

# At 4.7 mt, steel imports up 41% in first-half as exports decline 36% to 2.3 mt

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India was a net importer of steel for the first half of FY25 with imports of the metal at 4.7 million tonnes (mt), up 41 per cent y-o-y, while exports dipped to 2.3 mt, down 36 per cent. Imports more than doubled that of exports by 2.4 mt, per an internal report of the Union Steel Ministry, accessed by *businessline*.

The country was a net exporter of steel at 3.6 mt in the year-ago period (6 months of FY24) while imports were at 3.3 mt.

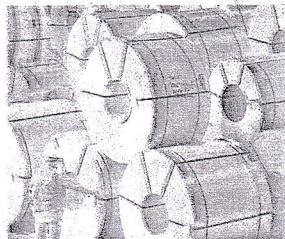
## **SUBSTANTIAL RISE**

"There is pressure of imports, especially from China and Korea. But on a sequential or month-on-month basis, the rate of growth of imports is manageable. It is in low single-digit numbers. On the positive side, there has been a substantial improvement in exports sequentially. Some price firm up in China is being seen which, if it plays out in the long-run, is a positive," a Ministry official said.

In September, finished steel imports were around 1 mt, up 78 per cent y-o-y, but staying at the August level (flattish at 1 mt). Exports for the month stood at 0.4 mt, up 16 per cent over the previous month (0.34 mt) but down 8 per cent over the same month last year (September 2023 exports were at 0.43 mt).

Finished steel includes hot rolled coils, cold rolled coils, coated steel, non-alloyed offerings, alloy steels and stainless steel.

Market participants said prices of Chinese HRC (SS400) improved post the stimulus announcement and ahead of the Golden Week holidays. The assessed prices of Chinese HRC (SS400) stood at \$510/t FOB Rizhao,



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and \$540/t CFR India as on October 2. Prices from China (freight exclusions) stood at \$410 per tonne, averaging out for the July-September period.

According to BigMint data, Chinese steel prices were at ₹42,800 per tonne (exclusive of freight) while metal coming in from ASEAN FTA nations were priced at ₹41,500 per tonne. In comparison, domestic steel was priced higher at ₹47,700 per tonne.

Per the Ministry report, non-alloyed steel (which include HRC, CRC and others) — used mostly in automobiles, electrical and capital goods, etc — witnessed an over 55 per cent y-o-y increase for the first six months of the fiscal to 3.5 mt while in September there was a 95 per cent y-o-y increase at 0.7 mt but it declined sequentially by 3 per cent.

On the other hand, alloy and stainless-steel imports were at 1.2 mt, up 13 per cent y-o-y for the first half of the fiscal. In September, category imports stood at 0.3 mt, up 44 per cent y-o-y and up 20 per cent sequentially (vs August).

## **DEMAND INTACT**

Domestic steel demand, however, remained strong at 73 mt, a rise of 14 per cent y-o-y. Consumption in the year-ago-period was 64 mt.

Finished steel production saw a 5 per cent y-o-y growth for the first six months of the current fiscal at 71 mt.