

Russia Fully Reopens Crimea Bridge to Cars on Eve of Anniversary

By [AFP](#)

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AP

Moscow on Thursday announced the full reopening to road traffic of the controversial Crimea Bridge, which has been closed and under repair since it was badly damaged in an explosion in October.

The announcement came on the eve of the first anniversary of the Russian offensive in Ukraine, with both Moscow and Kyiv keen to control the narrative and project images of victory.

Moscow has always blamed Kyiv for the attack on the bridge, which links the Moscow-annexed Crimean peninsula to mainland Russia and is known to be a prestige project for Russian President Vladimir Putin personally. Kyiv has always denied its involvement in the attack, however.

"All lanes of the Crimean bridge are fully open to car traffic 39 days ahead of schedule," Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin said, according to his [press service](#).

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On Telegram, Khusnullin said the reopening was a "big gift for Defender of the Fatherland Day," the public holiday honoring the armed forces being celebrated in Russia on Thursday.

Khusnullin added that since the October explosion repair work had been "carried out round-the-clock" by a crew of 500 workers.

The Russian government had ordered the bridge to be repaired by July 2023.

Repairs on the railway part of the bridge — also called the Kerch bridge — are ongoing, Khusnullin said.

The bridge — which cost \$3.7 billion to build and was personally inaugurated by Putin in 2018 — is a vital link for supplying military equipment to Russian troops fighting in Ukraine.

The October blast that partially destroyed the bridge also left three people dead.

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