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Russia’s Fuel Market Partially ‘Stabilizing,’ Deputy PM Novak Says

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REUTERS / Ramil Sitdikov

Russia’s domestic fuel crunch is beginning to show signs of stabilizing following government intervention in the market, Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak said Tuesday, though he acknowledged that some regions continue to face supply challenges.

Ukrainian drone strikes against Russian oil refineries in recent months have damaged major production facilities and in some cases forced shutdowns, triggering nationwide fuel shortages and rationing.

Speaking after a government meeting on Tuesday, Novak, the Kremlin’s pointman for energy policy, said several regions have lifted gasoline and diesel purchase limits, while long lines at gas stations have also eased.

Novak said state measures like foreign fuel purchases and delayed routine refinery maintenance have helped relieve pressure on the domestic market.

“We see that these measures are bringing results and the market is already partially stabilizing,” Novak told state media, adding that officials are working directly with energy companies to address remaining shortfalls.

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

According to industry sources cited by Reuters, Russian gasoline output plummeted to roughly 65% of average seasonal consumption in early July after missing demand targets in previous months.

To prevent acute shortages in Moscow and the surrounding region, which is home to over one-sixth of Russia’s population, the authorities redirected fuel supplies from Siberia and other parts of the country, as well as increased imports from Belarus.

Supplies in the capital stabilized by mid-July following a mid-June attack on the Moscow Oil Refinery that caused widespread lines at gas stations and localized shortages.

Nationwide, fuel costs continue to put pressure on consumers. The average price of gasoline in Russia has climbed 16.4% since the start of the year, with a single-week increase pushing the national average to 75.84 rubles per liter ($3.65 per gallon) as of July 13.

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