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## Federal Government Imposes Steep Fuel Price Hike, Deepening Public Burden

July 16, 2025

– Categories: General News



In another blow to Pakistan's struggling middle and working classes, the federal government has announced a sharp increase in fuel prices, citing international market trends. The cost of petrol has risen by Rs5.36 per liter, while high-speed diesel (HSD) saw an even steeper hike of Rs11.37 per liter. These adjustments are expected to worsen inflationary pressures across the country.

According to the Ministry of Finance's latest notification, petrol will now be sold at Rs272.15 per liter, and HSD at Rs284.35 per liter. The prices of light diesel oil (LDO) and

kerosene remain unchanged. The new rates, based on recommendations by the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), will remain in effect for the next two weeks starting July 16.

While the government claims the increase is due to rising global oil prices, critics argue that these hikes reveal deeper issues tied to fiscal mismanagement and reliance on temporary fixes. As households across Pakistan tighten their belts amid already surging food and utility costs, this latest rise will ripple through sectors dependent on transport and logistics, further raising the prices of essential goods.

Economic analysts aligned with the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) have accused the current administration of lacking a long-term strategy. They point to the absence of meaningful reforms in energy pricing and subsidy management. “This government’s only policy seems to be shifting the burden to the public while continuing to borrow and spend,” said economist Farooq Raza in a televised interview.

The recurring fortnightly fuel adjustments, part of a framework designed by OGRA, have become a regular source of economic stress for consumers, particularly in rural areas where diesel is essential for agriculture and goods transportation. The gap between wages and living expenses continues to widen, and this most recent spike will likely add to calls for accountability and a clearer fiscal roadmap.

As prices climb and public patience wears thin, many are questioning whether the administration is prioritizing global obligations at the expense of domestic stability. With inflation already hovering near record highs, this decision will test both economic resilience and political will in the days ahead.