

# US moots 12.5% tariff on India, 53 others over 'forced labour'

## Move Comes Amid Talks In Delhi On Trade Deal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** In a widely anticipated move, the US Trade Representative Tuesday proposed 12.5% tariff on exports from 54 countries, including India and China, accusing them of failure to prohibit import of goods using forced labour.

The announcement came while American officials are in India to discuss the details of the framework agreement,

### ► **EDIT: More Arm Twisting**

which commerce & industry minister Piyush Goyal had said is close to finalisation.

USTR is also expected to release its report on the second probe launched by it – dealing with excess capacity in 16 countries, including India – in what is seen as a move to replace the temporary 10% in place till July 24.

In a statement, the commerce & industry ministry said: "India remains engaged with the US on the matter as a part of section 301 proce-

## TRUMP & HIS TARIFF TRAJECTORY

**Feb 13, 2025** | Trump issues 'Reciprocal Trade and Tariffs' memorandum outlining plan to lower US trade deficit

**Apr 2** | Announces min 10% tariff on all countries along with country-specific levies; Indian exports face 17% additional duty

**Apr 5** | 10% global tariff implemented

**Apr 9** | Hours after country-specific tariffs kick in, Trump announces a 90-day suspension

**July 7** | Pause extended to Aug 1, pending negotiations

**July 31** | India faces 25% tariff when fresh reciprocal tariffs

announced, effective Aug 7

**Aug 6** | Another 25% penal tariff imposed on India for buying Russian oil. Total duty 50%

**Feb 6, 2026** | India, US announce framework agreement with 18% tariff

**Feb 20** | US SC terms emergency tariffs illegal, Trump slaps 10% duty on all countries for 150 days

**Mar 11** | USTR starts probe into structural excess capacity against India & 15 nations

**Mar 12** | 2nd probe against India & 59 nations for failing to prohibit shipment of goods produced with forced labour



dings. India is also parallelly engaged with the US for finalisation of a framework agreement as was announced on 2nd Feb 2026 and in accordance with the joint statement released on 7th Feb 2026." In its submissions to USTR, govt agencies and businesses had dismissed the allegations and called the probe unjustified, arguing that it was an issue on which there were global rules.

Govt officials, who have held multiple rounds of discussions with their Ameri-

can counterparts over the last few months, were expecting the US to rely on section 301 to impose additional tariffs, a main policy lever for the Trump administration's efforts to discourage exports and get countries to negotiate duties bilaterally.

Govt has maintained that it will agree to a bilaterally negotiated rate if India gets a comparative advantage over rival countries.

► **Shipment practices, P 21**

# Fourth Sudarshan S-400 squadron arrives in India from Russia

NEW DELHI, June 3 (ANI)

IN A major boost to strengthen the long-range air defence capabilities of the country, the fourth squadron of the S-400 Sudarshan air defence systems reached India from Russia a few days ago.

The S-400 Sudarshan long-range air defence system from Russia reached India on a ship and will be deployed in the operational area very soon, defence sources told ANI. The S-400 air defence system is part of a 2018 contract under which India was to acquire five S-400 squadrons from

Russia, three of which arrived two years ago and the remaining two were delayed



due to the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war. The Sudarshan played a huge role in thwarting the Pakistan Air Force's capabilities during Operation Sindoor, where it secured the longest recorded surface-to-air kill by bringing down a high-value Pakistan

Air Force surveillance aircraft flying at over 300 km. The fifth squadron of the S-400 air defence mission system is expected to reach India in the next few months.

# US for 12.5% tariffs on India, 53 other nations on concerns over forced labour

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, June 3 (PTI)

THE US has proposed to impose 12.5 per cent tariffs on 54 countries, including India, for allegedly failing to prohibit the import of goods produced with forced labour, even as officials from New Delhi and Washington are currently holding three-day talks to finalise the first tranche of the bilateral trade agreement.

The talks that started on Tuesday are being held in New Delhi.

Reacting to the proposed 12.5 per cent tariff, the Indian commerce ministry said New Delhi is engaged with the US on the two Section 301 investigations - over concerns related to forced labour and excess industrial capacity. The country is also "parallelly" engaged with the US for finalisation of an interim trade agreement, a framework for which was announced through a joint statement on February 7.

The US Trade Representative (USTR) has proposed the additional duty following investigations launched in March against 60 countries under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 over concerns



**India remains engaged with the US on the matter as a part of Section 301 proceedings. The country is also "parallelly" engaged with the US for finalisation of an interim trade agreement**

related to forced labour.

The measure remains a proposal and has not yet been finalised, the USTR said, adding that interested parties can submit requests to appear at hearings and summaries of testimony by June 22. The USTR is scheduled to hold hearings on July 7. The USTR has proposed duties on all goods barring a few. A special mechanism has also been proposed for textile and apparel products that could allow a cer-

tain volume of imports from selected economies to enter the US at lower tariff rates.

The 12.5 per cent duty has been proposed on 54 countries including Argentina, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Cambodia, China, India, Israel, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Philippines, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Thailand, the UAE, the UK, and Vietnam.

**'INDO-US TRADE DEAL ALMOST DONE'**: Suggesting that India-United States trade deal was 99 per cent complete, US Ambassador Sergio Gor said on Wednesday both sides were trying to resolve the remaining "1 per cent" sticking points and expected the long-awaited pact to be inked within the next several weeks.

Speaking at Citi's 2026 India Conference in Mumbai, the Ambassador noted that when US President Donald Trump was not in office from January 2021 to January 2025 after his first term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi still stayed in touch with him during those four years, highlighting their deep personal bond.

# BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group meet begins in Puri

PURI, June 3 (PTI)

THE second technical meeting of the BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group began here on Wednesday to deliberate on issues relating to disaster mitigation in 11 member nations.

The session will continue till June 5. Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will join the meet on Thursday.

"This is the first in-person technical meeting of the BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Working Group under India's BRICS Presidency. India had chaired the first technical meeting of the BRICS DRR Working Group, virtually, on April 29-30,"

said Odisha's Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari.

Policy makers and disaster management experts from BRICS member and partner nations have joined the event being held for the first time in Odisha, the Minister said.

He said the deliberations will focus on sustainable DRR financing, resilient infrastructure, anticipatory response, and integrating traditional knowledge into disaster resilience strategies.

Initially comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, the BRICS expanded in

2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the UAE, with Indonesia joining in 2025.



The agenda of the meeting is to deliberate on community-based DRR governance, disaster risk financing, multi-hazard early warning systems, climate-resilient infrastructure, nature-based and indigenous solutions, science, technology, and innovation in DRR, an official said.

In an X post, Chief Minister Majhi on Tuesday said, "Hosting the Second Technical Meeting of the BRICS Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group from

June 3â€”5 in Puri is a matter of great pride for Odisha. This important gathering reflects the growing global recognition of Odisha's leadership in disaster preparedness, resilience and effective disaster management."

The CM said this meeting offers an opportunity to showcase Odisha's globally acclaimed disaster management model and commitment to building resilient communities. "I warmly welcome the distinguished delegates from BRICS nations to Puri, the abode of Mahaprabhu Shri Jagannath, and am confident that this gathering will strengthen cooperation and advance global disaster resilience," he said.

# Ladakh to develop 10 model border hamlets

LEH/JAMMU, June 3 (PTI)

**LADAKH** Lieutenant Governor V K Saxena on Wednesday said the Union Territory will develop 10 model border hamlets under the vibrant village programme, with the foundation stone of the first such village laid at Chumur in eastern Ladakh.

Addressing locals during the launch of the project, Saxena described the initiative as a matter of pride and said the enthusiastic participation of villagers reflected their aspirations and whole-hearted support for the ambitious programme.

"The vibrant village programme, envisioned by Prime



Chumur village, where the first Model Border Village under the 'Vibrant Village Programme' is set to be developed, in Leh district of Ladakh. (PTI)

Minister Narendra Modi, aims to create self-reliant, climate-

resilient, tourism-enabled and economically vibrant

border villages in India's high-altitude frontier regions", he added.

Located at an altitude of 16,700 feet along the Indo-China border, Chumur comprises 24 households with a population of 91 people, all of whom are engaged in Pashmina rearing and production.

Saxena said under the project, 24 modern climate-resilient houses with thermally insulated walls will be constructed for the villagers.

"Each house will include an additional room suitable for homestay facilities to enhance livelihood opportunities".

(Contd on page 3)

# SC forms panel to re-examine Aravalli definition

NEW DELHI, June 3 (PTI)

THE Supreme Court has constituted a high-powered committee to conduct an independent review of the Centre's report on the definition and delineation of the Aravalli hill range and directed the panel to address what it described as "critical ambiguities" in

the findings.

The committee headed by Kanchan Devi, Director General of the Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) has been directed to submit a comprehensive report by August 31, 2026.

The move comes months after the apex court, on December 29, stayed the

implementation of an October 2025 report prepared by a committee chaired by the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

The court had then emphasised the need for an independent body of domain experts to undertake a fresh scientific and ecological assessment.