

Dhofar Steel to set up new rolling mill unit



Dhofar Steel, part of a well-diversified Omani corporate group, has announced plans to invest in the establishment of a steel rolling mill in Sohar Industrial Estate with raw material sourced from neighbouring Iran.

Group Chairman Salim al Mashekhi said, "The multi-million rial investment will see an existing billet manufacturing plant at Sohar upgraded and expanded into a major rolling mill with its output of reinforced steel bars targeted primarily at regional markets."

Speaking to the Observer, Al Mashekhi said, "The launch of a rolling mill will help position the growth of a strong and well-respected Omani brand in the domestic and regional markets."

"We launched Dhofar Steel around two years with the acquisition of a small steel billet manufacturing plant in Sohar. During this period, we have been testing the waters, and are now ready to upgrade our plant into a modern rolling mill. We are in discussion with our strategic partners in Iran for raw materials, and Turkey for equipment, to achieve our objectives."

Plans drawn up by Dhofar Steel envisage a rebar manufacturing capacity of 10,000-15,000 metric tonnes per month, slated for commissioning and launch within the next six to eight months, said Al Mashekhi. The plant's capacity could be potentially scaled up to 20,000-25,000 metric tonnes with the support of the company's strategic partners. A 25,000 sqmetre plot adjoining the existing facility has already been taken on lease by the company to accommodate the proposed expansion, he stated.

Importantly, a Steel Melt Shop integrated with the existing plant will allow for iron ore

to be imported from Iran as raw material for the project, the Group Chairman said. "Raw material will be sourced from Iran in the form of billets. However, as we also have a Melt Shop, we can import iron ore at competitive rates from Iran. We have already secured commitments in this regard from a top Iranian government official who had visited the Sultanate

recently," he pointed out.

According to the well-known Omani businessman, Omani-branded products are generally well-regarded in regional markets.

"We have increasingly found that our steel products, manufactured according to Omani specifications and bearing the 'Dhofar Steel' brand, are being well-received in regional markets, and we feel confident that our rebars will enjoy robust sales as well when we commence production."

Significantly, the planned launch of a new rolling mill will also be seen to help strengthen domestic production capacity of a commodity that is billed as strategically vital to the nation's ongoing modernization and economic development. Reinforced steel bars, along with cement, are important ingredients necessary to sustain the growth of the construction and infrastructure industry, which is one of the mainstays of the economy.

Egyptian shipyard cuts steel for navy corvette



Alexandria Shipyard in Egypt has started construction of the first DCNS-designed Gowind 2500 corvette to be built in the country.

The cutting of steel took place late and was witnessed by officials of the Egyptian navy and technical assistance and management teams of DCNS, a French company. Under a 2015 contract, DCNS is to provide the Egyptian navy with four Gowind 2500 corvettes. One is now under

construction in France; three others are to be built in Egypt by Alexandria Shipyards under a technology transfer provision of the award.

DCNS has sent supervision and technical assistance teams to Alexandria for the construction of the three corvettes. It also provides training of Egyptian shipyard staff at DCNS' site in Lorient, France. Gowind 2500 corvettes are 335 feet long, have a speed of 25 knots and a maximum range of 4,500 miles at a speed of 17 knots.