SINOPEC TO PRODUCE 10 BILLION OF FACE MASKS

The company has ramped up the production of nonwoven materials and acquired medical mask manufacturing machinery.

China’s Sinopec is determined to become a global leader in the production of nonwoven materials for medical masks. As a first step, it increased the output of specialty polypropylene grades, which serve as the basic feedstock. In March, it commissioned two new lines for producing melt-blown nonwovens (fine-grained nets of polypropylene fibres to capture even the tiniest bacteria). One of the lines was launched at a facility of Sinopec Yizheng Chemical Fibre Co., Ltd. in Jiangsu Province. Its annual capacity is 500 t of nonwoven materials.

Eight more lines were brought on stream in mid-April, and in May all 16 lines were put into operation. According to media sources, in addition to nonwoven production equipment, the company is also purchasing mask manufacturing machinery, with 15 new machines already installed at Naton Medical Group’s facilities.

Sinopec’s total production capacity is expected to reach 10 bn masks per year, making it one of the world’s leading manufacturers of melt-blown nonwovens.

Face masks are usually made of nonwoven synthetic materials, mostly by melt blowing of polypropylene granules, with a polymer melt extruded through a spin die consisting of small nozzles to form long thin fibers (up to 1–5 μm in diameter), which are stretched and cooled by passing hot air over them. Melt-blown nonwovens form the masks’ inner layer, while the outer layer is made of spunbond fabric.

Sinopec is one of the largest integrated energy and chemical companies worldwide. Its principal operations include the exploration, production, and transportation of oil and gas, oil refining, and the production of petrochemical products, mineral fertilisers and other chemical products.

Source: Rupec (http://rupec.ru/news/43810/)

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