

BIZ / ECONOMY

# China's foreign trade posts faster growth



By Huang Yixuan

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China's foreign trade in the first 11 months posted faster year-on-year growth, according to customs data.

Exports and imports in the January-November period added up to 29.04 trillion yuan (US\$4.44 trillion), an increase of 1.8 percent from the same period last year, the General Administration of Customs said on Monday.

In dollar terms, headline export growth surged to a much stronger-than-expected 21.1 percent year on year in November from 11.4 percent in October, led mainly by exports to the United States and the European Union.

Year-on-year import growth in dollar terms, meanwhile, moderated to a weaker-than-expected 4.5 percent last month from 4.7 percent in October, weighed by a slump in non-oil ordinary imports.

The headline trade surplus thus widened to US\$75.4 billion in November from US\$58.4 billion in October.

In yuan terms, total foreign trade rose 7.8 percent to 3.09 trillion yuan in November, among which exports jumping 14.9 percent to 1.8 trillion yuan while imports down 0.8 percent to 1.29 trillion yuan.

“The strong export growth was driven by China's status as the first economy out of the COVID-19 pandemic and a beneficiary of the massive financial relief provided in DM (developed markets) economies to maintain consumption demand, which jointly contributed to a surge in exports of personal protective equipment and work-from-home electronic products,

especially given seasonally higher demand prior to the Christmas season,” said Lu Ting, chief China economist of financial services company Nomura.

Zhuang Rui, Party secretary of the Beijing University of International Business and Economics, said the accelerated growth of foreign trade was a sign of the strong resilience of China’s economy.

“As China actively pushes ahead with the negotiation and signing of free trade agreements, more efforts will be made to promote the stability and quality of foreign trade,” Zhuang said.

China's foreign trade with ASEAN topped 4.24 trillion yuan, an increase of 6.7 percent, to account for 14.6 percent of China's headline foreign trade figure in the first nine months.

Trade with the European Union in the same period added up to 4.05 trillion yuan, up 4.7 percent, making the EU China’s second-largest trading partner. China's trade with the United States rebounded from earlier declines, with the value rising 6.9 percent to 3.65 trillion yuan over the period.

The customs highlighted rapid growth in foreign trade by private enterprises. In the first 11 months, they contributed a total of 13.47 trillion yuan to China's exports and imports, up 11.3 percent year on year, accounting for 46.4 percent of the total foreign trade value which was 4 percentage points higher than in the same period last year.

Of this total, private enterprises posted overall exports of 8.95 trillion yuan, an increase of 12.2 percent, accounting for 55.5 percent of the total value of China's exports, while imports increased by 9.5 percent to 4.52 trillion yuan, accounting for 35 percent of the headline imports.

During the same period, foreign-invested enterprises contributed imports and exports of 11.25 trillion yuan, accounting for 38.7 percent. State-owned enterprises' imports and exports topped 4.22 trillion yuan to account for 14.5 percent of the total.

The trade pattern structure has also been continuously optimized, with the proportion of general trade in the country's overall foreign trade growing larger.

From January to November, China's general trade rose 3.2 percent to 17.39 trillion yuan, accounting for 59.9 percent in total imports and exports which was 0.8 percentage points higher than in the same period last year.

In terms of industries, the export growth of China's textile yarn and fabrics products (including face masks) and medical devices (including ventilators) rose to 22.2 percent year on year and 38.4 percent, respectively, in November from 15.9 percent and 31.6 percent in October, "due to the second wave of the pandemic," Lu said.

"We believe China's export growth could remain elevated for another several months due to the worsening COVID-19 situation overseas, especially in the US and Europe," he added.

Export growth of automatic data processing equipment and components rebounded to 18.6 percent year on year from 13.1 percent in October, while that of home electric appliances surged to 61.9 percent in November from 39.6 percent.

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