

Report: India-US Interim Trade Agreement Framework Dialogue

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On **23 February 2026**, the **#NamoBharatDialogues** series hosted a seminar on the **India-US Interim Trade Agreement Framework** at the **Dr. Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC)**. The session drew policymakers, trade analysts, and distinguished speakers to assess recent progress in bilateral trade negotiations between **India and the United States**.

Overview

In early **February 2026**, India and the United States announced an interim framework to reset their trade relationship following periods of tariff escalation and legal uncertainty. Under this framework, **reciprocal U.S. tariffs on Indian exports have been significantly reduced to ~18 percent**, reversing higher duty levels imposed in 2025 and enhancing India's competitiveness in the U.S. market. The interim arrangement is intended to pave the way for a broader **Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA)** while addressing key tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Panelists & Key Contributions

- **Dr. Mohan Kumar**, DG, Motwani Jadeja Institute for American Studies, OPJ Global University & former Ambassador to France and a trade expert, provided strategic insights on the interim framework's implications for India's global trade engagement and economic diplomacy.
- **Shri Anil K. Antony**, National Secretary & National Spokesperson, BJP, discussed domestic economic considerations and the framework's interface with India's broader development agenda.
- **Shri Shishir Priyadarshi**, President of Chintan Research Foundation, analysed the tariff architecture and structural dimensions of U.S.–India trade negotiations.
- **Dr. Manish Dabhade** served as Moderator, guiding discussion on adaptive policy approaches amid evolving global trade dynamics.

Key Themes

Trade Reset & Market Access: The interim agreement marks a strategic recalibration in India-US trade relations by lowering U.S. reciprocal tariffs on Indian goods from previously high levels to around 18 percent and offering potential for tariff elimination on priority sectors. This is expected to benefit labour-intensive exports, strengthen market access, and support competitiveness.

Structural & Policy Uncertainty: Panelists noted ongoing volatility in U.S. trade policy, including shifts following legal developments in Washington. They emphasised the need for flexibility, consistent dialogue, and careful calibration of negotiators' objectives to address both tariff and non-tariff barriers.

Alignment with India's Economic Goals: The dialogue underscored alignment between the interim trade framework and India's domestic growth trajectory, including enhancing export-led growth, promoting MSME participation in global value chains, and advancing

India's aspiration to become an upper-middle-income economy with deeper integration in global markets.

Conclusion

The **India-US Interim Trade Agreement Framework dialogue** at DAIC provided a concise and timely appraisal of a critical phase in bilateral economic engagement. Speakers highlighted that, while the interim framework has eased tariff barriers and opened trade opportunities, its full potential will depend on successful negotiation of the comprehensive BTA and effective implementation of agreed provisions. Continued strategic engagement and adaptive policymaking remain essential as India furthers its role in shaping global trade dynamics.

