

Copper tariff will have limited impact on India

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The US has announced a steep 50 per cent tariff on imports of semi-finished copper and copper-based products from August 1, a move which will have a limited impact on India's exports from this sector to America.

A White House executive order said copper is being imported into the US in quantities and under circumstances that threaten to impair the national security of the US.

"...all imports of semi-finished copper products and intensive copper derivative products...shall be subject to a 50 per cent tariff. This tariff shall be effective with respect to goods entered for consumption, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 12:01 am eastern daylight time on August 1, and shall continue in effect, unless such action is expressly reduced, modified, or terminated," it said.

India exported copper products worth \$360 million to the US in FY25, including plates, tubes and other semi-finished forms. These shipments will now be more expensive.

Commenting on the development, think tank GTRI said since the tariff applies uniformly to all countries, including allies such as Japan and the EU, it creates a level-playing field among global suppliers.

"India is unlikely to face any specific disadvantage compared to others. Moreover, the impact on India's copper trade is limited," said GTRI founder Ajay Srivastava.

India is a net importer of copper, with imports totalling \$14.45 billion in 2024-25, far outweighing its exports.

Its main suppliers include Chile, Indonesia and Australia. Notably, India also imported \$288 million of copper scrap from the US, which may now become less viable due to disrupted bilateral copper flows.