

Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu



TRADE & INDUSTRIAL POLICY LEADER | FORMER UNION MINISTER FOR COMMERCE & INDUSTRY | GLOBAL TRADE NEGOTIATOR

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Former Union Minister for Commerce & Industry who led India's trade, export, investment, and industrial policy during a critical phase of global economic uncertainty. Known for combining data-driven policymaking, export competitiveness, and international negotiation to strengthen India's position in global trade and manufacturing.

MINISTERIAL LEADERSHIP – COMMERCE & INDUSTRY

- Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Government of India (2017–2019)
- Cabinet-level responsibility for international trade, exports, industrial policy, foreign direct investment, WTO negotiations, intellectual property, and ease of doing business.

KEY REFORMS & IMPACT

Export Growth & Trade Competitiveness

- Led India to achieve record merchandise exports of USD 330 billion (2018–19).
- Reduced trade deficit with China by USD 10 billion, strengthening India's negotiating position.
- Shifted export strategy from volume-driven to value-added and diversified exports.

Agriculture & Sectoral Export Reforms

- Introduced India's first Agriculture Export Policy, targeting:
 - Doubling agricultural exports to USD 60 billion
 - Improving farmer integration into global value chains
- Focused on logistics, standards, and market access reforms to support agri-exports.

Industrial Policy & Manufacturing Push

- Oversaw Make in India 2.0, reorienting manufacturing policy toward:
 - Sustainable production
 - Job creation
 - Global competitiveness
- Launched district-level manufacturing development plans across six districts in five states, targeting localized industrial growth.

Investment Facilitation & FDI

- Established the Investment War Room to:
 - Track, facilitate, and fast-resolve large FDI proposals
 - Improve investor confidence and execution timelines
- Strengthened institutional coordination between central ministries, states, and investors.

Data-Driven Governance

- Set up a Data Analytics Unit within the Ministry to:
 - Inform policymaking through real-time data
 - Improve program efficiency and monitoring
- Used analytics to support trade negotiations, export promotion, and industrial planning.

Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Reforms

- Initiated district-level Ease of Doing Business frameworks, expanding reform ownership beyond state capitals.
- Supported India's broader goal of becoming a USD 5 trillion economy through regulatory simplification and process reform.

Trade Policy & Multilateral Leadership

- Organised a special WTO mini-Ministerial meeting in India, reinforcing India's leadership in global trade discourse.
- Led negotiations to protect India's interests on:
 - Agriculture
 - Development policy space
 - Fair trade and market access
- Actively engaged in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

Digital Trade & Intellectual Property

- Initiated development of India's first National E-Commerce Policy, addressing challenges of the digital marketplace.
- Implemented a modern Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy to:
 - Encourage innovation
 - Strengthen IP protection
 - Improve global confidence in India's IP regime

GLOBAL ECONOMIC & TRADE ENGAGEMENT

- Served as India's G20 and G7 Sherpa, shaping global economic agendas.
- Represented India in high-level dialogues on trade, investment, supply chains, and economic governance.
- Engaged with multilateral institutions, global investors, and trade bodies to advance India's economic interests.

INSTITUTIONAL & POLICY LEGACY

- Repositioned India's trade policy toward resilience, competitiveness, and diversification.
- Integrated technology, analytics, and district-level execution into industrial policymaking.
- Strengthened India's credibility as a rule-shaper, not just a rule-taker, in global trade.