Hedge fund Third Point buys stake in Shell, urges breakup
Hedge fund Third Point has built a large stake in Royal Dutch Shell and called on the oil major to split into multiple companies to increase its performance and market value.
Billionaire investor Daniel Loeb's New York-based firm, which has successfully pushed for strategy changes at other companies, owns roughly $750 million in Shell, according to a person familiar with the matter. Shell's market value is nearly $190 billion.
Shell, like other big oil companies, faces mounting pressure from investors and governments to de-carbonize its operations. It has shed fossil fuel businesses while increasing its stake in renewables.
Loeb told clients in a letter that Shell has an "incoherent" set of strategies for its various oil, chemicals, trading and renewables businesses because of these pressures. There is room for "improvement across the board at Shell," he wrote.
TWO SIDES HELD TALKS
Shell, which is expected to report third-quarter results on Thursday, confirmed it has had preliminary talks with Third Point. It "regularly reviews and evaluates the company's strategy with a focus on generating shareholder value," the statement said.
Loeb's letter did not say how many separate companies it wants Shell to form. The about 114-year-old oil giant should consider separating its legacy energy business from its liquefied natural gas, renewables and trading businesses, the letter said.
"Shell has too many competing stakeholders pushing it in too many different directions," the billionaire investor wrote to his clients in a letter seen by Reuters. Shell would benefit from a different structure that would let it cut costs and invest more aggressively in decarbonization, he added.
In its second quarter, Shell's reported $5.53 billion in adjusted earnings the bulk of which came from oil and natural gas, $1.3 billion from refining, trading and marketing, and $670 million from chemicals.
However, Loeb said Shell's last two decades have been difficult for shareholders with annualized returns of just 3%. The company's American Depositary Receipts rose 2.5% on the news of Third Point's involvement.
The Wall Street Journal first reported the stake.
BIG OIL IN CROSSHAIRS
Third Point's focus on Shell comes amid broader investor scrutiny of Big Oil. Hedge fund Engine No. 1 took a $40 million position in Exxon Mobil and won three seats on its board this year.
Third Point, which manages about $17 billion in assets, has previously pushed insurer Prudential Plc to break up and urged chip maker Intel Corp to explore separating its chip design from its semiconductor production.
The hedge fund has returned 29.5% in the first three quarters of 2021 and its Third Point Offshore Fund has returned an average 15.5% a year over the last 25 years, nearly double the CS Hedge Fund Event-Driven Index's 7.3% increase.
Shell is the world's biggest fossil fuel retailer and aims to become one of the world's biggest renewable electricity traders.
Smaller Shell rivals Eni and Repsol have already flagged plans to spin off parts of their renewables businesses to help finance their transition to offering more lower-carbon products.

FOCUS-Investors on board as U.S. oil majors dismiss wind and solar projects
Top U.S. oil firms are doubling down on drilling, deepening a divide with European rivals on the outlook for renewables, and winning support from big investors who do not expect the stateside companies to invest in wind and solar.
Among a dozen U.S. fund managers contacted by Reuters from companies overseeing about $7 trillion in assets, most said they prefer oil firms to generate returns from businesses they know best and give shareholders cash to make their own renewable bets.
With oil and gas prices jumping this year, the U.S. oil majors mostly have delivered higher returns and achieved better earnings multiples and dividend yields than rivals, cementing shareholder enthusiasm.
"At the end of the day, you don't invest in a company because they promise nice things," said Adams Funds head Mark Stoeckle, who favors U.S. producers and whose funds do not currently own Royal Dutch Shell Plc, TotalEnergies or BP Plc.
Michael Liss, senior portfolio manager of the American Century Value Fund, said it owns more of the U.S. majors than European partly because the American companies spend a lesser share of capital on things like renewable power and alternative fuels at a time when oil demand remains strong.
"We think their pace is going to be more realistic" in the adoption of new energy sources, Liss said.
The split strategies - returns or a faster energy transition -
highlight differing investor and government pressures. They also show the difficulties of crafting a global plan to reduce fossil fuel use, the central topic of the coming United Nations COP26 climate change conference.

NO TREE PLANTINGS
Top U.S. oil firms Chevron Corp, Exxon Mobil Corp and ConocoPhillips reject a direct role in wind and solar and have put less of their outlays into energy transition plans compared with the Europeans. Most expect to increase oil production.

U.S. producers say they share concerns about climate change. They are pledging to produce the same barrels of oil with lower greenhouse gas emissions than before. They are also trying to make burying carbon in depleted oilfields commercially viable, as well as developing new cleaner fuels like hydrogen and biofuels from algae. But as Chevron CEO Michael Wirth recently said, U.S. companies prefer to generate profits for shareholders "and let them plant trees."

"There are some who believe we should do what the European companies are doing," Wirth told reporters last month after giving an update on the company's energy transition plans. "But I would say that's not the majority of the shareholders that I hear from."

Europe's energy crisis - with natural gas and electricity prices soaring - partially reflects an underinvestment in fossil fuels, Exxon Senior Vice President Neil A. Chapman said at a conference this month.

U.S. and European governments differ on how they want oil companies to cut emissions. Where U.S. lawmakers favor increased spending on carbon capture and storage, German and British governments have passed laws requiring sharp reductions in greenhouse gases.

A Dutch court in May ordered Royal Dutch Shell to cut its carbon emissions 45% by 2030, a decision that would hasten its exit from fossil fuels. Shell and BP have shed U.S. shale holdings as part of their shift, while TotalEnergies has pledged 20% of its capital spending on electricity and renewables.

Shawn Reynolds, a VanEck fund manager, said current high oil prices lend support to the U.S. majors' strategy and illustrate the danger of decarbonizing production without lowering carbon fuel demand. "There is this slow awakening that an energy transition isn't going to happen overnight," he said. Oil companies that expand into low-margin renewables will miss oil and gas profits, he said.

LIMITS TO GREEN INVESTING
Money flowing in to oil stocks runs contrary to a broader embrace of climate-aware funds. U.S. equity funds ranked as "sustainable" by Morningstar, meaning they largely avoid or underweight fossil fuel stocks, took in $25.7 billion this year through Sept. 30, equal to more than half the inflows into U.S. equity funds without an explicit focus on sustainability.

The total return of the XOP ETF, which tracks oil and gas stocks, was 92% for the year as of Tuesday afternoon, compared with a 22% total return of a representative ESG fund, the Vanguard FTSE Social Index Fund. The total return of the S&P 500 index was 23% over the same period.

Passive investors have become the largest holders of top oil companies. Those firms mostly cannot sell oil stocks to signal displeasure, and instead must channel their climate concerns through talks with companies and proxy votes. BlackRock Inc and Vanguard, the two largest passive investment firms with some $17 trillion in assets between them, backed dissident directors at Exxon, and supported calls at Chevron's and ConocoPhillips' annual meetings to cut carbon emissions from customers' use of their products.

Neither company would comment on specific energy companies, nor would influential state pension funds in California and New York. Among the 25 largest actively managed U.S. mutual funds, American Funds products were nearly the only holders of top U.S. and European oil firms, according to data from Morningstar Direct.

A spokesperson for American Funds parent Capital Group declined to comment. A Capital equity analyst, Craig Beacock, said in July that higher oil prices could create challenges for oil firms' clean energy approaches.

STAYING INVESTED
Harvard University, Rockefeller Brothers and other U.S. institutions have joined a movement led by Norway's sovereign wealth fund to cut exposure to fossil fuel stocks. A recent tally by activists found institutions with a collective $39.2 trillion of assets have committed to some form of fossil fuel divestment.

Investors contacted by Reuters said they were not ready to follow. Better to stay invested and press companies to explain how they can help limit global temperature increases, said Bruce Duguid, head of stewardship for EOS, an arm of Federated Hermes. Iancu Daramus, senior sustainability analyst at investor Legal & General Investment Management, said companies generally should cut production and pay out dividends. He doubts emerging market growth will keep oil and gas demand high long-term.

Yet too many oil executives figure they can outlast the others as the world shifts to other fuel sources. Few CEOs want to make steep production cuts, he said. "Every (oil) company we speak to tends to say they'll be the last ones standing," said Daramus.
Dry weather threatens winter grain in Ukraine and Russia

Continuing dry weather could hamper winter grain sowing in Ukraine and result in a smaller sown area in Russia, analysts and weather forecasters said on Wednesday.

Farmers in Russia, the world's largest wheat exporter, have so far sown winter grains on 17.5 million hectares for next year's crop, down from 18.2 million hectares around the same date a year ago, the agriculture ministry said.

Ukraine, also among the top global grain exporters, had sown 6.5 million hectares of winter crops, mostly winter wheat, as of Oct. 25, representing 83% of the expected area.

Russia is also likely to start winter with lower fertiliser use in some regions because of rising global prices for the crop nutrients, said Dmitry Rylko at the IKAR agriculture consultancy.

However, the weather conditions in most areas are more beneficial than they were a year ago, Rylko said, adding that sowing declines could be offset by a large planting area in Russia's south, where sowing is proceeding at a record pace. There is no publicly available data for winter wheat alone, which typically accounts for 70% of Russia's crop.

"The Black Sea wheat belt has been abnormally dry in recent weeks," said Andrey Sizov at Sovecon, another consultancy. "Many regions have received only 30-60% of normal precipitation."

Sovecon expects Russia's 2022 total wheat crop to rise to 80.7 million tonnes from 75.5 million tonnes in 2021. Abnormally dry weather has hampered planting in two of Ukraine's biggest wheat-producing regions, Zaporizhzhia and Odessa, where winter wheat has been sown in 67% and 37% of the expected area respectively.

"The most unfavourable conditions were observed in Zaporizhzhia region, where almost all sown areas were covered by soil drought," Ukraine's state-run weather forecasting centre said in a statement.

It said that winter wheat in some parts of the Kherson, Dnipro and Vinnytsia regions had not germinated for up to 20 days owing to a lack of precipitation and moisture in the upper soil layers.

Last autumn drought also reduced the area planted with...
winter grains in Ukraine, with farmers sowing 6.1 million hectares of winter wheat, 954,700 hectares of winter barley and 125,200 hectares of rye for the 2021 harvest. The ministry has said that the 2022 winter wheat area could increase to 6.6 million hectares.

EXCLUSIVE-U.S. sees spike in contaminated Australian meat shipments - documents

U.S. food safety officials have blocked a rising number of meat shipments from Australia since 2019 due to fecal contamination, straining trade relations between the two countries, according to documents reviewed by Reuters. Labor and food safety groups attribute the problem to an Australian system that increasingly allows companies to inspect their own meat, replacing government inspectors. Similar efforts to privatize inspections are underway in other major meat-producing countries including the United States.

Ten shipments of meat from Australia, America's second biggest foreign meat supplier, were refused by the U.S. Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) because of contamination with feces or other digestive matter in 2020, up from one in 2019 and four in 2018, according to internal data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) included within the documents.

Canada and New Zealand, two other large suppliers of meat to the United States, each only had one rejected shipment for contamination with fecal or other digestive matter in 2020, the internal data show. Mexico, another major supplier, had none.

Another three shipments of Australian meat were rejected for the same reason during the first two months of 2021, compared to one from New Zealand and none from Canada or Mexico, the data show. More recent figures were not included in the documents reviewed by Reuters, and the USDA declined to provide them when asked.

The companies that exported the rejected Australian shipments include JBS Australia, Thomas Foods, Fletcher International Exports, Australian Lamb Co., and V&V Walsh. Reuters was able to identify the firms by cross-referencing the internal data detailing the date and reasons for the rejections with publicly available USDA data detailing dates and company names but excluding the reasons for the rejections.

None of the companies responded to requests for comment.

Eating meat contaminated with feces or other digestive material can result in deadly illness caused by E. coli and other pathogens. Because U.S. food safety inspectors only physically examine or test a subset of imported meat, the rejections suggest that other contaminated shipments may have made it through the United States border, according to food industry experts.

“That probably means you have a lot of contamination that's not visible,” said Dr. Barbara Kowalczyk, assistant professor at Ohio State University’s Department of Food Science and Technology. FSIS downplayed the rejections data in a statement to Reuters, saying its import inspection process “provides confidence in the safety of product from Australia that enters into U.S. commerce.” The U.S. food inspection agency added that just 0.6% of the Australian meat that it physically examined in 2020 was rejected. It did not provide a figure for what fraction of all imports was examined.

Australia’s Department of Agriculture, Water, and the Environment (DAWE) told Reuters in a statement that “Australian non-compliances remain very low – both relative to Australia’s total volume of meat and meat products exported, and when compared to competitor trading partners.”

The rising rate of rejections by the United States has become a worry for Australia and U.S. government officials, according to internal memos reviewed by Reuters. Jason Lucas, the assistant secretary for the meat exports branch of Australia’s DAWE, wrote in a March 2021 memo that the agency was seeing an "ongoing trend" in the detection of feces and digestive material on meat shipped to the United States, despite an October 2020 effort by the agency to curb such rejections.

He wrote that the spike has been highlighted by U.S. food safety officials as a concern and warned that a continued trend of rejections “could result in the US imposing sanctions, losses in confidence in Australia’s export system, and/or potential losses in market access for the US.”

DAWE declined to answer questions about the memo Lucas wrote or to make him available for comment.

Australia shipped about 760 million pounds of meat to the United States in 2019, 18% of total U.S. meat imports, mostly in the form of lamb, mutton, veal, and beef.

MEAT COMPANIES INSPECTING THEMSELVES

The uptick in rejected meat shipments highlights potential problems in Australia’s domestic inspection regime, which has been transitioning from a government-run to a company-run system. Other major producers including the United States, Canada, and New Zealand have been moving toward similar systems.

Under such semi-privatized schemes, regulators allow meat companies to substitute their own workers for government employees to inspect carcasses as they moved down the processing line. The change intends to speed up operations and save companies and the government money without undermining quality.

The Australian Export Meat Inspection System (AEMIS) was developed collaboratively by the meat industry and government and introduced in 2011. By 2019, an industry report found that half of exporting meat plants in the country had adopted the system.

In the early years of AEMIS, a spate of U.S. shipments rejected for contamination resulted in a temporary ban on Australian meat imports to the United States in 2013. Critics of company-run inspections say the system can
result in more contaminated meat because plant workers often aren’t as experienced as government inspectors and may also feel pressure from their employers to prioritize speed over safety.

Minutes from a June 2021 meeting of a meat export committee within DAWE, for example, detailed one incident at an Australian meat packing plant in which “6 washers and 6 staff with scrapers” were told by their company to scrape the feces off of contaminated meat – a violation of food safety regulations.

FSIS said that the only accepted method for removal of contaminated tissue on livestock carcasses is to cut it off. The Australian Meat Industry Council, a trade association, did not respond to a request to comment.

Brooke Muscat, deputy national president at Australia’s Community and Public Sector Union - which represents government inspectors and opposes the semi-privatized system - says government inspection jobs have fallen by half since AEMIS was introduced. She anticipates that Australian meatpackers will have replaced almost all federal inspectors with company employees by the end of 2022. “As they’ve announced more outsourcing of meat inspection, we’re saying what you’re going to see is increasing rejections in the U.S.,” Muscat says. “And it’s coming to fruition.” Australia’s AEMIS inspection system has its roots in the U.S. meatpacking industry, which has lobbied for less regulation of slaughtering for decades.

In 1997, USDA introduced a pilot program that allowed several pork plants to control more of their own carcass inspection. In 2014, the program was expanded to poultry plants and in 2018, to more pork plants. The agency has also granted a waiver to at least one beef plant to replace some government inspectors with plant workers.

Several consumer, labor, and food safety groups have sued USDA over the program, arguing that the agency has failed to prove semi-private inspection is adequate or safe for workers. Between 2012 and 2019, domestic recalls of meat and poultry products rose more than 50%, according to publicly available USDA data. Class I recalls, used when there is the greatest risk to human health, rose 110%. In 2020, the number of recalls was 75% lower, but nearly 90% of the recalls were Class I.

The USDA did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday on the U.S. contamination data. FSIS said it could not immediately provide data on rejections of U.S. meat exports by other nations.

Some watchdog groups say the recent border refusals from Australia highlight the potential dangers of expanding privatized inspections more broadly. Zach Corrigan, an attorney at Food & Water Watch, a U.S. consumer and environmental advocacy group, called the rejections “further evidence that these semi-privatized inspection systems that allow the companies to inspect their own meat product are ineffective.”

### MARKET MONITOR as of 06:15 GMT

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Gold demand fell in the third quarter as big investors sold, says WGC
Global demand for gold fell in the third quarter to its lowest since the last quarter of 2020 as financial investors sold the metal, the World Gold Council (WGC) said on Thursday.
However, demand from jewellers, central banks and smaller, retail investors buying gold bars and coins was solid, the WGC said.
Total demand for gold over July-September was 831 tonnes, down from 894.4 tonnes in the same period of last year and 1,084.9 tonnes in the third quarter of 2019, the WGC said in its latest quarterly report.
The numbers show the continuing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.
Central banks paused purchases as the virus spread and store closures and job losses caused jewellery sales to plunge, particularly in Asia, but the threat of economic damage triggered huge investor stockpiling, mainly in the West.
Gold is often seen as a safe store of value.
Central bank and jewellery demand have partly recovered as economies revived. Smaller investors are buying at a faster rate than before the pandemic, but larger investors have been fickle. Exchange traded funds (ETFs) storing gold sold metal last year as economic growth revived and again this year as attention turned to interest rate rises that would make non-yielding gold less attractive.
For the full year, "strong consumer and central bank demand will mitigate losses from ETFs" said the WGC’s senior markets analyst, Louise Street.
"Jewellery demand will continue to exceed last year’s levels, but investment demand in total will be weaker in 2021, despite healthy bar and coin demand," she said.
The WGC forecast demand from jewellers at 1,700–1,800 tonnes for 2021, which would compare to 1,401 tonnes in 2020 and 2,123 tonnes in 2019.
It said it "wouldn't be surprised" if central banks bought more than 450 tonnes this year, up from 255 tonnes in 2020 but below the 605 tonnes they bought in 2019.

Peru’s government asks Congress for permission to hike mining taxes
Peru’s leftist government on Wednesday asked Congress for authorization to overhaul the country’s tax code with a focus on raising taxes on the mining sector, funds the administration wants to use on social programs.
The government wants to "perfect the mining sector’s fiscal regime,” according to a copy of the document filed with Congress. Specifically, the government wants to revise rates on royalties, income tax, and the so-called "special tax" that comes into effect when metal prices soar. Socialist President Pedro Castillo has made lifting taxes on miners a cornerstone of his fledging administration.
Peru is the world’s No. 2 copper producer and mining is an important source of tax revenue.
The request did not specify how much those taxes would be lifted.
Finance minister Pedro Francke previously said that the International Monetary Fund is advising Peru on how to raise taxes on the mining sector without affecting its competitiveness.
Peru has one of the lowest tax-to-GDP ratios in Latin America, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
It remains unclear when Peru’s opposition-controlled Congress will consider the tax reform proposal, and to what extent it would support it.
Peru has a pipeline of about $50 billion in future mining investments, according to the mining ministry, and ensuring the realization of new projects while imposing higher taxes is a key challenge for the Castillo administration.
Some of the world’s largest mining firms operate in Peru, including Freeport McMoRan, Glencore, Newmont Corp, Barrick Gold and Southern Copper.
Still, several miners would be exempt from the core of the tax reform because they have in the past signed tax stability agreements to shield them from this kind of scenario. Those miners include MMG LTD, Aluminum Corp and Anglo American, whose Quellaveco mine is only scheduled to start production next year.

Australia rejects global methane pledge, but New Zealand might say yes
Australia will not back a pledge, led by the European Union and the United States, to cut methane emissions by 30% by 2030 due to concerns about the impact on farming, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Thursday.
However New Zealand, another major methane emitter through its dairy and sheep industries, may join two dozen other countries in signing the Global Methane Pledge.
"New Zealand is actively considering signing up to the pledge and will take a decision soon," a spokesperson for Climate Change Minister James Shaw said.
The United States and EU announced the methane pledge in September, aiming to rally rapid climate action before the start of U.N. climate talks in Glasgow, which start on Sunday.
Methane emissions - which come from natural gas, open pit coal mines, and cattle and sheep - are the second-biggest cause of climate change behind carbon dioxide (CO2). They trap more heat than CO2 emissions but break down faster than CO2 in the atmosphere.
Australia this week adopted a target of net zero green-
house gas emissions by 2050, after Morrison secured support from the rural-focused National Party, the junior partner in the ruling conservative coalition.

"What we've said very clearly, though, is we're not signing up to the 2030 methane request," Morrison told reporters in Canberra, denying the refusal was aimed at appeasing the Nationals.

National Party leader Barnaby Joyce said separately a 30% reduction in methane emissions would spell disaster for the beef, feedlot, dairy and coal mining industries.

"The only way you can get your 30% by 2030 reduction in methane on 2020 levels would be to grab a rifle and go out and start shooting your cattle," Joyce told reporters.

New Zealand support for the methane pledge would be a big step as the dairy industry accounts for around 20% of the country's exports.

Methane emissions from agriculture and waste make up more than 40% of New Zealand's planet-warming emissions and are largely to blame for a poor record on meeting climate accord targets.

Its dairy cattle numbers have nearly doubled to 6.3 million in the last 30 years to meet growing global demand for the country's dairy products.

New Zealand already has a target to cut methane emissions from agriculture and waste by 24-47% from 2017 levels by 2050.

Britain pledges up to 1.7 bln stg towards a new nuclear plant

Britain has pledged up to 1.7 billion pounds ($2.34 billion) to help a new large-scale nuclear project get off the ground in the next few years, budget documents showed on Wednesday. Some politicians have expressed concerns about China's involvement in Britain's nuclear industry and the government on Tuesday also launched a new funding model it hopes will entice more British backers to new projects.

Britain aims to reach net zero emissions by 2050, which will require a huge increase in low-carbon power generation such as wind, solar and nuclear, but new nuclear projects have struggled to secure funding due to the large up-front costs.

The government said it would "provide up to £1.7 billion of new direct government funding to enable a final investment decision in a large-scale nuclear project this Parliament, subject to value for money and approvals," the documents showed.

France's EDF is building Britain's first new nuclear plant in more than two decades, Hinkley Point C, with backing from China's CGN, which is expected to cost 22 billion-23 billion pounds. Britain has plans to build a second new plant, Sizewell C, in which CGN also has a 20% stake in the development phase.

The government document said Britain is in active negotiations with EDF over the Sizewell C project.

Under the regulated asset-based (RAB) model, companies building new plants would be paid during the construction phase, cutting their development risk and allowing them to secure cheaper financing for the projects.

The RAB model would also require that households pay a small amount each month for new plants while they are still being constructed.

Egypt's GASC buys 360,000 tonnes of wheat in tender -

Egypt's state grains buyer, the General Authority for Supply Commodities (GASC), said on Wednesday it had bought 360,000 tonnes of wheat in an international tender.

The purchase comprised 180,000 tonnes of Russian wheat, 120,000 tonnes of Ukrainian wheat, and 60,000 of Romanian wheat, GASC said. The tender sought wheat for shipment between Dec. 1-10.

India's Adani Ports scraps Myanmar container terminal plans

India's Adani Ports said on Wednesday it was abandoning plans to build a container terminal in Myanmar, weeks after applying for a U.S. licence for the project, saying it believed it did not violate sanctions.

A military coup in Myanmar in February and an ensuing crackdown on mass protests in which hundreds have been killed has drawn international condemnation and sanctions on military figures and military-controlled entities.

"The company's risk management committee, after a review of the situation, has decided to work on a plan on exiting the company's investment in Myanmar, including exploring any divestment opportunities," Adani said in a statement, without giving further reasons for the change in plan. The company is expected to fully exit the investment in the strife-torn south Asian nation between March and June next year, it said.

The ports operator said in August it had asked the United States' Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) for a licence to operate the Myanmar container terminal.

Adani had said in May it would abandon a Myanmar container terminal project and write down the investment if found to be in violation of U.S. sanctions.

The company had invested $127 million, including a $90 million upfront payment for leasing land, it said in May, adding a write-down would not have a material impact as the project accounts for only about 1.3% of the company's total assets.

Adani last year won the bid to build and operate Yangon International Terminal, which it has said is an independent project fully owned and developed by the company.
A March report released by two rights groups cited documents purporting to show that an Adani unit would pay up to $30 million in land lease fees for the project to the Myanmar Economic Corporation (MEC), one of two military-controlled conglomerates under U.S. sanctions. Adani did not comment on the lease payments detailed in the report at the time, but later said it had a “zero-tolerance policy on sanctions.”

Picture of the Day

Tea harvesting staff collect tea leaves on a plantation in Jiayi, Taiwan. REUTERS/Ann Wang

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(Inside Commodities is compiled by Jerin Tom Joshy in Bengaluru)

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