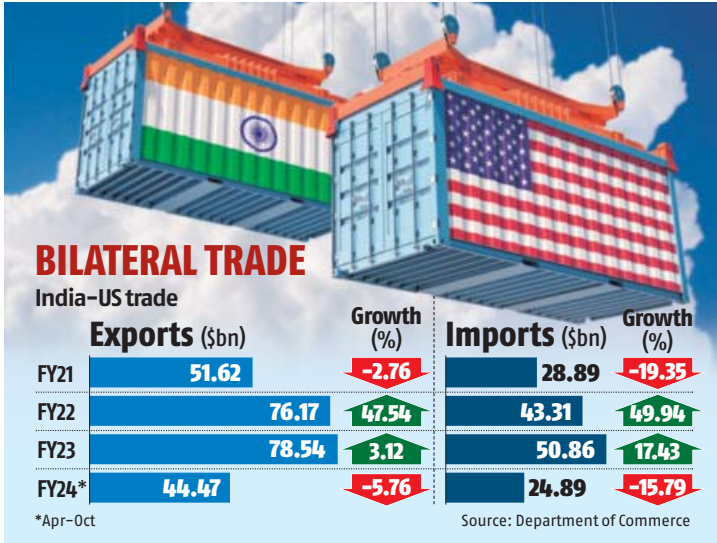


India, US may discuss non-tariff barriers



SHREYA NANDI

New Delhi, 26 December

India may take up the issue of non-tariff barriers resulting in a market access issue with the United States (US) in the upcoming meeting of the Trade Policy Forum (TPF) between both the nations, people aware of the matter said.

Preparations have begun for the annual meeting, scheduled for January 13-14 in New Delhi. Here, both sides hope to strengthen bilateral relations, resolve trade and investment issues and identify further areas for engagement.

Agriculture products, including fruits such as mango, grapes and pomegranate, are one of the focus areas for both the nations as time and again exporters from both sides

have faced challenges on market access. “There are a few market access issues with the US. For instance, there are some challenges related to the inspection of fruits such as pomegranate and mangoes, under the US’s preclearance programme,” one of the officials cited above told *Business Standard*.

“We will discuss these matters with them next month (at the TPF). US Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai, along with her team will be in Delhi,” the officials said.

Pradeep S Mehta, secretary general, CUTS International, said that legacy trade frictions pose a major challenge to advancing the bilateral trade relationship.

There is a need for a roadmap, which can match Indian and American trade priorities and

resolve outstanding issues, he added. “For India, restoration of our status as a beneficiary of the US GSP programme and securing good terms for Indian professional service providers should be the priorities. Since the TPF will be held just weeks before WTO MC13, the two sides must also explore how they can jointly contribute towards a successful MC13 and restoration of a well-functioning dispute settlement mechanism,” Mehta said.

The India-US TPF will be co-chaired by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and USTR Katherine Tai. The 13th ministerial-level meeting of the TPF took place in Washington during January a year ago. The forum was reconvened in November 2021 after a gap of four years.