

# Steel Ministry pushes for stricter norms on non-standard imports

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Alarmed over increasing requests for the import of steel, especially in some auto-grade and capital goods categories not covered under Indian standards, the Steel Ministry is looking at specific "intervention" on such non-standardised products and check shipments of the metal.

A meeting has been called on October 4 where discussions on products being imported and currently outside the purview of quality control orders (QCO) will be taken up.

The Ministry is already in favour of doubling customs duty on imported steel, in-

cluding from China, while it is in discussion with the Commerce Ministry to review FTAs with ASEAN, Ministry sources told *businessline*.

## **PUSH FOR REVIEW**

In a recent letter to the Department of Revenue, the Steel Ministry, citing an internal assessment, mentioned that they would look at "reducing NOC granted for imports from non-BIS licensed manufacturers".

It also pointed out the need for "review of Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) licences granted to foreign manufacturers and discretion to be exercised at the time of renewal of existing licences."

The Ministry is also in favour of no new BIS licences

being issued for next one year.

"It has been observed that a significant number of NOC requests are being received for the import of steel grades currently not covered by the Indian Standards notified under the QCO. To minimise non-BIS imports, there is an urgent need for interventions," stated an official from the technical division of the Steel Ministry in an email sent to various stakeholders, including automobile manufacturers, steel mills, importers, and exporters.

Communications have also been sent to the Director General of Indian Standards and the Chairman of the CBIC, Department of Revenue (*businessline* has reviewed a copy of the email).

A Steel Ministry official

stated that some of the import requests pertain to CRGO steel (cold rolled grain oriented). Additionally, several auto-grade steels used in car manufacturing and certain alloy steels required for capital goods are also under review.

As of October 2023, the regulations state that all steel imports not cleared by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) must obtain approval from the Steel Ministry.

## **IMPORTS SURGE**

Incidentally, India has already seen an increase in Chinese imports of the metal - up to a five-year high (for the five month period) of 1.14 million tonnes (mt) for April - August period. Imports were up 32 per cent year-on-year.