

Trump tariffs

Donald Trump says he will double steel and aluminium tariffs to 50%

US president escalates global trade war two days after a court ruled against the legality of his levies



Donald Trump speaks during a rally at a US Steel plant in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania. The president said in a post on social media that the levies will take effect from June 4 © Getty Images

Myles McCormick in Washington and **Zehra Munir** in West Mifflin, Pennsylvania

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Donald Trump said he would double tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from 25 per cent to 50 per cent in a fresh escalation of his global trade war.

The US president unveiled the increased levies as he touted a \$15bn partnership between Nippon Steel and US Steel at a rally in Pennsylvania, promising to erect a [tariff](#) “fence” around domestic metals production.

“We’re going to bring it from 25 per cent to 50 per cent, the tariffs on [steel](#) into the United States of America, which will even further secure the steel industry,” he told the crowd in West Mifflin.

“Nobody is going to get around that . . . At 25 per cent, they can sort of get over that fence. At 50 per cent they can no longer get over the fence.”

The new levies will take effect from June 4, the president wrote in a Truth Social post following the rally.

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Donald Trump says he will double steel tariffs © Reuters

[Trump](#) has sought to revitalise America’s industrial heartlands by aggressively targeting what he sees as dumping by foreign importers. In March, he slapped 25 per cent levies on steel and aluminium imports in one of the first broadsides of his global trade war.

Pennsylvania was one of crucial swing states Trump won in last year’s presidential election after he and Joe Biden courted blue-collar voters with competing promises to protect manufacturing jobs.

“Whatever the legal barriers or economic fallout, Trump is clearly determined to continue using tariffs as a policy tool to protect American smokestack manufacturing from the ravages of foreign competition,” said Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University.

The Canadian steel industry, the biggest source of US imports, slammed Trump’s move.

“Unwinding the efficient, competitive and reliable cross-border supply chains like we have in steel and aluminum comes at a great cost to both countries,” said Candace Laing, president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

The European Commission said that Trump’s decision “adds further uncertainty to the global economy and increases costs for consumers and businesses on both sides of the Atlantic”.

As the tariff “undermines ongoing efforts to reach a negotiated solution” Brussels is “prepared to impose countermeasures” which will come into effect on 14 July “or earlier, if circumstances require”, it said.

Gareth Stace, director-general of trade body UK Steel, said the tariffs were “yet another body blow”. UK steel exports to the US are worth £400mn a year. “Uncertainty remains as to whether and when our second biggest export market will be open for business or is being firmly shut in our faces,” Stace said.

Friday’s announcement increases trade tensions once again two days after a US trade [court ruled](#) many of the president’s tariffs illegal, though this did not include sectoral levies, such as those on steel and aluminium. The White House has vowed to fight the decision.

Trump’s volatile approach to tariffs — repeatedly announcing new levies before later dialling them back — has caused confusion among companies and led to huge swings in markets in recent months.

The Trump administration reached a deal with China two weeks ago to lower tariffs between the two countries, which had reached as much as 145 per cent. But tensions appeared to be rising again on Friday when Trump accused Beijing of renegeing on the arrangement.

The steel tariff escalation comes after Trump last week endorsed Nippon Steel’s “partnership” with US Steel, reversing his campaign trail opposition to a deal between the Japanese company and the American producer.

The president on Friday hailed what he called a “blockbuster agreement” with a “great partner” that he said would “ensure this storied American company stays an American company”.

Trump said Nippon Steel had made a “monumental commitment” to invest \$14bn in the company, including more than \$2bn to increase steel production in Pennsylvania’s Mon Valley and \$7bn to modernise mills and build facilities in Indiana, Minnesota, Alabama and Arkansas.

Additional reporting by Ilya Gridneff in Toronto, Alice Hancock in Brussels and Gill Plimmer in London

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