

India-US interim trade deal likely to be operational in April: Goyal

DUTY RELIEF. Commerce Minister hopeful that Washington will roll back tariffs on Indian goods to 18% soon

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Commerce & Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has expressed hope that the India-US interim trade deal would be signed in March and operationalised in April.

Indian exporters, however, are still waiting for the US to bring down reciprocal tariffs to 18 per cent from the current 25 per cent, which officials confirmed was likely to happen much before the finalisation of the interim pact, as agreed to between the two sides.

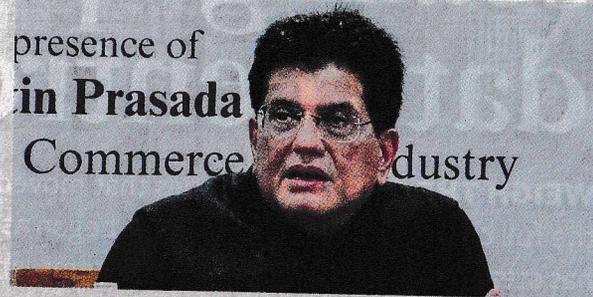
"The US had agreed to reduce reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods to 18 per cent independent of the interim deal and ahead of it. We expect it to happen any time," an official tracking the mat-

ter said. Goyal, too, confirmed that the lowering of import tariffs to 18 per cent was likely to happen in February.

Of the 50 per cent tariffs on Indian products imposed in August-September 2025, the US formally rolled back 25 per cent punitive levies linked to the purchase of Russian oil earlier this month. India's negotiating team, led by chief negotiator Darpan Jain, will be in Washington on February 23 to meet the US team and sort out remaining issues in the interim deal to finalise the legal text of the agreement, the official added.

Goyal criticised Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi for questioning India's commitment to buy goods worth \$100 billion from the US every year as part of the trade

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Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal

deal without a similar commitment from Washington, and accused him of being detached from the real issue.

The Minister said that lowering of US additional tariffs on Indian goods from 50 per cent to 18 per cent (as part of the deal) was a huge relief to Indian exporters of labour-intensive goods.

Moreover, the US would also bring down tariffs to

zero per cent on India's gems and diamonds and spices as part of the interim trade deal, he added.

PLANNED IMPORTS

Goyal said the planned imports of items such as GPUs, tech equipment, aircraft and coking coal from the US were things that the country needed. "India has safeguarded all the sensitive sec-

tors (in the India-US trade deal). It is a great win-win solution for both countries," he said.

Earlier this month, India and the US released a joint statement announcing a framework for an interim trade agreement. While the reduction of reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods drew cheer from exporters, some farmer groups raised concerns on the commitments on farm products.

"India will eliminate or reduce tariffs on all US industrial goods and a wide range of US food and agricultural products, including distillers dried grains with solubles, red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits, and additional products," the joint statement noted.