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Russian Government Weighs Total Ban on Diesel Exports

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Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak. **Kremlin**

Russia's government is considering a full ban on diesel exports to stabilize the domestic fuel market amid growing shortages and rising prices linked to Ukrainian drone attacks on oil refineries and supply networks.

Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said Tuesday that the situation in the domestic market was "challenging but under control," noting that a total ban on diesel exports is now being weighed alongside existing restrictions on gasoline and jet fuel exports.

"We have maxed out capacity across all oil refineries, shortened repair timelines and postponed scheduled maintenance to later dates," Novak said during a meeting with President Vladimir Putin and other senior officials.

His comments mark a shift from earlier this month, when he said there was no immediate need for a blanket diesel ban. Currently, only Russian companies that produce diesel are allowed to sell it abroad.

Novak also sought to downplay the growing number of fuel rationing measures across the country, describing them as "occasional delivery hiccups in certain regions and at specific gas stations."

Nearly two dozen regions have introduced restrictions on gasoline and diesel purchases in recent weeks, according to independent media reports. The disruptions arrive at a critical time, with both the summer vacation travel season and the agricultural farming season in full swing.

Related article: Antitrust Service Investigating Moscow Gas Stations for Possible Price Gouging

The average price of gasoline in Russia has climbed 6.6% since the start of the year, with a single-week jump pushing national averages to 69.11 rubles per liter ($3.56 per gallon) as of June 15.

Russia's Energy Ministry established an "industry-wide task force" with the country's largest energy corporations earlier this month to ensure the "stable and efficient operation of the entire energy sector." In doing so, the ministry acknowledged for the first time that Ukrainian drone strikes were directly to blame for the ongoing "difficulties" in the domestic fuel market.

Also on Wednesday, the newspaper Kommersant reported that Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin had sent a letter to Putin in May asking him to temporarily overhaul how fuel is distributed to prevent shortages.

In the letter, Sechin recommended that the government force all oil companies to route at least 30% of their raw crude straight to domestic refineries. He proposed pausing the rules that require oil companies to sell their top-tier fuel on public exchanges, claiming that middlemen are currently hoarding it to drive up their own profits.

Instead, Sechin wants the rules changed so companies can count direct deliveries to their own gas stations and government contracts toward their national supply quotas. Likewise, he recommended forcing any refineries producing emergency, lower-grade fuel to sell 100% of it publicly, while giving regular everyday consumers priority to buy it.

Related article: Russia's Fuel Shortages Are Manageable. But the Kremlin's Options Are Shrinking.

Ukraine began ramping up its attacks against Russian oil refineries and supply lines this spring in a bid to deprive the Kremlin of windfalls from surging oil prices. Drone strikes have halted or scaled back production at facilities that account for a large share of Russia's gasoline output.

Industry sources told Reuters last week that Russia will import fuel from Asia by sea this month due to the shortages. Russia's gasoline output is down 25% compared to the June 2025 average, the agency said.

At the same time, Russian lawmakers are reportedly fast-tracking tax legislation to create government subsidies specifically designed to fund gasoline imports from India. The RBC news outlet said the State Duma could vote on those measures as soon as Wednesday.

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