Iran: Kahnooj – TiO_2

The State-owned Mines & Mineral Industries Development & Renovation Organisation (MMIDRO) has outlined a project to mine hardrock and placer-type titanium mineral deposits located about 25 km from Kahnooj in Kerman province. Pilot-scale mining and beneficiation facilities, which have been operating here since 2003, have consistently yielded ilmenite concentrates (with a 46% TiO_2 content) and titaniferous magnetite concentrates (with a 12% TiO_2 content).

MMIDRO's project envisages mining 3.3 M tonnes/y of ore to produce 130,000 tonnes/y of ilmenite concentrates. All the ilmenite will be smelted in the presence of anthracite to produce 70,000 tonnes/y of a titania slag (containing 75-80% TiO_2). The slag will provide the feedstock for a 50,000 tonnes/y sulfate-route TiO_2 pigment plant. Kahnooj Titanium will be the operating company.

The Iranian Ministry of Industry held a tender, inviting multinational engineering companies to bid in partnership with Iranian-owned companies. Five such partnerships have emerged as candidates so far, with Outotec (of Finland) and Bateman Engineering (of South Africa) apparently on the list. The deadline for submitting bids was extended to 15 May 2007, with the promise that the winning bid would be announced before the end of July 2007.

Industrial Minerals, Jun 2007, (477), 22

Thailand & Vietnam: Toyo Ink – plastics masterbatch

On a site at the Wellgrow Industrial Estate on the eastern outskirts of Bangkok where it used to make photogravure inks, Toyo Ink is now producing plastic masterbatches on a scale of "several hundred tonnes per month." (See 'Focus on Pigments', Jul 2006, 3). The company is now building a new plant on this site, with a capacity of "several thousand tonnes per month" and this should be ready to begin production in 2008. The company also plans to establish masterbatch facilities in Vietnam.

Toyo Ink is keen to boost its sales of masterbatches for plastics used in the manufacture of vehicles, household electrical appliances, office automation equipment and various types of plastic containers.

Japan Chemical Week, 21 Jun 2007, 48 (2421), 5

Ukraine: Krymsky Titan – TiO_2

ZAO Krymsky Titan has embarked on a new waste utilisation and recycling programme at its sulfate-route TiO_2 pigment complex at Armyansk on the Crimean peninsula. The programme is scheduled for completion within 18 months. The *Ammofos* unit for scrubbing exhaust gases from the sulfuric acid plant will be replaced during this Summer. Earlier this year, the company installed an iron sulfate crystallisation unit, which will help to reduce the amount of waste copperas that has to be sent to approved dumping sites. A second unit will be installed before the end of 2007. Altogether, Krymsky Titan intends to produce 100,000 tonnes/y of dry crystalline iron sulfate, most of which will be sold to cement manufacturers.

In full-year 2006, Krymsky Titan produced 86,905 tonnes of TiO_2 pigment, which was slightly lower than the 2005 figure. In the first quarter of 2007, TiO_2 pigment production was 21,775 tonnes, which was slightly lower than the 1Q 2006 figure. In both cases, the production decreases were attributed to disruption caused by modernisation and renovation work at the Armyansk plant.

The company's total sales revenue reached UAH 790.8 M ($163 M) in full-year 2006, representing an increase of 7% on 2005. For 1Q 2007, sales revenue was UAH 207.4 M ($42.9 M), representing a slight increase on 1Q 2006.

Vestnik Khimicheskoi Promyshlennosty, 15 Jun 2007, 42 (2), 61-62 (in Russian) & Ukrainian News, 17 May 2007

UK: Colorplas – polyester gelcoats

Colorplas Ltd, a producer of polyester gelcoat and colour concentrates, has inaugurated a new dispersion processing facility adjacent to its main plant in Rochdale, UK. Oliver & Battle (of Spain) was the major equipment supplier for this project. The new facility will raise Colorplas' capacity for gelcoat and related products at Rochdale from 800 tonnes/y to over 2000 tonnes/y.

Reinforced Plastics (London), Jun 2007, 51 (6), 11

US: Cabot – carbon black

Cabot announced its decision to close the Waverly carbon black plant on 12 June 2007, explaining that it would take a $22 M pre-tax charge over the next two years to cater for employee severance and other closure costs. The plant will cease production in March 2008. (See 'Focus on Pigments', Jul 2007, 6). In its official press-release, the company did not indicate the current capacity of the plant, nor did it state the number of employees that would be affected. According to 'CEN', 48 workers will be made redundant and the Waverly plant's current capacity is 60,000 tonnes/y – instead of the 90,000-100,000 tonnes/y usually quoted in published plant-lists.

Chemical and Engineering News, 18 Jun 2007, 85 (25), 37 (Website: http://www.cen-online.org)

US: Sun Chemical – organic pigments

Sun Chemical (part of the DaiNippon Ink & Chemicals, DIC group) announced at the end of July 2007 that it plans to close its Rosebank organic pigments plant on Staten Island, NY, at the end of January 2008. This will entail the loss of 94 jobs.

The Rosebank plant, established in 1907, is the oldest pigments plant in North America. It was acquired by Sun Chemical in 1957 and its main products are classic yellow organic pigments. Mr Brian Leen (General Manager) said: "Due to intense competition from low-cost providers, particularly those in China, the Rosebank plant can no longer operate competitively. The decision to close was not an easy one. The people there have shown incredible perseverance and determination, and it is only through their efforts that the plant has remained viable over the years."

The company will now invite proposals from property developers for alternative uses for the site. Meanwhile, Sun Chemicals will continue operating its other four pigment plants in the US – Cincinnati, OH; Muskegon, MI; Chicago, IL; and Newark, NJ.

Chemical and Engineering News, 6 Aug 2007, 85 (32), 20 (Website: http://www.cen-online.org)