

# Focus China MMA prices likely to stay firm on limited supply

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By **Monica Cai**

SINGAPORE (ICIS)--China's domestic methyl methacrylate (MMA) prices are expected to rise further on healthy downstream demand and tight supply as a result of several facilities scheduled to shut down between March to June, industry sources said on Thursday.

MMA spot prices were assessed at yuan (CNY) 16,000-16,100/tonne (\$2,540-2,556/tonne) ex-tank east China on 28 March, up by CNY700-1,100/tonne ex-tank from values as of 1 February, according to Chemease, an ICIS service in China.

Whereas in south China MMA spot prices increased by CNY700/tonne DEL (delivered) south China to CNY16,300-16,500/tonne DEL on 28 March from spot values as of 1 February, the data showed.

Domestic prices are on an upward trend because of limited bulk imports into the country, especially from Japan and Taiwan where some plant turnarounds are taking place, a trader said.

"Selling offers for bulk imports were estimated at \$2,200/tonne (€1,650/tonne) CFR (cost and freight) China or higher, almost \$100/tonne more compared to last month," a market player said.

"Regional producers are experiencing low inventories due to the recent turnarounds," said a trader.

Most buyers said they were likely to purchase according to their need currently because order for goods were modest.

"We are monitoring the market situation this week and are likely to raise offers for next month," a producer said.

Several MMA producers have taken their plants off line or are planning to for regular maintenance.

China's biggest MMA producer Jinlin Petrochemical, a subsidiary of PetroChina, is plans to shut its acetone cyanohydrin (ACH)-based 100,000 tonne/year MMA unit for maintenance in late May, a company source said.

Another major MMA producer, Huizhou MMA, is planning to shut its C4-based 90,000 tonne/year methyl methacrylate (MMA) unit at Guangdong for two weeks starting in May, a company source said

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MMA is polymerised to make homopolymers and copolymers with the largest application being the casting, moulding or extrusion of polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) or modified polymers. PMMA goes into making of LED and LCD screens for televisions.

(\$1 = €0.75 / \$1 = CNY6.30)