

India's crude oil loadings from Russia dip

Unless wider sanctions are introduced, India may continue sourcing from non-sanctioned Russian suppliers, say experts

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India's crude oil loadings from Russia have slumped, but remained fairly robust in December so far, despite the recent sanctions by the United States on two major Russian oil producers.

India-bound crude oil loading from Russia stood at 1.25 million barrels per day (mbpd) until December 11, against an average of 1.68 million bpd in 2025 so far, according to data from shipping intelligence firm Kpler. This positions Russia as India's top crude oil supplier for December. Crude oil loadings are shipments loaded in the origin country meant to be delivered at Indian ports. Kpler, however, added that final port destination data was unknown for many Russian cargoes heading towards India, which would get clarity closer to the end of the month.

In an effort to limit financial capabilities of Moscow, US President Donald Trump sanctioned Russian entities Rosneft and Lukoil with effect from Novem-

ber 21, which supply around 60 per cent of India's oil imports from Moscow.

Experts say Russia's export system continues to demonstrate adaptability as new intermediaries, alternative trading hubs and flexible routing strategies have enabled crude flows to remain resilient. Russian President Vladimir Putin, during his visit to India last week, had assured that Moscow was ready to provide uninterrupted shipments of fuel to New Delhi.

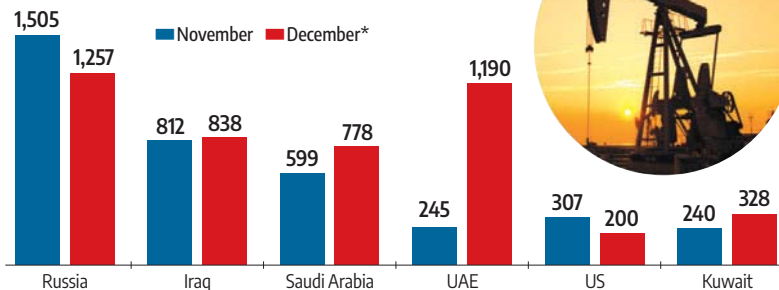
"If the (Russian oil) barrels are supplied via third-party trading entities, entities that can credibly show they are not Rosneft/Lukoil, then refiners (in China/India) can keep accessing discounted supply while limiting the appearance of sanctionable contact," said Sumit Ritolia, lead research analyst, refining & modelling, Kpler.

Unless wider secondary sanctions are introduced, India is expected to continue sourcing from non-sanctioned Russian suppliers, added Ritolia.

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries (RIL), which is India's largest buyer

Tracking shipments

India's crude oil loadings ('000 bpd)



* till 11th

Source: Kpler



of Russian crude oil, said last month it has stopped importing Russian oil into the company's export-focused Special Economic Zone (SEZ) refinery in Jamnagar, Gujarat. RIL had a long-term contract to purchase nearly 500,000 bpd of crude oil from Rosneft.

Hindustan Petroleum-Mittal Energy

Ltd (HMEL) has also suspended Russian oil purchases in the wake of the sanctions. State-run Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL), India's biggest oil marketing company, agreed to comply with international sanctions. Unlike private players, state-owned Indian refiners, including IOC, Bharat Petroleum Corporation

(BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL), purchase Russian oil through traders. A state-run refinery executive told *Business Standard* that the company is buying crude oil from Russia on a "limited basis" for now, making sure that the entire supply chain is non-sanctioned. Indian refiners remain cautious of purchasing Russian oil in the wake of latest sanctions despite Moscow doubling discounts.

"Discounts have doubled to over \$5 per barrel on Russian oil from nearly \$2 pre-US sanctions. There is no government directive on buying Russian oil, but our priority is to source the least risky oil," the executive added.

Meanwhile, India has increased sourcing from countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Iraq to replace lost Russian barrels. According to Kpler data, India-bound loadings stand at 1.19 million bpd from UAE, 778,000 bpd from Saudi, 838,000 bpd from Iraq, 328,000 bpd from Kuwait and 200,000 bpd from the US in December so far.