

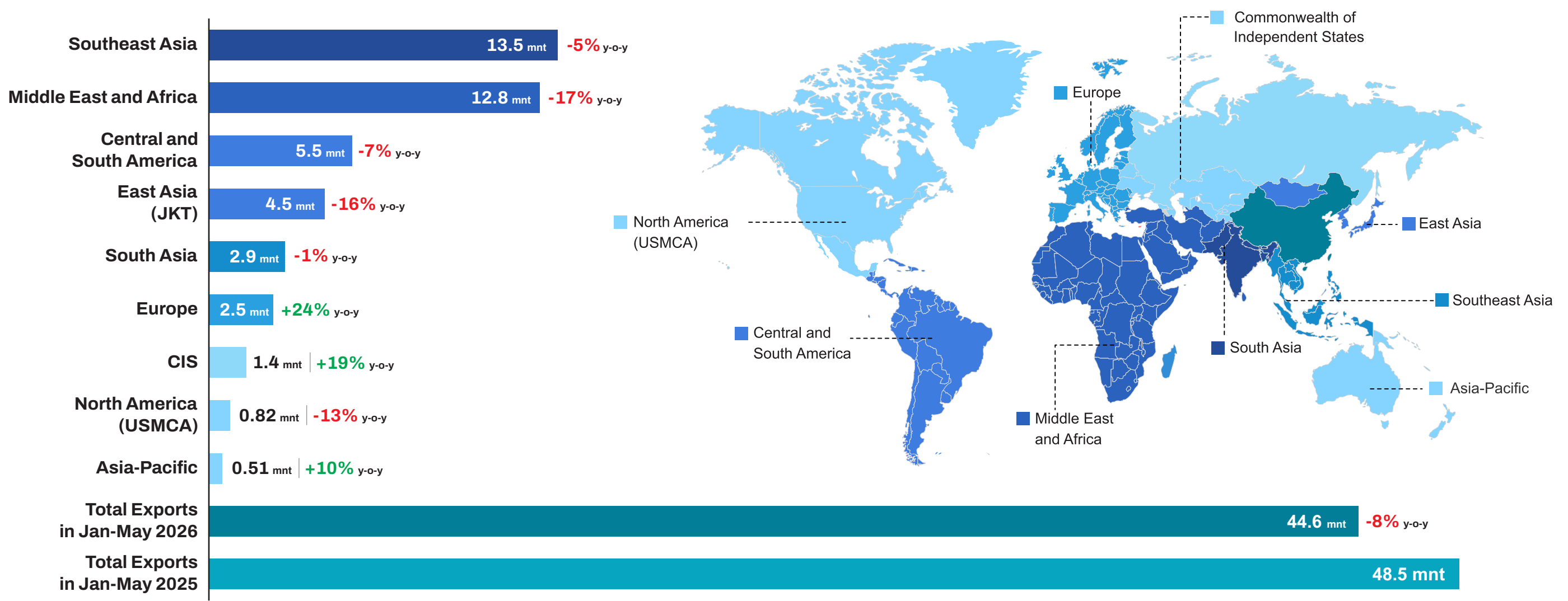
# China's steel exports shift towards emerging markets as developed economies tighten trade barriers

China's finished steel exports declined 8% year-on-year (y-o-y) to 44.6 million tonnes (mnt) during January-May 2026, according to China Customs data. The decline reflects softer overseas demand, mounting trade restrictions and a gradual moderation from the exceptionally strong export performance recorded in 2025.

However, exports rebounded to 10.3 mnt in May from 9.5 mnt in April, suggesting Chinese mills continue to find overseas outlets despite a more challenging global trading environment.

China's steel exports are likely to remain elevated through the coming months, although the pace of growth will increasingly depend on regional demand rather than broad-based global recovery. Chinese mills continue to benefit from a pricing advantage over many international competitors, allowing exports to remain competitive even as overseas demand moderates.

## China's Region-wise Steel Exports in 5M 2026 (Jan-May)



JKT: Japan, South Korea, Taiwan | USMCA: United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement  
All above figures are rounded off. | Quantity in million tonnes (mnt) | % change in year-on-year (y-o-y) | Source: China Customs, BigMint

## Region-wise list of exporting countries

Country	Exports in May'26	Exports in Apr'26	% change	Exports in Jan-May'26	Total Exports in Jan-May'25	% change	Total Exports in 2025 (Jan-Dec)
<b>Southeast Asia</b>							
Vietnam	1.00 mnt	0.81 mnt	+23% m-o-m	3.31 mnt	4.08 mnt	-19% y-o-y	10.28 mnt
Thailand	0.69 mnt	0.49 mnt	+39% m-o-m	2.34 mnt	2.56 mnt	-9% y-o-y	5.80 mnt
Philippines	0.58 mnt	0.62 mnt	-7% m-o-m	2.30 mnt	2.29 mnt	0% y-o-y	5.66 mnt
Indonesia	0.43 mnt	0.54 mnt	-20% m-o-m	2.09 mnt	2.02 mnt	+3% y-o-y	4.75 mnt
Malaysia	0.30 mnt	0.25 mnt	21% m-o-m	1.21 mnt	1.20 mnt	+1% y-o-y	3.08 mnt
Others	0.46 mnt	0.48 mnt	-4% m-o-m	2.28 mnt	2.03 mnt	+12% y-o-y	4.84 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.45 mnt</b>	<b>3.18 mnt</b>	<b>+8% m-o-m</b>	<b>13.52 mnt</b>	<b>14.19 mnt</b>	<b>-5% y-o-y</b>	<b>34.40 mnt</b>
<b>Middle East and Africa</b>							
Saudi Arabia	0.33 mnt	0.17 mnt	+98% m-o-m	1.69 mnt	2.22 mnt	-24% y-o-y	5.57 mnt
Türkiye	0.36 mnt	0.34 mnt	+7% m-o-m	1.44 mnt	1.75 mnt	-17% y-o-y	3.85 mnt
United Arab Emirates	0.16 mnt	0.06 mnt	+176% m-o-m	1.11 mnt	2.46 mnt	-55% y-o-y	5.46 mnt
Nigeria	0.20 mnt	0.18 mnt	+13% m-o-m	0.91 mnt	0.83 mnt	+10% y-o-y	2.03 mnt
Egypt	0.10 mnt	0.08 mnt	+32% m-o-m	0.60 mnt	0.48 mnt	+23% y-o-y	1.56 mnt
Others	1.58 mnt	1.41 mnt	+12% m-o-m	7.06 mnt	7.64 mnt	-8% y-o-y	19.17 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.74 mnt</b>	<b>2.23 mnt</b>	<b>+23% m-o-m</b>	<b>12.81 mnt</b>	<b>15.38 mnt</b>	<b>-17% y-o-y</b>	<b>37.64 mnt</b>
<b>Central and South America</b>							
Peru	0.23 mnt	0.22 mnt	+5% m-o-m	0.79 mnt	0.75 mnt	+6% y-o-y	2.40 mnt
Colombia	0.15 mnt	0.15 mnt	-3% m-o-m	0.59 mnt	0.47 mnt	+25% y-o-y	1.57 mnt
Brazil	0.07 mnt	0.10 mnt	-25% m-o-m	0.55 mnt	1.12 mnt	-50% y-o-y	3.34 mnt
Chile	0.14 mnt	0.14 mnt	+2% m-o-m	0.47 mnt	0.58 mnt	-18% y-o-y	1.67 mnt
Ecuador	0.12 mnt	0.11 mnt	+16% m-o-m	0.38 mnt	0.32 mnt	+19% y-o-y	1.05 mnt
Others	0.46 mnt	0.49 mnt	-6% m-o-m	2.77 mnt	2.74 mnt	+1% y-o-y	4.96 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.18 mnt</b>	<b>1.21 mnt</b>	<b>-2% m-o-m</b>	<b>5.54 mnt</b>	<b>5.96 mnt</b>	<b>-7% y-o-y</b>	<b>14.99 mnt</b>
<b>East Asia (JKT)</b>							
South Korea	0.57 mnt	0.51 mnt	+12% m-o-m	2.54 mnt	3.10 mnt	-18% y-o-y	7.27 mnt
China Hong Kong	0.20 mnt	0.21 mnt	-2% m-o-m	0.84 mnt	0.87 mnt	-3% y-o-y	2.05 mnt
Taiwan, China	0.11 mnt	0.12 mnt	-14% m-o-m	0.44 mnt	0.57 mnt	-23% y-o-y	1.17 mnt
Japan	0.09 mnt	0.06 mnt	+47% m-o-m	0.37 mnt	0.51 mnt	-28% y-o-y	1.26 mnt
Mongolia	0.08 mnt	0.09 mnt	-17% m-o-m	0.25 mnt	0.25 mnt	-3% y-o-y	0.63 mnt
Others	0.01 mnt	0.01 mnt	+26% m-o-m	0.05 mnt	0.04 mnt	+32% y-o-y	0.08 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.06 mnt</b>	<b>1.00 mnt</b>	<b>+5% m-o-m</b>	<b>4.49 mnt</b>	<b>5.34 mnt</b>	<b>-16% y-o-y</b>	<b>12.46 mnt</b>
<b>South Asia</b>							
India	0.39 mnt	0.19 mnt	+101% m-o-m	1.17 mnt	1.45 mnt	-19% y-o-y	2.17 mnt
Pakistan	0.25 mnt	0.29 mnt	-15% m-o-m	1.13 mnt	0.81 mnt	+39% y-o-y	3.12 mnt
Bangladesh	0.14 mnt	0.12 mnt	+16% m-o-m	0.47 mnt	0.51 mnt	-7% y-o-y	1.21 mnt
Sri Lanka	0.02 mnt	0.05 mnt	-69% m-o-m	0.16 mnt	0.20 mnt	-21% y-o-y	0.54 mnt
Nepal	0.005 mnt	0.004 mnt	+43% m-o-m	0.02 mnt	0.02 mnt	-4% y-o-y	0.04 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.79 mnt</b>	<b>0.66 mnt</b>	<b>+20% m-o-m</b>	<b>2.94 mnt</b>	<b>2.98 mnt</b>	<b>-1% y-o-y</b>	<b>7.08 mnt</b>
<b>Europe</b>							
Belgium	0.11 mnt	0.14 mnt	-23% m-o-m	0.47 mnt	0.29 mnt	+65% y-o-y	0.89 mnt
Italy	0.08 mnt	0.12 mnt	-37% m-o-m	0.45 mnt	0.45 mnt	0% y-o-y	1.22 mnt
Spain	0.07 mnt	0.08 mnt	-7% m-o-m	0.39 mnt	0.21 mnt	+83% y-o-y	0.55 mnt
Poland	0.03 mnt	0.04 mnt	-29% m-o-m	0.16 mnt	0.17 mnt	-9% y-o-y	0.45 mnt
U.K.	0.02 mnt	0.04 mnt	-42% m-o-m	0.14 mnt	0.09 mnt	+52% y-o-y	0.24 mnt
Others	0.15 mnt	0.15 mnt	+6% m-o-m	0.88 mnt	0.79 mnt	+12% y-o-y	2.15 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.46 mnt</b>	<b>0.57 mnt</b>	<b>-18% m-o-m</b>	<b>2.49 mnt</b>	<b>2.00 mnt</b>	<b>+24% y-o-y</b>	<b>5.51 mnt</b>
<b>Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)</b>							
Russia	0.12 mnt	0.09 mnt	+35% m-o-m	0.37 mnt	0.35 mnt	+6% y-o-y	1.18 mnt
Uzbekistan	0.07 mnt	0.08 mnt	-11% m-o-m	0.25 mnt	0.20 mnt	+26% y-o-y	0.66 mnt
Kazakhstan	0.06 mnt	0.03 mnt	+77% m-o-m	0.15 mnt	0.16 mnt	-4% y-o-y	0.65 mnt
Ukraine	0.02 mnt	0.07 mnt	-74% m-o-m	0.10 mnt	0.04 mnt	+161% y-o-y	0.15 mnt
Kyrgyzstan	0.05 mnt	0.03 mnt	+89% m-o-m	0.09 mnt	0.04 mnt	+123% y-o-y	0.35 mnt
Others	0.03 mnt	0.06 mnt	-57% m-o-m	0.48 mnt	0.43 mnt	+13% y-o-y	0.53 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.34 mnt</b>	<b>0.36 mnt</b>	<b>-5% m-o-m</b>	<b>1.45 mnt</b>	<b>1.21 mnt</b>	<b>+19% y-o-y</b>	<b>3.52 mnt</b>
<b>North America (USMCA)</b>							
Mexico	0.08 mnt	0.08 mnt	-4% m-o-m	0.35 mnt	0.42 mnt	-16% y-o-y	0.99 mnt
USA	0.07 mnt	0.07 mnt	-6% m-o-m	0.30 mnt	0.36 mnt	-15% y-o-y	0.76 mnt
Canada	0.05 mnt	0.05 mnt	-2% m-o-m	0.17 mnt	0.17 mnt	-2% y-o-y	0.50 mnt
Others	0.0003 mnt	0.0004 mnt	-22% m-o-m	0.001 mnt	0.001 mnt	+5% y-o-y	0.003 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.19 mnt</b>	<b>0.20 mnt</b>	<b>-4% m-o-m</b>	<b>0.82 mnt</b>	<b>0.95 mnt</b>	<b>-13% y-o-y</b>	<b>2.25 mnt</b>
<b>Asia-Pacific</b>							
Australia	0.08 mnt	0.05 mnt	+47% m-o-m	0.31 mnt	0.32 mnt	-3% y-o-y	0.78 mnt
New Zealand	0.01 mnt	0.01 mnt	+32% m-o-m	0.07 mnt	0.05 mnt	+53% y-o-y	0.13 mnt
Papua New Guinea	0.02 mnt	0.02 mnt	+7% m-o-m	0.06 mnt	0.05 mnt	+25% y-o-y	0.12 mnt
Maldives	0.006 mnt	0.002 mnt	+176% m-o-m	0.02 mnt	0.01 mnt	+89% y-o-y	0.03 mnt
Fiji	0.004 mnt	0.004 mnt	-4% m-o-m	0.01 mnt	0.01 mnt	+45% y-o-y	0.03 mnt
Others	0.011 mnt	0.006 mnt	+78% m-o-m	0.03 mnt	0.03 mnt	+13% y-o-y	0.07 mnt
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.13 mnt</b>	<b>0.09 mnt</b>	<b>+41% m-o-m</b>	<b>0.51 mnt</b>	<b>0.47 mnt</b>	<b>+10% y-o-y</b>	<b>1.17 mnt</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>10.3 mnt</b>	<b>9.5 mnt</b>	<b>+9% m-o-m</b>	<b>44.6 mnt</b>	<b>48.5 mnt</b>	<b>-8% y-o-y</b>	<b>119 mnt</b>

All above figures are rounded off. | Quantity in million tonnes (mnt) | % change in month-on-month (m-o-m) % change in year-on-year (y-o-y) | Source: BigMint

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