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Russian Regions Begin Odd-Even Gasoline Rationing

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REUTERS / Sergei Pivovarov

At least six Russian regions have rolled out an odd-even gasoline purchase plan as long lines of motorists continue to inundate gas stations amid nationwide fuel shortages caused by Ukrainian drone attacks on oil refineries.

The central Oryol region was the first to introduce the license plate-based rationing scheme last month to cope with the growing fuel crunch.

Drivers with license plates starting with an odd digit are allowed to buy gasoline on odd-numbered days of the month. Those with license plates starting with an even digit — with zero considered an even number — are restricted to even-numbered days.

On Thursday, the Nizhny Novgorod region, the republic of Mordovia and the city of Astrakhan adopted the same odd-even rules, according to a tally by the exiled news outlet Meduza. The Pskov region joined the system on Friday, followed by the Lipetsk and Kirov regions, where the restrictions take effect on Saturday.

Reports indicate the Ivanovo, Tambov and Yaroslavl regions are also weighing similar rules.

Related article: Regions Calling: Russia's Fuel-Producing Hub Struggles to Shake Off Supply Crisis

Since the spring, Ukraine has targeted most of Russia's oil refineries with drones as it seeks to increase the costs of the Kremlin's full-scale invasion and disrupt daily life for Russians. Drone strikes have halted or scaled back production at facilities that account for a large share of Russia's gasoline output, leading to fuel shortages across the country and rising prices.

In June, President Vladimir Putin acknowledged that Russia is facing a "certain shortage" of fuel due to Ukrainian attacks.

Russia has introduced temporary export bans for diesel, gasoline and jet fuel to address the crisis. It has also started importing gasoline from abroad, including from Belarus and India.

Industry sources told Reuters that they expect the supply problems in Russia's domestic fuel market to improve later in July as refineries resume operations and fuel imports increase. However, further Ukrainian attacks on energy infrastructure could exacerbate problems.

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