RegTracker

Third Quarter 2025 (July-September)

We are delighted to present the Third Quarter (July–September 2025) Edition of RegTracker — CIRC's flagship quarterly update on regulatory and policy developments. RegTracker offers crisp insights into key legislative reforms, pending bills, and expert perspectives to help you stay ahead of the curve in a rapidly evolving regulatory landscape.

This quarter highlights India's ongoing journey towards a modern, forward-looking regulatory framework, with notable strides in sustainability, digital transformation, and efficient public service delivery.

About CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC)

CIRC is a leading not-for-profit research and capacity-building organisation dedicated to competition, regulation, and sustainable development. Established by CUTS International in 2008, CIRC collaborates with global institutions like UNCTAD, UNICEF, and ADB to drive policy impact through research and knowledge creation.

In the digital age, emerging technologies like AI, IoT, and big data are reshaping markets and challenging traditional competition laws. CIRC is at the forefront, delivering cutting-edge research, publications, and expert-led training programs to address these evolving issues.

With a strong network of specialists and global recognition, CIRC continues to influence policy, foster innovation, and build expertise for a dynamic and competitive future.

About CUTS International

Established in 1983, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) is a registered, recognised, non-profit, non-partisan, non-government organisation (NGO) pursuing social justice and economic equity both within and across borders. Today, it operates out of programme centres in India located in Jaipur, Chittorgarh and Calcutta, India. The advocacy centre is located in New Delhi, India, and resource centres at Hanoi, Vietnam; Lusaka, Zambia; Nairobi, Kenya; Accra, Ghana; Geneva, Switzerland & Washington DC, USA, with a focus on research, advocacy and networking.

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Enhancing Knowledge, Strengthening Capacity

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PROGRAMMES AT CIRC

CERC Refines Transmission Framework to Support Emerging Clean Energy Technologies

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) has issued the Second Amendment to the Sharing of Inter-State Transmission Charges and Losses Regulations, 2020, marking an important recalibration of India's power transmission framework. The amendment introduces new definitions such as "tariff regulations" and "terminal bay," enhancing regulatory precision and operational clarity.

Key updates include refined rules for apportioning transmission charges among drawee Designated Inter-State Customers (DICs) operating under separate general network access, and clearer norms for computing transmission deviations for generating stations connected to both intra- and inter-state grids—a move aimed at greater billing transparency and accountability.

Notably, the amendment repositions renewable and emerging technologies—including hydro, offshore wind, energy storage, and green hydrogen/ammonia projects—by revising eligibility norms and phasing down certain transmission charge waivers.

It also introduces mechanisms to retain waivers under force majeure and permits self-declaration for energy storage projects, streamlining compliance and reducing administrative friction.

Overall, the amendment signals CERC's adaptive regulatory approach—balancing cost-sharing fairness, grid efficiency, and the promotion of next-generation clean energy infrastructure in India's transition toward a low-carbon power system.

Source:https://cercind.gov.in/regulations/200-AZ.pdf

ENERGY

PNGRB's New Tariff Framework Poised to Reshape India's Gas Market

The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB), through its July 4, 2025, press note, announced the Second Amendment to the Natural Gas Pipeline Tariff Regulations, marking a major reform in India's gas pricing and infrastructure regime. The amendment simplifies the unified tariff structure by reducing the number of tariff zones from three to two and extending the lower Zone 1 tariff nationwide for Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) and domestic Piped Natural Gas (PNG). This change is expected to cut transportation costs, enhance affordability, and expand access to clean fuel for households and urban transport.To ensure supply stability, entities are now required to source at least 75% of system-use gas through long-term contracts of three years or more, protecting consumers from price volatility. A key innovation is the creation of a Pipeline Development Reserve (PDR) — a performance-linked mechanism where profits from highly utilised pipelines are shared equally between infrastructure reinvestment and tariff reduction.

Source:https://pngrb.gov.in/pdf/press-note/20250704_PR.pdf

India Unveils Revised Green Hydrogen Pilot Scheme for Decentralised Applications

India Unveils Revised Green Hydrogen Pilot Scheme for Decentralised Applications

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has announced revised guidelines for its Green Hydrogen pilot projects, marking a significant stride in India's clean energy transition. The revamped scheme aims to promote innovative production pathways such as floating solar, biomass conversion, and hydrogen generation from wastewater, expanding the nation's renewable energy landscape.

A key highlight of the initiative is its focus on decentralised and community-level applications including residential, commercial, and mobility sectors — to explore hydrogen's role in cooking, heating, and off-grid power generation. By supporting such pilots, the government seeks to move beyond industrial use and integrate green hydrogen into everyday life, showcasing its technical, economic, and social viability.

Additionally, the scheme prioritises safety, performance validation, and innovation across sectors to ensure sustainable and reliable adoption. This forward-looking initiative not only accelerates India's renewable energy goals but also sets a global benchmark for developing nations aspiring to build inclusive and sustainable hydrogen ecosystems.

Source:https://cdnbbsr.s3waas.gov.in/s3716e1b8c6cd17b771da77391355749f3/uploads/2025/08/20250806545556112.pdf

TRANSPORT

MoRTH Issues Amendment to Strengthen FASTag-Based Toll Collection

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has released an amendment refining toll collection mechanisms under the FASTag ecosystem. The updated framework introduces crucial adjustments to rate determination and exemption thresholds aimed at curbing toll evasion and optimising revenue efficiency. By aligning with Section 7 of the National Highways Fee (Determination of Rates and Collection) Rules, the amendment enhances the enforceability of toll provisions within concessionaire agreements, thereby reducing potential disputes and supporting smoother project financing. It also reinforces the government's commitment to transparent, technology-driven toll operations across India's expanding highway network.

For stakeholders — including concessionaires, auditors, and policy implementers — the revision necessitates recalibrating compliance mechanisms to ensure interoperability and data integrity within the digital tolling ecosystem. Overall, this reform marks another step toward seamless, cashless mobility and improved governance in national highway management.

Source:
https://morth.nic.in/sites/default/files/Amendment-NH-Toll-Fasttags.pdf

TRANSPORT

Indian Ports Act, 2025: Modernising Maritime Governance

The recently enacted Indian Ports Act, 2025 (Act No. 27 of 2025) signals a major shift in India's maritime governance. By consolidating and repealing older port laws, the legislation seeks to simplify administration, rationalise tariffs, and encourage greater private sector participation across both major and non-major ports.

Building on the framework of the Major Port Authorities Act, 2021, the new law grants port authorities wider regulatory autonomy, allowing for quicker decision-making, faster approval of public-private partnership (PPP) projects, and smoother dispute resolution through dedicated tribunals. This is expected to reduce procedural delays and make India's port sector more investor-friendly. Importantly, the Act brings sustainability and competition to the forefront of port management, aligning India's maritime policy with global standards. For private developers and investors, it also means revisiting due diligence and concession frameworks to match the evolving regulatory landscape.

Overall, the Indian Ports Act, 2025 represents a timely reform—aimed at improving efficiency, transparency, and competitiveness in India's port ecosystem, while strengthening the country's position as a key player in global trade and logistics.

Source:
https://shipmin.gov.in/sites/default/files/indian%20Ports%20Act%2C%202025_0.pdf

INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Balancing Play and Policy: India's New Era of Online Gaming Regulation

The Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act, 2025 marks a watershed moment in India's digital evolution—one that balances innovation with responsibility. By formally recognizing e-sports, educational, and social gaming, the law signals an institutional embrace of the country's rapidly expanding gaming ecosystem. At the same time, it draws a clear line by prohibiting "online money games," a category often linked to gambling risks, addiction, and financial exploitation. Central to the Act is the establishment of a dedicated governing authority tasked with ensuring compliance, promoting responsible gaming practices, and fostering consumer protection. This creates a structured environment where legitimate gaming enterprises can thrive under a transparent, accountable framework.

Beyond regulation, the Act reflects a larger policy vision—positioning gaming as a driver of digital creativity, skill development, and employment, while curbing its darker edges. As India emerges as one of the world's fastest-growing gaming markets, this legislation lays the foundation for sustainable digital sportsmanship and a mature, globally competitive gaming industry.

Source:
https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2025/08/4f673438a686e3fa81dd2d277b445f42.pdf

TRAI's In-Building Infrastructure Registration: Boosting Accountability and Connectivity

TRAI's recent operationalization of in-building infrastructure registration marks a pivotal moment in advancing the 2024 Rating Regulations. By enabling certification of distributed antenna system (DAS) deployments under Section 36, the framework places clear responsibility on landlords to maintain and upgrade in-building telecom infrastructure. This is a crucial step toward bridging connectivity gaps in commercial and residential spaces, directly supporting India's broader Digital India objectives.

Beyond technical compliance, the registration mechanism has wider implications. It incentivizes timely upgrades, potentially influencing lease agreements and reducing disputes related to telecom installations. For developers and landlords, adherence could also enhance ESG profiles, making properties more attractive for sustainability-linked financing. However, the regulatory pathway is not without challenges—appeals on accreditation decisions may emerge, underscoring the need for transparent processes and clear standards. Overall, TRAI's initiative signals a maturing telecom ecosystem where infrastructure accountability aligns with both commercial interests and national connectivity goals. By linking regulatory compliance with technological readiness and financial incentives, the policy sets the stage for a more resilient, inclusive, and future-ready in-building telecom landscape.

Source:
https://trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-08/PR_No.84of2025.pdf

ENERGY

Draft REC Amendment: Strengthening Incentives for Off-Grid Renewables

The Central Electricity Regulatory Commission (CERC) has released a draft amendment aimed at recalibrating Renewable Energy Certificate (REC) issuance and trading mechanisms, signaling a push to better support off-grid renewable projects. Key revisions include adjustments to vintage multipliers and floor prices, designed to enhance the economic attractiveness of renewable installations and deepen market liquidity. By invoking Section 178 of the Electricity Act, the amendment reinforces the regulatory authority's commitment to a robust, transparent REC framework.

For obligated entities, these changes could have significant implications for Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO) compliance strategies, potentially altering procurement patterns and financial planning. The draft also highlights the importance of stakeholder engagement—the consultation window allows market participants to shape enforcement provisions, which may, in turn, influence future disputes over certificate validity or trading obligations. Overall, this amendment reflects a policy shift toward more dynamic incentives for renewable energy, particularly in off-grid contexts. By aligning regulatory mechanisms with market realities, CERC seeks to foster both environmental sustainability and financial viability, paving the way for a more resilient, efficient, and inclusive renewable energy ecosystem in India.

Source:
https://cercind.gov.in/2025/draft_reg/Draft_REC_%281st_Amendent%29.pdf

TRANSPORT

Streamlining Tunnel Approvals: A Step Forward for Hill Infrastructure

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' recently issued Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for NH Tunnel Alignment Studies sets a much-needed benchmark for tunnel feasibility assessments in India. By formalizing a process that integrates geological surveys, environmental considerations, and multi-stakeholder consultations, the SOP aims to expedite approvals while ensuring compliance with the Tunnel Safety Guidelines

For developers and planners, this clarity translates into greater predictability in project timelines and DPR submissions, reducing uncertainties that have historically slowed hill highway projects. The SOP also aligns with environmental mandates under the EIA Notification, 2006, reinforcing a commitment to sustainable infrastructure development in ecologically sensitive regions.

Importantly, the SOP provides a transparent framework that can minimize administrative challenges and strengthen dispute resolution mechanisms for alignment conflicts. However, its effectiveness will hinge on rigorous adherence and consistent interpretation by authorities. By codifying a structured, consultative approach, the Ministry not only accelerates the construction of strategic tunnel projects but also sets the stage for safer, more efficient, and environmentally responsible hill highway development across the country.

Source:
https://morth.nic.in/sites/default/files/Standard

Streamlining Audits in Broadcasting: TRAI's Latest Move

TRAI's latest draft on addressable systems proposes a significant recalibration of audit and reporting norms, balancing regulatory oversight with operational efficiency. By easing audit obligations for smaller Distribution Platform Operators (DPOs), the draft recognizes the practical constraints of smaller players, while simultaneously mandating disclosures on infrastructure sharing to prevent inconsistencies in subscriber reporting.

Anchored in the 2017 Regulations and enforceable under Section 36 of the TRAI Act, this amendment seeks to reduce disputes before the TDSAT, particularly around CAS/SMS interoperability—a recurring challenge in the sector. For larger stakeholders and investors, the clarified audit framework could simplify M&A due diligence, offering a more transparent view of subscriber bases and system compliance.

However, the proposal also raises questions on exemption thresholds. Policymakers will need to ensure that easing compliance for smaller operators does not inadvertently create loopholes or reporting gaps. Overall, the draft reflects TRAI's attempt to modernize regulatory processes, encourage transparency, and reduce litigation, signaling a shift toward pragmatic regulation that balances sectoral growth with consumer protection.

Source:
https://www.trai.gov.in/sites/default/files/2025-09/Draft_Regulation_22092025_0.pdfNotification

WASTE MANAGEMENT

Operationalizing the HOWM Rules: Streamlining Imports with Accountability

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways' recently issued Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for NH Tunnel Alignment Studies sets a much-needed benchmark for tunnel feasibility assessments in India. By formalizing a process that integrates geological surveys, environmental considerations, and multi-stakeholder consultations, the SOP aims to expedite approvals while ensuring compliance with the Tunnel Safety Guidelines. For developers and planners, this clarity translates into greater predictability in project timelines and DPR submissions, reducing uncertainties that have historically slowed hill highway projects. The SOP also aligns with environmental mandates under the EIA Notification, 2006, reinforcing a commitment to sustainable infrastructure development in ecologically sensitive regions.

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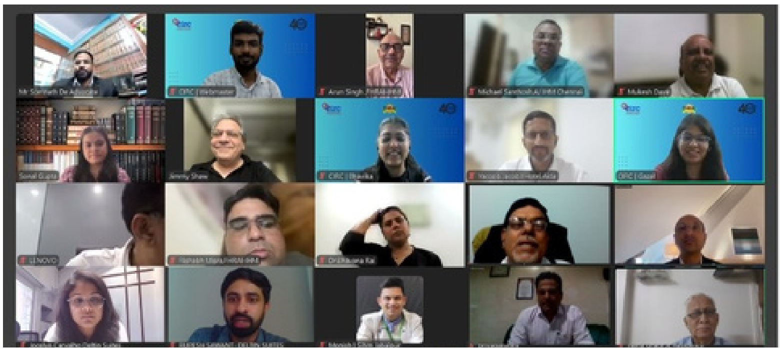
Source:https://moef.gov.in/uploads/pdf-uploads/pdf_68d528b19fa7b0.29708152.pdfNotification

PAST PROGRAMMES

Navigating the Legal Landscape of Hospitality

The ***FHRAI Centre for Excellence in Research in Tourism and Hospitality (CERTH), in collaboration with the CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC)***, organized an eight-week online course titled “Navigating the Legal Landscape of Hospitality,” held from 23rd May to 12th July, with sessions every Friday and Saturday. The program provided a comprehensive overview of India’s hospitality laws, covering licensing, labour regulations, contract drafting, food safety, taxation, and intellectual property protection. Delivered through interactive weekend sessions by legal and industry experts, it combined case studies with practical learning. The course also highlighted key industry challenges, including overlapping regulations, stringent compliance requirements, high liability risks, and the constant need to adapt to evolving legal standards.

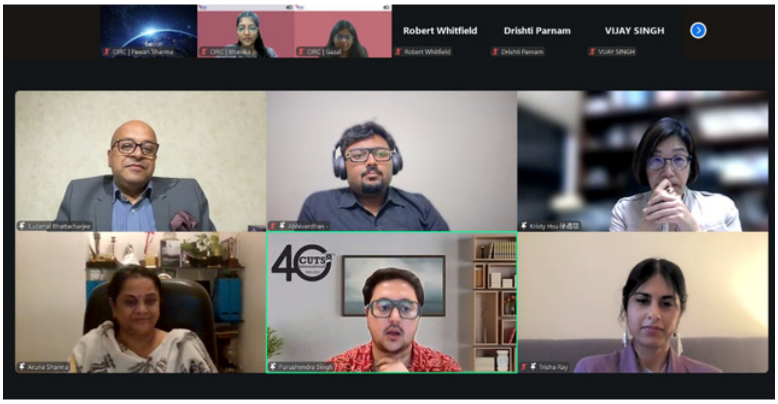


Glimpse of Hospitality Law Course

In Media:
Click here to read Press Release

Webinar on Global Dynamics of AI Regulation

On August 18, ***CUTS Institute for Regulation and Competition (CIRC) and CUTS Global Affairs*** hosted a webinar on the global dynamics of AI regulation. The session explored how major economies such as the EU, US, China, India, and Russia are using AI governance to shape global trade, data policies, and geopolitical influence. It also examined key regulatory trends, national security concerns, and the growing need for international cooperation in developing a balanced global AI framework.
The webinar was moderated by Mr. Subimal Bhattacharjee, with panellists Ms. Trisha Ray, Dr. Kristy Hsu, Dr. Jia Kai, Dr. Aruna Sharma, and Mr. Abhivardhan sharing their insights on the evolving global AI landscape.

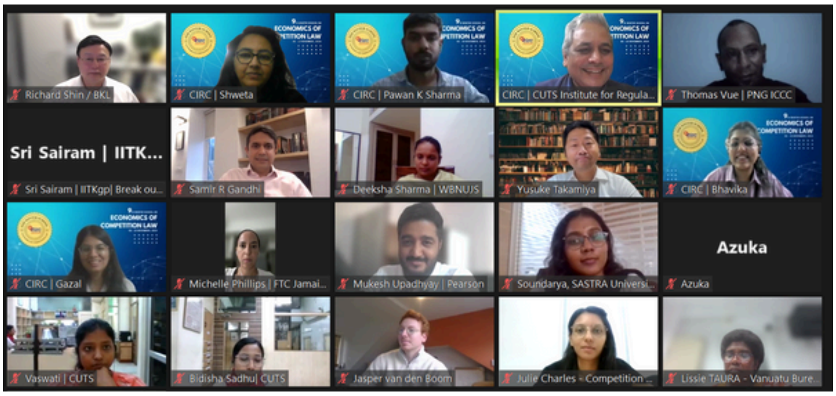


Know More

or Visit:
for more details and Event Report

UPCOMING PROGRAMME:
10TH WINTER SCHOOL ON ECONOMICS OF COMPETITION LAW

We are delighted to announce the **10th edition of the Winter School on Economics of Competition Law** scheduled from **November 5, 2025 to November 9th, 2025**. It is a 20-hour training programme, spread over five days, with four-hour sessions each day. Led by globally renowned speakers, the sessions of the winter school have been carefully curated to forward discourse on the application of economic tools and analysis in competition law cases. It aims to provide the participants with an understanding of the increasingly important role that economics plays in understanding the markets and assessing the violation of competition law. It strongly focusses on practical examples and direct application of the underlying economic theories and techniques.



Glimpse of Winter School 2024

SCHEDULED FROM
5 to 9 November 2025

Register Here

or Visit:
to register