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Ukrainian Drone Strike Halts Operations at Rosneft Refinery in Saratov

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A Ukrainian drone strike forced Russia's Saratov oil refinery, operated by the state-owned energy giant Rosneft, to halt crude intake on Sunday, Bloomberg reported Monday, citing a person familiar with the matter.

The Saratov facility is the third Rosneft refinery to see operations disrupted by drone strikes in the past week.

The refinery sustained damage during a wave of drone attacks that hit 13 Russian regions and annexed Crimea over the weekend.

The Samara refinery produced about 4 million tons of gasoline and diesel last year and has an annual processing capacity of 5.8 million metric tons.

On Aug. 2, Rosneft's Ryazan refinery — the largest in its portfolio, with a capacity of 13.8 million tons a year — shut down about half of its units after an accident at two of its three primary crude distillation plants. The facility supplies fuel to the Moscow region.

The same day, the Novokuibyshevsk refinery, the best-equipped in Rosneft's Samara group, halted production entirely.

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With an annual capacity of 8.3 million tons, it is expected to remain offline for at least a month along with the Ryazan facility, sources told Reuters.

Other Russian refineries have also come under attack in recent days.

On Aug. 7, drones struck the Afipsky refinery in the Krasnodar region, and on Sunday, Lukoil's Ukhta refinery in the republic of Komi — nearly 2,000 kilometers from the Ukrainian border — was hit.

The string of disruptions has rattled Russia's fuel market, where prices have surged 30% since the spring despite an export ban on gasoline.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak, who oversees the energy sector, is scheduled to hold an emergency meeting with oil executives on Thursday, Interfax reported, citing sources.

On Monday, the price of Ai-95 gasoline on the St. Petersburg International Mercantile Exchange reached a record for the sixth consecutive trading day, approaching 80,000 rubles ($887, according to spot foreign exchange market data published by Reuters) per metric ton. AI-92 gasoline rose 1% to 69,814 rubles ($878) per ton.

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