

## China's exports fall for first time in eight months

AFP, Beijing

China's exports fell in October for the first time in eight months, official data showed Friday, as trade tensions flared in the weeks before Chinese President Xi Jinping met US counterpart Donald Trump.

Shipments dropped 1.1 percent year on year, missing a Bloomberg forecast of a 2.9 percent rise.

Imports in the same month rose 1.0 percent, China's General Administration of Customs said. That was well off September's reading and short of the 2.7 percent climb estimated in the Bloomberg forecast.

China and the United States reached a detente in their trade war after Xi and Trump met in South Korea at the end of October. That put a precarious pause on months of tit-for-tat measures between the economic and technological powerhouses as the leaders agreed to suspend a raft of measures for a year.

Beijing last month announced fresh restrictions on exports of rare earth technologies, a sector it dominates and is critical to defence and auto manufacturers.

Trump retaliated by threatening an additional 100 percent tariff on Chinese goods.

However, that warning was called off after Xi and Trump met last month in South Korea, with the US leader calling their first encounter since 2019 a "great success".

Washington halved a blanket tariff on Chinese goods to 10 percent, while Beijing loosened restrictions on rare earth exports of rare earths, also providing relief to European businesses.



## RMG Sustainability Council expands mandate beyond safety

REFAYET ULLAH MIRDHA

The RMG Sustainability Council (RSC), a permanent safety monitoring body in Bangladesh's export-oriented garment industry, has decided to expand its scope of work.

From November 16, the tripartite body involving industry, brands, and unions will monitor issues such as employment contracts and separation, wages, leave and other benefits, the situation of freedom of association and collective bargaining for workers.

It will also look into whether there is child or forced labour, and instances of discrimination in the largest export-oriented industry, according to an RSC document.

The council currently focuses on issues related to the occupational safety and health of workers.

"If any worker lodges a complaint with the RSC, we will investigate," said RSC Managing Director Abdul Haque, citing a decision of the RSC board last month.

The RSC will support its tripartite stakeholders in addressing a wider range of workplace-related issues through an integrated, transparent, and credible platform, according to the document.

This expansion is designed to reduce duplication of efforts, streamline processes, and make complaint management fairer, faster, and more effective for all parties.

In the first phase, beginning November 16, 2025, the RSC will cover 58 brands and 1,185 factories. This phase will run for six months and establish the foundation for full implementation.

In the second phase, all remaining brands and factories will be brought under the purview of the RSC.



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## China starts work on easing rare earth export rules but short of Trump hopes

China has begun designing a new rare earth licensing regime that could speed up shipments, but it is unlikely to amount to a complete rollback of restrictions as hoped by Washington, industry insiders said, reports Reuters.

The Ministry of Commerce told some rare earth exporters they will be able to apply for new streamlined permits in the future and in industry briefings outlined the documents that will be required, two sources familiar with the matter said.

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The export curbs have become Beijing's most potent source of leverage in its trade rivalry with Washington, as China produces over 90 per cent of the world's processed rare earths and rare earth magnets, vital in products ranging from cars to missiles. Following the agreement reached between Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping, China said



last week it would pause for one year the restrictions it imposed in October.

However, China's commerce ministry has said nothing publicly about a broader round of controls introduced in April that rattled global supply chains.

The White House said on Saturday that China had agreed to introduce general licenses and characterised such permits as the de facto end of China's rare earth export controls.

In private, Chinese officials have

said they are working on the licenses, three other sources briefed on discussions said, although one said it could take months.

However, other industry insiders said the new licenses do not mean China's wide-ranging rare earth export controls introduced in April have been removed.

China's Ministry of Commerce did not immediately respond to questions from Reuters.

The new licenses would be valid for a year and probably allow

larger export volumes, the first two sources said. Companies are preparing documents, which will require more information from customers, they said.

The sources said they expect more clarity by the end of the year.

Some Chinese rare earth companies said they have not yet been informed of the change.

General licenses will likely be harder to acquire for users associated with defence or other sensitive areas, some industry sources said.

All sources spoke on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the matter.

Introduced in April and expanded in October, Beijing's rare earth rules require exporters to obtain licenses for every cargo, an onerous and lengthy process customers complain is holding up exports. The restrictions created shortages in May which brought parts of the auto industry to a halt. Of the 2,000 applications submitted by European Union firms since April, just over half have been approved.



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# India's CVD probe into BD jute product imports faces setback

## Bangladesh seeks 30-day extension for questionnaire submission

REZAUL KARIM

India's investigation into imposing a countervailing duty (CVD) on Bangladeshi jute product imports has hit a procedural snag, with Bangladesh seeking an extra 30 days to submit its questionnaire responses, sources said.

The commerce ministry has requested the Bangladesh High Commission in New Delhi to take the next course of action regarding the issue.

The move comes amid a tight deadline set by India's Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) and follows a lack of consultation between the two countries prior to the initiation of the investigation. The DGTR had, through an email on October 8, set a strict 30-day deadline for the submission of the government questionnaire, exporters' questionnaires, and economic interest questionnaires. Within the same period, exporters must also submit their questionnaires and economic interest information. Considering the overall situation -- including time constraints and the complexity of collecting the necessary information to prepare responses -- the commerce ministry believes it is appropriate to request an extension for the submission of questionnaire responses, according to a letter sent to the New Delhi High Commission.

This deadline, which expired on November 7, proved insufficient for Bangladesh's commerce ministry and the exporters concerned. The DGTR initially fixed September 1 for a

- ▶ India's DGTR set strict 30-day deadline for questionnaire submissions
- ▶ Exporters must also submit economic interest information simultaneously
- ▶ Bangladesh argues time constraints justify extension request to India
- ▶ Original consultation email reached Bangladesh after proposed meeting date
- ▶ India's DGTR issued Notice of Investigation without responding to request
- ▶ Bangladesh requests formal consultation in third week of this month
- ▶ Anti-dumping duties on jute continue after 2022 Sunset Review

consultation, but the relevant email was communicated late, reaching the Bangladesh commission on September 25, well after the proposed meeting date. In response to the missed date, Bangladesh formally sought a 60-day

extension for the consultation. The DGTR, however, proceeded to issue the Notice of Initiation of Investigation on September 29 without responding to the commerce ministry's request. To address this, Bangladesh has sent

a follow-up letter to New Delhi, requesting a formal consultation to be organised in the third week of November 2025 -- an unprecedented move to retroactively comply with the pre-initiation requirement.

The DGTR's investigation for a new CVD adds another significant trade barrier to Bangladesh's vital jute sector. India already maintains strict Anti-Dumping Duties (ADD) on jute products from Bangladesh, confirmed by an extended levy set in December 2022 and further reviewed in mid-2025.

Jute goods exported from Bangladesh have faced significant anti-dumping duties since 2017. In March 2018, the Indian authority concerned initiated an anti-circumvention investigation into the import of jute sacking cloth from Bangladesh. The Indian finance ministry enhanced duty on Bangladesh's sacking bags in June 2019.

The DGTR conducted a sunset-review investigation and recommended the extension of ADD on jute goods imported from Bangladesh on behalf of Indian traders in September 2021. The Indian finance ministry extended the duty on December 30, 2022. Since January 5, 2017, the Indian finance ministry has imposed anti-dumping duties for five years on jute products from Bangladesh, at rates ranging from \$6.03 to \$351.72 per tonne, amid allegations of dumping goods such as jute yarn, twine, sacking bags, and hessian fabrics. The tariff barrier in the form of anti-dumping duties continues following the Sunset Review conducted in 2022.

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