

# ‘Very big’ trade deal coming, maybe with India: Trump



**US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP'S COMMENTS COME AT A TIME WHEN AN INDIAN TRADE DELEGATION IS IN WASHINGTON DC TO HOLD FURTHER TALKS FOR A TRADE DEAL**

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After concluding a trade deal with China, US President Donald Trump has said that a “very big” trade agreement with India may be signed soon.

“We just signed (a trade deal) with China. We are not going to make deals with everybody... But we’re having some great deals. We have one coming up, maybe with India, very big one, where we’re going to open up India,” Trump said while speaking at a White House event on Thursday.

Trump’s comments come at a time when a trade delegation from New Delhi, led by Chief Negotiator Rajesh Agrawal, is in Washington DC to hold further talks for a trade deal.

The ongoing in-person round of talks between New Delhi and Washington is crucial, considering that the end of the 90-day pause on the US’s plan to impose country-specific reciprocal tariffs on July 9 is less than a fortnight away. Both are aiming to finalise an “early tranche” or first part of a broader trade deal — bilateral trade agreement (BTA) — that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Trump had announced in February.

The Trump administration announced reciprocal tariffs on countries, including India (26 per cent), on April 2. Subsequently, it announced a 90-day pause on those tariffs to negotiate trade deals while retaining a universal 10 per cent tariff on countries.

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However, in a press briefing, White House spokesperson Karoline Leavitt on Thursday said that there’s a possibility that the Trump administration may extend the July 9 deadline. “Perhaps it could be extended, but that’s a decision for the President to make,” she said.

Leavitt also said that the deadline was not critical. “The President can simply provide these countries with a deal if they refuse to make us one by the deadline. The President can take a reciprocal tariff rate that he believes is advantageous for the US and for the American worker,” she added.

Separately, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said the Trump administration’s agenda for trade

agreements could get wrapped up by the Labor Day holiday (September 1, 2025), indicating some negotiations are likely to extend past the upcoming July deadline.

“We have countries approaching us with very good deals,” Bessent said on Friday on Fox Business, highlighting Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick’s comments the day before that the White House has imminent plans to reach agreements with 10 major trading partners.

“So, if we can ink 10 or 12 of the important 18 — there are another 20 relationships — then I think we could have trade wrapped up by Labor Day,” Bessent said. He didn’t specify the countries he expects deals with.

As far as the trade deal with

India is concerned, the first phase of the deal may include tariffs reduction and focus on the priority non-tariff barriers faced by the exporters from both countries. The US is bargaining for relaxation of India’s quality control order (QCO) norms. Washington also wants India to open up its agriculture sector.

India has been pushing for exemption from the 26 per cent reciprocal tariff proposal and the existing 10 per cent universal tariff.

While both sides have time and again shown optimism towards signing of the deal, earlier this week a senior government official said that India is “not desperate” to conclude an early-tranche trade deal with the

US by July 9, but both sides are positively engaged towards a pact despite challenges.

Delhi-based think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) said that the next seven days could determine whether India and the US settle for a limited “mini-deal” or walk away from the negotiating table — at least for now.

Regardless of the outcome, trade experts caution that India must hold its ground and insist on a reciprocal, balanced, and transparent agreement. “Any trade deal with the US must not be politically driven or one-sided, it must protect our farmers, our digital ecosystem, and our sovereign regulatory space,” GTRI said on Friday.