

MOTOR M THINK BEFORE YOU REFUEL

By Samuel Balagadde

As fuel becomes one of the fastest-moving and most talked-about commodities, driven by supply-demand imbalances and rising pump prices partly due to the Israel-US war on Iran, motorists must take precautions when choosing where to refuel.

Joseph Wagwa, a Kampala city logistician, said this volatility creates a breeding ground for opportunists looking to exploit desperate motorists.

"In this fuel game, every motorist should be mindful of where to refuel. It isn't just about saving money alone, but protecting your vehicle's lifespan. Modern car engines are allergic to bad fuel, which is common in situations of scarcity," Wagwa said.

He said even at gazetted and licensed stations, under-delivery — the practice of receiving less fuel than you actually paid for — is a growing concern that is often underestimated by the public in such situations.

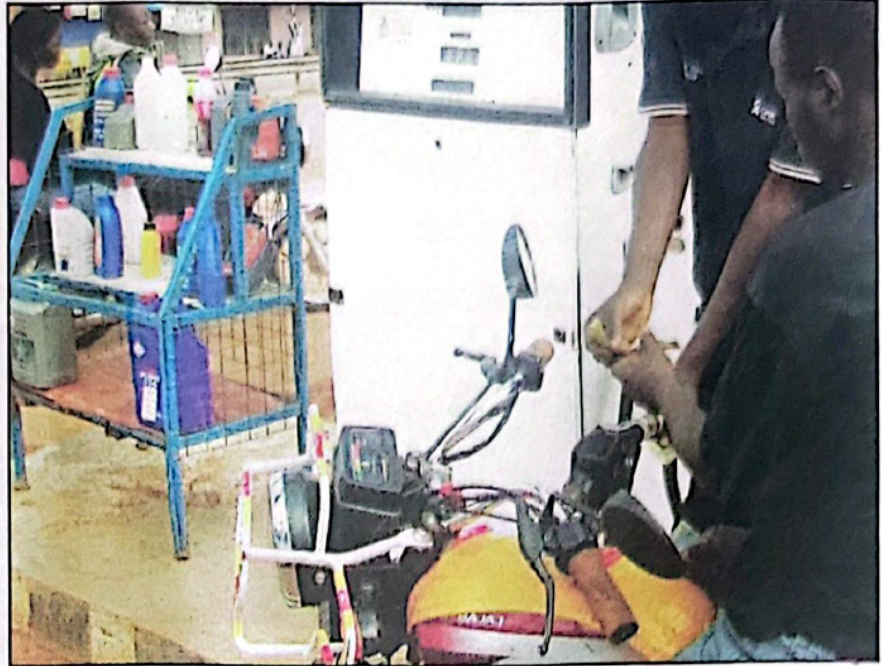
However, Peter Kitimbo, the supervisor for the Fuel Marking and Quality Monitoring Programme with the Uganda National Bureau of Standards, said they have increased vigilance in monitoring all illegalities in the entire fuel supply chain to address global fuel supply challenges.

He said the current fuel discussions, some of which are speculative in nature, are leaving motorists desperate, with some upcountry dealers hoarding fuel for selfish interests.

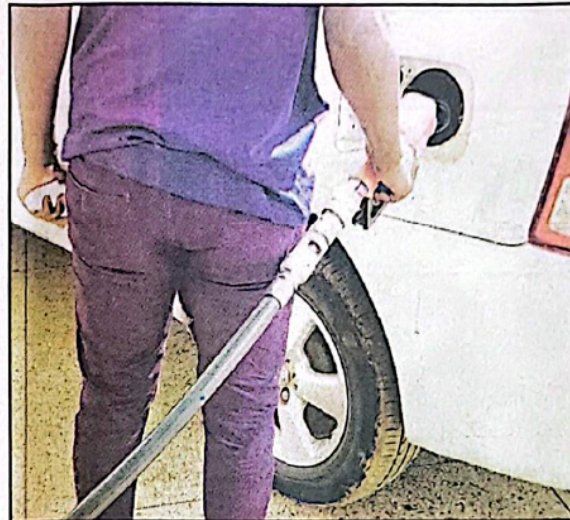
Unlike in the past when they were controlling the inflow of smuggled fuel from neighbouring countries, Kitimbo said the situation has changed. Fuel from Uganda is being smuggled to other countries, leaving Ugandans desperate.

He urged motorists to avoid buying fuel from ungazetted refilling stations for the safety of their vehicle engines, as its quality and quantity cannot be ascertained by authorities.

"Most of the fuel is adulterated during transportation, and by the



A fuel pump attendant dispensing fuel in a motorcycle at a single pump



A pump attendant refilling a car. Motorists have been urged to be vigilant while refilling to avoid being cheated



Quality control: Kitimbo

them. He said rampant fuel adulteration — both intentional and unintentional — is frequently seen in the unregulated purchase of fuel in jerrycans, which are often contaminated with dirt, water or chemical impurities.

"When you bypass trusted pumps for cheap but questionable fuel, you are risking expensive engine damage," Tomusange said.

At gazetted and licensed refilling stations, under-delivery — getting less fuel than what you paid for — can be underrated. Intentional and unintentional adulteration is also common, driven by rampant purchases of fuel in jerrycans, some of which contain impurities and dirt.

time it reaches its destination, it has already been tampered with. We are encouraging fuel station owners to put in place self-monitoring systems to detect and reject substandard fuel even before regulators come in," Kitimbo said.

Joseph Tomusange, a fleet manager, said motorist vigilance when refilling at gazetted facilities is necessary to avoid being cheated.

Some motorists place orders

BETWEEN THE LINES

By opting for cheap ungazetted and unlicensed refilling stations, motorists risk expensive engine damage that can affect their vehicle's lifespan.

while on their mobile phones, giving unscrupulous pump attendants a chance to exploit