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# Sorting out WTO disputes with India helped American rural communities: USTR

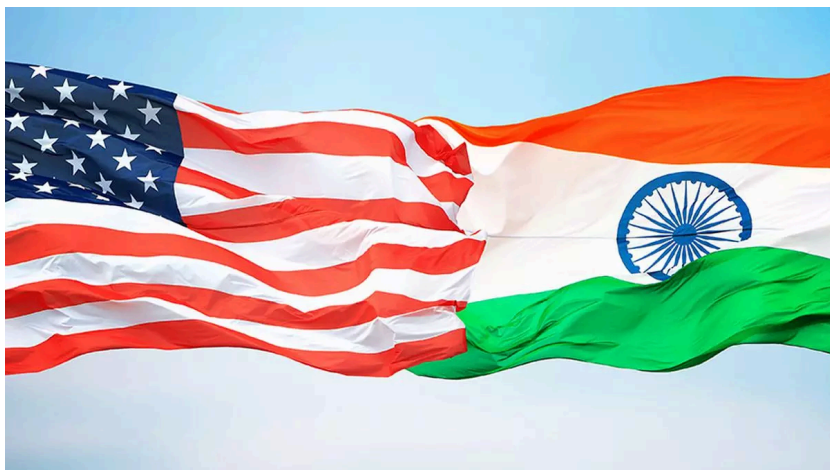
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India's wheat subsidies are distorting prices and directly hurting American farmers, says Senator Ron Wyden, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance

BY AMITI SEN

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US Trade Representative Katherine Tai has highlighted sorting out WTO disputes with India as a win for the agriculture and rural

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**Vinod Aggarwal**  
President, Society of Indian



communities in he  
before the Senate Committee on  
Finance on President Joe Biden's  
2024 Trade Policy Agenda where  
some concerns were raised on  
India's wheat subsidies allegedly  
hurting American farmers.

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“Last June, India and the United States terminated six WTO disputes, and India agreed to remove retaliatory tariffs on several US products. This means improved access for chickpeas, lentils, almonds, walnuts, and apples benefiting farmers across the country, including in Michigan, Oregon, and Washington,” Tai said in her written testimony to the Senate Committee on Wednesday.

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Additionally, in September, India and the US resolved their final outstanding WTO dispute, and India agreed to reduce tariffs on several US products, the USTR added.

“This means more market access for turkey, duck, blueberries, and cranberries benefiting farmers in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Wisconsin,” she said.

The WTO disputes settled between India and the US include India’s appeal against the US’s imposition of tariffs on imports of steel and aluminium products from India; the US appeal against India’s retaliatory tariffs; India’s renewable energy subsidies for solar cells and modules under Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission; India’s appeal over similar subsidies for solar cells and solar modules by eight US state governments; US’ appeal against India’s export subsidy programmes; India’s imposition of countervailing duties on imports of certain hot-rolled carbon steel flat products from the US.

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The last dispute between the two, which was settled in September 2023, was on poultry import from Washington as part of which India agreed to cut import duties on some farm items.

In his remarks at the hearing, Senator Ron Wyden, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Finance, alleged that India’s wheat subsidies were distorting prices and directly hurting American farmers.

“Without trade enforcement, our trade laws aren’t worth the paper they are written on... India’s wheat subsidies are distorting prices and making it harder for Oregon’s

farmers to compete in the Asian market,” Wyden said.

Wyden also mentioned Mexico’s “illegal fishing practices” and China’s “rap sheet of unfair subsidies and trade practices” adding that these “unfair trading practices” were hurting workers in America.

In discussions around its wheat subsidies under the MSP programme at the WTO, India has been maintaining that its subsidies were well within the range prescribed by the WTO, and its food security programmes were necessary to support vulnerable farmers and feed the poor.

Giving her account of how the settlement of WTO disputes with India had helped US farmers, the USTR gave an example of a family growing almonds in the Central Valley of California visited by her team.

“This family was impacted by India’s retaliatory tariffs imposed in 2019, limiting their access to a vital market for their operation. We removed those tariffs and provided more economic certainty for this family and many others,” she said.

The US was India’s largest trading partner in 2022-23 with bilateral trade rising 7.65 per cent to \$128.55 billion.