TATA STEEL

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WE MUST ACT

Tata Steel has announced its proposal to restructure and transform Tata Steel UK.

In a message to the entire workforce, CEO Rajesh Nair said: "We must act. We must take this critical step to secure our future and enable us to transition to financially viable, low-carbon steelmaking.

"This is a critical juncture that would allow us to build a long-term green steel future for our employees, our communities, and for future generations.

"If we are not able to seize this opportunity, the overall future of our business could be jeopardised."

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WHAT'S INSIDE

Third quarter financial results released for Tata Steel UK

Tata Steel UK's third quarter losses were revealed as being £(159) million – a daily loss of £1.7m for the 92-day period.

This was despite the company using less in raw materials and energy due to recent operational challenges.

This means the company has lost £330m in the first nine months of the financial year.

Commenting on the results, Koushik Chatterjee, Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer of the parent company Tata Steel Limited, said: "The UK business continues to face production shortfalls arising from the end-of-life condition of several of its heavy end assets.

"Our announcement on 19 January in relation to Tata Steel UK follows detailed discussions and careful consideration of the alternative proposal from the representative body of the UK trade unions and their advisor.

"The company's analysis shows that partial continuity of blast furnaces until completion of transition to the EAF is not affordable, and engineering studies have found that building the EAF in an already operating steel melt shop is not feasible.

"Tata Steel is acutely aware of the impact of its proposal to wind down the heavy end in Port Talbot on individuals and the local community associated with the steel works. We will meaningfully consult with our employees and work to provide them with a fair, dignified and considerate outcome.

"Tata Steel proposes to commit in excess of £130m to a comprehensive support package for affected employees. This is in addition to the £100m funding for the Transition Board set up by the company along with the UK and Welsh governments.

"Tata Steel has begun engineering design work on the EAF and discussions with National Grid for supporting infrastructure with a target to commission the EAF by 2027."

Securing our future

'We must seize this opportunity'

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The company's proposal, which is subject to consultation, would lead to a reduction of up to 2,800 roles across the business.

The proposal follows detailed discussions with the UK Steel Committee (UKSC) and its advisors, and careful consideration of the UKSC's endorsed proposal for maintaining a single blast furnace and other associated Heavy End operations in Port Talbot.

Rajesh explained: "While we have agreed to adopt an element of the endorsed proposal, we consider that the continuation of a single blast furnace operation, including steelmaking production, is not feasible or affordable during the delivery of the transformation project."

As part of the company's proposal, Port Talbot's two high-emission blast furnaces and coke ovens would close in a phased manner.

The first blast furnace would close around mid-2024 calendar year and the remaining Heavy End assets would wind down during the second half of 2024 calendar year.

Rajesh continued: "However, as a result of our discussions with the UKSC, we have revised our proposal and will continue to operate the Port Talbot hot strip mill throughout the transition period, instead of mothballing the asset."

The company's proposal also includes the wider restructuring of other locations and functions across the business, including the proposed closure of Port Talbot's Continuous Annealing Processing Line (CAPL) in March 2025. In addition, the company's downstream and steel processing centres would continue to serve customers by utilising imported semi-finished steel from Tata Steel Group, as well as other select strategic suppliers.

Rajesh acknowledged the potential impact of the company's proposal and reassured the workforce that support would be made available.

He said: "I understand this proposal could have a major impact on you, your family, and the wider community. In such difficult times, it is important that we do everything we can to support each other. There are people and organisations you can lean on for support, including our independently managed Employee Assistance Programme, mental health first aiders, your line manager, and your local trades union representatives."

He also made an important safety appeal: "While I fully understand how difficult it will be for you to hear this news, I make a plea that it does not distract you from undertaking your daily tasks safely. Keeping ourselves and each other healthy and safe must be our absolute focus.

"There is never a good time to make such difficult announcements, but everything points to that time being now."

Answering your key questions

***Steel News* caught up with Tata Steel UK's Chief Executive Officer, Rajesh Nair, to understand more about the company's proposals to restructure and transform Tata Steel UK**

The company's proposal, which is subject to consultation, would lead to a reduction of up to 2,800 roles across the business. How can you justify such proposals?

I am acutely aware of the profound impact these proposals would have on the local community and potentially affected employees – many of whom have worked with us for most of their lives. I understand the course we are putting forward is difficult, but we believe it is the right one.

It is important to recognise that by taking these difficult decisions we will preserve the long-term future of our steel industry, not just in Port Talbot, but in the UK more broadly.

The proposals would secure the remaining 5,000 jobs across Tata Steel UK and many thousands more across our supply chain.

What are the next steps for those potentially impacted by the proposed role reductions?

The company will start a formal information sharing and consultation process with employees and their representatives on the proposals. We will meet with trade union representatives at a national level and then at a local work level. During the consultation process we will discuss the proposed employee and organisation changes, as well as measures to support employees in roles potentially impacted by the proposal. Following these meetings, we will then meet individually with the employees impacted by the proposed role reductions.

We will look to maximise voluntary redundancies and we propose to commit in excess of £130m to a comprehensive support package for potentially affected employees, including redundancy terms, community programmes, skills training and job-seeking initiatives.

The dedicated Transition Board – which is made up of Tata Steel representatives, trade union partners, local representatives, as well as the UK and Welsh governments – will also offer comprehensive support to individuals potentially affected, as well as the local community.

The board itself is structured into two specialised sub-groups: one focused on people, skills, and businesses, and the other on place and regeneration. Through these sub-groups and the £100m support fund, the board will provide support.

Why doesn't the company keep one blast furnace open, as the UK Steel Committee advisers proposed?

We carefully considered the UK Steel Committee's endorsed proposal for partial continuity of blast furnace steelmaking assets until electric arc furnace facilities are commissioned in Port Talbot.

We commissioned independent engineering studies and analysis of alternative scenarios, which showed that continued blast furnace production – while constructing the new electric arc furnace – would not be feasible because the projected operating costs of such a configuration would be financially unaffordable; building the EAF in an already operating steel melt shop would be fraught with risk, significantly increasing costs, creating a sub-optimal plant layout, delaying implementation of the plan and jeopardising the proposed business transformation programme; and the near end-of-life condition and deteriorating operating performance of several of our heavy end assets in Port Talbot.

How will Tata Steel UK secure continuity of supply to its customers through its downstream and steel processing sites?

We have developed detailed plans which would enable us to secure continuity of supply for UK and overseas customers, utilising imported semi-finished steel – including from Tata Steel plants in the Netherlands and India, as well as other select strategic suppliers – until the commencement of electric arc furnace production.

The best way forward

Tata Steel Group's CEO and Managing Director, TV Narendran, laid out the company's proposals for sustaining Tata Steel UK and transitioning from blast furnaces to making 'green' steel through electric arc furnaces, in a series of broadcast interviews with BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Sky News and Times Radio. Here's what he had to say . . .

Tata Steel Group's CEO and Managing Director, TV Narendran, spoke directly to the broadcast media following the company's announcement

"It is a very difficult day; we fully empathise with that. It's not something we would have liked to happen, but I think we tried very hard over the past 15 years to preserve the site.

"We've had a lot of challenging times, our employees have worked together with us through these times and made sacrifices. But we've reached a stage where continuing as we are is no longer an option and creating a sustainable future is what we think is the best way forward.

"We have invested something like £5 billion to keep the business going, so it is not that we have given up in a hurry, it's not that we have not tried hard enough.

"But now the question is, how do we create a future which is sustainable? How do we create a future where we are not always so fragile and standing at the edge of a cliff? How do we build a future for steelmaking, which keeps up with the times because you need to have low-carbon steelmaking?

"We felt the best way to secure the future is by taking advantage of the scrap that is available in the UK, rather than using imported iron and coal to make steel here.

"Companies across the world are shifting over to scrap-based steelmaking, and in Europe it's already happening, so why should we not do it?

"We've had many conversations with the unions, particularly over the past four months. We've seriously considered their proposal, we've looked at all the details, we've incorporated some of the suggestions into our plan.

"But there are multiple challenges: the financial challenge is that it would cost something like £600m more to keep running the blast furnace.

"There's an additional £200m cost to the project and then on top of that there would be a project delay of at least 10-12 months.

"Obviously we do believe that our proposed way forward is the best way forward to secure the future of the Port Talbot site."

Mr Narendran went on to answer questions about the £500m funding the company will receive from the UK Government. He said: "This money is available to us when we start constructing the new plant. The £1.25bn plan is to build the new steelplant, so any losses that we incur is to Tata Steel's account. That is in addition to what we're investing to build the new plant."

When asked whether he was prepared to guarantee that the electric arc furnace would actually be installed, Mr Narendran said: "Absolutely. In fact, we want to get started as soon as possible."

Mr Narendran also responded to questions about whether additional money from the UK Government would have changed the decision. He said: "Not in terms of the way forward because if you look at what's happening in Europe, if you want to have a lower carbon footprint making steel, everyone is shifting to electric arc furnaces.

"If you want to bring down carbon emissions significantly in the steel industry anywhere in the world, it's about replacing blast furnaces with other process routes.

"If there's gas available here, or if there's more incentive for us to set up what we call a DRI unit (Directly Reduced Iron), then you can set up those facilities that can feed into the EAF.

"So, in our discussions with the government going forward, this is step one. If the government is incentivising or encouraging more consumption of steel – for instance, in the UK – we are happy to grow. If demand goes up, why would we not want an opportunity to unlock more value here after we've invested so much time trying to preserve the place?

"We want to be spending money to unlock more value rather than struggling to survive."

Mr Narendran was also challenged about the company having to import steel.

He explained: "Only for maybe a year or two, when you are shutting down the furnaces and building the new one, because there is a period when we have to take care of our customers. We have 4,000 people working in downstream units, we don't want them to run dry as we transform Port Talbot, so for that period, yes we will be importing steel, but once we have the EAF, we think 2027 latest we don't need to import any steel."

Rajesh Nair

View from the **top**

We must act now to secure our future

Obviously, my column today is dominated by the difficult decision to announce our proposal to restructure and transform Tata Steel UK.

There is never a right time to make such announcements.

Sadly, the reality we face today means we must act now to secure our future.

The fact that our proposal will impact the lives of so many of our incredibly talented and loyal workforce weighs heavily on me and I am deeply sorry for that.

By now, you should have attended a briefing and had the opportunity to ask your questions. Some questions I can respond to, but others I will be able to answer as we progress through formal consultation.

As expected, there has been a huge amount of media coverage. I expect this will continue.

While much of the commentary has been accurate, some of the claims have presented an incomplete or even a misleading picture.

There has also been plenty of political activity.

For me, it is gratifying to see that so many people across the spectrum care so much about our business, our sector, and our communities.

And that they realise just how important steel is to the UK economy and to the UK's net zero ambitions.

During this difficult period, I urge the workforce to continue to remain focused and ensure we maintain safe and reliable operations.

It's a message you hear time and again, but it is one that is more important now than ever to make sure everyone goes home safely.

We continue to deliver for our customers. Across our downstream operations, production records are being broken in Shotton, customer visits continue, plus our investment projects in both Hartlepool and Corby continue.

I'd like to sign off by reminding you that support is available. Please do not struggle alone. Asking for help is a strength.

Thank you and stay safe.

Rajesh

Rajesh Nair
Chief Executive Officer

The facts about Tata Steel UK's pro

There has been a huge amount of media coverage and speculation on social media following Tata Steel's announcement on Friday, 19 January, about its proposal to transform and restructure the UK business. While much of the commentary has been accurate, some of the claims have presented an incomplete or even a misleading picture. Here, *Steel News* identifies some of the most popular claims and provides the facts to help people make up their own minds.

Steel sovereignty

Claim 1: Retaining our ability to make 'virgin' steel (producing steel from iron ore) is essential to the UK's national and economic security. The UK could be the only G20 country to leave itself without the capability to make 'virgin'/ primary steel?

Facts:
A) When iron-making furnaces were first built in Port Talbot, they could be supplied with locally-produced iron ore and coal. Making 'virgin'/ primary steel in Port Talbot today means importing millions of tonnes of iron ore and coal from around the world to feed the blast furnaces. More than 90% of these raw materials are imported from a small number of suppliers in countries as far away as Japan, Brazil and Australia.

B) In the coming years, the UK's abundant supply of steel scrap and increasing levels of renewable electricity will be able to feed and power Tata Steel's proposed electric arc furnace. This means our domestic self-sufficiency would increase – from just 10% of UK-sourced raw materials today to about three-quarters with an electric arc furnace, making steel production in Port Talbot more resilient to adverse global events and supply chain risks.

C) The resilience and sovereignty of the overall UK steel industry would also be significantly enhanced through this transition. We plan to make good use of the country's strong scrap supply resources, align with the country's renewable energy ambitions and position ourselves at the forefront of the global supply of green steel from a globally-competitive UK industry.

D) Tata Steel has also made clear that, with the right investment and policy environment, it is open to further investment, such as in a direct reduced iron (DRI) plant. We would look at the case for a potential DRI plant in the UK if the business conditions are right and, if in future, the Government supported further investment.

Claim 2: A direct reduced iron (DRI) plant built somewhere in the UK would secure the country's sovereign capability to produce 'virgin' steel from iron ore.

Facts: Our proposal to invest in an electric arc furnace (EAF) mirrors the successful installation of this low-carbon technology in other major steel-producing markets such as the United States, where emissions have been cut while guaranteeing production of complex, high-quality steel. More than 70% of steelmaking in the United States is now EAF-based. In Europe this figure is 40% and expected to rise sharply in the coming years as steelmakers make the switch from blast furnaces to electric arc furnaces.

But our focus on EAF technology would not be the end of our decarbonisation transformation in the UK. In fact, the installation of an electric arc furnace should be seen as part of the future transformation of Port Talbot in which a DRI plant could be added, provided there was financial support available and the business conditions were right (e.g. having access to competitively-priced natural gas and then green hydrogen, which is not the case currently).

Claim 3: A direct reduced iron (DRI) plant could replace the jobs lost from Port Talbot's heavy end.

Facts: DRI, or similar HBI (hot briquetted iron), plants around the world do not employ the same number of jobs as a steelworks' heavy end. They typically employ around 200 people.

For example, voestalpine created 190 jobs at this Texas plant which can produce 2 million tonnes of HBI by reducing iron ore. HBI, like DRI, is used in electric arc furnaces.

Steelmaking capabilities

Claim 4: EAF-produced steel is of a lower quality than blast furnace-produced steel and Tata Steel UK will not be able to make the same products for customers.

Facts: EAF technology can already make 90% of the grades of steel which blast furnaces can. Adding an iron source to the scrap in the EAF – i.e. direct reduced iron, hot briquetted iron or pig iron – would enable us to manufacture the most demanding steel products for customers.

The United States has arguably led the way in developing ways to produce more complex grades of steels using EAFs so they can be used in some of the most demanding end uses, including in the automotive industry. Automotive and packaging companies are already buying flat steel products made in electric arc furnaces.

As part of Tata Steel's investment in the UK, we are looking to establish two new Centres for Innovation at the University of Manchester and Imperial College London. Working with world-leading academia, this multi-million pound investment will help us develop advanced materials for our customers. It would also complement R&D we are already doing at the University of Warwick and Swansea University.

With additional R&D, supply chain collaboration, and development of the UK's scrap supply chain we firmly believe we'll be able to supply the full order book by the time our proposed electric arc furnace comes onstream.

Funding

Claim 5: Government funding is investment in cutting jobs at Port Talbot.

Facts: This claim is not true. In fact, the Government funding is helping to secure 5,000 jobs at Tata Steel in the UK.

We want to build a business here in the UK which is both environmentally and financially sustainable. In order to do that, we need to address two key issues: our significant financial losses and the fact we are the country's largest CO_2 emitter. We need to restructure the business now to enable us to be able to invest, jointly with government, in a new electric arc furnace and upgrade other assets.

No Government would be able, or willing, to cover our financial losses. Instead, the UK Government plans to invest in green steelmaking technology at Port Talbot with money paid only as the project progresses. We won't receive anything until we actually start building the proposed new electric arc furnace.

Claim 6: The Labour party says it has a

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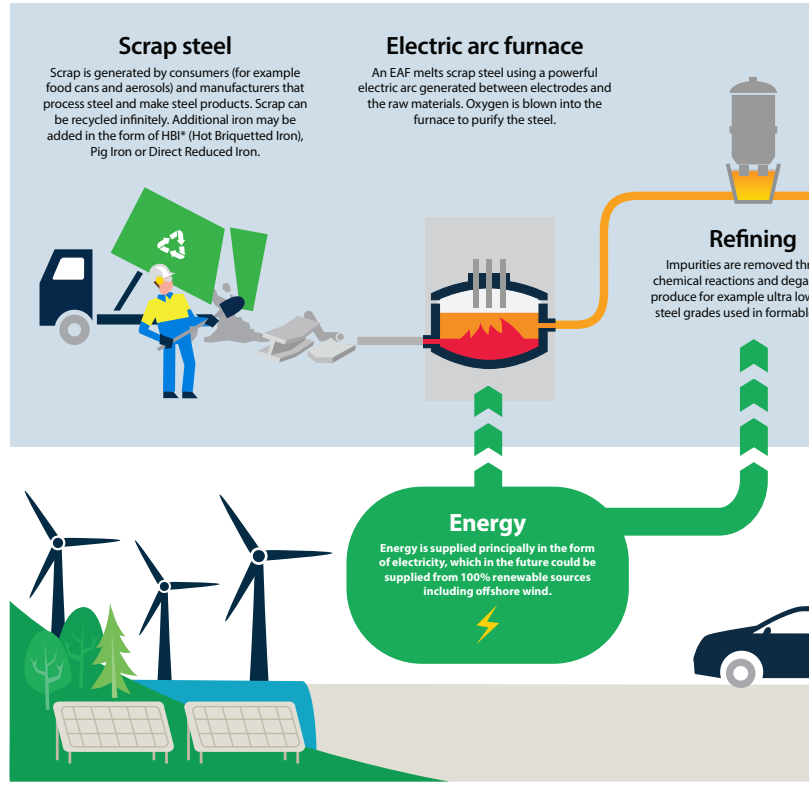
How electric arc furnace (EAF) steelmaking



posed green steel transformation

£3 billion green steel fund – why not wait for that?

Facts: It's important to recognise that Tata Steel UK is losing more than £1 million a day, so there's an urgent need to ensure the business is operationally and financially sustainable.

Governments can support investment in new technology, but they are not allowed under state aid rules to cover steel companies' financial losses. That means any financial losses have to be paid by Tata Steel, which is now unaffordable.

Tata Steel has, though, made clear it is open to further investment in the future, such as through a direct reduced iron (DRI) plant, but we need to develop a settled EAF-based configuration first. We would look at the case for a potential DRI plant if the business conditions are right.

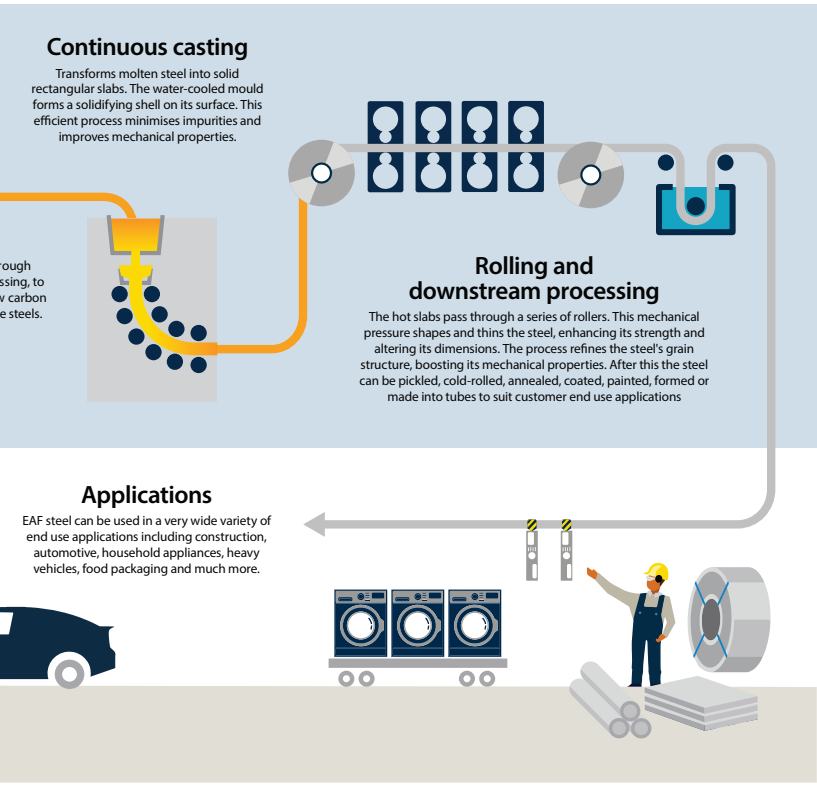
Company finances

Claim 7: Tata Steel UK is not losing £1 million a day – it's just not making as much profit as it would like to. How can Tata Steel UK still be operating if it's been making losses for so many years?

Facts:
A) The directors of Tata Steel UK have a legal duty to prepare annual accounts which give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company. PWC, an independent auditor, then inspects our accounts, like they do with other companies, to ensure they're correct and comply with the law. Our financial accounts are available for anyone to see on the UK's Companies House website. Our parent company, Tata Steel Limited, is publicly-listed in India with more than a million shareholders who effectively own it. It also publishes its financial results every three months, which include the UK business figures.

B) Those accounts show that since 2007, Tata Steel UK has lost more than £4 billion after tax. The business has only been able to keep going because our parent company in India has provided the necessary financial support. Without continued parental support, Tata Steel UK would not be able to carry on trading.

g works



C) With ageing assets, the UK losses in 2023 got even worse. In the past three months, we lost almost £160 million (EBITDA) – about £1.7 million a day. That's clearly not sustainable.

Claim 8: Tata Steel UK's parent company, Tata Steel Limited, makes good profits. Why can't they give more money to its UK business?

Facts:
A) Tata Steel Limited, like any public company, is accountable to its shareholders who reasonably expect to receive a return on their investment.

B) Tata Steel has been an incredibly patient investor in our UK business since it acquired Corus in 2007. It has invested £4.7 billion here in the UK, but has not earned either profits or received a single penny in dividends in return. It was also compelled to write off the entire amount of its investment in the UK business.

C) Imagine this was your money – would you invest in a company making financial losses with its current set-up? In our latest financial results, the UK business lost a further £159 million in just three months – that's £1.7 million a day.

D) Despite these losses and having to write off its investment in the UK, Tata Steel is still proposing to invest £750 million in electric arc furnace technology and asset upgrades to secure long-term, high-quality steel production in Port Talbot. It will also provide more than £150 million for a comprehensive support package for affected employees, community programmes, skills training and job-seeking initiatives, including through the Transition Board. Additionally, the company will continue to provide significant funding to cover expected cash losses for the UK business during the proposed transition.

Decarbonisation

Claim 9: Going green costs jobs. Jobs are being sacrificed in the pursuit of net-zero goals.

Facts:
A) We want to build a business here in the UK which is both environmentally and financially sustainable. In order to do that, we need to address two key issues: our significant financial losses and the fact we are the country's largest single CO_2 emitter.

B) The proposal to invest in electric arc furnace technology follows a comprehensive analysis into all the financial and technological options available for us. The transition mirrors the successful installation of EAFs in other major steel-producing markets such as the United States, where it has cut emissions whilst guaranteeing production of complex, high quality steel. On completion, the programme would transform the competitiveness of our UK business, secure most of our capability in terms of end products, whilst cutting our carbon emissions by about 85%.

C) Consumers' expectations are changing – they are demanding more sustainable products with a lower carbon footprint. Industry needs to change to meet those expectations. The demand for green steel is increasing while governments in advanced economies, like the UK and EU, are pushing industry to reduce emissions by increasing the cost of polluting. Currently, Tata Steel UK pays carbon costs of £70 - £80 million a year for operating its blast furnaces, with significantly higher costs expected over the coming years. It's not an option to continue with the status quo and if we don't act to dramatically reduce our CO_2 emissions, we will be out of business.

D) It is true an EAF-based operation requires fewer people to run it because we would not need coke ovens, a sinter plant, blast furnaces or a steelplant. But operating an EAF would give us the opportunity to invest further in other assets in the future and for Port Talbot to be at the centre of a green hub which attracts other investments and new jobs – everything from building offshore wind turbines to making low-carbon jet fuel.

E) We will continue to play a leading role in the creation of the Celtic Freeport to develop the huge investment and job opportunities which the transition to a green economy offers.

Claim 10: Rather than making steel in the UK, Tata Steel will import steel from countries with lower environmental standards during its transition phase.

Facts: We would need to import steel substrates (slab and coil) for a temporary period of time while the electric arc furnace is being built, but we do not expect this to lead to higher carbon emissions. Many of these steel imports would come from our sister plants in India and the Netherlands. Our plants in India have similar CO2 footprints as Port Talbot and our Dutch plant is one of the top three most CO_2 efficient steel plants in the world with 15% lower carbon emissions than Port Talbot.

The environmental cost of shipping steel substrate will be less than shipping raw materials from around the world to Port Talbot – for every 1 million tonnes of steel slab or coil we import, we would save importing about 2.5 million tonnes of raw materials, as we currently do. The future model of using UK-sourced scrap in an EAF would also lead to a big drop in raw material imports.

Customers' demands are rapidly changing . . . and EAFs serve a growing green steel market

Gareth Stace, Director General of UK Steel, wrote in the Sunday Times, dispelling myths around electric arc furnace technology and looking at opportunities for the future green steel market

The steel debate in the UK has many crossed wires about the ability of an electric arc furnace (EAF) to produce new steel across all the products and grades customers demand.

EAF technology can produce all steel products and grades by managing the raw material mix, such as high-quality scrap, and mixing pig-iron or Direct Reduced Iron (DRI). The quality of the materials supplied is extremely important.

While this is a major factor, the narrow focus on the EAF's technical capability slightly misses the point of what we are trying to achieve. The steel sector is faced with the colossal task of decarbonising, and EAF technology is the quickest and most efficient way for the UK industry to drastically reduce its emissions.

Why should the UK be left behind? Countries across the globe are investing significantly in electric arc furnace technology and driving innovation in their steel sector. If Kemi Badenoch reports to Parliament on primary steelmaking, I hope the Secretary of State recognises blast furnaces are not the only option to make 'virgin' steel.

While making some products via EAF can be more challenging, UK steelmakers will respond accordingly if the market demand for green steel products exists.

Sectors like the construction industry are now demanding green steel produced in an EAF – so the UK steel industry is responding by choosing to cut its carbon footprint and switch to EAF.

But there's also a 'build it, and they will come' mentality too: other industries will want low emission steel in the future.

The narrative seems to be hung up on what 'virgin' steel is and why a G20 economy needs to have virgin steelmaking capability. And yet this forgets virgin steel is made from imported iron ore and coal.

The claim the UK would be the only G20 country without primary steel production is incorrect – Saudi Arabia's (member of the G20) steel industry is 100% EAF. While we may not wish to make that comparison, we could look to Italy, a significantly bigger player in the global steel sector than the UK, where 84% of its production is EAF, 18.1 million tonnes, three times the UK steel output. Current investment plans in Europe, North America, Africa, and Central and Eastern Europe over the next couple of years are all EAF.

Meanwhile, we can make new steel from a recycled raw material we are sitting on in abundance – namely, scrap steel. There are more than 10 million tonnes of scrap steel collected in the UK annually, much of which is shipped abroad.

One key advantage of the UK steel sector is that, by and large, our six steel-producing companies do not compete with each other. Our competition lies elsewhere, in Europe and further afield. This means we can come together, to work for the greater good of our whole sector.

There is a strong future ahead – our customers are asking that we supply them with green steel more and more each day, and society wants us to get to net zero.

It's important, too, to have a government that is committed to work with us to deliver a globally competitive steel.

In the UK, four major companies make steel with EAF technology. Liberty Steel, Sheffield Forgemasters, Marcegaglia and Celsa Steel in Cardiff. The first three are making very high quality steels for demanding sectors.

One of the UK's greatest strengths is the research and innovation in universities up and down the country.

For example, Swansea University is leading a new research programme into the latest sorting and processing technology which will reduce non-desirable elements from scrap steel.

To produce some of the steel our economy needs, it is true that we will import pig iron and DRI. But rather than that fact being a barrier to vastly increasing our EAF capacity, government could set out a long-term vision like UK Steel and the industry did when we published our Net Zero roadmap report in 2022.

Electric arc furnaces serve a growing market for green steel. If our whole sector doesn't recognise that our customers' demands are changing, then we will certainly go out of business.

Let's have a factual debate on what the sector needs to do, in partnership with government, trade unions and our customers, to ensure steelmaking has a future in the UK.

The UK has an abundance of scrap steel that can be fed into an electric arc furnace to make new products

Puzzle solutions

Crossword and Sudoku solutions

Across: 1 Focus; 7 Provost; 9 Atishoo; 10 Uniform; 11 Axiom; 12 Evergreen; 16 Speedways; 21 Incur; 22 Horatio; 24 Unmoral; 25 Nelsons; 26 Runny. Down: 1 Fracas; 2 Critique; 3 Scheme; 4 Spouse; 5 Polo; 6 Stamen; 8 O-ring; 13 Vow; 14 Ray; 15 Electron; 16 Sphinx; 17 Ditto; 18 Arouse; 19 Simmer; 20 Brolly; 23 Role.

9	5	6	1	8	3	7	2	4
1	3	2	7	5	4	8	6	9
7	4	8	2	6	9	5	1	3
3	8	1	4	2	6	9	5	7
4	6	7	8	9	5	2	3	1
5	2	9	3	1	7	6	4	8
2	7	4	6	3	8	1	9	5
6	9	3	5	7	1	4	8	2
8	1	5	9	4	2	3	7	6

Serving customers during times of change

There has, quite rightly, been a focus on the impact of the restructuring announcement on those people and communities which could be directly affected in the coming months and years.

But how have customers reacted to the news? What have colleagues been doing to ensure they understand the proposals and what it will mean for the business during the transition and into the longer-term future?

Steel News caught up with Russell Codling, Director of Markets, Business Development and Commercial Services, to find out more.

"Most of our customers have been incredibly understanding and willing to navigate a path through any transition with us," he said. "Obviously, they are still keen to have more details on what will happen during transition and what EAF steelmaking will offer once it is in place."

For any customer, security of supply is vital – knowing the material they need will be available on time and to the correct specifications allows them to serve their own markets successfully.

Russell added: "Obviously our customers are having to plan their own decarbonisation journeys and are very keen to see how Tata Steel will be able to supply them low carbon green steel to support their own net zero goals."

However, for some customers – those who have traditionally taken products from CAPL – conversations have been harder.

"They have been very professional about it and appreciate that the timelines we have proposed mean they will have time to find alternative sources," he added.

For colleagues in the Commercial function, the work will continue to inform and serve customers.

Russell said: "The hard work everyone is doing in engaging with our customers, understanding their needs, and getting ready for both the transition period and what comes after it is amazing and very impressive."

Russell Codling, Director of Markets, Business Development and Commercial Services

Asking for help is a strength

Support is available, both within the business and externally, to anyone who may be struggling in the wake of the announcement.

From Tata Steel's huge network of mental health first aiders up and down the UK and the Employee Assistance Programme internally, to outside support groups such as Mind and the Samaritans – help is out there and available to every employee and contractor partner.

Ian Russon, Director of Health and Safety, said: "Following the announcement on Friday 19 January of the proposal to restructure and transform Tata Steel UK, it is entirely natural that many of us will be worried about the future – our own personal future, that of our teams, and the business as a whole.

"This is understandably an unsettling and stressful time, but plenty of support is available for anyone who may be struggling.

"You can access our free personal support service, the Employee Assistance Programme, run by Aviva's Care First, which has a dedicated team of experts on hand 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to help support your wellbeing. It is strictly confidential and is available both online and over the phone.

"Or, you can speak to your local Mental Health First Aider. We have 380 of them located across all our UK sites, and each one is trained to listen and signpost towards the appropriate support.

"If you're based in Port Talbot, the Wellbeing Hub – located next to the footbridge between the AGO and the canteen – is now operating a drop-in service, meaning there's no need for a referral. The Hub is a safe, confidential space where our Works Counsellor is on hand to help and support during difficult times.

"Alternatively, you can access a wealth of external organisations who have reached out to offer support to everyone."

Help is available for colleagues who may be struggling, including at the Wellbeing Hub in Port Talbot, which is now operating a drop-in service to support employees

A mental health and wellbeing support pack has been created to help signpost people towards the help they may need.

Ian also urged colleagues to look out for the people around them and reach out if they notice anyone struggling to cope.

"Though you can't make others feel better about them-selves, you can offer support and encour-age-ment," he said.

"I com-pletely under-stand how difficult a period this is for everyone, who may be feeling more stressed and anxious than usual.

"Please, don't struggle alone – help is on hand, whenever and however you may need it."

> **"Please, don't struggle alone – help is on hand, whenever and however you may need it**

Politics Corner

A turbulent year is in store for global politics

Many countries – 64 to be exact – will face the fate of the democracy this year. With a combined 49% of the global population having an opportunity to vote at polling stations for their next leader, 2024 looks set to be the year of political turmoil.

The USA has already kicked things off, as it looks like it will be a repeat of the 2020 election: Trump vs Biden. Others to watch out for are Russia, Ukraine, India and Taiwan – all of which take place in the first half of the year – and obviously (with its date to be confirmed) the UK.

Returning to domestic affairs, recent polling in the UK continues to show Labour leading comfortably, causing much anxiety for the governing party of 14 years. The current numbers indicate that Labour could receive 45% of the electorate's vote, Conservatives 25%, and 10% for the Lib Dems.

Many things are going to affect this general election . . . the NHS, the economy and industry, including steel. Recently, Tata Steel's transformation plans have been given significant airtime the House of Commons, Select Committees and the Senedd.

Every Wednesday at noon in the House of Commons, the Prime Minister is subject to a grilling by the opposition party. Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer did not disappoint last week, as Tata Steel news took centre stage.

He commented on the recent announcement, which he labelled a "farce", and suggested that the UK Government is handing out £500m to make 3,000 workers redundant, echoing many of the views within the press. Rishi Sunak stated numerous times in the debate that the Government has protected the steel industry and its jobs.

In Wales, the Senedd's focus hasn't strayed far from the announcement either. First Minister Mark Drakeford and Welsh Conservative leader Andrew RT Davies both took the opportunity to make it clear that the Welsh Government does not support the plan, and instead supports Syndex's plan. The company is dedicated to continuing to engage with politicians from both governments and all parties.

A lot can happen in the time from now until the general election, as past years have demonstrated, so all that's left to say is . . . watch this space.

Amelia

Amelia Quelch
Public Affairs and Community

Six Nations honour for steel hero's son

If you had tickets to the Wales vs Scotland game at this year's Six Nations in Cardiff, or watched it at home or in the pub, did you pay particular attention to the gameday mascot?

Why? Well, the son of one of Tata Steel's own employees had the honour of leading the team out onto the pitch on Saturday 3 February with Wales captain Dafydd Jenkins, before joining in with the players to sing the national anthem Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau.

Taylor is the son of proud dad Damien James, who works as a Sustainable Operational Excellence Coach in the SOE team at Port Talbot.

Steel News caught up with Damien, in between rolling out another SOE project, to find out more.

"Taylor is rugby mad; he's been playing since he learned to run and spends his weekends representing Maesteg Quins and Bridgend schools district team," said Damien.

"He couldn't believe it when he received the letter, he was truly over the moon. He was really looking forward to the experience.

"All his family and friends were watching and supporting him, but I did offer that if nerves got the better of him, then I'll put the red shirt on and join the team as a mascot!"

When asked about his dad's job, Taylor said: "What do you do, dad? I think you just stand up in front of people, talk and send emails!"

On Saturday, Taylor got to meet past and present players, and had a front row seat to cheer on the Welsh team.

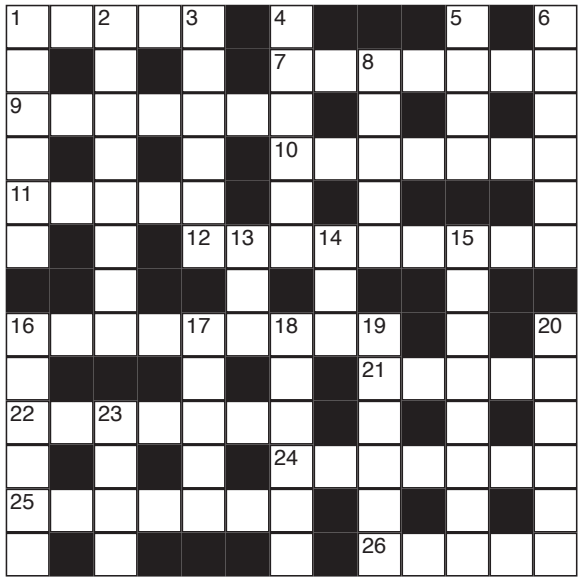
Rugby mad Taylor, son of employee Damien James, had the honours of being the match day mascot at the Wales Vs Scotland Six Nations game in February

And Taylor's prediction for the game?

"Wales to win, and I reckon the score will be Wales 22 Scotland 18," he said.

Although the prediction wasn't quite accurate Taylor thoroughly enjoyed his experience!

Crossword... solution on page 7



ACROSS

1 Centre of attention (5)
7 Head of an Oxbridge college (7)
9 Sound of a sneeze (7)
10 The same, unchanging (7)
11 Widely accepted principle (5)
12 Keeping leaves in winter (9)
16 Racetracks (9)
21 Bring about as result of actions (5)
22 Hornblower or Nelson? (7)
24 Unethical: dissolute (7)
25 Wrestling holds (7)
26 Excessively fluid (5)

DOWN

1 Noisy disturbance (6)
2 Analytical review (8)
3 Systematic plan (6)
4 Husband or wife (6)
5 Game played on horseback (4)
6 Fertilizing organ in plants (6)
8 Gasket (1-4)
13 Solemn promise (3)
14 Fish with winglike fins (3)
15 Subatomic particle (8)
16 Lion with woman's head (6)
17 The same: duplicate (5)
18 Wake from sleep (6)
19 Boil slowly (6)
20 Umbrella (6)
23 Actor's character in play (4)

Sudoku... solution on page 7

		6			3	7	2	
		2	7	5	4		6	
	4	8					1	
4	6		8	9			3	1
		9	3		7			8
2		4	6	3				
6		3						
8			9				7	

A look into the future

The global steel industry faces one of the biggest challenges in its history: how to significantly reduce its carbon emissions for the good of the climate, while continuing to underpin the manufacturing industry in its own development of green technologies such as wind turbines, solar farms and electric vehicles.

The latest series of Tata Steel UK's podcast, 'SteelCast', talks to industry experts, academics, politicians and customers not only about the challenges and opportunities of making green steel, but also about the huge amount of work already under way to reduce the company's carbon footprint and that of its products in use.

As Head of Public Relations and podcast host, Tim Rutter, said: "With the recent announcement of proposals to restructure the UK business, the subject of what happens next to the steel industry should be of interest to all those who have an interest in our business and the green industrial future of the UK."

The latest episode features Global CEO and MD of Tata Steel, Mr T V Narendran during his latest visit to Port Talbot.

You can download, listen and subscribe to the fantastic 'SteelCast' series wherever you get your podcasts – you can even watch the latest ones on YouTube!

Steel News

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