

Exports up 54%, but India turns net steel importer

TRADE FLOWS. Imports drop 31 per cent to 0.67 mt in August

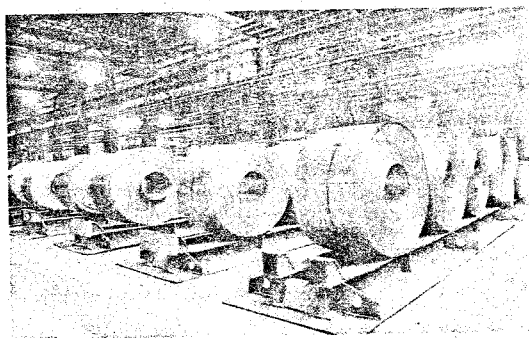
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India's steel trade flows diverged sharply in August, with exports climbing more than 50 per cent on a year-on-year basis, while imports tumbled by a similar number, even as the country turned a net importer of the metal. India bucked a two-month trend of being a net exporter, as imports exceeded exports for the five-month period between April and August.

Exports of finished steel rose over 54 per cent in August year on year to 0.53 million tonnes (mt), while imports at 0.67 mt was down 31 per cent. For August, India turned net importer by 0.14 mt, as per provisional data from India's Steel Ministry.

For the April-August period, imports dropped 33 per cent from a year earlier to 2.5 mt, while exports advanced 16 per cent to 2.2 mt. India continued to be a net importer by 0.3 mt.

Interestingly, a month-on-month (sequential) comparison of August over July shows that both imports and exports witnessed a surge. Imports were up 47 per cent, while export of the alloy saw



MORE OUTPUT. Production of finished steel climbed 13 per cent in August from a year earlier to 13.35 mt ISTOCK.COM

a moderate 9 per cent growth, despite the low base effect.

"Prices continue to remain under pressure. In export markets, it was the Chinese offerings that dominated supplies and at competitive prices. West Asian markets saw excess of lower priced supplies, while European demand continues to be under pressure," a market participant said.

"Import ups and downs depend on orders and could be a monthly aberration," said another source.

PRODUCTION HIGHER

Production of finished steel climbed 13 per cent in Au-

gust from a year earlier to 13.35 mt (vs 12.44 mt in August 2024) and crude steel was at 13.8 mt, up 11 per cent for the month under review. Private players accounted for 85 per cent of the output.

Consumption, meanwhile, rose nearly 9 per cent to 13.69 mt; and was up 2.3 per cent sequentially.

For the five-month period, production of crude steel was at 68.3 mt, up 12 per cent; finished steel production at 65 mt, up 10 per cent and consumption at 66 mt, up 8 per cent.

Consumption is expected to pick pace, post monsoon (September/October onwards), source said.