

Trump continues to nudge India on talks, claims trade deal is close

NO MIDDLE GROUND. Negotiators failed to clinch a deal during talks in Washington DC recently

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Keeping up pressure on India, US President Donald Trump has said once again that the US is very close to sealing a trade deal with the country even as he sent letters to 14 trade partners, specifying the tariff rates to be imposed on them from August 1.

While on Monday evening (US time), the US President indicated that he may be open to negotiations beyond August 1, Tuesday morning he hardened his stand and said that no extensions will be granted after that.

"Now we've made a deal with United Kingdom. We've made a deal with China. We're close to making a deal with India.

"Others we met with and we don't think we're going to be able to make a deal. So we just send them a letter," Trump said on Monday, talk-



DUTIES DELAYED. Reciprocal tariffs of 26% announced on Indian goods were also paused till July 9, except a 10% baseline tariff imposed on all goods from most countries

ing to reporters at the White House.

NEW TARIFFS

Trump's letters, sent to countries including Japan, South Korea, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, Malaysia, Serbia, Tunisia, Kazakhstan and South Africa, spell out tariffs to be imposed on them from August 1. The new tariffs are

mostly close to the reciprocal tariffs announced on April 2, which were initially paused till July 9.

Reciprocal tariffs of 26 per cent announced on Indian goods were also paused till July 9, except for a 10 per cent baseline tariff imposed on all goods from most countries. Trump's stated intention behind the proposed tariffs and the trade pacts

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that he is trying to get into with partner countries is to bring down America's trade deficit. Trump indicated on Monday that the US may be even open for negotiations beyond August 1, in response to a question on whether it was a hard deadline. "I would say firm, but not 100 per cent firm. If they call up and they say we'd like to do something a different way, we're going to be open to that," he said.

But then he changed his mind. "As per letters sent to various countries yesterday, in addition to letters that will

be sent today, tomorrow, and the next short period of time, tariffs will start being paid on August 1...No extensions will be granted," Trump posted on social media platform on Tuesday morning.

The Indian negotiators spent about a week recently in Washington DC trying to work out an interim trade deal, but they failed to clinch it due to continued disagreements with the US over some issues, including protecting India's sensitivities in agriculture and dairy. India also wants preferential market access in the areas of its interest, such as labour intensive products, that would give it an edge over competitors.

"India discusses on its own terms and we never makes a trade deal based on a timeline. When the deal is good, fully matured, and in the national interest, then we accept it," Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal had told the media on Friday last week.