

Daily Current Affairs

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India United States Trade Policy Forum

- The **14th Ministerial-level meeting** of the **India- United States Trade Policy Forum (TPF)** was held in New Delhi. Minister of Commerce and Industry, India, **Shri Piyush Goyal** and U.S. Trade Representative, **Ambassador Katherine Tai** co-chaired the TPF meeting.
- The Ministers committed to pursue foundation to launch **future Joint Initiatives** in certain areas, including critical minerals, customs and trade facilitation, supply chains, and trade in high tech products, in which the **United States and India will develop an ambitious and forward-looking roadmap** for enhanced cooperation in order to achieve economically meaningful outcomes.



- The Ministers agreed to establish a **Joint Facilitative Mechanism (JFM)** to mitigate **non-tariff barriers** which would pursue mutually recognition of results from International Laboratories and establish mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs), on a bilateral basis whenever possible.
- This would eliminate duplicative testing requirements and reduce compliance costs for trade in high-quality goods.

- Ambassador Tai **appreciated India's G20 Presidency** and the outcomes achieved in the G20 Trade and Investment Working Group, in particular the adoption of the High-Level Principles on Digitalization of Trade Documents.
- The Ministers acknowledged the ongoing **discussions on a Social Security Totalization Agreement** and additional information provided by the Indian side to the US side as part of discussions. **Social Security/ Totalisation Agreement** is one of the key asks from the Indian side in the TPF which will significantly contribute towards enhancing services trade between countries and help Indian IT professionals who temporarily work in the US.
- **Indian side** raised the issue of **lifting the ban on exports of wild caught shrimps**, which is a significant ask from the Indian side affecting Indian fishermen and our exports to the US market.



- USA is India's top export market for shrimps. In this context, both the Ministers welcomed the finalization of the **Turtle Excluder Device (TED)** design developed with the technical support of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). **TED is an effective device** in minimizing the impact of fishing on sea-turtle population and would foster enhanced seafood trade between the two countries.
- India also emphasized the **need to increase the number of inspections** by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA) in India to reach the pre-pandemic

level. It may be noted that USA is India's top export market for pharma products.

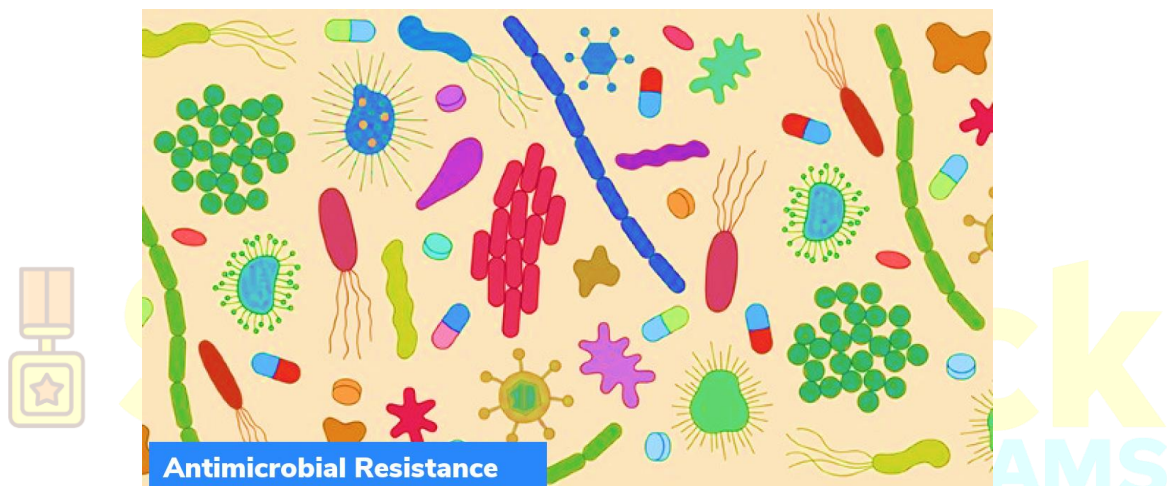
- The Ministers noted that the **movement of professional and skilled workers**, students, investors and business visitors between the countries contributes immensely to enhancing bilateral economic and technological partnership. Minister Goyal highlighted challenges being faced by business visitors from India due to **visa processing time periods** and requested the United States to augment processing.



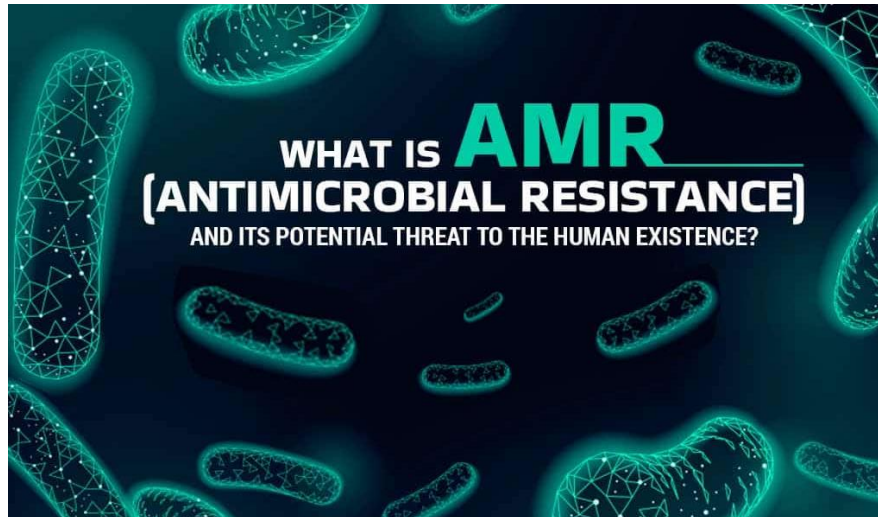
- The Ministers also acknowledged the **role of professional services in catalysing** bilateral trade between the two countries and noted that issues related to recognition of professional qualifications and experience can facilitate services trade.
- Both Ministers also discussed the **issue of import management system** for specific hardware and Minister Goyal briefed her about India's objectives, including those related to national security concerns, and Ambassador Tai expressed a willingness to collaborate with India on the shared objective of supply chain resilience in this sector.
- Minister Goyal reiterated **India's interest in restoration of its beneficiary status** under the U.S. Generalized System of Preferences program. Ambassador Tai noted that this could be considered, as warranted, in relation to the eligibility criteria determined by the U.S. Congress.

Operation Amrith

- **Kerala Drug Control Department** recently launched **Operation Amrith** (Antimicrobial Resistance Intervention For Total Health) to **prevent the overuse of antibiotics in the state**. The aim is to **conduct surprise raids** in pharmacies to detect over-the-counter (OTC) sales of antibiotics without a doctor's prescription.
- AMR refers to the ability of bacteria and microbes to resist the drugs used to inhibit or kill them. Considered a **"silent pandemic"**, AMR was associated with around 5 million deaths globally in 2019, with 1.3 million deaths directly attributed to it.



- As part of this, pharmacies must maintain records of antibiotic sales. They must also display posters stating **"antibiotics not sold without doctor's prescription"**. Strict action will be taken against those not complying.
- The public can participate by reporting pharmacies selling antibiotics without prescription to the Drug Control Department. A toll-free number has been provided for lodging complaints. Once a complaint is received, it will be transferred to the zonal office for verification and immediate action.
- Operation Amrith activities are being carried out under **Kerala's Antimicrobial Resistance Strategic Action Plan's** (KARSAP) antibiotic literacy initiative.
- **Kerala was the first Indian state** with a state action plan on AMR aligned with India's national action plan. After releasing the state action plan on AMR, Kerala initiated the Antibiotic Literate Kerala Campaign to raise AMR awareness.
- The health department has committed to completely phase out OTC antibiotic sales without prescription and take action against violating pharmacists.



- For proper disposal of unused antibiotics, Kerala has the Programme on **Removal of Unused Drugs (PROUD)**. This drug take-back programme was piloted in Thiruvananthapuram district in 2019.
- The **World Bank estimated in 2017** that annual global healthcare costs could reach \$1.2 trillion by 2050 under a high AMR impact scenario. The world could also lose 3.8% of GDP annually and see up to 10 million deaths annually, mostly in Asia and Africa.

Food Corporation Of India

- **FCI marks its 60th anniversary**, with Union Minister Piyush Goyal praising India's **food self-sufficiency** as a remarkable achievement in human history. **On January 14, 2024**, Goyal emphasized the FCI's crucial role in preventing hunger for every citizen in the world's most populous country.
- Minister Goyal underscored the need for the FCI to maintain **transparency in its operations and embrace digital technologies** for enhanced efficiency and quality. He urged the organization to explore avenues to manage expenses effectively, acknowledging the vital role it plays in maintaining India's food security.
- The **FCI, a statutory organization** responsible for managing the government's granaries, has been instrumental in achieving **food self-sufficiency**. Through its procurement process at federally fixed minimum support prices (MSP), it buys millions of tonnes of farm produce from Indian farmers, preventing distress sales. This food is then distributed free of cost to 800 million impoverished citizens under the National Food Security Act.



Food Corporation of India

- Recognizing the historical significance of former **Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri in establishing the federal food agency**, Minister Goyal highlighted the ongoing modernization efforts of the FCI. These include the implementation of automated weighing bridges, closed-circuit cameras, and mechanized loading of freight to enhance operational efficiency.
- Minister Goyal emphasized the critical role of the FCI in India's development journey, stating that there is **"no place for complacency."** He highlighted the agency's contribution to strengthening every child through food security by purchasing food from farmers and distributing it to the less privileged.



- The FCI's market interventions, wherein it sells grains to bulk buyers, have played a **vital role in lowering inflation and stabilizing supplies**. Despite the current export ban on onions, the FCI continues to purchase them at fair prices, balancing the interests of consumers and farmers.

- In the fiscal year 2022-23, the FCI procured 76.56 million tonnes of paddy and 26.2 million tonnes of wheat from approximately 12.3 million cultivators. This amounted to a total payout of ₹2.19 lakh crore, contributing to the government's food subsidy bill.

Tenzing Norgay Award

- President Draupadi Murmu presented the **posthumous Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award to Savita Kanswal**, a brave mountaineer from Lothru village in Uttarkashi district in a ceremony.
- Savita Kanswal made history by becoming the **first Indian woman mountaineer** to conquer both **Mount Everest (8848 m)** and **Mount Makalu (8485 m)** within an astonishing span of 16 days.



- The promising journey of Savita took a tragic turn when she met an untimely demise on October 4, 2022. While attempting to climb **Draupadi Ka Danda peak** as a member of the team sent by the Nehru Institute of Mountaineering, Savita was struck by an avalanche. Her passion for conquering peaks and pushing boundaries ultimately cost her life.
- Savita Kanswal, a courageous mountaineer **from Lothru village** in the Bhatwari block of Uttarkashi district, has left an indelible mark on the world of mountaineering and adventure sports despite the tragic end to her journey.
- Savita Kanswal's legacy goes beyond her remarkable achievements; it encapsulates her courage, determination, and resilience in the face of challenges. Her ability to overcome odds and push her limits serves as a beacon of inspiration for adventure lovers across the country.



Pench Tiger Reserve

- **Pench Tiger Reserve** in Maharashtra has made history by securing recognition as **India's inaugural Dark Sky Park**, marking its position as the **fifth in Asia**. This prestigious acknowledgment underscores the reserve's unwavering commitment to protecting the **sanctity of the night sky** and creating an optimal setting for astronomy enthusiasts.
- The **International Union for Conservation of Nature**, recognizing the intrinsic value of the night sky as a natural, cultural, and historical resource, played a pivotal role in conferring this distinction.
- Emphasized the **escalating global threat posed by light pollution** and its substantial risk to this invaluable natural resource. The Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society Working Group, led by the International Astronomical Union, actively advocates for the establishment of **'Dark Sky Parks'** by national and local governments.
- To enhance the stargazing experience, the reserve has established a night **observatory near Bagholi**, funded by the district planning committee. Additionally, over 100 street and community lights in nearby villages have been strategically replaced, addressing light pollution concerns and preserving the pristine quality of the night sky.



- About Pench Tiger Reserve: The Reserve is located in the **southern reaches of the Satpura hills** in the Seoni and Chhindwara districts in Madhya Pradesh and continues in Nagpur district in Maharashtra as a **separate Sanctuary**.
- It is named after the **Pench River**, which flows from north to south through the Reserve.
- It comprises of the **Indira Priyadarshini Pench National Park**, the Pench Mowgli Sanctuary and a buffer.
- It is undulating, with most of the area covered by small hills and steep slopes on the sides.
- The undulating topography supports a mosaic of vegetation ranging from a moist sheltered valley to an open, dry deciduous forest.
- The reserve boasts a diverse range of flora, including teak, saag, mahua, and various grasses and shrubs.

Atpadi Conservation Reserve

- The **Government of Maharashtra** has recently declared the establishment of a new Conservation Reserve in the Atpadi region of Sangli district, named the '**Atpadi Conservation Reserve**'.
- This significant development is a step forward in the conservation of wildlife and biodiversity in the region. The Atpadi Conservation Reserve is situated in the forest land of Sangli district.
- It forms a crucial ecological bridge, connecting the **Maini Conservation Area** in the west with the **Maldhok Bird Sanctuary** in the northeast.

Government Of Maharashtra
Declares New Atpadi Conservation
Reserve In Sangli District



- This connectivity is vital for the movement and genetic diversity of wildlife in the region.
- The reserve hosts a diverse range of flora and fauna. It includes **three types of forest cover**: Semi-evergreen, moist deciduous, and dry deciduous.
- The area is home to 36 tree species, 116 herb species, 15 shrub species, 14 vine species, and 1 parasitic plant.
- A key objective of the Atpadi Conservation Reserve is to preserve the habitat of various mammals like wolves, jackals, deer, foxes, civets, rabbits, and other species. The establishment of the reserve will play a crucial role in the protection of these wildlife corridors.
- The reserve spans a significant area and is characterized by a rich ecological tapestry, contributing to the overall environmental health and biodiversity of Maharashtra.

International Camel Festival

- The **three-day International Camel Festival** kicked off with great fervor in the culturally rich district of **Bikaner, Rajasthan**. The festival commenced with an enthralling **Heritage Walk**, setting the stage for a celebration of folk culture that captivated both domestic and foreign tourists.
- On the inaugural day of the festival, the streets came alive with the vibrant hues of decorated camels, traditional robes, and women adorned in colorful costumes.



- The Heritage Walk, **starting from Rampuriya Haveli**, saw the enthusiastic participation of folk artists, adding a touch of authenticity to the cultural fiesta. Local folk artists mesmerized the onlookers with traditional songs, Rammats, and captivating dances, offering a glimpse into the rich local culture.
- As the Heritage Walk traversed through the main roads of the city, the residents warmly welcomed the participants. Flowers adorned the path, and rangolis decorated various places, creating an atmosphere of joy and festivity. The city park became a focal point of the celebration, attracting a large number of tourists and locals who eagerly gathered early in the morning to witness the cultural spectacle.

Yogesh Singh Wins Gold Medal

- In Shooting, India's **Yogesh Singh** won a **gold medal** in the men's **25m standard pistol event** at the **Asian Shooting Championships 2024 in Jakarta, Indonesia** yesterday.
- **Mongolian shooter Davaakhuu Enkhtaivan** claimed the silver medal with the same score. The Indian shooter, however, finished ahead as he shot 17Xs as opposed to Enkhtaivan's seven.

- Kazakhstan's Nikita Chiryukin, who beat India's Vijayveer Sidhu to the men's 25m rapid-fire pistol gold medal yesterday, claimed the bronze with 568.
- India's Amit Kumar took the sixth position with 565 while Om Prakash was 12th with 553.



REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Primary Focus Of The India United States Trade Policy Forum

- A. Climate Change Agreements
- B. Customs And Trade Facilitation
- C. Human Rights Advocacy
- D. Space Exploration Collaboration

ANSWER: B

2. Which Country Is India's Top Export Market For Shrimps

- A. USA
- B. India
- C. Japan
- D. China

ANSWER: A

3. Which State Launched Operation Amrith

- A. Karnataka
- B. Jharkhand
- C. Kerala
- D. Odisha

ANSWER: C

4. Savita Kanswal Seen In News Associated With

- A. Music
- B. Dance
- C. Scientist
- D. Mountain climbing

ANSWER: D

5. Which Award Is Named After Tenzing Norgay

- A. Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award
- B. Tenzing Norgay National Cinema Award
- C. Tenzing Norgay National Explorer Award
- D. Tenzing Norgay National Sports Award

ANSWER: A

6. Pench Tiger Reserve Located In

- A. Assam
- B. Himachal Pradesh
- C. Maharashtra
- D. Kerala

ANSWER: C

7. Which Government Department Is Responsible For Organizing The Startup India Innovation Week 2024

- A. Department of Food and Public Distribution
- B. Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
- C. Department of Financial Services
- D. Department of Heavy Industries

ANSWER: B

8. According To 2024 Henley Passport Index, What Is The Rank Of India

- A. 83rd
- B. 81th
- C. 80th
- D. 90th

ANSWER: C

9. Which Printing Press Published A Book Titled ‘Modi: Energising A Green Future

- A. Pentagon press
- B. Penguin Random House
- C. Acme Printing press
- D. Harper Collins publishers

ANSWER: A

10. Since Which Year, India And Pakistan Exchange List Of Their Nuclear Installations And Facilities In First Week Of January

- A. 1988
- B. 1992
- C. 1995
- D. 1998

ANSWER: B

11. Which Country Officially Launched A Digital Nomad “Workation” Visa

- A. Japan
- B. China
- C. Singapore
- D. South Korea

ANSWER: D

12. Which Organization Issues Electoral Bonds In India

- A. RBI
- B. SIDBI
- C. NABARD
- D. State Bank of India

ANSWER:D

13. Which Business Conglomerate Is Leading Dharavi Redevelopment Project

- A. Reliance
- B. Adani
- C. Godrej
- D. Hiranandani

ANSWER: B

14. What Is The Free Movement Regime Between India And Myanmar

- A. A Trade Agreement Between The Two Countries
- B. A Pact Allowing Visa-free Movement Across The Border
- C. A Cultural Exchange Program
- D. A Mechanism For Voluntary Repatriation Of Refugees

ANSWER: C

15. Name Of Biosimilar Antidiabetic Drug Recently Launched By Glenmark In Indian Market

- A. Lirafit
- B. Glyciphage
- C. Januglify
- D. Insugen

ANSWER: A

16. Which Organization Along With CCRAS Launched 'SMART 2.0' Program To Promote Clinical Studies In Priority Areas Of Ayurveda

- A. AYUSH Ministry
- B. NITI Aayog
- C. National Commission for Indian System of Medicine
- D. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

ANSWER: C

17. Who Is Current CEO Of Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre

- A. Sanjay Kundu
- B. Rajesh Kumar
- C. Rakesh Asthana
- D. Ajay Bhalla

ANSWER: B

18. Which Country Is Host Of 19th Summit Of Non Aligned Movement, 2024

- A. India
- B. Azerbaijan
- C. Uganda
- D. South Africa

ANSWER: C

19. Primary Goal Of European Space Agency's Proba-3 Mission Scheduled To Launch Aboard India's PSLV

- A. To Study Earth's Atmosphere
- B. To Explore Distant Galaxies
- C. To Demonstrate Precision Formation Flying For Solar Observation
- D. To Map The Martian Surface

ANSWER: C

20. 1200-year-old Miniature Votive Stupas Have Been Discovered In Which State/UT

- A. Uttarakhand
- B. Sikkim
- C. Bihar
- D. West Bengal

ANSWER: C

