

India, US officials to meet after Budget to discuss investment

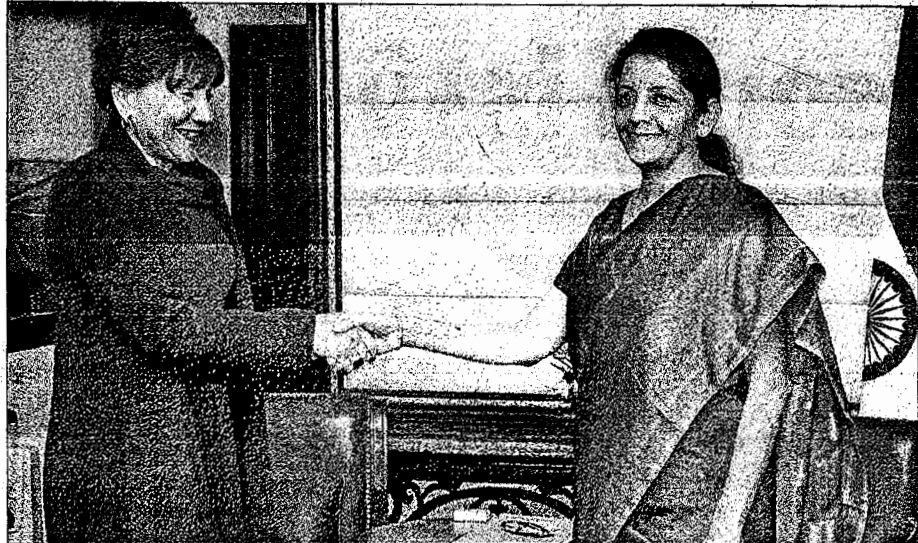
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New Delhi, Jan 27: India and the US will hold high-level meetings after the forthcoming Budget session to identify and prioritise sectors for investments and technology sharing, commerce minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** said on Tuesday.

She held a meeting on Tuesday with visiting US commerce secretary **Penny Pritzker**, during which issues related to the India-US totalisation agreement (on social security), US's visa restrictions and better protection of intellectual property rights (IPR) in India figured. "We asked the Americans to have a look at the (draft IPR) policy and invited inputs from them," she said.

While countries such as the US have been pressing New Delhi to bolster IPR in the pharmaceutical sector and steps to avoid unfair commercial use of R&D data made available by their companies to Indian regulators, India is keen to ensure the support of developed countries for its "Make in India" campaign and therefore has started a review of its IPR policy to give confidence to foreign investors.

However, India has not stated whether the IPR review will entail a rethink on the additional filter of satisfactory improve-



Commerce minister **Nirmala Sitharaman** with US secretary of commerce **Penny Pritzker** (left) in New Delhi

ment in therapeutic efficacy for patents, over and above the TRIPS criteria of novelty and inventive step. In its April 30 Special 301 report (annual review of the global state of IPR protection and enforcement), the US had classified India as a 'priority watch list country'.

During the Sitharaman-Pritzker meeting, Indian officials pointed out initiatives of the government including foreign investment ceiling in defence and railways sectors and sought American investment.

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