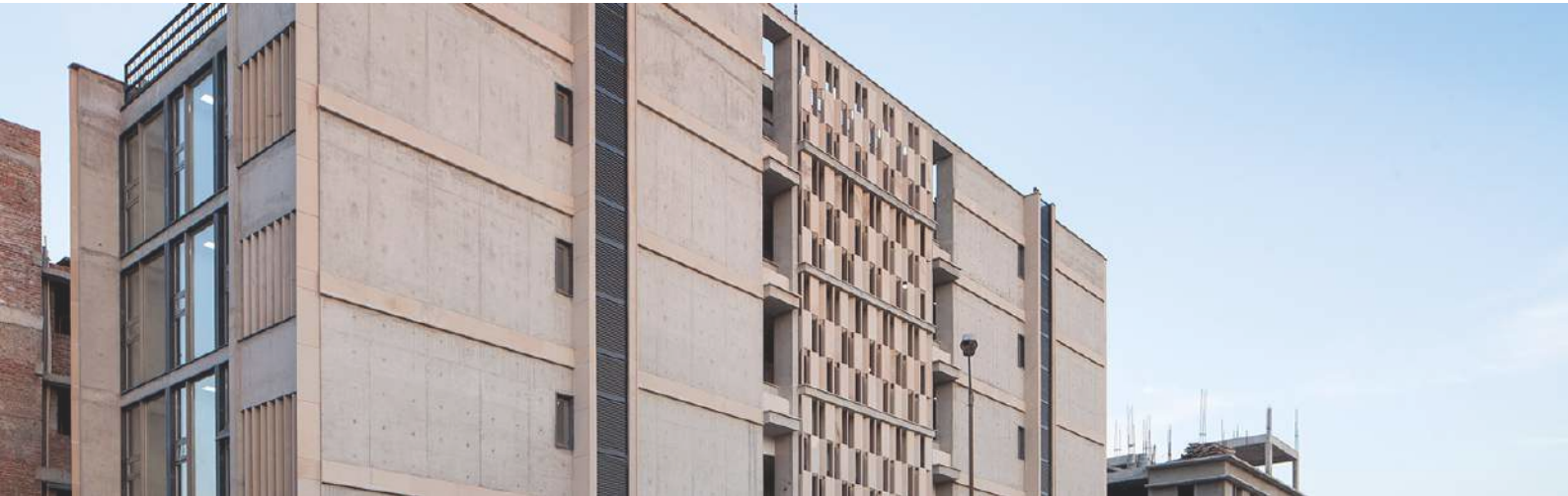


July 2026 INSIGHTS

Highlights from June 2026



Message from the Leadership

The world today is undergoing profound geopolitical, economic, and technological transformations, making resilience and future readiness essential for sustained growth and stability. Amidst an increasingly volatile and uncertain geopolitical environment, India–Japan relations are placing greater emphasis on economic security. In this context, efforts to deepen mutual understanding, build strategic trust, and explore new ideas and innovative solutions for the India–Japan strategic economic partnership are now more important than ever.

The Japan Program at ICRIER, established in 2007, has been actively engaged in policy-oriented research and dialogue to strengthen and deepen India–Japan economic engagement. As India and Japan approach the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations in 2027, the Program is poised for further expansion. A significant milestone in this journey is the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between ICRIER and the Japan Research Institute (JRI) in June 2026 to undertake collaborative research and dialogue initiatives aimed at advancing a forward-looking agenda for bilateral engagement. Going forward, our endeavour is to foster a more connected, collaborative, and purpose-driven knowledge ecosystem that supports a stronger and more resilient India–Japan strategic economic partnership.

Sanjana Joshi

Senior Fellow, ICRIER



POLICY IN ACTION

Future of Development Cooperation Coalition | New Delhi Convening

1 June, 2026 | New Delhi

ICRIER hosted the New Delhi convening of the Future of Development Cooperation Coalition, in collaboration with the Center for Global Development, as part of the Coalition's ongoing series of regional consultations. The discussion brought together experts to explore the future of development cooperation, examining both common themes across regions and the distinct perspectives shaping South Asian priorities in development finance and knowledge partnerships.



Signing of ICRIER-JRI MoU & Interactive Session

1 June, 2026 | New Delhi

ICRIER signed a Memorandum of Understanding with The Japan Research Institute (JRI) for collaborative research and dialogue with a focus on the India-Japan strategic and global partnership. Mr. Pramod Bhasin (Chairperson, ICRIER) and Mr. Kenji Hiramatsu (Chairman, Institute for International Strategy, JRI) noted that amidst rising geopolitical uncertainties, deepened economic security cooperation between India and Japan is more important than ever.



Getting Agricultural Markets Right | Book Launch

10 June, 2026 | New Delhi

ICRIER, in collaboration with NSE India, hosted the launch of *Getting Agricultural Markets Right*. The book offers an evidence-based examination of India's agricultural marketing system, covering commodity derivative markets, digital platforms, Farmer Producer Organisations, and frontier technologies. The launch was followed by two panel discussions on *Policy and Market Reforms in Indian Agriculture: Commodity-Specific Perspectives*, and *FPOs, Digitalisation, and the Role of AI in Agri-Market Transformation*.



India's Trade Digitalization: From Domestic to Cross-Border Integration

11 June, 2026 | **Bangkok**

ICRIER and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and United Nations ESCAP, convened a session at APTFF x PTW 2026 in Bangkok to examine India's readiness for the Cross-border Paperless Trade Agreement (CPTA) framework. Discussions centred on export competitiveness, MSME integration, and India's role in shaping Asia-Pacific digital trade governance. The session also marked the release of the ICRIER–RIS–CWS Policy Brief, *India's Drive Towards Paperless Trade: Recent Developments and the Way Forward*.



The Economic Potential of Circular Textiles | Circular Samvaad 2026

17 June, 2026 | **New Delhi**

Sulakshana Rao (Senior Fellow, ICRIER) participated as a panellist in the discussion on The Economic Potential of Circular Textiles at CircularSamvaad 2026, organised by GIZ India. She highlighted how products, practices, and partnerships can drive India's competitiveness in the global textiles sector, underscoring the importance of innovation, technical collaborations, and shared infrastructure in accelerating the transition to a sustainable and circular textile ecosystem.



APEDA-ICRIER Reports on India's Agri-Export Strategy | BHARATI Business Meet

22 June, 2026 | **New Delhi**

Four reports developed under the APEDA-ICRIER Knowledge Partnership Project were released at the APEDA BHARATI Business Meet at Bharat Mandapam. Prepared by the APSI team at ICRIER and led by Prof. Ashok Gulati, the reports examine export opportunities and strategies across four commodity segments — Pickles & Sauces, Honey, Grapes, and Citrus. They outline evidence-based strategies to strengthen value chains, improve quality and standards, enhance market access, and expand India's agri-export footprint.



EPWD Field Visit | Skilling and Entrepreneurship Training for Rural Women

23 June, 2026 | Agon Village, Nuh Mewat, Haryana

As part of the EPWD (Economic Policies for Women-led development) Gender Programme, the ICRIER team visited Agon village in Haryana's Nuh Mewat district to observe a skill training and entrepreneurship development workshop conducted by ETASHA Society under its Kaamyabi initiative. The visit offered first-hand insights into Etasha's rural entrepreneurship development model, which equips women with practical business capabilities. The visit provided valuable insights into how skilling and entrepreneurship can unlock rural women's economic potential.



Inauguration of Rajasthan's First Farmer-Owned Agri-PV Plant under PM-KUSUM

24 June, 2026 | Kundanpura Village, Jaipur

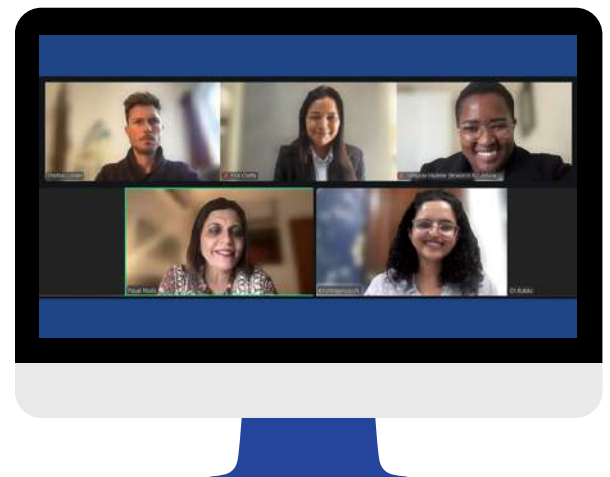
ICRIER's APSI vertical inaugurated Rajasthan's first farmer-owned 600 kW DC Agriphotovoltaics (Agri-PV) Plant under PM-KUSUM Component A in Kundanpura Village, Bassi Block. Suman Chandra, IAS (Director, MNRE), Chandra Shekhar Rajan (Chairman, Kotak Mahindra Bank), Manju Rajpal, IAS (Principal Secretary, Agriculture, Govt of Rajasthan), and Rohit Gupta (CMD, Rajasthan Renewable Energy Corporation Limited), delivered the special addresses. The pilot demonstrates how the same parcel of land can produce both food and clean energy, supporting farmers' transition from *Annadata* to *Urjadata* while advancing India's clean energy goals.



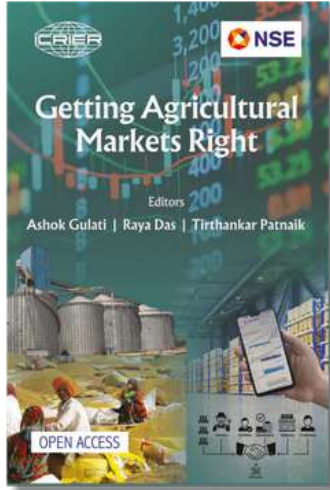
CoP DPI4D 20: Conceptualising 'Transformative DPI' in Africa for Sovereignty, Trust, and Equality

25 June, 2026 | Virtual

As part of the continuing CoP DPI4D webinar series, ICRIER organised a session with Research ICT Africa on transformative DPI in Africa. Pria Chetty (Executive Director, Research ICT Africa), Thomas Linder (Senior Researcher, Research ICT Africa) and Tshepiso Hadebe (Researcher and Executive Research Assistant, Research ICT Africa) led the discussion on how DPI can be conceptualised in the African context to advance sovereignty, trust, and equality. The session was moderated by Payal Malik (Visiting Professor, ICRIER) and Krishnapriya V.S. (Fellow, ICRIER).



SPOTLIGHT: NEW RESEARCH



Getting Agricultural Markets Right

Authors: *Ashok Gulati, Raya Das, Tirthankar Patnaik*

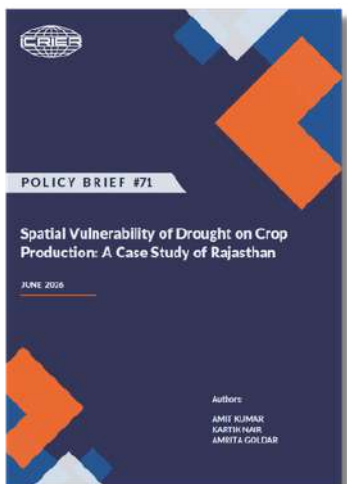
Small and marginal farmers make up 86% of India's cultivators, yet remain the most vulnerable to price volatility and market fragmentation. Co-published by ICRIER and NSE India, this book analyses India's agricultural marketing system across 14 chapters, examining price efficiency across regulated, semi-regulated, and non-regulated crops. It evaluates the role of commodity futures, Farmer Producer Organisations, and digital platforms like e-NAM in enabling better price discovery and risk management, making the case for a more transparent, competitive, and inclusive marketing architecture.



India's Drive Towards Paperless Trade: Recent Developments and the Way Forward

Authors: *Arpita Mukherjee, Prabir De, Pritam Banerjee, Geetika Gupta*

Amid mounting trade costs and geo-economic fragmentation, this Policy Brief assesses India's preparedness for cross-border paperless trade frameworks, particularly the CPTA (Framework Agreement on Facilitation of Cross-Border Paperless Trade in Asia and the Pacific). It finds that initiatives like ICEGATE, SWIFT, and BharatTradeNet, alongside the proposed Draft Trade Facilitation Bill, position India well for CPTA accession, with gains for regional integration, trade cost reduction, and India's role in shaping Asia-Pacific digital trade governance.



Spatial Vulnerability of Drought on Crop Production: A Case Study of Rajasthan

Authors: *Amrita Goldar, Amit Kumar, Kartik Nair*

Over 60% of Rajasthan's districts fall in high-risk drought zones, yet the spatial dimension of this crisis remains underexplored in policy design. This Policy Brief integrates satellite-derived indicators, climatic variables, and agricultural data to map drought vulnerability hotspots across Rajasthan's districts. The analysis finds that western and northern districts face the highest risk, driven by persistent rainfall deficits and low soil moisture, and calls for spatially targeted policy responses that integrate climate risk into agricultural planning and rural livelihood strategies.

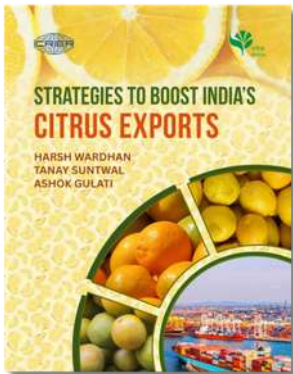
SPOTLIGHT: NEW RESEARCH



Outcome Document: Workshop on Digital Public Infrastructure and Public Service Delivery | Inclusion. Efficiency. Security.

Authors: *Sumita Kale, Krishnapriya V S, Nitika Jain, Mehak Aggarwal*

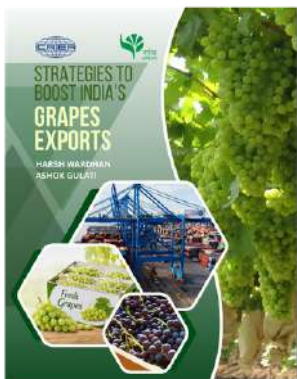
Building on the ICRIER–University of Queensland workshop of 8 May 2026, this document synthesises perspectives of various stakeholders on how DPI is reshaping social protection systems. It examines India's Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) programme as a globally significant reference point, while surfacing the institutional and governance challenges of scaling DPI-enabled welfare systems.



Strategies to boost India's Citrus Exports

Authors: *Harsh Wardhan, Tanay Suntuwal, Ashok Gulati*

Prepared under the APEDA–ICRIER Knowledge Partnership Project, this report examines India's citrus export potential and the constraints limiting market access in high-value destinations. Drawing on production, trade, and value-chain analysis, it outlines evidence-based strategies to strengthen quality and standards compliance, improve post-harvest handling, and expand India's citrus footprint in global markets.



Strategies to boost India's Grapes Exports

Authors: *Harsh Wardhan, Ashok Gulati*

Prepared under the APEDA–ICRIER Knowledge Partnership Project, this report assesses India's position as a global grapes exporter and identifies opportunities to expand market share in premium destinations. It outlines evidence-based strategies covering variety selection, phytosanitary compliance, cold chain infrastructure, and market diversification to strengthen the competitiveness of Indian grape exports.

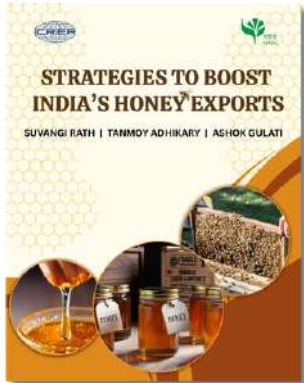


Strategies to boost India's Pickles & Sauces Exports

Authors: *Suvangi Rath, Tanay Suntuwal, Ashok Gulati, Kirti Goel*

This report examines the export landscape for India's pickles and sauces segment, a category with strong potential given the growing global appetite for South Asian cuisines. It outlines evidence-based strategies to strengthen value chains, meet international quality and safety standards, and expand market access across key destinations.

SPOTLIGHT: NEW RESEARCH



Strategies to Boost India's Honey Exports

Authors: *Suvangi Rath, Tanmoy Adhikary, Ashok Gulati*

This report analyses India's honey export sector, one of the country's most significant value-added apicultural exports, and the challenges it faces in premium markets. It outlines evidence-based strategies to strengthen residue testing and quality assurance, expand market access, and support beekeepers across the value chain.



Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM): Impact on India's Steel Exports to the EU and Carbon Tax Incidence

Authors: *Amrita Goldar, Bishwanath Goldar, Kumar Abhishek, Sunishtha Yadav, Poulomi Bhattacharya*

This Working Paper applies ICRIER's *Samridhi* Model (a GTAP-E based Computable General Equilibrium framework) to evaluate the impact of the EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism on India's steel exports. The study finds that CBAM is likely to reduce India's steel exports to the EU by around 24%, while producing only a 1% reduction in aggregate global steel emissions. The findings underscore the need for India's steel sector to accelerate its transition to low-carbon production pathways in order to preserve competitiveness in EU and other carbon-priced markets.



Harvesting Sun and Soil: India's Agri-PV Future

Authors: *Ashok Gulati, Subhodeep Basu, Bidisha Banerjee, Laxmi Sharma*

Despite being a major land user and energy consumer, India's agricultural sector has yet to fully participate in the country's clean energy transition. This report examines the evolution, business models, and scalability of Agri-PV, as a pathway to dual income streams for farmers alongside expanded renewable capacity. Drawing on two in-depth case studies of farmer-owned models under PM-KUSUM in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the report demonstrates economic feasibility while identifying key hurdles including payment delays and regulatory fragmentation.



WTO & E-commerce Moratorium: India's Options Post MC 14

Authors: *Aahana Srishti, Arpita Mukherjee, Pritam Banerjee*

With the WTO e-commerce moratorium having lapsed at MC14 in March 2026 and members like the US, EU, and UK signalling their intent to continue duty-free treatment of electronic transmissions among themselves, this policy brief traces the chronology of WTO moratorium discussions and outlines recommendations that prioritise the interests of Indian business and digitally delivered services exporters.

IN THE NEWS

A crisis in India's cotton fields

Authors: Ashok Gulati, Ayushi Gupta & Ritika Juneja | 8 June, 2026 | Financial Express

In cotton fields, policy is undoing what science built. That's the challenge for the Cotton Productivity Mission

Authors: Ashok Gulati, Ayushi Gupta & Ritika Juneja | 8 June, 2026 | The Indian Express

Reducing Food Waste for Sustainable Food Systems

Author: Arpita Mukherjee | 8 June, 2026 | ET Edge

The Future of Development Finance Is Not Primarily About Money

Authors: Tanu Goyal & Shekhar Aiyar | 9 June, 2026 | Project Syndicate

Labour Standards and India's Export Competitiveness

Authors: Arpita Mukherjee & Puja Mehra | 10 June, 2026 | Mint

Counting on the weather gods

Author: Somit Dasgupta | 10 June, 2026 | Financial Express

The Rise of Illegal Online Gaming and its Costs

Authors: Angana Parashar Sarma & Arpita Mukherjee | 20 June, 2026 | Mint

Road to energy security passes through our farms

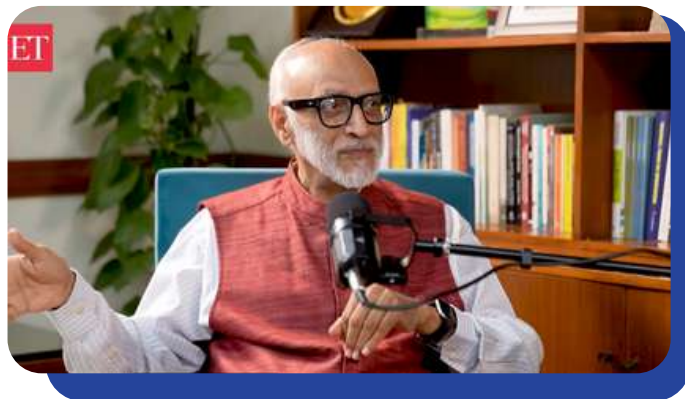
Authors: Ashok Gulati & Subhdeep Basu | 22 June, 2026 | Indian Express

VOICES FROM ICRIER



Will the India-US Trade Deal Move from Negotiations to a Final Agreement? | The Big Question, NDTV Profit

Arpita Mukherjee (Professor, ICRIER) joins *The Big Question* on NDTV Profit to discuss the state of India-US trade negotiations amid renewed uncertainty from tariffs, geopolitical tensions, and shifting supply chains. The conversation examines the key issues shaping the negotiations, India's approach to balancing domestic priorities with market access commitments, and the role of FTAs in an evolving trade landscape.



What's ailing India's fertiliser subsidy and ethanol policy? Ashok Gulati explains | ET Digital

In an interview with The Economic Times, Dr. Ashok Gulati (Distinguished Professor, ICRIER) argues that India's fertiliser subsidy regime is fiscally unsustainable, import-dependent, and in need of urgent reform. He advocates replacing input subsidies with direct income support to farmers, enabling more efficient resource use and promoting long-term agricultural sustainability.

IN THE NEWS

The 'maize revolution' could be India's next productivity-led farm success

Author: Ramesh Chand | 25 June, 2026 | Business Standard

India's Paperless Trade Transition and the Digital Trade Facilitation Bill

Authors: Arpita Mukherjee, Puja Mehra | 26 June, 2026 | Mint

TEAM SPOTLIGHT



Saloni Dhadwal is a Research Associate in the Digital Economy, Startups and Innovation team at ICRIER. Her academic background includes a 5-year integrated law degree from the Army Institute of Law and a postgraduate diploma in liberal studies from Ashoka University. She has conducted research across key areas of the digital economy, including regional innovation systems, cellular standard-essential patent licensing, cross-border data flows in the South Asian region, state-level use cases of digital identities for public service delivery in India, and competition regulation in digital and AI-driven markets.

PODCAST



Can India do AI without Anthropic?

Payal Malik (Visiting Professor, ICRIER) and Gaurav Aggarwal (Chief AI Scientist, Reliance Intelligence) join Ms. Puja Mehra, to discuss whether India can build a strong and independent AI ecosystem without relying on global AI leaders. The conversation spans India's AI capabilities and ecosystem, its comparative advantage across the AI stack, the role of frontier models, and what is needed to build India's AI infrastructure, innovation capacity, and institutional, policy, and regulatory systems, while unpacking what "sovereign AI" really means.



A Difficult Ministerial: Negotiations, Outcomes, and Strategic Implications from WTO MC14

In this episode, Dr. Shekhar Aiyar (Director & CE, ICRIER) and Mr. Rajesh Aggarwal (Visiting Professor, ICRIER) join Ms. Puja Mehra, to discuss the outcomes of the fourteenth WTO Ministerial Conference and its strategic implications for India. The discussions also focus on India's approach to safeguarding development priorities in a fragmenting multilateral trading system.