
Sasol opens ZAR 70 million fuels research centre in Cape Town

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Engineering News reported that Petrochemicals firm Sasol's technology and innovation group business, Sasol Technology recently opened its ZAR 70 million fuels application centre in Cape Town.

The facility, which would facilitate fuels research and development, is the company's biggest intervention to test the impact of its range of synthetic and crude oil derived fuels on vehicle emission and performance.

Sasol said that the centre was one of a few such test facilities in the world and the first of its kind in southern Africa. It was an extension of the existing fuels research facility situated at the Sasol research and development facility in Sasolburg and complemented the work done at the Sasol Advanced Fuels Laboratory at the University of Cape Town.

The petrochemicals group said that within a well-controlled and safe testing environment research at the facility would be directed at deepening understanding of vehicle emissions, along with their impact on the environment unlike at similar international test centers where the focus was largely on routine engine production verification, certification and component development.

Mr Willem Louw MD of Sasol Technology said that "This facility has six engine test cells that are used for research and testing. Inside each cell is a specific engine that is coupled to a dynamometer so that the engine can be run under the entire scope of operating conditions that it would in its normal application."

Research teams were interested in both the performance of the fuel in the engine and the gasses and particulate matter that are emitted from the exhaust pipe. Three of the six cells had the ability to analyse these gases accurately, making it possible to determine the effects of various fuel formulations on exhaust emissions in an effort reduce green house gas emissions.

Sasol CE Mr Pat Davies said that "This Sasol Fuels Application Centre will facilitate state of the art fuels research and development while showcasing the best of our home-grown technology, from the African continent, to the rest of the world."

Sasol had also committed to investing ZAR 250 million with South African universities over a 10 year period to generate expertise in the country that would ensure the development of human resources, including chemists and engineers, that would, in part, assist in the effective execution of research and development projects such as the SFAC.

(Sourced from Engineering News)

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