



# Commerce Secretary Shri Rajesh Agrawal Highlights Need for Rigorous Legal Thinking at CTIL's 9th Anniversary Celebration

**CTIL Releases 9th Anniversary Magazine on Trade and Sustainability, Launches Special Edition of Investment Law Compass**

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Commerce Secretary Shri Rajesh Agrawal, in his video address at the 9th Anniversary Celebration of Centre for Trade and Investment Law (CTIL), held at the Prime Minister's Museum and Library in New Delhi, on 7 October 2026, said that established rules were being questioned, while emerging issues such as sustainability-linked trade measures and digital trade were reshaping the global trade agenda. He noted that rigorous legal thinking was more important than ever and that CTIL, as a leading institution in the field, was well placed to contribute to it.

Commerce Secretary Shri Rajesh Agrawal, congratulated CTIL on completing nine years and noted that the Centre had earned the trust of the Government, industry and the wider trade law community through its sustained and rigorous work. He recalled CTIL's contributions to the Department of Commerce through legal analysis and specialised support in free trade agreement negotiations, dispute settlement and institutional memory building.

India needs institutions like CTIL that do more than follow developments in international economic law and are capable of shaping them, noted Justice P. S. Narasimha, Judge, Supreme Court of India.

Justice Narasimha observed that international investment law has evolved from an initial focus on the protection of foreign investment towards greater recognition of the regulatory freedom of States. He noted that the field is now entering a phase in which questions of institutionalisation, legitimacy and the long-term balance between investment and public power have assumed greater significance. He underscored the need for a durable international investment law framework that balances investment protection with the regulatory authority of States.

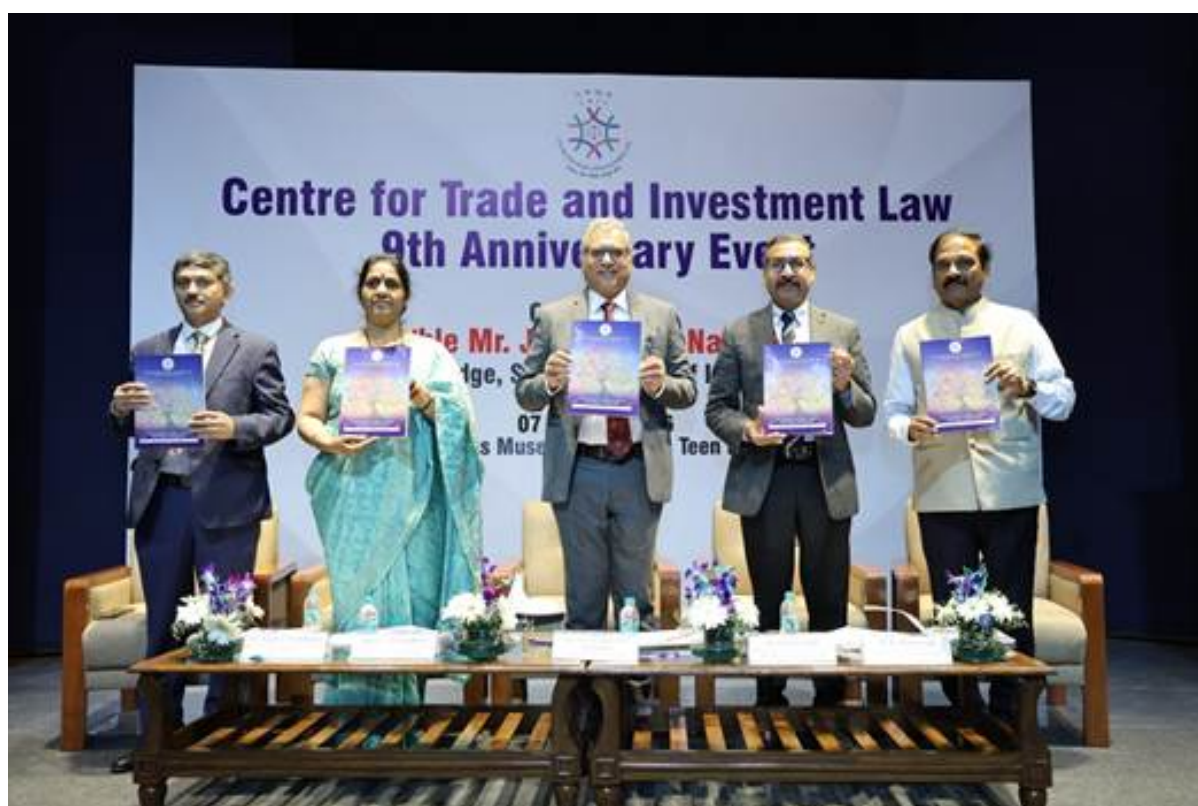
Head, CTIL, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), and WTO India Chair, Prof. James J. Nedumpara, highlighted that CTIL was established to strengthen India's trade capacity as a broader element of economic statecraft. He noted that CTIL had provided more than 4,000 legal opinions, participated in negotiations concerning nearly 10 free trade agreements, and contributed to WTO negotiations, submissions, notifications and dispute settlement.

Additional Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Shri Yashvir Singh, delivered the Special Address and highlighted CTIL's contributions to India's major trade engagements, including support for major free trade agreements and engagements such as the G20 and BRICS over the past several years. He also highlighted CTIL's work in WTO negotiations, notifications and dispute settlement, along with its contributions to India's economic diplomacy and the development of human capital in international economic law.

Vice Chancellor, IIFT, Dr. K. Rangarajan, in his address, recalled the evolution of specialised trade-policy institutions at IIFT. He highlighted CTIL's growing role in providing timely expertise for international trade negotiations and policy interventions.

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Smt. Kapil Chaudhary, highlighted CTIL's expanding research in emerging areas, including critical minerals, semiconductors, artificial intelligence, supply chains, climate and sustainability. She also emphasised the need for institutional knowledge management and greater capacity building within the Department of Commerce.

On the occasion, the ninth anniversary issue of the CTIL Magazine, titled "The Emerging Sustainability Landscape: Responding to Shifting Winds", was released. The magazine examines the future opportunities and challenges that developing countries may face as they seek to participate in the evolving intersection of trade and sustainability. A special anniversary edition of Investment Law Compass, CTIL's monthly newsletter on developments in investment law and policy, was also launched.



The formal proceedings concluded with the presentation of Distinguished Long Service Awards to members of the CTIL faculty and staff.

## Abhishek Dayal/ Garima Singh/ Ishita Biswas

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