

India turning net importer of steel matter of concern: TV Narendran

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Rising import of steel in India at a time when international prices continue to soften, and the country turning net importer (of steel) is a "little bit of a concern", says TV Narendran, CEO and MD, Tata Steel, one of the largest steel-makers of India.

The Centre has assured intervention though, he said, adding that "one needs to see how it pans out".

India continued to be a net importer in October by 0.29 million tonne (mt), with steel shipments coming in at 0.57 mt, against exports at 0.28 mt.

"I think it is a little bit of a concern because internationally steel prices are still a bit soft because of China... so lets wait and see how it pans out... The Indian government will look at (what to do) to help us," he told *businessline* on the sidelines of the Indian Steel Association's annual conclave.

FALLING EXPORTS

Price pressure from China, slowing European demand because of recessionary pressures, lack of clarity on EU's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) reporting guidelines and better realisations in domestic markets continue to have an adverse impact on exports.

In the year-ago period (Q2FY23), exports (1.41 mt)



TV Narendran, CEO and MD, Tata Steel BUJOY GHOSH

outdid imports (1.38 mt) by a slender 0.03 mt.

For the seven month period of the fiscal (April-October), India is barely a net exporter by just 0.05 mt.

However, the country had turned a net importer of steel in Q2FY24 (July - September) for the first time in three-odd years, with nearly 1.50 mt of finished offerings coming in during the period, up 8 per cent on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis. Steel imports were higher than exports by 0.34 mt (exports were 1.16 mt).

Last available reports with India's Steel Ministry show that China is the largest importer of finished steel here, primarily cold rolled coils. China displaced key countries like Korea and Japan from top of the list; while changing dynamics saw Vietnam — once India's key buyer — turn importer (selling to Indian traders) at prices lower than those pre-

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vailing here.

According to Narendran, Tata Steel has already put out proposals and discussions are ongoing with the Dutch government about decarbonisation of its 7 million tonne per annum (mtpa) plant at Ijmuiden in Netherlands.

The goal is to produce carbon-neutral steel by 2050.

"We have already given a proposal which is being discussed with the Dutch government," he said adding that Tata Steel was looking for financial aid from the Netherlands government to execute its decarbonisation plans. This reportedly would be on similar lines to its ongoing decarbonisation plans in the UK.

Narendran did not elaborate on the estimated funding the company is looking at from the Dutch government. "That we don't want to share lets wait for the discussion to happen," he said.