

# CUTS INTERNATIONAL

## NATIONAL AFFAIRS



Monthly Brief #20, December 2025

### Justice is a Constitutional Promise

***Uphold it by giving alternative dispute resolution a chance***

India's judicial system is severely overburdened, with more than 52.4 million cases pending as of July 2025 across subordinate courts, high courts, and the Supreme Court, along with large backlogs in tribunals. In this context, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) offers one of the most practical pathways to timely justice. While not a cure-all, ADR can substantially ease court congestion and improve access to dispute resolution.

However, ADR's potential remains unevenly realised. Many litigants are unaware of mediation or conciliation, and until recently, the enforceability of mediated settlements was uncertain. The Mediation Act, 2023, addresses this by granting statutory enforceability and confidentiality, but inconsistent implementation across states and courts has limited its impact.

India's arbitration experience also reveals challenges. The White Industries case highlighted prolonged enforcement delays, damaging India's reputation as an arbitration-friendly jurisdiction. More recently, the Supreme Court's 2024 judgment in the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation case raised concerns about excessive judicial intervention, undermining the finality of arbitral awards.

Globally, ADR is embedded in justice systems. The US and UK mandate early mediation, while Singapore and Hong Kong thrive as arbitration hubs due to modern laws, strong institutions and minimal court interference. India, by contrast, operates a fragmented ADR framework across multiple statutes.

To bridge this gap, India must fully operationalise the Mediation Act, institutionalise early case triage, build professional capacity, raise public awareness, and responsibly expand online dispute resolution. Mainstreaming ADR is essential to delivering accessible, affordable and timely justice.

*We hope 2026 ushers in peace, love, and prosperity. Wishing you and your loved ones a happy and fulfilling New Year.*

Pradeep S Mehta  
Editor

*Abridged from an article that appeared in Mint on December 07, 2025. The same can be accessed at: <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/online-views/justice-constitutional-altrnative-dispute-resolution-indian-courts-pending-cases-backlog-11764956731739.html>*

## Message for our Readers

The twentieth edition of the National Affairs Monthly Brief contains selected published news or comments on trade, regulatory, and governance issues.

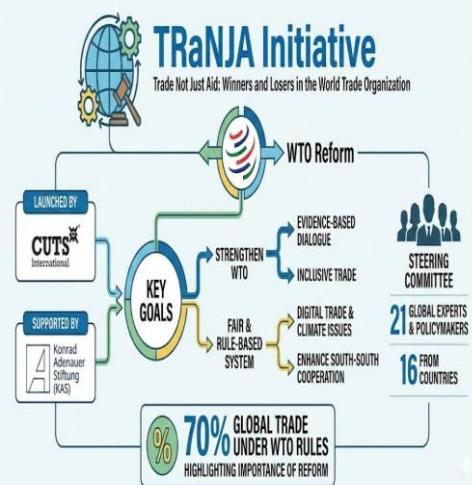
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### Trade, Not Just Aid: Winners and Losers in the WTO

CUTS International launched its global "Trade, Not Just Aid: Winners and Losers in the WTO" (TRaNJA) initiative in Tokyo to help reposition the WTO amid rising unilateralism and shifting trade dynamics. Co-chaired by Shashi Tharoor and Pascal Lamy, the initiative brings together 21 global experts to advance evidence-based WTO reform. CUTS Secretary General Pradeep S. Mehta emphasised the WTO's continued relevance, noting that 70 percent of global trade still operates under MFN rules and calling for a positive narrative to revive multilateralism.



## India Engages with US for an Early, Balanced Trade Agreement



India remains actively engaged with the US to reach a mutually beneficial and balanced trade arrangement. Ambassador Vinay Mohan Kwatra said, noting ongoing dialogue with the US Trade Representative. He added that the tone of ties was set during Modi's meeting with Trump. Kwatra also highlighted India's recent launch of a communication satellite as a major milestone, marking significant progress in bilateral space cooperation in 2025.

- [Hospitality, Textiles Sectors to Drive Jobs Growth](#)  
Times of India, December 12, 2025
- [IMF's C Grade: Why Doubts Over Our Rapid Growth are Misplaced](#)  
Akash P Poojari, Mint, December 07, 2025
- [Delhi's 40-Year Air Pollution Battle](#)  
The Print, December 04, 2025
- [India Entering Golden Era of Defence Innovation](#)  
The Economic Times, November 25, 2025



## TRAI's '12-Minute-Per-Hour' Cap

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) requires broadcasters to adhere to the 12-minute-per-hour advertising limit. This rule remains in effect even while the matter is in court. Broadcasters argue this will hurt the struggling TV sector. TRAI is reviewing broadcaster responses before deciding on further action. The next court hearing is scheduled for January 27, 2026.



## India Can Help Tackle Digital Inequality



India is well-positioned to tackle digital inequality and shape an inclusive transition in Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the world, said a new United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) report. While AI is advancing at a historic pace, strong digital ecosystems in some countries and limited connectivity, skills, and infrastructure in others are widening gaps.

- [The IndiGo Fiasco and Surge Pricing](#)  
The Financial Express, December 25, 2025
- [Jio Platforms Records Highest Global IP Filings in India](#)  
The Economic Times, December 18, 2025
- [How CSR and Philanthropy Can Drive Systemic Change for a Viksit Bharat](#)  
The Financial Express, December 09, 2025
- [Health Care Sector Welcomes Bill That Taxes Pan Masala Production](#)  
Sanket Koul, Business Standard, December 07, 2025

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## Farmer Producer Organisations Essential for Rural Economic Growth

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu said FPOs are essential to transforming farmers into entrepreneurs and strengthening rural economic activity across the state. Addressing farmers during the 'Raitanna Meekosam' programme in East Godavari district, Naidu said agriculture must expand beyond cultivation and move into value addition through agro-based industries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises at the village level.



## The Inequality Paradox: Is India Living Up to its Founding Promise?



The World Inequality Report 2026 presents stark evidence of India's widening economic divide. The richest 10 percent control about 65 percent of national wealth, with the top 1 percent alone holding nearly 40 percent, while the bottom half survives on just 3 percent. These figures reflect not only inequality, but a growing divergence from the social and economic ideals envisioned at Independence.

- ['SHAKTI Scholars' Fellowship Launched](#)  
[www.newsoneair.gov.in](http://www.newsoneair.gov.in), December 22, 2025
- [Right to Education More Important than University Polls](#)  
Times of India, December 19, 2025
- [Status of Rural Telemedicine in India](#)  
Suruchi Kumari, The News Minute, December 18, 2025
- [Disability Centred Philanthropy in India](#)  
The Wire, December 03, 2025

### Events

- [Dinner Talk by Shashi Tharoor on "Leveraging a Volatile Global Order: Accelerating India's Journey Towards Viksit Bharat"](#)  
New Delhi, December 15, 2025
- [Webinar on "Artificial Intelligence, Consumers, and Competition Policy"](#)  
December 05, 2025

### Media

- [Create More Space to Let Solar Power Flow](#)  
Financial Express, December 16, 2025  
*By VP Singh, Pradeep S Mehta & Akash Sharma*
- [Amid Tariff Crisis, The World Trade Organisation Has To Be Revived Now](#)  
The Asian Age, December 14, 2025  
*By Pradeep S Mehta*