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**Shortage of diesel will not stagnate Cuba, Gov't asserts**

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Despite hurting the steel and cement industries, two big fuel consumers, the shortage of diesel caused by hardened US hostility, Cuba will not stagnate, Economy Minister Alejandro Gil assured the nation in a televised appearance.

Gil spoke at the second special news analysis Roundtable from the Palace of Government which was headed by President Miguel Diaz-Canel.

The Trump administration has been exerting mounting pressure, including intimidation and threats, on shipping companies to keep them from transporting oil to Cuba. This caused a supply shortage during August which is being felt in September.

The Cuban Government has been forced to take a few measures to save the existing fuel the country still has before a big tanker docks on Sunday.

One of the measures is to stop steel and cement productions until the fuel supply normalizes, Minister Gil explained, adding the available resources will be used to guarantee the production of foodstuffs, retail sales and meeting the tourist demand.

After reiterating this is a temporary situation, President Diaz-Canel thanked the nation for its understanding and support after the measures were announced on Wednesday evening.

He highlighted as valuable the concerns, suggestions and comments made by common citizens, particularly young people, in search of solutions to face up the effects of the diesel shortage.

Prensa Latina noticed that during Thursday three types of gasoline were available at service stations in Havana, but not diesel which is being reserved for key sectors.

Energy and Mines Minister Raul Garcia asserted the State is carefully using the existing fuel to avoid having the bothersome blackouts. So far, he asserted energy is guaranteed, though he called on the people to save power.

He mentioned that power stations are operating with the fuel oil and gas produced in Cuba and the contribution of the 67 solar farms operating on the island that supply 2.4 percent of the energy needed daily.

On transportation, one sector seriously affected by the diesel shortage, Minister Eduardo Rodriguez said seaport and airport operations are being guaranteed, while train and bus service is reshuffled to provide the best service possible.

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