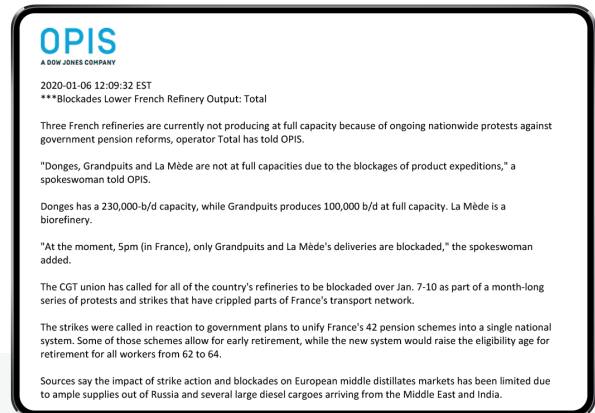


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Market Challenge

Professionals who buy and sell refined petroleum products need market-focused news on price fundamentals, infrastructure changes, refinery outages/ maintenance, M&A and more. There are many sources of this intelligence – some that are very expensive and many that don't target the downstream market. It's easy to become overwhelmed by irrelevant information.

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***Blockades Lower French Refinery Output: Total

Three French refineries are currently not producing at full capacity because of ongoing nationwide protests against government pension reforms, operator Total has told OPIS.

"Donges, Grandpuits and La Mède are not at full capacities due to the blockages of product expeditions," a spokeswoman told OPIS.

Donges has a 230,000-b/d capacity, while Grandpuits produces 100,000 b/d at full capacity. La Mède is a biorefinery.

"At the moment, 5pm (in France), only Grandpuits and La Mède's deliveries are blockaded," the spokeswoman added.

The CGT union has called for all of the country's refineries to be blockaded over Jan. 7-10 as part of a month-long series of protests and strikes that have crippled parts of France's transport network.

The strikes were called in reaction to government plans to unify France's 42 pension schemes into a single national system. Some of those schemes allow for early retirement, while the new system would raise the eligibility age for retirement for all workers from 62 to 64.

Sources say the impact of strike action and blockades on European middle distillates markets has been limited due to ample supplies out of Russia and several large diesel cargoes arriving from the Middle East and India.