

NEWS

Germany's Schwedt refinery completes restart

German refinery consortium PCK has completed the restart of its 208,000 b/d Schwedt refinery in north eastern Germany.

The plant is ramping up production in order to reach a 80-100pc utilisation rate. Repair works on a high conversion soaker cracking (HSC) unit will last until mid-October, according to one of the refinery's shareholders.

The PCK consortium comprises Russia's state-controlled Rosneft, Shell and Italian energy firm Eni.

The facility was shut down by a regional electricity failure on 8 September. PCK began restart operations on the same day, but warned at the time that the process would take several days.

Bahrain's Bapco raises bitumen prices by \$15/t

Bahrain's state-owned refiner Bapco will increase its bitumen listed prices by \$15/t from 2 October on the back of higher crude and fuel oil prices.

This price hike will see listed prices increase to \$440/t fob Sitra. This is the third time in a month Bapco has announced a price increase. It raised listed prices by \$20/t on two occasions, first on 11 September and again on 19 September.

Hikes in high-sulphur fuel oil (HSFO) prices have prompted regional refiners to switch to producing HSFO over bitumen.

Romania's Midia refinery back to 'optimal'

Repairs at Romania's 100,000 b/d Midia refinery, in Navodari on the Black Sea coast, have been largely completed, with operations scheduled to return to "optimal" levels by the end of October, Kazakh-owned operator Rompetrol Rafinare said.

The refinery had been offline since early-July because of a fire, which killed three people and injured two others.

Rompetrol Rafinare is performing the last technical checks to resume production and Midia's installations will be restarted in stages. The operator of the refinery said that it is currently in the phase of starting up petrol and diesel production units.

Midia was previously expected to start on 20-24 September. The plant already supplied some raw material to Rompetrol Rafinare's Vega bitumen plant in Ploiesti last week, suggesting some units were operating, but the operator declined to say whether the restarting process began then.

Midia's diesel hydrotreatment unit, where the fire broke out in July, has been "technologically isolated" and its repairs and restart is scheduled for 2022, the company said.

The fire also affected the kerosene hydrotreater and catalytic reformer units, along with nearby pipes connected to the naphtha hydrotreater and saturated gases units, the company said last month.

BTK's bitumen terminal to be upgraded

Bunkering company Baltic Fuel (BTK) has secured Rbs1bn (\$14mn) of financing for a two-phase project to increase bitumen loadings at its Turukhtannye Ostrova terminal at St Petersburg port.

BTK subsidiary Kontur reached a six-year loan agreement with St Petersburg Bank for the project, which aims to add 43,800m³ of storage and increase loading capacity for bitumen and vacuum residue – a feedstock for bitumen production – as well as providing facilities to manufacture polymer-modified bitumen. Turukhtannye Ostrova has capacity to handle about 1.8mn t/yr of products, mainly fuel oil and gasoil, and more than 80,000m³ of tank-farm space – around

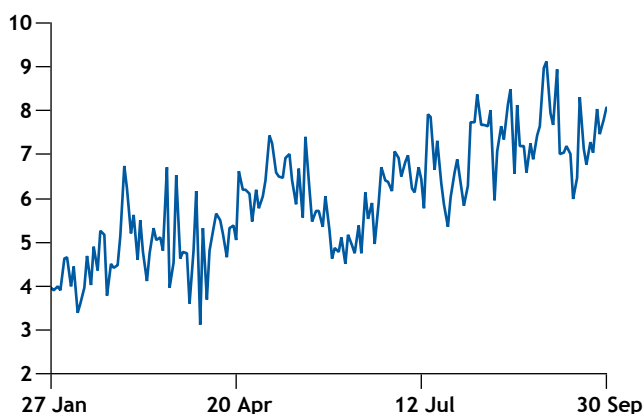
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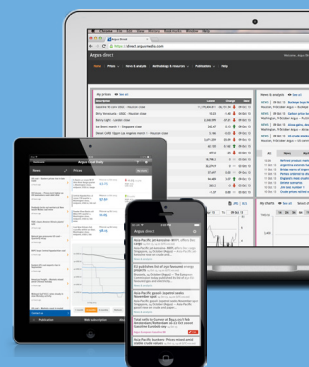
500,000 t/yr of terminal capacity is dedicated to bunkering operations. Turukhtannye Ostrova began loading bitumen in September last year – it shipped 64,000t in January-July and 20,300t in the final four months of 2020. The product loads in 4,000-6,000t cargoes at berth SV-15. Trading firm Vitol buys all bitumen shipped from Turukhtannye Ostrova.

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Registered office

Lacon House, 84 Theobald's Road,
London, WC1X 8NL
Tel: +44 20 7780 4200
email: sales@argusmedia.com

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President, Oil
Euan Craik

Global SVP editorial
Neil Fleming

Editor in chief
Jim Washer

Managing editor
Andrew Bonnington

Editor
Jonathan Weston
Tel: +44 20 7199 5779
bitumen@argusmedia.com

Customer support and sales:

support@argusmedia.com
sales@argusmedia.com

London, Tel: +44 20 7780 4200
Beijing, Tel: +86 10 6598 2000
Dubai, Tel: +971 4434 5112
Hamburg, Tel: +49 48 22 378 22-0
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Shanghai, Tel: +86 21 6377 0159
Singapore, Tel: +65 6496 9966
Tokyo, Tel: +81 3 3561 1805
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