

China targets Japanese companies over military ties

[AFP](#) :: China took action against 40 Japanese companies and entities on Tuesday, citing national security concerns, the latest escalation of a months-long row that has seen tourism to Japan plummet.

The two countries have been locked in a spat over comments by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi in November that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on self-ruled Taiwan.

In the latest move, Beijing's commerce ministry restricted exports to 20 Japanese entities, including Mitsubishi and the Japanese space agency, accusing them of helping to enhance Japan's military capabilities.

From Tuesday, Chinese exporters will not be able to supply dual-use items to the listed Japanese entities, and overseas firms are banned from providing them with dual-use items originating in China.

The ministry added a further 20 Japanese entities, including Subaru, to a "watch list" requiring stricter reviews of exported items that could be used for military purposes.

"The above measures are aimed at curbing Japan's 'remilitarisation' and nuclear ambitions and are completely legitimate, reasonable and lawful," a commerce ministry statement said.

A Japanese trade official told AFP Tokyo would "take appropriate measures" after analysing the impact of the new export curbs.

– Diplomatic row –

Travel to Japan, long a popular destination for Chinese tourists, has plummeted since November as Beijing warned its

citizens against going there.

Japanese media also reported in November that China had suspended imports of Japanese seafood, which it had only recently resumed purchasing after a previous ban over wastewater release from the Fukushima nuclear plant in 2023.

Tokyo returned two pandas to China last month, leaving Japan without any of the bears for the first time in 50 years.

Also last month, Beijing announced a broad ban on the export of “dual-use” goods with potential military applications to Japan.

But the latest move singles out dozens of Japanese heavyweights, with shares of several firms falling after the announcement.

“China’s lawful listing actions target only a small number of Japanese entities, relevant measures target dual-use items and do not impact normal economic (exchanges) and trade between China and Japan,” the commerce ministry said.

“Honest and law-abiding Japanese entities have nothing to worry about,” it added.

Companies on the “watch list” can apply to be removed if they cooperate with Beijing’s verification terms.

In recent months, China has also begun restricting exports to Japanese companies of scarce and expensive “heavy” rare earths, as well as the powerful magnets containing them, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing two exporters in China.

AFP