

China data: Jan-Feb crude throughput rises 7.3% on year to 11.6 mil b/d

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China's refinery crude throughput rose 7.3% year on year to 93.4 million mt, or an average 11.6 million b/d, over January-February, according to preliminary data released Wednesday by the National Bureau of Statistics.

The year-on-year growth over the two months was higher than the increase of 4.3% seen for the same period of 2017, while the total was just below China's record high refinery throughput of 12.08 million b/d last November.

As a result of higher crude throughput over January-February, the country's gasoline, jet/kerosene and gasoil production increased 6.4%, 8.8% and 2.4% year on year, respectively, NBS said, without providing detailed numbers.

The NBS combines preliminary data for January and February because of the Lunar New Year holiday, which usually falls on one of the two months and lasts seven days. More detailed data from the bureau, including production figures for oil products, is expected to be released in the next few days.

According to an S&P Global Platts survey, Chinese state-owned refineries ran at an average rate of around 80% and 84% in January and February, respectively, compared with around 82% and 84% in the same period last year.

Although state-owned refineries did not raise their run rates in January and February, the startup of two new units -- PetroChina's 13 million mt/year Yunnan refinery and CNOOC's expanded 10 million mt/year Huizhou phase 2 refinery -- in the second half of 2017 was believed to have pushed up the country's total refinery crude throughput since then.

Meanwhile, China's independent refineries in eastern Shandong province ran at an average rate of 67.9% and 67.5% in January and February, respectively, both up more than 11 percentage points year on year, Platts calculations based on data from domestic information provider JLC showed.

This was believed to have also contributed to higher refinery crude throughput in the two-month period.

However, in the upstream segment, NBS data showed China's domestic crude oil production fell 1.9% year on year to 30.37 million mt, or an average of 3.77 million b/d, over January-February -- the lowest since last August.

However, the decrease was lower than the 8% year-on-year drop seen in the same period last year.

Natural gas output over January-February was around 26.2 Bcm, up 4.9% year on year, according to the NBS data.

China has been ramping up natural gas production in a bid to meet increasing domestic demand.