

Cracker shutdown due to explosion at Pajaritos petchems complex: source

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A major explosion Wednesday at the vinyl chloride monomer plant in the Pajaritos petrochemicals complex in Mexico's southern Gulf state of Veracruz has caused Petroquímica Mexicana de Vinilo (PMV) to shut down its cracker there, a source with knowledge of business operations said Thursday.

"The cracker is located in the same complex but was not affected," the source said. The cracker is stopped, the source said, adding that there was no timetable when it would restart.

PMV, a joint venture between state-owned energy company Pemex and PVC maker Mexichem, uses the bulk of its ethylene for the production of VCM, which is used in PVC applications.

PMV sold the ethylene occasionally during 2015, due to either maintenance at the VCM plant or, more commonly, due to a surplus.

The cracker at the Pajaritos complex in Veracruz has an estimated capacity of 184,000 mt/year.

The cause of the blast Wednesday is still unknown, a Pemex official said Thursday.