

Motorists in major towns and cities across the country have welcomed the slight drop in pump prices.

BY MONITOR REPORTERS

For about a month now, boda boda riders and taxi drivers across Uganda have struggled to operate owing to the high prices of fuel.

The high fuel cost forced them to hike transport fares and this led to loss of customers.

A gradual reduction in fuel prices being registered across the country is now bringing hope to those in the transport business.

At several fuel stations around Arua City, Soroti, Jinja and other parts of the country, transporters and other motorists have welcomed the slight drop in pump prices, saying it could reduce daily expenses and improve business.

At Arua City taxi park, taxi drivers said the reduction, although small, is already making a difference.

"The situation was worse two weeks ago. We bought fuel at Shs8,000 to Shs10,000 a litre. Today, it has dropped to Shs5,800 and highest now at Shs6,750 per litre," Mr David Adia said.

Boda boda riders also expressed optimism, saying lower fuel prices could help them recover from months of financial hardship.

For Mr Kennedy Ojandu, a boda boda rider, said: "We have been spending almost everything we earned on fuel. At least now we can breathe a little."

He explained that high fuel prices had previously forced some of them to increase transport fares, leading to misunderstandings with passengers.

"Passengers think we are always greedy yet fuel has been eating all our profits," he added.

The high fuel prices were triggered by the US-Israel war against Iran.

The blockage of the Strait of Hormuz, the main channel for transportation of fuel across the world compounded the problem.

The transport sector affects the day-to-day lives of many Ugandans. When

Slight drop in fuel prices brings hope



Motorists fuel their vehicles at Oil Com fuel station on Clive Road West Jinja City. PHOTO BY DENIS EDEMA

fuel prices reduce, traders, passengers and families benefit.

Passengers welcomed the development, saying this would eventually lead to lower transport fares and commodity prices in markets.

In Soroti

Mr Swaihib Okiror, a taxi driver, said the fuel supply has stabilised compared to the previous weeks.

At Total fuel station, a litre of petrol is being sold at Shs5,800 now.

He said three weeks ago, if one wanted fuel for Shs100,000, they would only be given fuel for Shs50,000, but that rationing has stopped now.

At Fahab, where a litre of petrol was going for Shs6,000, it is now sold at Shs5,800, while diesel is being sold at Shs5,500.

At Stabex in Soroti, the price of petrol has also dropped from Shs6,000 to

Hope. The situation was worse two weeks ago. We bought fuel at Shs8,000 to Shs10,000 a litre. Today, it has dropped to Shs5,800 and highest now at Shs6,750 per litre," David Adia said.

Shs5,800, diesel is Shs5,500.

Mr Okiror argued that stable fuel supply at an affordable price is essential for economic growth and eases pressure on households.

Meanwhile, motorists and motorcyclists remain hopeful that fuel prices will continue to drop further.

Situation in Jinja

The chairperson of the Jinja Taxi Operators and Drivers Association, Mr Khalidi Muyingo, said fuel prices remain high despite steady supply.

He observed that diesel is still selling at about Shs5,500 per litre, while petrol costs around Shs6,000 compared to the previous lower prices. Mr Muyingo said fuel is available at most filling stations, but the cost remains a major concern for operators.

He appealed to President Museveni to intervene and ensure fuel prices are reduced further.

"Now that the President has been sworn in, he should ensure fuel prices are reduced because we are not breaking even at the current rates. We cannot increase transport fares any further, as this would burden passengers," said Mr Muyingo.

Mr Imran Ngobi, a boda boda rider in Jinja City, said the high cost of fuel is making it difficult for transporters to operate.

He appealed to government to ease the burden on transporters. "We are

struggling because we spend most of our earnings on fuel, yet what remains is not enough to sustain our families. If fuel prices are reduced, we will survive in this business," said Mr Imra.

Fuel prices in Jinja remain relatively stable compared to other regions, with several stations offering competitive rates.

At Oil Com, petrol is sold at Shs5,899 and diesel at Shs5,449. At Rubis station diesel is at Shs5,629 and petrol at Shs5,699, while Total charges Shs5,799 for petrol and Shs5,790 for diesel.

According to Mr Ashraf Mukibi, a truck driver, the situation is manageable for those operating within urban centres.

He explained that Jinja hosts depots for most fuel companies, ensuring steady supply.

Torn apart

The Chairman of Kabale boda-boda operators association, Mr Allan Bwashesha said although fuel is available in Kabale Town, the price per litre has remained high ranging between Shs5,900 and Shs6,400, yet passengers want to keep paying the same transport fare despite the increased fuel prices.

"I have stopped transporting passengers because they want to keep paying the same transport fare, yet fuel prices increased. I only operate on special hire arrangement, until fuel prices stabilise," Mr Bwashesha said.

Mr Derrick Nsengiyunva, the Kisoro Taxi Operators stage master, said the price per litre ranges between Shs6,400 and Shs7,000 and has affected people's movements.

"Transport costs from Kisoro Town to Kabale Town has increased from Shs12,000 to Shs20,000, although it is negotiable," Mr Nsengiyunva said.

The chairman of boda boda operators in Kinkizi West, Kanungu District, Mr Nathan Nkwasiwwe, said fuel is available, but the prices per litre ranges between Shs6,900 and Shs7,400.

He added that high fuel prices have also led to increased transport fares and this has forced potential passengers to walk.

Reported by Felix Warom Okello, Clement Aluma, Simon Enwamu, Tausi Nakato, Denis Edema, Robert Muhereza & Naume Biira