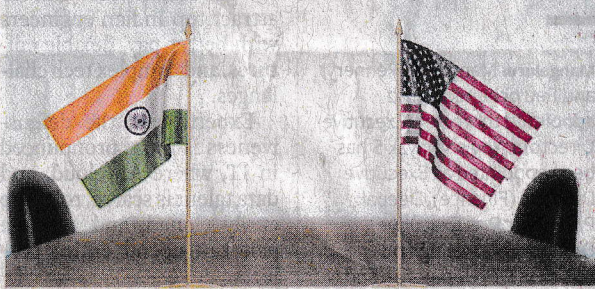


# US 'pushing India' for market access, tariff cut across sectors

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Despite New Delhi's resistance, the US is continuing to press India for greater market access across sectors in the ongoing Bilateral Trade Agreement negotiations and also for "much less tariffs". India has been holding out on sensitive sectors, such as agriculture and dairy.



**TARIFF TUSSELE.** Despite the July 9 tariff deadline, India can only say yes to a pact that is balanced, with both sides gaining

## 'A DIFFERENT DEAL'

US President Donald Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Tuesday: "I think we are going to have a deal with India. And that is going to be a different kind of a deal. It is going to be a deal where we are able to go in and compete. Right now, India does not accept anybody in. I think India is going to do that and if they do that, we are going to have a deal for much less tariffs."

Although the July 9 deadline for an interim deal to avoid the US reciprocal tariffs looms, India is not ready to play ball till it gets to fully protect its sensitivities, including agriculture, and gets commensurate benefits in terms of market access in the US, sources said.

If the details of the deal

cannot be worked out on time, the chances are that the Trump regime will either announce a bare-bones kind of a deal, like those with the UK and China, or will go ahead and impose the reciprocal tariffs. There is also the possibility of some "good faith negotiators" getting more time.

"A bilateral trade deal has to be balanced. Both sides have to go back with something that they have gained. India cannot make offers for everything that the US wants," a source tracking the matter told *businessline*.

## US OFFERING LITTLE

The US is continuing to press for market access for agricultural products, including GM products, which India is not

able to accept. Moreover, there seem to be demands for steep tariff cuts in several sectors, such as automobiles, motorcycles, alcoholic beverages and processed food, that India cannot accept without getting something in return, the source added.

"The US is willing to offer very little. Indian negotiators are struggling for a full roll back of the 26 per cent reciprocal tariffs, including the 10 per cent baseline levy, and the sector-specific tariffs on steel and aluminium, as also automobiles. There seems to be not much chance of the US agreeing to lower its MFN (normal) tariffs," the source said.

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