market — without it India would negotiate country by country from a weaker position and its exporters would lose the predictability of bound tariffs. The system's flaws are real; the alternative for a middle power is worse.

What is the difference between the peace clause and a permanent solution?

The peace clause is a political commitment not to litigate, conditional on notification and safeguards, covering specified existing programmes for traditional staples. A permanent solution would be a legal change — revising the AMS calculation, updating the reference period, or excluding public stockholding for food security altogether. One is forbearance; the other is entitlement.

Why does India oppose plurilateral agreements at the WTO?

Because a plurilateral outcome negotiated among willing members and folded into the WTO rulebook would bind, or set the reference point for, members who never agreed to it. India argues that adding new agreements requires consensus of the full membership. Critics reply that consensus has produced almost nothing for two decades.

How does the WTO relate to India's FTAs?

FTAs are permitted as an exception to MFN under GATT Article XXIV for goods and GATS Article V for services, provided they cover substantially all trade and do not raise barriers to non-members. The FTA pivot is legal within the system, but a proliferation of preferential deals does erode the MFN principle in

practice.

Glossary

AMS Aggregate Measurement of Support The metric for trade-distorting domestic support in the Amber Box. **De minimis** Support below 10% of value of production (5% for developed countries) that need not count towards reduction commitments. **External reference price ERP** The 1986–88 world price used as the benchmark for measuring market price support. **Peace clause** The Bali understanding restraining disputes against developing-country public stockholding programmes. **MFN Most-Favoured Nation** A concession to one member must extend to all, with FTAs as a permitted exception under GATT Article XXIV. **S&DT Special and Differential Treatment** Longer timelines and lighter obligations for developing members. **MPIA Multi-Party Interim Appeal Arbitration Arrangement** The Article 25 workaround for the paralysed Appellate Body; India is not a participant. **SSM Special Safeguard Mechanism** A proposed developing-country right to raise duties temporarily on import surges. **Plurilateral** An agreement among a subset of members rather than the full membership. **CBAM Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism** The EU measure pricing embedded carbon in specified imports, in its definitive phase from January 2026. **Single undertaking** The Doha Round principle that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed. **Appeal into the void** Appealing a panel report to a non-functioning Appellate Body so it is never adopted or enforced.

All figures at a glance

Item	Figure
WTO established	1 January 1995, under the Marrakesh Agreement
Uruguay Round	1986–94
WTO membership	166 (Comoros and Timor-Leste admitted at MC13)
De minimis ceiling, developing countries	10%
De minimis ceiling, developed countries	5%
External reference price base period	1986–88, not indexed to inflation
Bali peace clause agreed	MC9 Bali 2013; made open-ended by General Council, November 2014
India's peace clause invocation for rice	since 2018–19
Appellate Body non-functional since	December 2019
Appellate Body full strength	7 members; 3 needed to hear an appeal
MPIA participants	61 members, ~60% of world trade (as at MC14)
Fisheries Subsidies Agreement adopted	MC12, June 2022
Fisheries Subsidies Agreement entry into force	September 2025
E-commerce moratorium in place since	1998, renewed at each ministerial until MC14
MC13	Abu Dhabi, February–March 2024
MC14	Yaoundé, Cameroon, 26–30 March 2026 — no ministerial declaration
Plurilateral digital trade group at MC14	66 members, ~70% of global trade
Peak US tariff on Indian goods, 2025	≈50%, including a 25% Russian-oil penalty
Reciprocal tariff under February 2026 framework	18%
India-US interim framework announced	6 February 2026
Stated Indian purchase intent from the US	\$500 billion over five years

Item	Figure
US Supreme Court ruling on IEEPA reciprocal duties	20 February 2026
India-UK CETA signed	July 2025
India-EU agreement concluded	early 2026
EU CBAM definitive regime	from January 2026, after a transitional reporting phase
NFSA beneficiaries underpinning India's PSH programme	≈800 million

Sources **wto** — WTO agreement texts and ministerial documentation for the AoA architecture, three boxes, de minimis thresholds, the Bali peace clause, DSU procedure and the dispute record. **mc14** — WTO, EU and other official statements and contemporaneous reporting from Yaoundé, 26–30 March 2026: no ministerial declaration, blocked e-commerce moratorium extension, fisheries referral to MC15, decisions on small economies and SPS/TBT S&DT, MPIA expansion to 61 members, and the 66-member plurilateral digital trade group. **india-commerce-ministry** — Statements by the Commerce and Industry Minister at and after MC14 on public stockholding, the Special Safeguard Mechanism, cotton, fisheries S&DT, dispute settlement restoration and the 'reform, perform, transform' framing. **joint-statement** — India-US Joint Statement of 6 February 2026 and subsequent reporting: 18% reciprocal tariff, removal of the 25% Russian-oil-linked duty, tariff and non-tariff commitments, and the \$500 billion purchase intent. **policy** — EU CBAM and Deforestation Regulation documentation; UNFCCC principle of common but differentiated responsibilities; National Food Security Act coverage. **Verify before you cite** Tariff rates, negotiation status and membership figures in this area change quickly, and the India-US position in particular was unsettled through mid-2026. Verify against the WTO, PIB and the Department of Commerce before citing in a formal answer or paper. Agri-Policy Desk · Published 2026-08-12 · v1.0.0

THE CLASSROOM BEHIND THIS BOOK

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8/10

of the top 10 ranks

32

final selections, one batch

12

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“The morning hour is worth three at night.”

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