

US trade deficit widens in Nov as imports jump

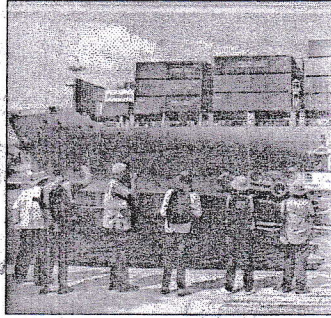
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THE US TRADE deficit widened in November, reflecting the biggest jump in imports since March 2022 as companies accelerated shipments ahead of a possible dockworkers' strike and in anticipation of potential tariffs by the Trump administration.

The gap in goods and services trade grew 6.2% from the prior month to \$78.2 billion, Commerce Department data showed Tuesday. The figure was in line with the median projection of economists in a Bloomberg survey.

The value of imports increased 3.4% from a month earlier to \$351.6 billion. Exports rose 2.7%. The figures aren't adjusted for inflation.

The jump in imports was broad, including increases in consumer goods, capital equipment and motor vehicles, likely reflecting a preference by US companies to secure shipments in advance of potential tariffs. Moreover, many are hoping to mitigate disruptions from a potential strike by dockworkers with a mid-January deadline to reach a deal.



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The figures follow an October downshift in demand for foreign merchandise after companies doubled up efforts to ensure they were well-stocked ahead of holiday-shopping season.

Goods and services trade in the third quarter subtracted from gross domestic product, and the latest net exports figures suggest a similar impact is possible in the final three-month period of 2024. US manufacturers, as well as service providers, remain challenged by weak overseas economies and a strong dollar that risk keeping the trade gap wide this year.