Thailand Fastener Trade Update: Import Pressure, Export Gains and the 2026 Market Test

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Thailand's fastener market is enters 2026 with strong industrial demand, continued reliance on imported supply and clearer export gains in selected overseas markets. The country still imports far more iron and steel fasteners than it exports, but recent partner-side data show that **Thai suppliers are gaining ground in markets such as the European Union, Japan and the United States**. This makes Thailand an important fastener market to watch. It is not only a domestic consumption market for screws, bolts, nuts, washers and rivets. It is also becoming a more visible supply point within Asia's changing industrial chains. For a country with strong activity in automotive production, electronics, machinery, construction, appliances and industrial assembly, fasteners remain small but essential components. When production expands, fastener demand usually moves with it.

A Fastener Market Still Pulled by Industrial Demand

The latest complete country-level benchmark confirms the scale of Thailand's fastener demand. In 2024, Thailand imported USD 1.037 billion of iron and steel fasteners under HS 7318 and exported USD 594.5 million. This left a trade deficit of about USD 442.8 million, with exports covering 57.3 percent of imports. The purpose of this benchmark is not to make 2024 the main story, but to show the market size Thailand carried into the latest trade cycle. A country importing more than USD 1 billion of fasteners is a major destination for global suppliers and an important ASEAN market.

▼ Table 1. Thailand's Fastener Trade Position

Import	Export	Trade Deficit	Exports VS. Imports
USD 1.037 billion	USD 594.5 million	USD 442.8 million	57.3%

Thailand's import dependence reflects the structure of its manufacturing base. Industrial users need fasteners with different grades, coatings, tolerances, quality approvals and customer specifications. Some products can be supplied locally, while others continue to come from established overseas sources because of technical requirements, buyer approval or price competitiveness.

China and Japan Still Anchor Thailand's Supply

China and Japan remain the two main external pillars of Thailand's fastener supply chain, but they serve the market differently. China continues to dominate the volume side, while Japan appears more concentrated in higher-value industrial supply.

China exported USD 254 million worth of fasteners to Thailand in the first three quarters of 2025, with a reported volume of about 107,000 tons. Even without the fourth quarter, Thailand was already China's sixth-largest fastener export market during that period. This confirms Thailand's role as a major destination for high-volume fastener supply.

Japan also remained a key supplier. In 2025, Japan exported 33,797 tons of fasteners to Thailand, valued at 39.686 billion yen. Converted at the 2025 annual average exchange rate, this equals about USD 265.3 million. The value is close to China's reported January to September shipments, but Japan's volume was much lower, giving Japan a far higher unit value per ton.

▼ Table 2. Latest Supply-Side Signals for Thailand

	China (Jan. to Sep. 2025)	Japan (Full year 2025)
Value	USD 254 million	USD 265.3 million
Volume	107,000 tons	33,797 tons
Approx. Unit Value	USD 2,374 per ton	USD 7,851 per ton
	Strong volume supply	Higher-value industrial supply

Note: Japan's yen value is converted using the 2025 annual average exchange rate of 149.5686 yen per U.S. dollar. China's figures cover January to September 2025, while Japan's figures cover the full year.

The unit-value gap is one of the most useful insights in the latest data. China's reported exports to Thailand averaged about USD 2,374 per ton, while Japan's exports averaged about USD 7,851 per ton. This does not mean one source is better than the other. It shows that Thailand imports different product mixes from each country. China appears stronger in high-volume, price-competitive supply, while Japan appears more focused on higher-value fasteners used in quality-sensitive applications such as automotive, machinery and precision manufacturing.

For Thai manufacturers, this dual supply structure is useful but also risky. China supports cost and availability. Japan supports technical reliability and customer-approved supply. The challenge is to balance price, quality, delivery time and supply-chain resilience.

Thai Exports Gain Ground in Key Markets

Thailand's fastener export position is stronger than its import deficit suggests. Recent partner-side data show positive movement in demanding markets, especially the EU and Japan, while the United States remains an important destination.

The EU imported EUR 119.19 million of HS 7318 fasteners from Thailand in 2025, compared with EUR 103.47 million in 2024. Import volume increased from 60.34 million kg to 74.37 million kg. Using the 2025 annual average exchange rate, the 2025 EU value equals about USD 129.0 million, with an approximate unit value of USD 1,734 per ton.

Japan's import data also show growth. Japan imported 4,195 tons of fasteners from Thailand in 2025, valued at 4.842 billion yen. Converted to U.S. dollars, this equals about USD 32.4 million, with an approximate unit value of USD 7,715 per ton. In 2024, Japan imported 3,656 tons from Thailand, valued at 3.997 billion yen.

The United States remained another important destination. U.S. imports of screws, bolts, nuts, washers and similar iron or steel articles from Thailand reached USD 119.06 million in 2025. The available source does not provide a comparable quantity figure, so a unit-value calculation is not included for the U.S. market.

Table 3. Thailand's Export Signals in Selected Markets					
Destination Market	2024	2025	Change	Approx. 2025 USD Equivalent	Approx. 2025 Unit Value
EU import value from Thailand	EUR 103.47 million	EUR 119.19 million	+15.2%	About USD 129.0 million	About USD 1,734 per ton
EU import volume from Thailand	60.34 million kg	74.37 million kg	+23.2%		
Japan import value from Thailand	3.997 billion yen	4.842 billion yen	+21.1%	About USD 32.4 million	About USD 7,715 per ton
Japan import volume from Thailand	3,656 tons	4,195 tons	+14.7%		
U.S. import value from Thailand	Not used as comparison	USD 119.06 million	2025 market confirmation	USD 119.06 million	Not available

The export unit values show that Thailand's shipments to Japan had a much higher unit value than shipments to the EU. This suggests that Thailand's fastener exports are not uniform across markets. Japan may be buying a more technical or higher-value product mix, while the EU may include a larger share of volume-oriented products. These figures are commercially important because the EU, Japan and the United States are demanding markets. Buyers usually expect consistent quality, correct classification, reliable packaging, traceability, material documentation and stable delivery. Thailand's ability to increase exports to the EU and Japan suggests that Thai suppliers are finding space where reliability and documentation matter, not only price.

Early 2026 Trade Conditions: Strong Exports, Heavier Imports

Thailand's wider trade figures in early 2026 show an active but pressured industrial environment. In April 2026, exports reached USD 31.583 billion, up 23.1 percent year on year. Imports rose faster, increasing 45.0 percent to USD 41.604 billion.

This produced a monthly trade deficit of USD 10.021 billion. For January to April 2026, Thailand's exports reached USD 127.753 billion, up 18.9 percent. Imports reached USD 147.251 billion, up 35.7 percent, leaving a trade deficit of USD 19.498 billion.

Table 4. Thailand's Trade Context in Early 2026		
Indicator	April 2026	Jan. to Apr. 2026
Total exports	USD 31.583 billion	USD 127.753 billion
Total imports	USD 41.604 billion	USD 147.251 billion
Export growth	+23.1%	+18.9%
Import growth	+45.0%	+35.7%
Trade balance	-USD 10.021 billion	-USD 19.498 billion
Industrial product export growth	+27.5%	+22.8%

For fastener companies, the industrial product figure is especially relevant. Industrial exports increased 27.5 percent in April and 22.8 percent during the first four months of the year. The official trade release also showed expansion in product groups closely linked with fastener consumption, including computers and equipment, automobiles and parts, telephones and components, integrated circuits, machinery and parts, and rubber products.

This does not prove that fastener exports grew at the same rate. It does show that Thailand's industrial base remained active. When automotive parts, machinery, electronics and assembly-related exports expand, the demand environment for fasteners usually improves through production, replacement, maintenance and export manufacturing.

What the Latest Data Mean for Suppliers

The latest figures point to two layers of opportunity. For foreign suppliers, Thailand remains attractive because its industrial base still requires large volumes of imported fasteners. China and Japan already hold strong positions, but there is still room for suppliers offering certified products, stable delivery, corrosion-resistant finishes, technical support and application-specific fasteners. For Thai manufacturers, the opportunity is more selective. Competing directly with China in basic high-volume products is difficult, while competing with Japan in highly approved precision segments requires strong technical capability. The more realistic growth space is in reliable industrial fasteners, flexible orders, shorter lead times, regional delivery and export-ready documentation.

For distributors, the key advantage will be inventory depth and technical service. Thailand's buyers need both price-competitive products and higher-value fasteners for automotive, machinery, electronics, construction and industrial assembly. Distributors that can reduce sourcing risk and support product selection will remain important.

Export Growth Will Depend on Capability

Thailand's export gains in the EU and Japan show that Thai fastener producers can compete in demanding markets. The next stage, however, will depend less on volume and more on quality systems, traceability, material certificates, coating information, product testing and correct documentation. This is becoming more important because export markets are paying closer attention to origin, transshipment and compliance risks. For Thai suppliers, transparent documentation can become a practical competitive advantage, especially when selling to buyers in the United States, the EU and Japan.

Risks and Market Outlook

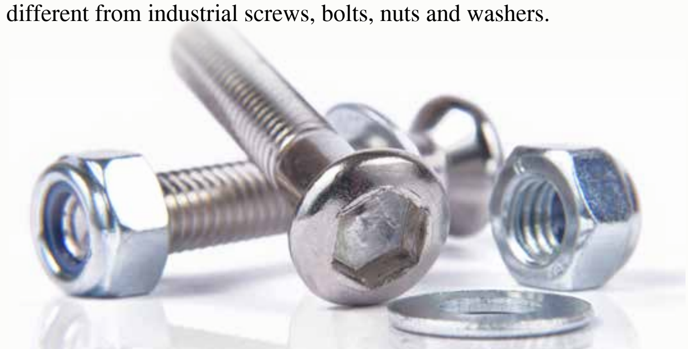
Thailand's fastener outlook is active but not risk-free. The main risk is supply concentration. China and Japan are essential suppliers, but dependence on a few major sources exposes Thai buyers to freight disruption, exchange-rate pressure, tariff changes and geopolitical uncertainty. Margin pressure is another issue. Strong Chinese supply keeps prices competitive in standard product categories. Thai producers that remain in basic products may struggle unless they offer faster delivery, better service or more technical value.

The 2026 outlook remains positive but selective. Domestic demand should be supported by manufacturing, export production, maintenance and infrastructure-related activity. Import demand is also likely to remain strong because many Thai manufacturers still depend on approved overseas suppliers. Export growth should continue where Thai suppliers can meet buyer requirements for quality, documentation and delivery reliability. The strongest opportunity is not to position Thailand only as a low-cost producer, but as a reliable regional fastener supply base for ASEAN and selected global markets.

Product Segments to Watch

Screws and bolts remain the most important product group to watch because they are widely used in automotive, machinery, electronics, metal fabrication and construction. Self-tapping screws are also important because of their use in appliances, sheet metal, electrical products and light manufacturing.

Nails, tacks and staples should be monitored separately. They are fastening-related products, but their demand drivers and pricing are different from industrial screws, bolts, nuts and washers.



Conclusion

Thailand's fastener market is moving on two tracks. The country remains heavily dependent on imported fasteners, especially from China and Japan, but Thai exports are also gaining ground in important markets such as the EU, Japan and the United States. The latest data show a market shaped by strong industrial demand, import pressure and selective export growth. For the fastener industry, Thailand should be watched closely in 2026 because it reflects a wider shift in Asian manufacturing. Buyers want cost efficiency, but they also need quality, documentation, reliable delivery and supply-chain resilience. The companies best positioned for this market will be those that can offer more than low prices. Reliable supply, consistent quality, technical support and proper documentation will define Thailand's next phase in the fastener trade. ■

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