

## India strengthening quality standards to check low grade imports

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is developing quality standards for many products in order to prevent import of low quality products into the country, which may pose damage to consumer health and environment. As of 31 March, 2019, the bureau introduced 20,227 standards for various consumer and industrial goods.

However, India is said to have developed standards for hardly 10% of all imported products, while the remaining products remain unregulated. Last year, Government of India suggested BIS to develop standards for more than 4,500 products (HS codes), for regulating import of sub-standard goods. In recent months, the BIS introduced technical standards for 150 products, which account for USD 47 billion of India's imports (in 2018-19), media reports suggest. In September 2019, the bureau introduced quality standards to regulate low grade import of batteries. Following this, India's import of batteries declined 75% to 20 million units in April-September 2020 from the year ago period.

However, still there are many products for which no local standards are available, which encourages import of sub-standard products from abroad. For instance, industry sources allege that import of sub-standard aluminum scrap has increased in recent period into India as the country does not have quality standards to regulate this product. USA is said to be dumping huge amount of aluminum scrap into India after China and European Union discouraged import of this product by imposing quality stringent standards. Rise in import of low grade aluminum scrap not only affects the quality of the end products which uses this scrap, but also hurts the sales of local aluminum producers. Although India has enough capacity to meet local demand for aluminum, imports of aluminum scrap from USA is learnt to have increased 327% between 2016 and 2020.

Stringent quality standards are required not only to protect consumer health and environment, but also to safeguard national security interest. Import of certain electronic goods can harm the national security as they may be embedded with malware capable of triggering cyber attacks. However, while framing product quality standards, India should ensure that these standards are in line with international benchmarks as we are one of the signatories of the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT). Under this agreement, India should align its National Standards with International Standards. As mandated by WTO, India's BIS harmonized 525 domestic standards with international standards last year. However, while framing its quality standards, the WTO has provided leeway for member countries to include certain country -specific technical requirements to meet the unique challenges faced by different countries in health, safety, environment and national security.

## Notifications

### PIB

Minister calls for joint efforts to support MSMEs in gems and jewellery sector

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1676098>

Invest India launches SDG Investors Map

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1675985>

India, Finland to cooperate in environment protection efforts

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1676034>

Minister calls for exemption of toll plaza pacts from stamp duty in UP

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1676146>

Ministry issues Draft Merchant Shipping Bill

<https://www.pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1676050>

### CBIC

Revision in Customs Duty on crude palm oil to 27.5%

<https://www.cbic.gov.in/resources//htdocs-cbec/customs/cs-act/notifications/notfns-2020/cs-tarr2020/cs43-2020.pdf>

Extension of anti-dumping duty on Polyester Yarn

<https://www.cbic.gov.in/resources//htdocs-cbec/customs/cs-act/notifications/notfns-2020/cs-add2020/csadd39-2020.pdf>