

Porsche training is prize for lucky few refugees

AFP, Stuttgart, Germany
Ammar Alkhouli "dreamed of owning a Porsche" when he lived in Syria, but he never imagined that he would one day get training from the German automobile giant to help build its luxury cars.

Aged just 19, Ammar was one of 13 asylum seekers to be offered a place on a refugee integration scheme launched by the Stuttgart-based company in March this year, in response to the massive influx of refugees to Germany in 2015.

Porsche wanted to "show the welcoming German culture and allow people to establish themselves as well and as quickly as possible," technical training director Norbert Goeggerle explains.

In this first year there were around 100 candidates for the five-month course, which offered German language, history and culture classes and coaching through the bureaucracy as well as instruction on business and technical training.

Participants, hailing from Eritrea, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Syria and aged between 16 and 38, were each paid a monthly stipend of 250 euros (\$280).

Now Ammar has secured a three-year apprenticeship as a mechatronics technician, a job where "you can dismantle and reassemble the engine," he explains, his eyes gleaming with excitement. When he arrived in Germany two years earlier, it was far from a given that Ammar would make such progress.

He didn't speak a single word of Goethe's language -- a far cry from the confident sentences he now produces with a slight accent.

"I fled for Germany because the situation in Syria is very bad, you can't live well there," he said. "My German friends tell me I was lucky to be at Porsche and that I had to make the most of it," he added.

Porsche, a subsidiary of car behemoths Volkswagen and a synonym for German engineering excellence, is a sought-after employer even among Germans. The firm is well-known for paying workers generous annual bonuses -- which this year amounted to more than 8,000 euros per person.



AFP/FILE
Ammar Alkhouli, left, a 19-year-old refugee from Syria, and German trainee Dennis Strohmaier work on a Porsche 911 Carrera S at the training centre of Porsche AG in Stuttgart, southwestern Germany.

Most of the refugees spoke very little German at the beginning of their five-month course. But training director Goeggerle was impressed by their "extremely strong motivation".

"We explained to them that the idea wasn't to offer them a job at Porsche, but they said to themselves, 'If I give it my all, it might work out,' and we noticed that. They were always punctual and very reliable," he said.

Another participant, Zaryab Imran, 18, had never heard of the carmaker when she arrived in Germany in April 2015.

"I wasn't safe in Pakistan," she explains in more hesitant German.

But she has secured a further training place at Porsche, heading for an apprenticeship, after she showed an interest in the cars' leather-upholstered interiors.

In fact, most of the 13 participants will stay at Porsche for multidisciplinary training, apprenticeships or even a full job offer on the production line.

While Porsche isn't short of applicants, German business is well aware that over the long term the refugees could be a boon to the country's economy.

Many business leaders welcomed 2015's influx as a potential source of new labour, at a time when Europe's biggest economy is struggling with an ageing population that is resulting in shortages of skilled labour in critical sectors like automobiles.

But refugees won't be a quick fix, as it will in most cases take years of education and training to prepare them for work in a German factory.

Many large- and medium-sized business have launched initiatives to try and smooth refugees' paths onto the labour market.

They've often found themselves blocked by complex bureaucracy, language barriers or the candidates' lack of qualifications. In the 2014-15 academic year, just 3.0 percent of companies that take apprentices counted refugees among them.

"Many small companies don't have the resources to train refugees," Goeggerle said. While Porsche would not reveal how much its integration has cost, it is repeating the exercise later this year, with 15 new participants set to start 10 months of training in December.

Oil rises on talk of producer action, but excess looms

REUTERS, London

Oil prices rose on Monday to their highest in nearly a month, with benchmark Brent crude trading more than 10 percent above the start of August, as speculation intensified about potential producer action to support prices in an oversupplied market.

Brent crude oil futures rose to a high for the month of \$47.67 a barrel on Monday before dipping back to \$47.10 per barrel at 0943 GMT, up 13 cents from their last settlement, and 11.3 percent above the last close in July.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude futures rose to a high of \$45.15 a barrel before dipping to \$44.63 a barrel, still up 14 cents from their last close. WTI has gained more than 7 percent in August.

On Monday, Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak bolstered hopes that oil producing nations could take action to stabilise prices, telling a Saudi newspaper that his country was consulting with Saudi Arabia and other producers to achieve market stability.

Still, analysts were sceptical that the market could maintain its strength, particularly as the excess of supply that has dogged producers for the past two years showed little sign of quickly abating.

"In our view a renewed price correction cannot be ruled out if market participants start focusing on the supply side again, for the latest drilling activity figures in the US cast doubts that the oversupply is really being eroded," Commerzbank analyst Carsten Fritsch said in a note.

Baker Hughes data released on Friday showed the number of rigs operating in the US rose by 15 last week to 396.

While far from the over 1,600 in operation in 2014 before the price rout, it has steadily risen from a low of just 316 in late May as US producers adjusted to lower prices.

Doubts also abounded over the chances of Opec putting aside a market share battle in order to prop up prices. Iran is edging out Russia in a fight to supply crude oil to Poland, while its crude exports to South Korea jumped nearly four fold in July from the previous year.

"The (Opec) meeting is unlikely to yield anything because Opec are caught in a squeeze," David Hufton of oil brokers PVM wrote on Monday. "On the supply side it is their own increase in production that is prolonging the price depression but if they freeze or restrain production to lift prices they will stimulate competing non-Opec supply and lose market share."

Tesla removes 'autopilot' from China website after Beijing crash

REUTERS, Shanghai/San Francisco

Tesla removed the word "autopilot" and a Chinese term for "self-driving" from its China website after a driver in Beijing who crashed in "autopilot" mode complained that the car maker overplayed the function's capability and misled buyers.

The Tesla driver crashed earlier this month while on a Beijing commuter highway after the car failed to avoid a vehicle parked on the left side, partially in the roadway, damaging both cars but causing no injuries.

It was the first known such crash in China, though it follows a fatal accident in Florida earlier this year that put pressure on the auto executives and regulators to tighten rules for automated driving.

"At Tesla we are continuously making improvements, including to translations," a Tesla spokeswoman said in an emailed statement to Reuters.

"We've been in the process of addressing any discrepancies across languages for many weeks. Timing had nothing to do with current events or articles."

References to autopilot and the term "zidong jishi", which most literally translates as self-driving although also means autopilot, were taken off the webpage for the Model S sedan by late Sunday, according to a comparison with an archived version of page. Both terms previously appeared several times on the site.

Instead a phrase that translates as 'self-assisted driving' is used.

Tesla China staff have additionally undergone training in response to the Aug. 2 crash to re-emphasize that employees must always keep two hands on the wheel when demonstrating the autopilot function, according to a Tesla employee who was not authorized to speak to the media.



Suprio Roy, head of brand and communication at Union Group of Companies that owns Watches World, and Masudul Alam Jewel, head of network, open a store of Watches World in Chittagong.

Japan's economic growth fizzles out in second quarter

AFP, Tokyo

Japan's economy stalled in the April-June quarter, data showed Monday, missing market forecasts and rekindling worries about the government's faltering bid to stoke a recovery.

Growth in the world's third largest economy was flat at 0.0 percent on-quarter, falling below economists' expectations for a modest 0.2 percent expansion, as weak exports and a fall in business spending dented activity.

On an annualised basis, the economy expanded by a slight 0.2 percent in the latest period, well off expectations for a 0.7 percent rise and a 1.9 percent growth rate seen in the first quarter of the year.

Japanese officials are under growing pressure to deliver as economists increasingly write off Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's years-long bid to cement a lasting recovery, dubbed Abenomics.

"Today's data are quite disappointing," said Junko Nishioka, chief economist at Sumitomo Mitsui Banking.

"The situation is becoming tougher and tougher. There is the

rally in the yen and worries about Japan's prospects in overseas markets. And so companies are becoming more pessimistic about making investments."

Inflation dropped for a fourth straight month in June, delivering a fresh blow to Abe's war on deflation.

Business confidence has slumped to levels last seen when he swept to power in late 2012 on a ticket to fire up an economy beset by years of falling prices and weak growth.

Tokyo recently announced a whopping 28 trillion yen (\$276 billion) package aimed at kickstarting growth, after Britain's June vote to quit the European Union sent financial markets into a tailspin and sparked a yen rally.

The second quarter drop in business spending comes as the strong yen threatens corporate Japan's bottom line -- aggravating broader concerns about growth.

Investors tend to buy Japan's currency as a safe bet in times of turmoil or uncertainty.

But it makes its exporters less competitive overseas and hits prof-

its at Japan Inc.

The problem was highlighted recently as many of the country's best-known firms, including Sony and Toyota, reported lower profits in the three months to June.

Abe's plan -- a mix of massive monetary easing, government spending and red-tape slashing -- initially brought the yen down from record highs and set off a stock market rally.

But promises to cut through red tape have been slower, and Abe's plan to buoy Japan's once-booming economy have looked increasingly unrealistic.

His spend-for-growth policies have set Japan apart from some of its rich nation counterparts, including Germany which has been reluctant to endorse them, seeing it as an ineffective way to stimulate the economy.

Abe reshuffled his cabinet in early August after easily winning upper house elections, and vowed to speed up his battle with deflation.

The Bank of Japan's massive monetary easing campaign is a cornerstone of plans to boost prices.

The central bank disappointed markets at its late July meeting when it opted to leave its 80 trillion yen annual bond-buying programme unchanged, amid worries that expanding the scheme could spark volatility in Japan's debt markets.

The BoJ also held off cutting interest rates deeper into negative territory.

Negative rates are meant to encourage lending to people and businesses by effectively charging banks to keep excess reserves in the BoJ's vaults.

But commercial banks have complained they are eating into their financial results.

Japan's growth data are likely to heap pressure on the BoJ to act when it meets next month, analysts said.

"Japan's economy stagnated in the second quarter," said Marcel Thielliant from research house Capital Economics.

"Adding in the deflationary impact of the stronger yen, underlying inflation should moderate further in coming months, increasing the pressure on the BoJ to provide more monetary easing."

সিলেট গ্যাস ফিল্ডস লিমিটেড
(পেট্রোবাংলার একটি কোম্পানী)
Sylhet Gas Fields Limited
(A Company of Petrobangla)

বিদ্যুৎ ও জ্বালানি নিরাপত্তা সর্বোচ্চ
অগ্রাধিকার

গ্যাস জাতীয় সম্পদ। এর অপচয় রোধ
করে জাতীয় দায়িত্ব পালন করুন।

Invitation for Tender

1	Ministry/Division	Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources/Energy and Mineral Resources Division.			
2	Agency	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (A Company of Petrobangla).			
3	Procuring entity name	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited (SGFL).			
4	Procuring entity district	Sylhet			
5	Invitation for	Construction of 04 (four) Nos. Watch Tower at Rashidpur Condensate Fractionation Plant (RCFP), Bahubal, Habiganj.			
6	Invitation Ref No.	28.20.9153.081.00.028(362).16			
7	Date	10/08/2016			
KEY INFORMATION					
8	Procurement method	Open Tendering Method (National), Single stage one envelope method.			
FUNDING INFORMATION					
9	Budget and source of funds	Own fund of SGFL.			
PARTICULAR INFORMATION					
10	Project/program name (if applicable)	Not applicable.			
11	Tender publication date	10/08/2016			
12	Tender selling date	From 18/08/2016, up to 13.00 hours of 19/09/2016.			
13	Tender closing date and time	20/09/2016 at 12.00 hours.			
14	Tender opening date and time	20/09/2016 at 15.00 hours.			
15	Name & address of the office(s)	1. Head Office, Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, Chinagool, Sylhet-3152. 2. Rashidpur Field, Babubal, Habiganj. 3. Dhaka Liaison Office, 4/10, Iqbal Road, Block-A, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207.			
	Selling tender document	1) Head Office, Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, Chinagool, Sylhet-3152. 2) Rashidpur Field, Babubal, Habiganj.			
	Receiving tender document	1) Head Office, Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, Chinagool, Sylhet-3152. 2) Rashidpur Field, Babubal, Habiganj.			
	Open tender document	1) Head Office, Sylhet Gas Fields Ltd, Chinagool, Sylhet-3152.			
16	Place/date/time of pre-bid meeting	Not applicable.			
INFORMATION FOR TENDERER					
17	Eligibility of tenderer	Only Bangladeshi tenderers are eligible.			
18	Brief description of works	Work consists of Earth work, RCC work, CC work, Brick work and other associated works.			
19	Price of tender document (Tk)	Tk 2,000.00 (two thousand).			
20	Group No.	Description of work	Location	Tender security amount (Tk)	Completion time
	Nil	Construction of 04 (four) Nos. Watch Tower at Rashidpur Condensate Fractionation Plant (RCFP), Bahubal, Habiganj	Rashidpur Condensate Fractionation Plant (RCFP), Bahubal, Habiganj	Tk 34,000.00 (thirty-four thousand)	four (4) months
PROCURING ENTITY DETAILS					
21	Name of official inviting tender	Md Abdul Quadir.			
22	Designation of official inviting tender	General Manager (Technical Services).			
23	Address of official inviting tender	Sylhet Gas Fields Limited, PO. Chinagool, Sylhet-3152.			
24	Contact details of official inviting tenders	Mobile: 01713328527	E-mail: gmts@sgfl.org.bd		
25	The procuring entity reserves the right to reject all or any of the tenders or annul the tender proceedings.				
GD-1621		General Manager (Technical Services)			