

# Paper and paperboard imports rise 37% in Apr-Dec FY23

Paper and paperboard imports were around 1.07 million tonnes in the corresponding period of the last fiscal year, the Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) said.

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Imports of paper and paperboards have increased by 37 per cent to around 1.47 million tonnes in April-December this fiscal, which have hit the local paper mills, an industry body said on Sunday.

Paper and paperboard imports were around 1.07 million tonnes in the corresponding period of the last fiscal year, the Indian Paper Manufacturers Association (IPMA) said while citing DGCI&S data.

The import of the commodity had seen a 25 per cent jump to 1.44 million tonnes in FY23 in volume terms and April-December figures have crossed that also, IPMA said in a statement.

“Imports of paper and paperboard in huge volumes and worth Rs 10,000 crore in nine months are impacting the Make-in-India drive as well as depriving employment to 5 lakh committed farmers who are aligned with the domestic Paper Industry through agro, farm forestry,” IPMA President Pawan Agarwal said.

There is more than adequate domestic capacity in India to manufacture almost all grades of paper and such indiscriminate imports are adversely impacting the commercial viability of most paper mills in the country, Agarwal said.

According to government data, out of over 900 paper mills, only 553 are operational in India.

The surge in imports is mainly due to a massive 142 per cent growth in imports of paper and paperboard from ASEAN, which enter the country at zero import duty under the ASEAN-India free trade agreement, IPMA said.



Representative image for a bundle of Papers

Credit: iStock Photo

Imports of all major grades of paper are showing a rising trend, with imports of uncoated writing & printing paper, coated paper and paperboard witnessing the highest rates of growth, it added.

Besides zero duty concessions to ASEAN and Korean FTAs, import tariff concessions to China under the Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) have also boosted paper imports.

There is a substantial subsidy given by some of these countries to their paper mills which offers a cost advantage in comparison to Indian paper mills, IPMA said.