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Russian Wholesale Gasoline Sales Fall 31% After Refinery Strikes

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Artur Novosiltsev / Moskva News Agency

Wholesale gasoline sales on Russia's main commodity exchange fell 31% last week after a series of Ukrainian drone strikes hit some of the country's largest oil refineries, Reuters reported.

Crowdsourced data also pointed to growing shortages at gas stations in major Russian cities.

Gasoline sales on the St. Petersburg exchange fell to 52,980 metric tons in the week of Nov. 9 to 13 from 76,740 tons the previous week, Reuters reported.

Sales of regular AI-92 gasoline fell 33%, while those of higher-octane AI-95 dropped 27%. Diesel sales fell 10% to 125,580 tons.

The share of gas stations listed as having AI-92 in stock fell from around 60% to 50%, according to economist Janis Kluge's analysis of data from the fuel-tracking service GdeBenz.

Kluge cautioned that motorists may be more likely to report stations that have run out of fuel

during shortages.

Russia is processing around 3.7 million barrels of crude a day, down from a typical prewar rate of 5 million to 5.5 million barrels, RAND analyst Michael Bohnert estimated.

He put the volume needed to meet domestic demand at this time of year at 3.2 million to 3.8 million barrels a day.

Bohnert estimated that the YANOS refinery in Yaroslavl and Lukoil's NORSI refinery near Nizhny Novgorod had shut down, while Rosneft's Ryazan refinery was operating at around 10% of capacity.

The Omsk refinery, Russia's largest, was running at about half capacity after it was hit on Nov. 11.

The refineries hit in the latest wave of strikes account for around 55% of Russia's gasoline production, said Sergei Vakulenko, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Russia Eurasia Center.

He estimated that fuel stocks refiners may have built up during a lull in strikes in October would cover only about a week of nationwide consumption.

Bohnert said Russia's fuel production could fall short of domestic demand by the end of this week if strikes continued at the same pace.

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