CHINA – BAROMETER

Monthly Update

October 2025

FOCAL POINTS :

Macro Environment

China’s economy expanded at 4.8 percent in the July-September quarter, the slowest annual pace in a year, weighed down by persistent pressure from the property downturn and subdued consumer sentiment. Industrial profits, however, surged to their largest gain since November 2023, offsetting faltering retail sales and continued weakness in the housing market, as overall economic growth remained steady over the summer.

Energy

Hydropower generation thrived in September amid abundant rainfall, reaching an 11-month high of 158.9 billion kWh, up 7.5 percent from August. Its share of total power generation rose to 19.2 percent, from 15.8 percent the previous month.

Manufacturing

Property investment continued to decline, falling 13.9 percent year-to-date through September, worsening from a 12.9 percent drop in January–August. This contributed to subdued crude steel output, which fell 4.6 percent year-on-year.

Imports

Coal imports hit an intra-year high of 46.33 million tonnes in September, rising 7.6 percent month-on-month. Iron ore arrivals also surged 10.6 percent from August, reaching a record for a single month.

Exports

Fertilizer exports jumped 67.8 percent year-on-year in September to 5.44 million tonnes. Steel exports for the first three quarters rose 9.2 percent to 87.96 million tonnes, marking a record high for the period.

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CONTENT PAGES :

- China's economy growth slowed to 4.8 percent year-on-year in the three months to the end of September, its weakest pace in a year. That also marked a deceleration from the 5.2 percent expansion recorded in the second quarter and 5.4 percent observed in the first.
- Industrial profits surged 21.6 percent year-on-year in September, marking the largest gain since November 2023.
- On the contrary, retail sales growth slowed to 3.0 percent on the year, down from 3.4 percent gain in August, marking the weakest expansion since August 2024.
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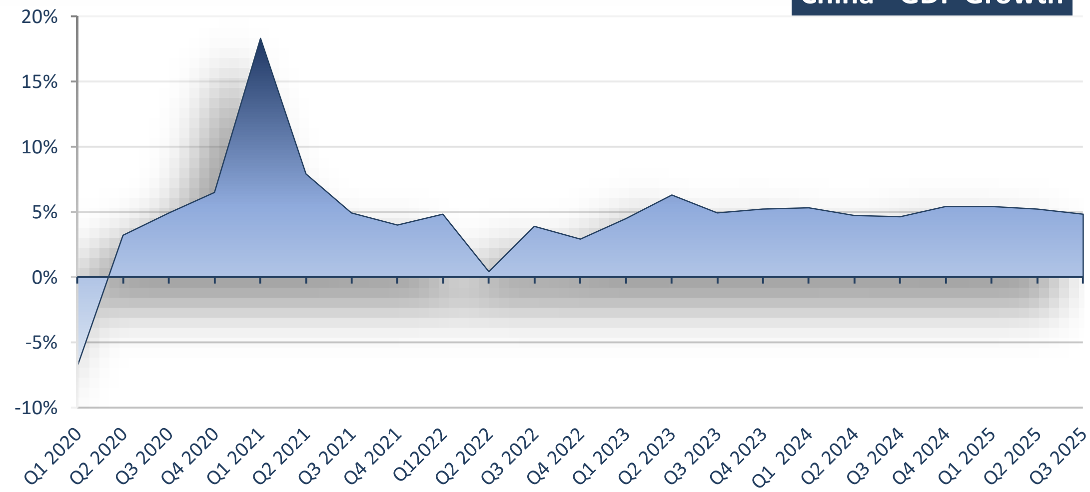
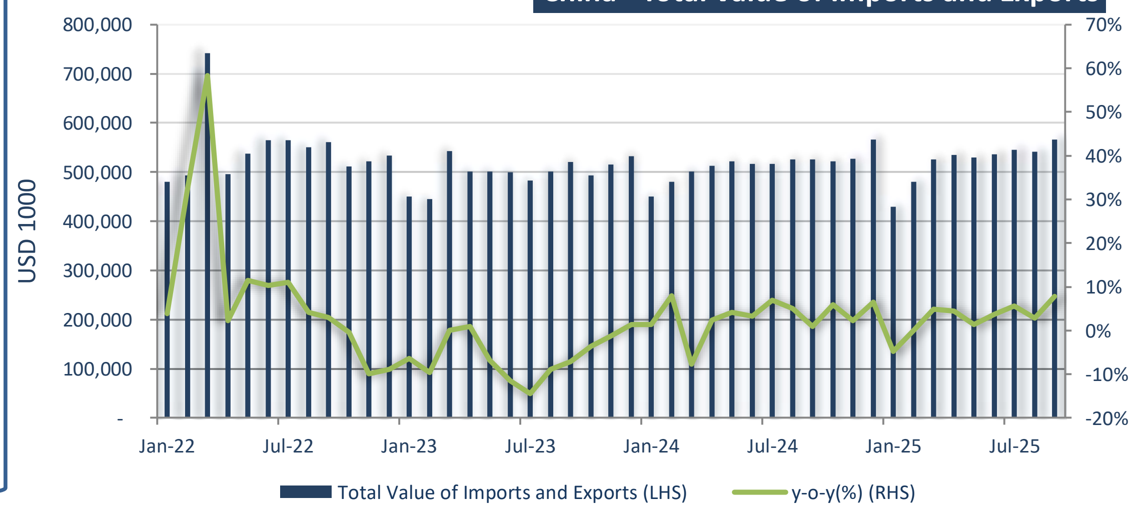
- China's exports jumped 8.3 percent year-on-year to a seven-month high of USD 328.6 billion in September, exceeding analysts' 6.0 percent forecast.
- China's imports rose 7.4 percent year-on-year in September to a seven-month high of USD 238.1 billion, accelerating sharply from August and marking the fourth consecutive monthly increase.
- China's trade surplus came in at USD 90.45 billion in September, falling short of projections of USD 98.96, but still above the USD 81.69 billion recorded in September 2024.

China - GDP Growth



Source: NBS, Doric Research

China - Total Value of Imports and Exports

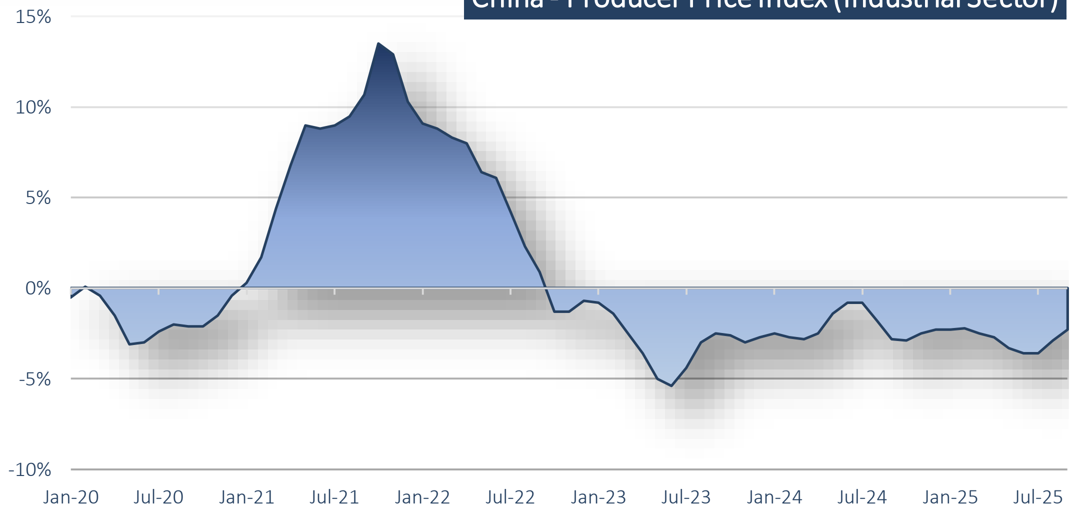


Source: GAC, Doric Research

- China's producer prices fell by 2.3 percent year-on-year in September, easing from a 2.9 percent drop in the previous month and marking the mildest decline since February.
- On a monthly basis, September's figure held steady, matching market forecast amid Beijing's steeped-up efforts to curb excess capacity ahead of Golden Week.
- The year-on-year drop in factory-gate prices narrowed for a second consecutive month, though producer prices still fell 2.8 percent over the first nine months of the year.

- China's consumer prices dropped by 0.3 percent year-on-year in September, steeper than market estimates of a 0.1 percent decline but slightly less than a 0.4 percent contraction in the previous month.
- On a monthly basis, the Consumer Price Index (CPI) inched up by 0.1 percent, missing forecasts of a 0.2 percent growth, after remaining flat in August.
- The core inflation, stripping out food and energy prices, expanded for the fifth consecutive month in September, returning to 1.0 percent for the first time since March 2024.

China - Producer Price Index (Industrial Sector)



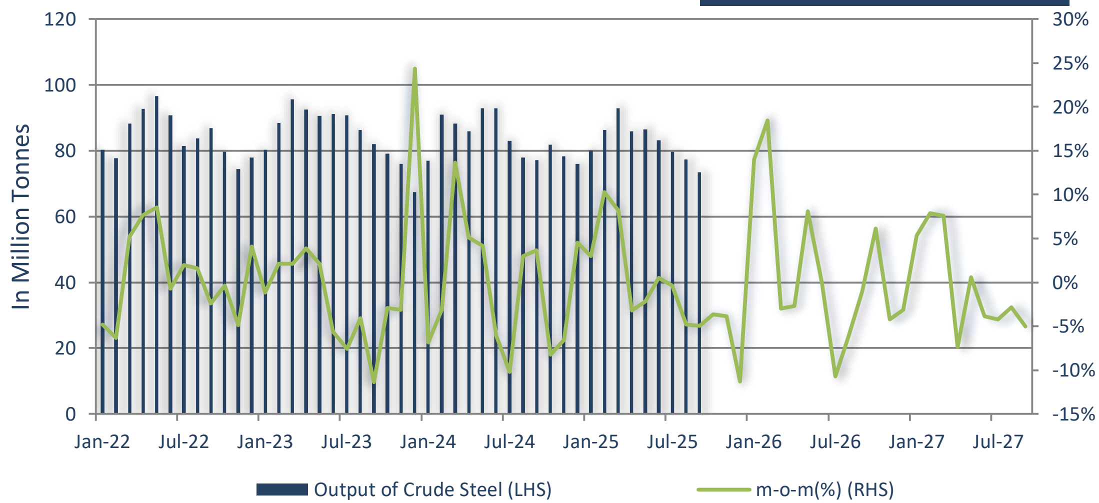
Source: NBS, Doric Research

China - Inflation Rate

Source: NBS, Doric Research

- China manufactured 73.49 million tonnes of crude steel in September, the lowest level since December 2023. That was also down by 4.6 percent from a year earlier.
- On a monthly basis, crude steel output slide by 5.0 percent.
- Daily crude steel output averaged 2.45 million tonnes per day in September, down by 1.9 percent from August.
- In the first three quarters, China's crude steel output continued to decline year-on-year, falling 2.9 percent to 746.25 million tonnes.
- China's manufacturing activity has stayed in contraction for a sixth consecutive month in September at 49.8. However that was still the strongest record since March, accelerating from August reading of 49.4.
- The sub-index tracking production rose to a six-month high of 51.9 in September, as manufacturing activity picked up, while new orders ticked up to 49.7.
- The official non-manufacturing PMI, which included services and construction, edged slightly lower to 52.9 in September from 53.0 in the prior month.

China - Crude Steel Output



Source: NBS, Doric Research

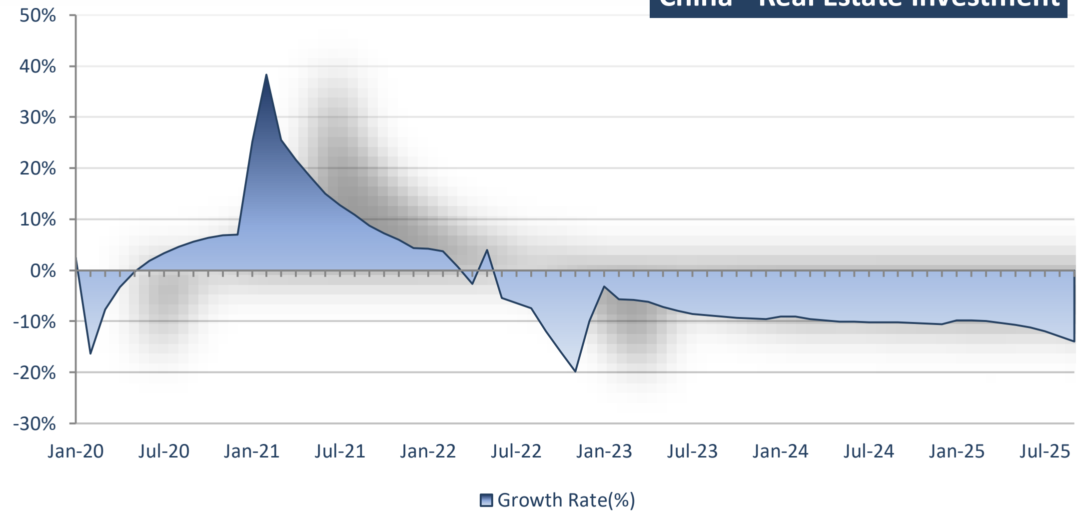
China - Manufacturing PMI

Source: NBS, Doric Research

- Property investment in China extended its decline, sliding by 13.9 percent in the year through September, worsening from the 12.9 percent decline in the January-August period.
- Property sales by floor area dropped by 5.5 percent year-on-year in September.
- New construction starts fell 18.3 percent over the past nine months, slightly easing from the 19.5 percent decline seen in the first eight months.
- China's new home prices fell 0.4 percent month-on-month in September, the sharpest drop in eleven months, while resale home prices slid 0.64 percent, marking the steepest annual fall.

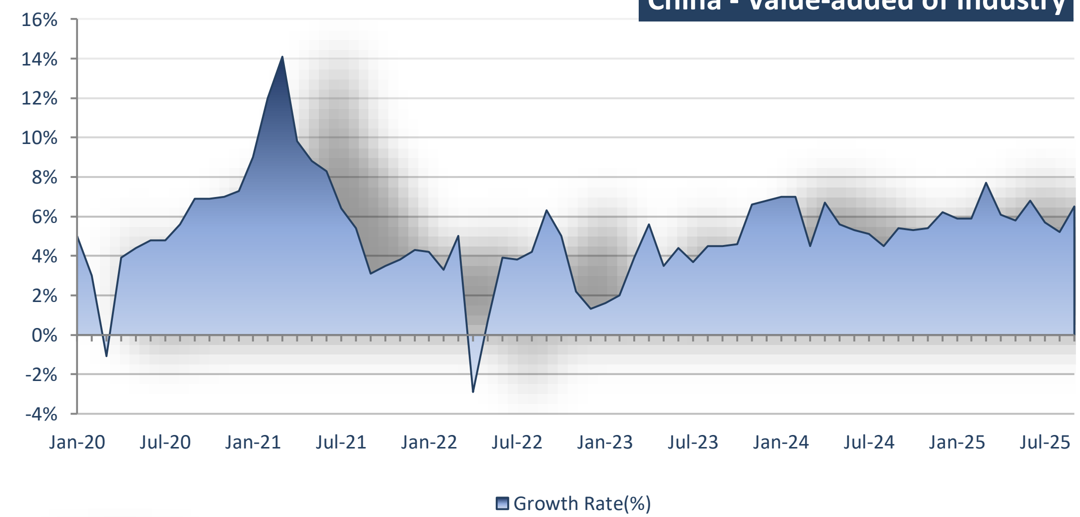
- In September, China's total value-added industrial output expanded by 6.5 percent year-on-year.
- From January to September, the added value of industries went up by 6.2 percent compared to the same period last year.
- By sector, the value added of the mining edged up by 5.8 percent year-on-year, while that of the manufacturing grew by 6.8 percent annually.

China - Real Estate Investment



Source: NBS, Doric Research

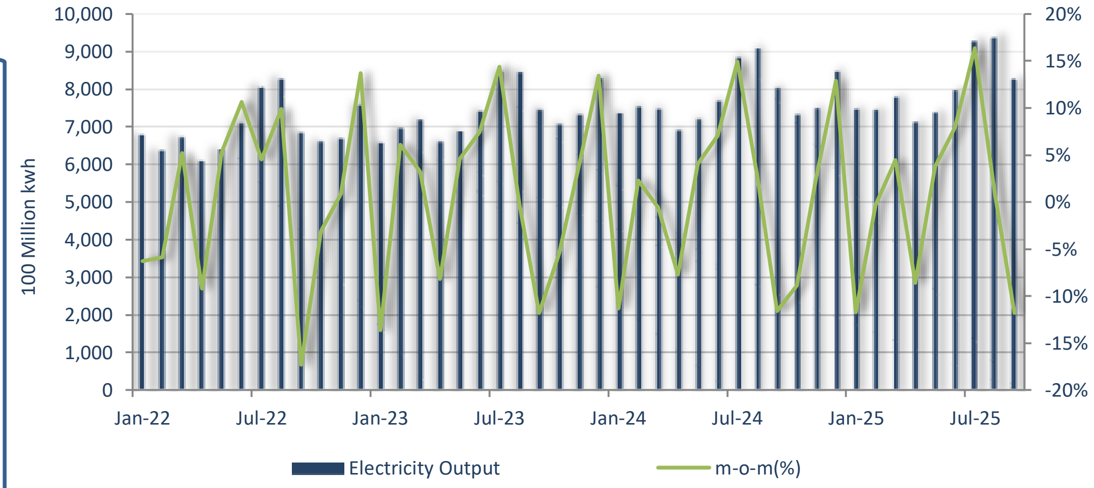
China - Value-added of Industry



Source: NBS, Doric Research

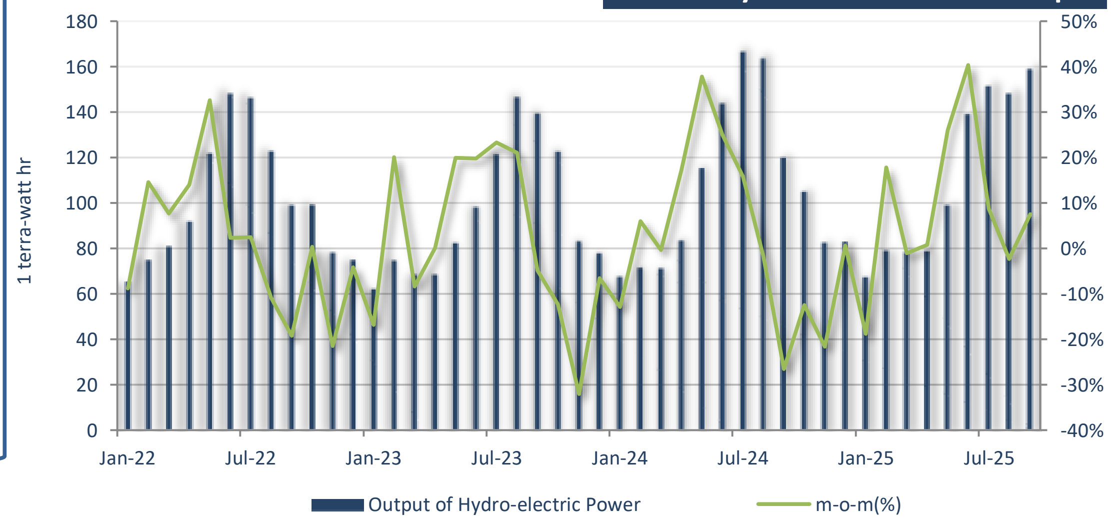
- China's power generation from all sources contracted by 11.8 percent on month to 826.2 billion kilowatt hours (kWh) in September, though the reading remained 1.5 percent higher compared with the same month last year.
- The monthly decline reflected a seasonal drop in China's electricity demand when cooler weather reduced air-conditioner use.
- China's clean energy generation continued to grow significantly, with solar and wind power leading the increase.
- China's electricity consumption hit a record 7.77 trillion kilowatt-hours in the first three quarters of 2025, up 4.6 percent year-on-year, with quarterly growth accelerating from 2.5 to 6.1 percent.
- In contrast, hydropower generation thrived amid abundant rains last month, hitting an 11-month high of 158.9 billion kWh, jumping by 31.9 percent from the year-ago level.
- That accounted for 19.2 percent of the country's total power generation, up from 15.8 percent in August.
- Hydropower generation over the first nine months amounted to 999.18 billion kWh, a slight decline of 0.3 percent against the same period in 2024.

China - Electricity Output



Source: NBS, Doric Research

China - Hydro-Electric Power Output

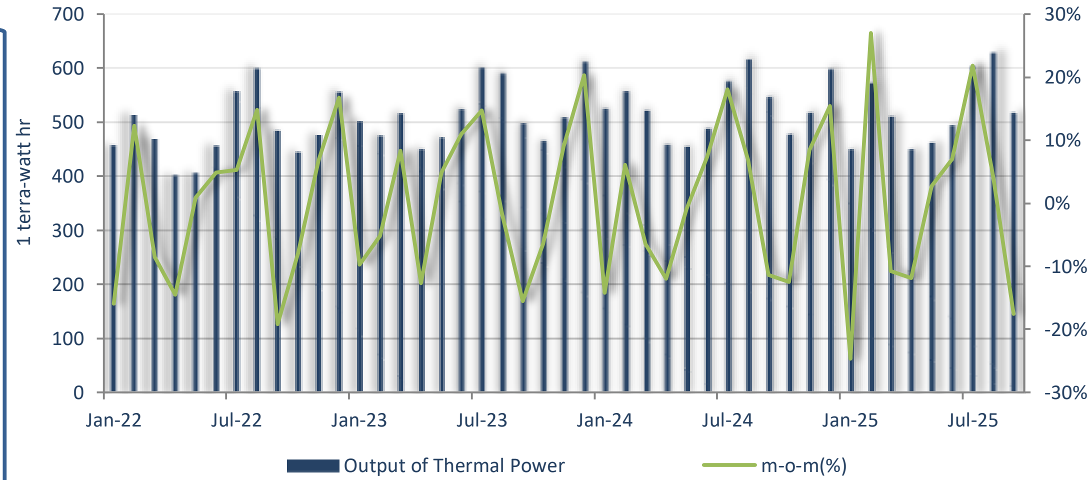


Source: NBS, Doric Research

- China's generation from thermal power retreated notably last month, down by 5.4 percent on year to 517.5 billion kWh.
- That was also down by 17.5 percent from 627.4 billion kWh produced in August, when thermal output surged to the highest level in decades.
- Its share in the country's total power generation also shrank to 62.6 percent, as compared with 67.0 percent in August.
- Over the past three quarters of the year, China's thermal power output declined by 1.2 percent over the same period in 2024.

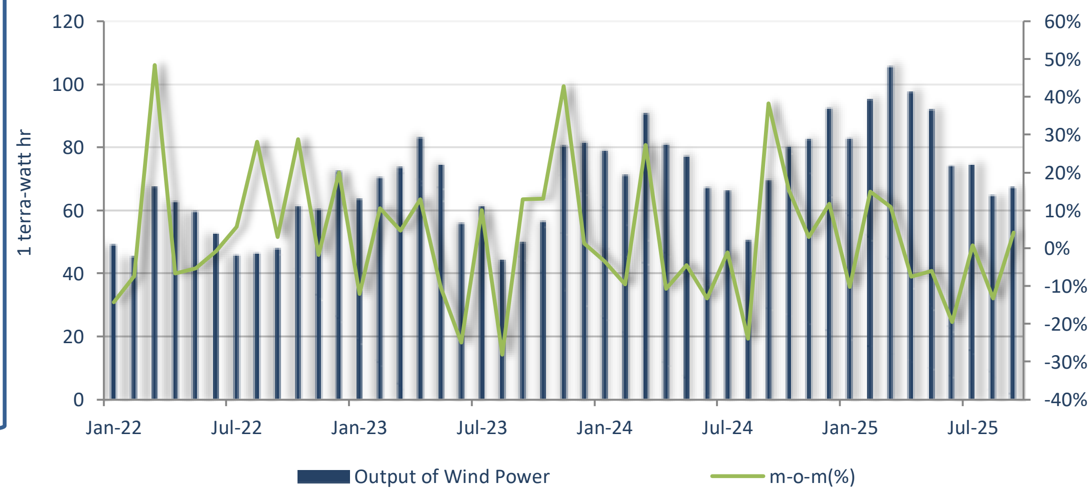
- In September, China's wind power contributed 8.1 percent to the overall power mix, with its generation up by 4.2 percent on month to 67.2 billion kWh. Though the figure was 7.6 percent lower on year.
- In contrast, nuclear power generation weakened in September, down by 15.1 percent on month to 36.2 billion kWh.

China - Thermal Power Output



Source: NBS, Doric Research

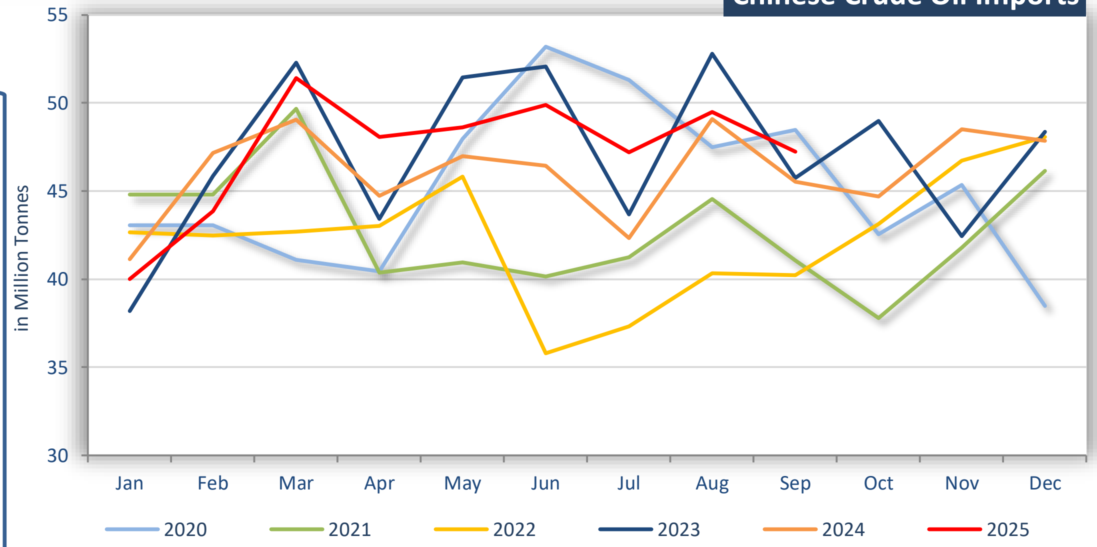
China - Wind Power Output



Source: NBS, Doric Research

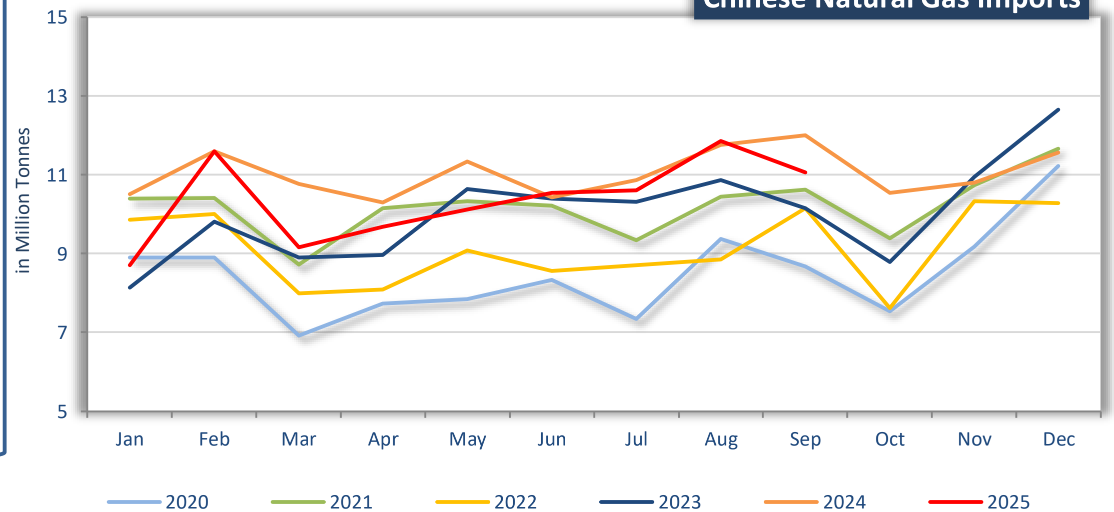
- Crude oil flows into China totaled 47.25 million tonnes in September, or 11.5 million barrels per day, the lowest level since January.
- This marked a 3.9 percent year-on-year increase, with refineries running at their highest utilisation rates this year. However, September saw a 4.5 percent month-on-month decline as refineries reduced purchases following the price surge in early June.
- Russia remained China's top supplier, accounting for 17.5 percent of China's total crude imports. In September alone, Russian arrivals expanded by 4.3 percent from August to 8.3 million tonnes.
- For the first nine months of the year, China's crude oil imports increased by 2.6 percent year-on-year to 423.0 million tonnes.
- Natural gas imports fell 7.8 percent year-on-year in September to 11.05 million tonnes, with total arrivals for 2025 reaching 92.86 million tonnes, down 6.2 percent year-on-year.
- LNG imports dropped 15.0 percent in September, marking the 11th consecutive monthly decline, as cheaper domestic fuel substitutes the imported supply.

Chinese Crude Oil Imports



Source: GAC, Doric Research

Chinese Natural Gas Imports

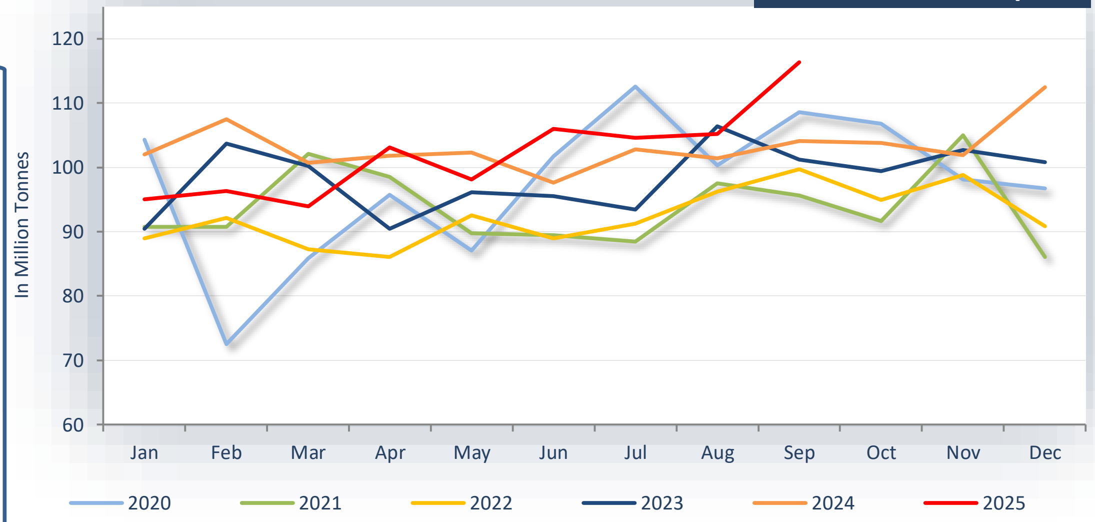


Source: GAC, Doric Research

- China's iron ore imports reached a record of 116.33 million tonnes in September, hitting a record-high for a single month.
- The September volume represented an 11.7 percent increase from the 104.13 million tonnes recorded in the same month of 2024, remaining above the 100-million-tone mark for the fourth consecutive month.
- Last month's surge aligns with China's seasonal pattern to increase manufacturing activity in autumn months, boosting buyers to build inventories in anticipation of higher production requirements.
- During the first three quarters of 2025, China's iron ore imports amounted to 917.69 million tonnes, remaining flat year-on-year.

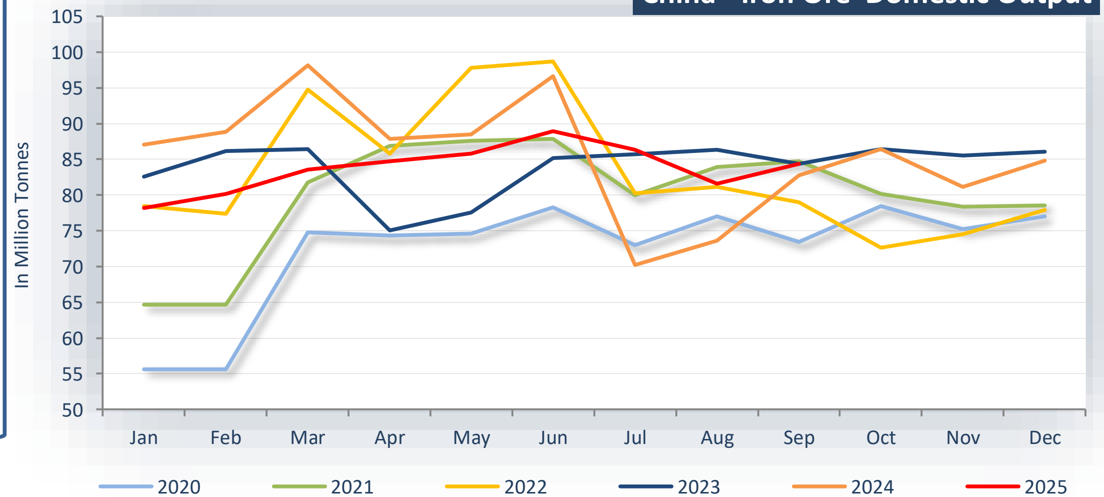
- China's iron ore production rose by 0.6 percent on year and by a larger 3.2 percent on month in September, to reach 84.3 million tonnes.
- Yet the total production of the feed material during January-September was 3.8 percent lower than the same period in 2024, amounting to 761.43 million tonnes.

China - Iron Ore Imports



Source: GAC, Doric Research

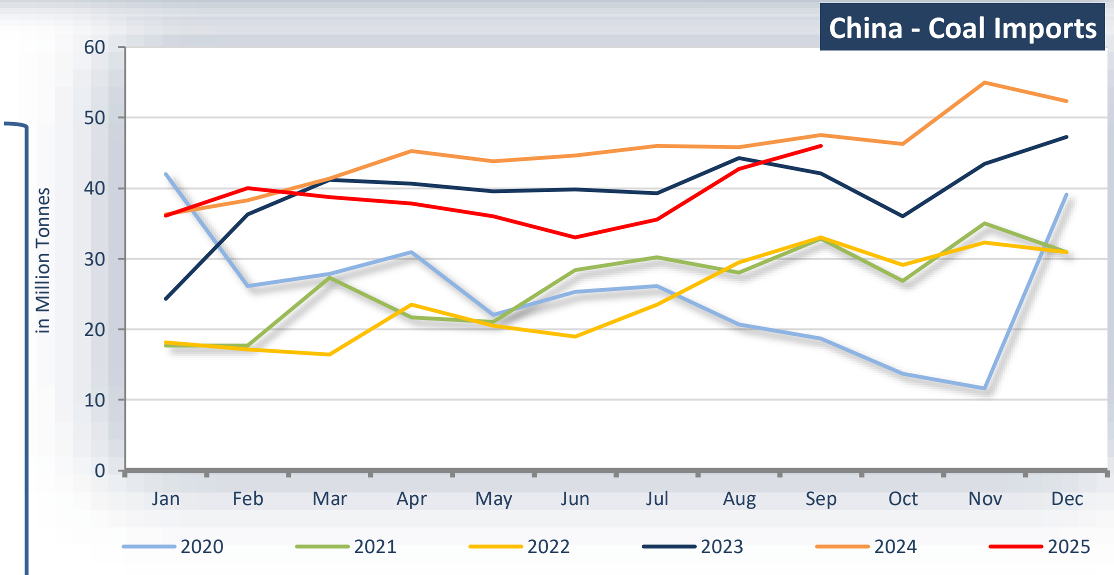
China - Iron Ore Domestic Output



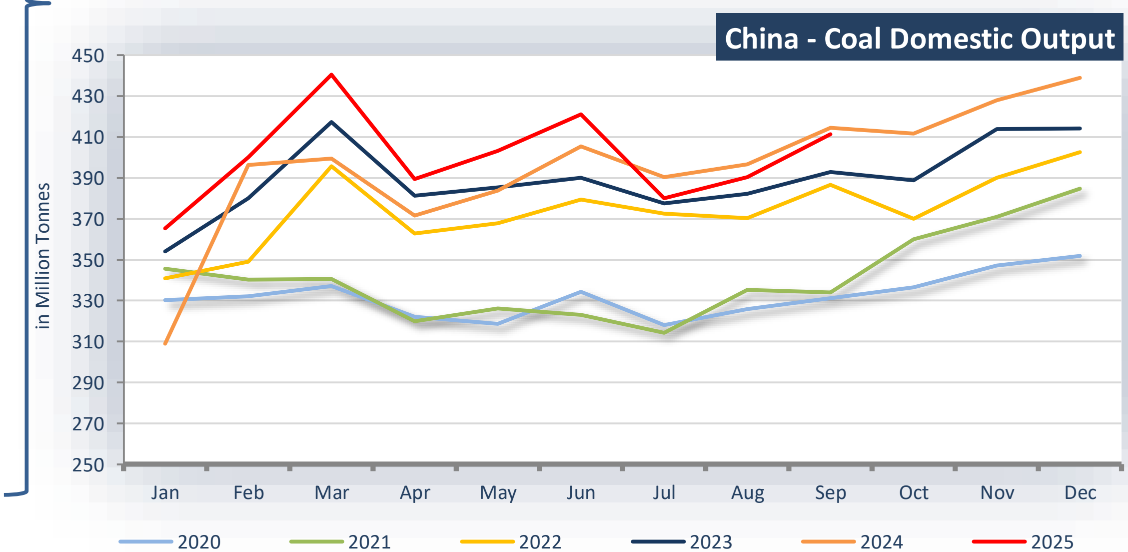
Source: NBS, Doric Research

- China's coal imports reached 46.33 million tonnes in September, notching an intra-year high and jumping by 7.6 percent from previous month.
- However the imports volume still registered a 3.3 percent drop compared with the year-prior level, extending the on-year downtrend since March, though at a much slower pace.
- In the January-September period, China's coal imports amounted to 345.86 million tonnes, down 11.1 percent year-on-year.

- In September, China's production of raw coal totaled 411.51 million tonnes, up by a notable 5.4 percent from August.
- Despite the monthly increase, September output fell 1.8 percent year-on-year — the third consecutive monthly decline — amid stricter safety inspections and flooding in key mining regions.
- Daily output averaged 13.72 million tonnes, up 8.9 percent from August's average of 12.6 million tonnes per day.
- China's coal output for the first nine months of the year was 2.0 percent higher than a year earlier and remains on track to set a new annual record.



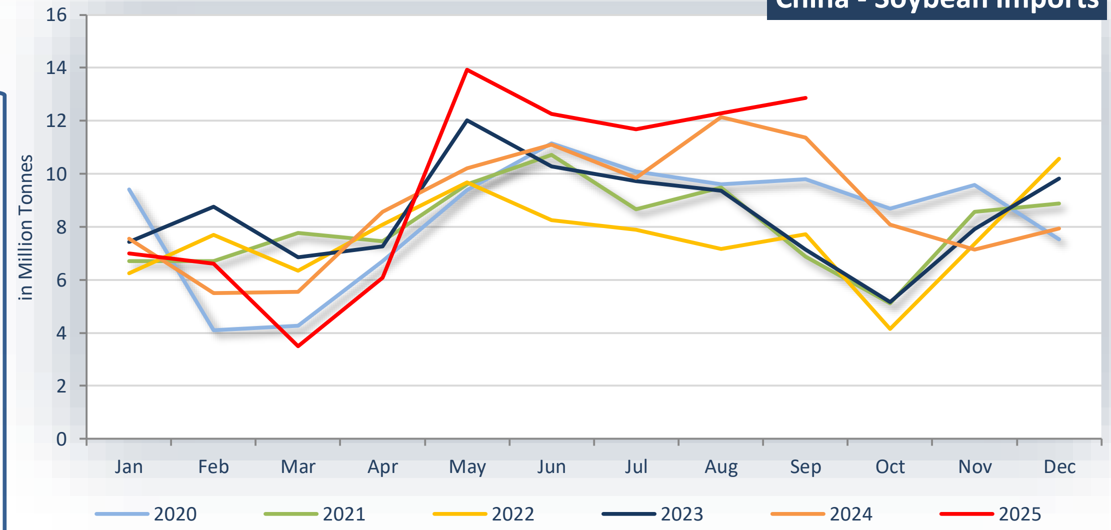
Source: GAC, Doric Research



Source: NBS, Doric Research

- China's soybean imports hit a record high for the month of September, with the country receiving 12.87 million tonnes, its second highest monthly-total on record behind May 2025.
- That marked an increase of 4.8 percent month-on-month and 13.2 percent from 11.37 million tonnes a year earlier.
- Brazil's shipments to China rose 29.9 percent in September to 85.2 percent of total imports, while Argentina's jumped 91.5 percent to 1.17 million tonnes.
- Total imports for the first nine months of the year stood at 86.18 million tonnes, up 5.3 percent year-on-year

China - Soybean Imports



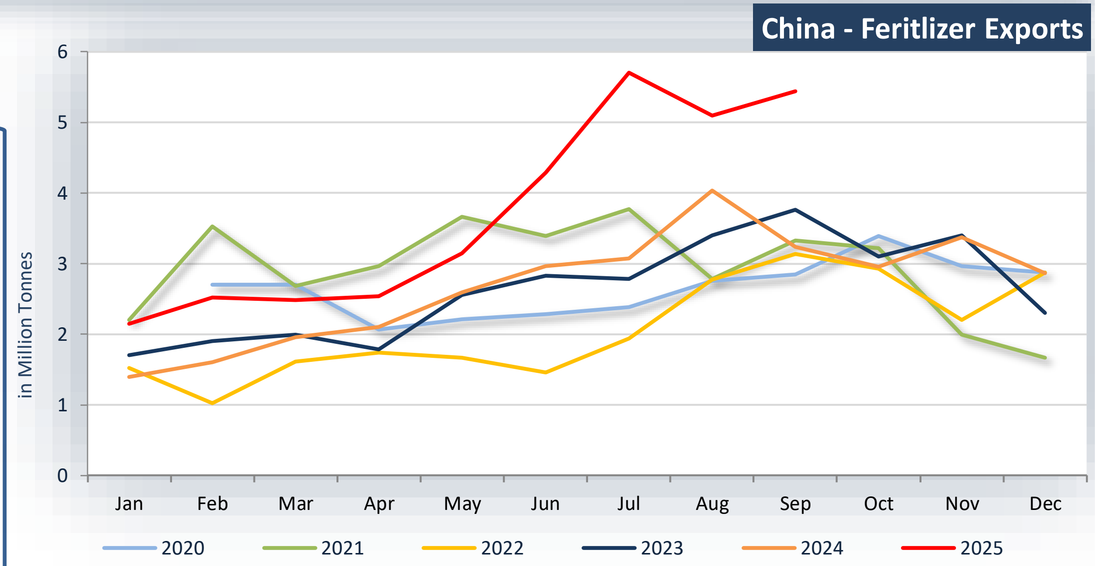
Source: GAC, Doric Research

- China's grain imports surged by 12.6 percent year-on-year to 2.4 million tonnes.
- Specifically, China imported 56,6 thousand tonnes of corn in September, up by 56.4 percent month over month. By comparison, inflows fell 26.9 percent on month in September 2024.
- China's wheat imports rebounded to 429,1 thousand tonnes in September, up 95.6 percent on month and 86.0 percent over year.

China - Grain Imports (excluding Soya)

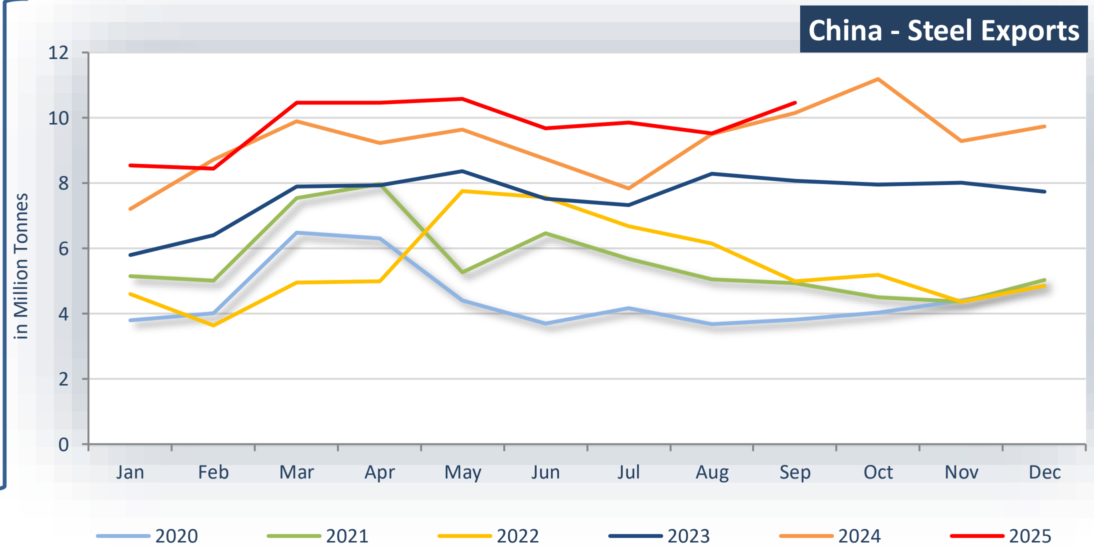
Source : GAC, Doric Research

- China's fertilizer exports climbed significantly by 67.8 percent year-on-year in September to 5.44 million tonnes.
- From January to September, fertilizer exports jumped 45.4 percent year-on-year to 33.36 million tonnes, driven by strong overseas demand and competitive pricing.
- China announced plans to reimpose export restrictions on key fertlizers including urea, starting in October 2025. The suspension is expected to significantly tighten global supply, potentially causing a 10-15.0 percent increase in specialty fertilizer prices.



Source: GAC, Doric Research

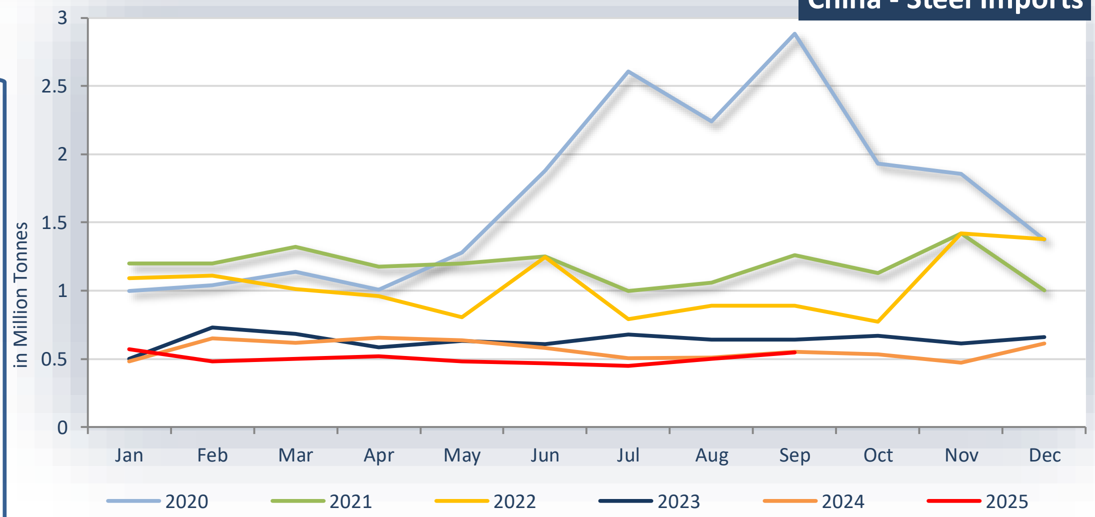
- Finished steel exports rose to 10.47 million tonnes in September, up 10.0 percent month-on-month and 3.1 percent year-on-year, driven by orders placed during the final month of the China–U.S. tariff truce.
- Cumulative steel exports for the past three quarters climbed 9.2 percent to 87.96 million tonnes, setting a record high for the period.
- Chinese steel production fell to 73.49 million tonnes in September, representing the fourth consecutive monthly decline.



Source: GAC, Doric Research

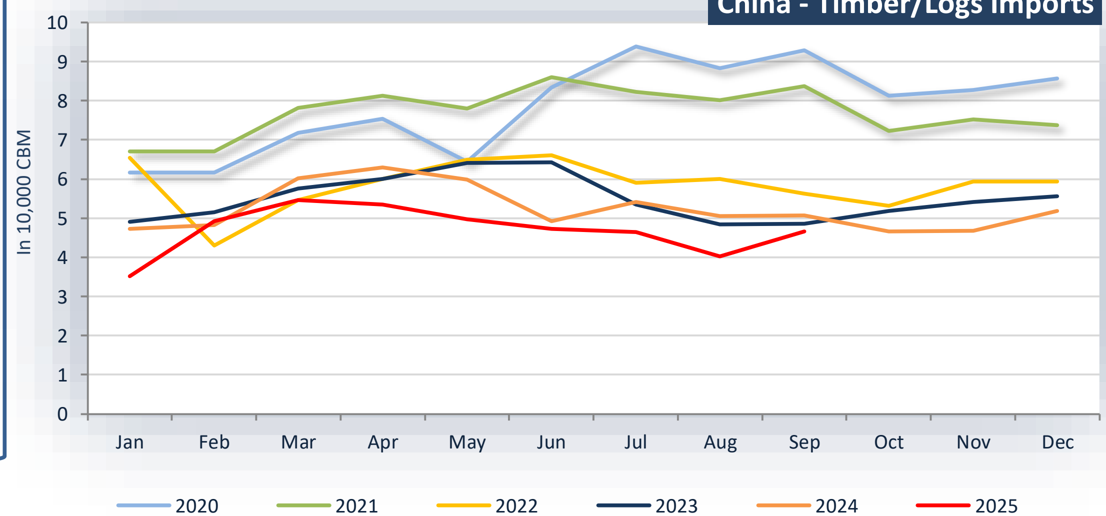
- China's seaborne steel arrivals remained flat both on year and on month in September, at 1.22 million tonnes.
- Cumulative imports for January-September period, slipped by 13.0 percent from the previous year to 4.52 million tonnes, extending their downward trajectory.
- Finished steel inventories fell by 4.1 percent year-on-year to 9.02 million tonnes in September, while steel scrap inventories surged by 108.0 percent compared with the previous year.
- In September, the Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) for the Chinese steel sector stood at 47.7 percent, or 2.1 percentage points lower, than that recorded in August.
- Timber imports increased by 0.7 year-on-year in September, to reach 4.67 million cubic meters, a positive sign after an 11-month decline.
- In contrast, total imports for the past three quarters stood at 42.3 million cubic meters, a 12.5 percent decline compared to the same period in 2024.
- China's Global Timber Index (GTI) maintained growth in line with increased timber imports, staying in expansionary territory for a second consecutive month at 51.7, an increase of 0.9 percentage points from the previous month.

China - Steel Imports



Source: GAC, Doric Research

China - Timber/Logs Imports



Source: GAC, Doric Research

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