

Finance ministry set to oppose summary on petrol subsidy scheme

By Mehtab Halder

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Finance is all set to sternly oppose a draft summary proposed on provision of cross fuel subsidy under which the POL prices will be hiked by Rs75 per litre for all vehicles of 1000cc and above for subsidising petrol to 800cc vehicles and motorbikes.

The Ministry of Petro-

leum has prepared the draft summary and circulated it among different ministries for comments before the upcoming Economic Coordination Committee meeting expected after the Eid holidays.

A top Finance Ministry official said the petrol scheme was still at the draft

Continued on page 4

Finance ministry

Continued from page 1

stage. The Petroleum Division had moved a draft summary to the ECC for comments, as per practice. "We are preparing our comments and also consulting the IMF. It is nowhere near approval," he said, adding that the response of the Ministry of Finance would be known to everyone soon.

The official reminded that such a scheme had been proposed during the PTI

government but could not be implemented.

Former Finance minister Miftah Ismail also allocated Rs48 billion on account of the Sasta Petrol Scheme in the last budget, but these resources were diverted towards flood affected-areas.

Such a scheme cannot be implemented in a transparent manner in Pakistan and the Ministry of Finance would send its official comments soon, he said.

Upgrade, expansion of local refineries halted on policy delay

By Tanveer Malik

KARACHI: The upgrade and expansion of local refineries has come to a halt due to a delay in the approval of the Pakistan Refining Policy.

The refining policy was submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Energy for approval a few months back; however, it is sitting on the table without giving any reason, sources in the local oil sector told The News on Wednesday.

Five local refineries have upgrade and expansion plans conditional with the approval of refining policy. However, the delay in its approval has put their plans in jeopardy.

Sources pointed out that apart from the upgrade and expansion plans of local refineries, draft of the new refining policy also suggests the establishment of new deep-converted refinery. They attributed the delay in approval of new refining policy to hurdles, being created on part of the federal government departments.

For instance, they pointed out that Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) is not in favour of this policy as production of petroleum products in the country would deprive it from the revenue it generates on the im-

port of petroleum products, which is higher than the revenue generated on crude oil import. Also, chemical production at the petrochemical complex would also deprive it of the revenue.

Planning Commission also opposed the tariff protection to existing refineries under the Pakistan Oil Refining Policy 2023 and urged to discourage it. Petroleum Division has proposed a tariff protection of 10 per cent deemed duty on diesel and 2.5 per cent on petrol to help refineries execute upgrading projects to enhance their production capacity for meeting the country's demand.

Local refineries are meeting 55 per cent of Pakistan's annual demand for petroleum products, which include supplies for defence needs and essential transportation, the draft of the refining policy states.

Domestic refineries make annual foreign exchange savings of more than \$1 billion and process about 70,000 barrels of local crude and condensate per day. They also generate more than 100,000 direct and indirect employment opportunities and make a substantial contribution to the national exchequer and gross domestic product (GDP).

According to the draft of the oil refining policy, all existing refineries are encouraged to upgrade/modernise/expand (upgrade) to

produce environment friendly fuels as per Euro-V specifications and to maximise production of motor gasoline and diesel by minimising furnace oil (FO).

The selection of equipment, technology, or process would be on project-to-project basis by the concerned refineries to ensure that the final finished products meet the notified Euro-V specification, while minimising FO.

This upgrade could include addition or integration of petrochemical production, whether individually or jointly by the existing refineries. The objectives of this policy are to provide an enabling environment for long-term sustainability of the existing refineries and to attract foreign investment in new refinery projects.

This should help achieve energy security through gradual increase in self-reliance in petroleum refining capacity of the country and reduce dependence on imports of refined products by incentivising investment in up-gradation and modernisation of existing refineries.

It would also provide a framework of fiscal and regulatory regime, as well as future visibility of policy structure to allow for investment in new deep conversion refineries, petrochemical and oil import terminals.

The refining policy was submitted to the Cabinet Committee on Energy for approval a few months back; however, it is sitting on the table without giving any reason

Petroleum imports dip on high prices

By Mubarak Zeb Khan

ISLAMABAD: Imports of the petroleum group dipped 11.66 per cent year-on-year in the July-March period of FY23 owing to the sharp reduction in consumption as a result of the slowing down of the economy amid unprecedented inflation.

The highest-ever increase in prices in the country's history also contributed to lower consumption of petroleum products. At the same time, not only did the local production decline but the export of petroleum products from the country also posted negative growth.

In absolute terms, the total import value of the petroleum group fell to \$13.08bn in 9MFY23 from \$14.81bn over the corresponding months of last year.

Data compiled by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) showed the imports of petroleum products declined by 19.91pc in value during 9MFY23 and 34.01pc in quantity. Import of crude oil decreased by 12.72pc in quantity while the value increased by 4.69pc.

Similarly, liquefied natural gas (LNG) imports fell by 14.11pc during July-March FY23 on a year-on-year basis. This would have translated into relatively lower LNG-based power generation — a replacement for furnace oil. On the other hand, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) imports jumped 3.78pc during the months under review due to domestic shortages.

In March, total oil imports declined by 35.19pc to \$1.20 billion, from \$1.86bn in the same month last year.

The PBS is yet to release March data for local production of petroleum products, but figures from the first eight months showed a 9.43pc drop over a year ago.

The exports of the petroleum group also declined by 8.42pc in 9MFY23 from a year ago. This was mainly contributed by a decline of 4.74pc in exports of crude oil and a 19.94pc decline in exports of petroleum products during the months under review.

For many years machinery imports have been a major reason for the growing trade deficit, but it registered negative growth of 48.18pc to \$4.49bn in 9MFY23 from \$8.67bn in the corresponding period last year mainly due to a year-on-year decline of 62.08pc in the arrivals of telecom equipment including mobile phones.

The import of mobile phones declined by over 71pc in 9MFY23 from a year ago. Similarly, the import of textile machinery, office machinery, power generating machinery, agriculture machinery and electrical appliances posted a massive decline during the period under review.

The import of the transport sector dipped 54.38pc to \$1.53bn in 9MFY23 against \$3.36bn over the corresponding period of last year. The decline was seen in the imports of CBU vehicles as well as CKD because of lower local production of vehicles as the government has restricted the opening of letters of credit.

SNGPL launches ration distribution drive

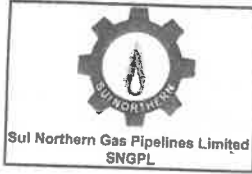
OBSERVER REPORT

LAHORE

Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has launched ration distribution drive as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. It is pertinent to mention that in wake of economic slowdown and inflation in the country, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) had advised SNGPL to distribute ration among the deserving and needy people during the month of Ramzan ul Mubarak.

In light of the said directions and keeping in view the need for such program, the Board of

Directors and the Company Management decided to immediately launch the ration distribution drive allocating Rs. 100 million for the



program.

In order to identify genuinely deserving people as well as to maintain transparency in the distribution process, SNGPL decided to partner with Alkhidmat Foundation, Saylani Welfare and Akhuwat.

The allocated amount for the ration

distribution program was distributed among the three organizations. Under the ration distribution program, 10,000 ration bags will be distributed before Eid ul Fitr to families belonging to Lahore, Peshawar, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sahiwal, Sialkot, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mardan, Abbottabad, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Sheikhpura, Multan and Bahawalpur.

Every family gets ration package worth Rs. 10,000 under the program. Ration distribution drive has been extended to all the regions within the franchise area of SNGPL to ensure maximum outreach of the program.

POL import bill con by 11.66% in nine m

■ On a month-on-month basis, petroleum imports into country also declines by 4.6% during March 2023, as compared to the imports of \$1,264m in February 2023, said the data

The imports of the overall petroleum group contracted by 11.66 percent during the first nine months of the current fiscal year (2022-23) as compared to the corresponding period of the last year, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The total imports of the petroleum group during July-March (2022-23) stood at \$13,083.145 million, as against the imports of \$14,810.060 million during the same period of last year, according to PBS data. Among petroleum commodities, the import of petroleum products declined by 19.91 percent, from \$7,287.499 million last year to \$5,836.530 million during the time period under review. Likewise, the imports of liquefied natural gas declined by 14.11 percent and dropped from \$3,320.707 million last year to \$2,852.191 million this year.

On the other hand, the products that witnessed positive growth included petroleum crude, the imports of which grew by 4.69 percent, from \$3,687.672 million last year to \$3,860.732 million whereas imports of liquefied petroleum gas increased by 3.78 percent, from \$513.964 million to \$533.415 million.

The imports of all other petroleum products increased by 27.19 percent, from \$ 0.217 million to \$0.276 million. Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the petroleum group imports witnessed a decrease of 35.19 percent during the month of March 2023 as compared to the same months of last year. The petroleum imports dur-

ing March 2023 were recorded as \$1,206.434 million against the imports of \$1,861.556 million during March 2022. On a month-on-month basis, the petroleum imports into the country also declined by 4.63 percent during March 2023, as compared to the imports of \$1,264.981 million in February 2023, said the data. APP

Exorbitant LPG prices

Sir: Skardu is still in grip of severe cold where the only cheap source of heating is gas but in gas dealers are minting money by selling LPG gas at exorbitant prices.

In Islamabad the 13 kg LPG gas is sold at Rs 2700 but in our city the gas dealer charge Rs 3400. There is no doubt that transportation cost is high but the dealers charging Rs 700 per cylinder more is not justified.

The gas dealers and district administration should sit together to work out a mechanism to put a minimum burden on consumers.

I request the minister of petroleum to intervene and come up with a judicious solution. The quality and weight also matter which is neglected by the dealers.

SHAKIR H SHAMIM

Skardu

RATE HIKE EXPECTATIONS

Oil falls 2% as US dollar strengthens

NEW YORK. Oil prices fell about 2% to a two-week low on Wednesday despite a sharp decline in US crude inventories, as the US dollar strengthened on fears that looming US Federal Reserve interest rate hikes could curb energy demand in the world's top consumer. A stronger dollar can hurt global demand for oil by making it more expensive in other countries, and investors were also discouraged by uneven economic data in China, the world's biggest crude importer. Brent futures fell \$1.45, or 1.7%, to \$83.32 a barrel by 1546 GMT. US WTI crude fell \$1.47, or 1.8%, to \$79.39. WTI and Brent were headed for their lowest close since March 31, erasing all price gains since the surprise oil output cut announced on April 2. REUTERS

**OGDCL partners with
TCF to promote quality
education in Pakistan**



ISLAMABAD (PR): Under its Corporate Social Responsibility Programme, the Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with The Citizens Foundation (TCF) in Islamabad to promote quality education for underprivileged children in Pakistan. The MoU aims to construct and operationalize primary level schools in the OGDCL's operational areas in collaboration with TCF, to empower local communities. This initiative will enable out of school children to receive quality education at their doorstep, creating a positive impact in society and transforming the lives of families of these children. It will be a long term partnership for the promotion of education in marginalized sections of society in years to come. OGDCL is a socially conscious organization and strongly believes in giving back to the communities to transform their lives. This partnership with TCF is aligned with OGDCL's commitment to improving education outcomes in Pakistan and will make a significant contribution to the country's development. The collaboration between OGDCL and TCF is a testament to the importance of public-private partnerships in improving education outcomes in Pakistan.

SNGPL launches ration distribution drive



LAHORE
STAFF REPORT

Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) has launched ration distribution drive as part of its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program. It is pertinent to mention that in wake of economic slowdown and inflation in the country, Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) had advised SNGPL to distribute ration among the deserving and needy people during the month of Ramzan ul Mubarak. In light of the said directions and keeping in view the need for such program, the Board of Directors and the Company Management decided to immediately launch the ration distribution drive allocating Rs. 100 million for the program. In order to identify genuinely deserving people as well as to maintain transparency in the distribution process, SNGPL decided to partner with Alkhidmat Foundation, Saylani Welfare and Akhuwat. The allocated amount for the ration distribution program was distributed among the three organizations. Under the ration distribution program, 10,000 ration bags will be distributed before Eid ul Fitr to families belonging to Lahore, Peshawar, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Sahiwal, Sialkot, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Mardan, Abbottabad, Sargodha, Faisalabad, Shekhupura, Multan and Bahawalpur. Every family gets ration package worth Rs. 10,000 under the program.

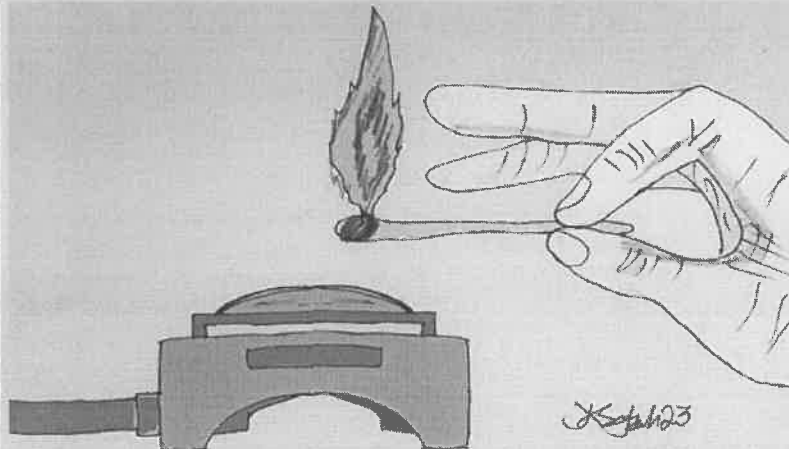
OGDCL partners with TCF to promote quality education



ISLAMABAD
PR

Under its Corporate Social Responsibility Program, the Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with The Citizens Foundation (TCF) in Islamabad to promote quality education for underprivileged children in Pakistan. The MOU aims to construct and operationalize primary level schools in the OGDCL's operational areas in collaboration with TCF, to empower local communities. This initiative will enable out of school children to receive quality education at their doorstep, creating a positive impact in society and transforming the lives of families of these children. It will be a long term partnership for the promotion of education in marginalized sections of society in years to come. OGDCL is a socially conscious organization and strongly believes in giving back to the communities to transform their lives. This partnership with TCF is aligned with OGDCL's commitment to improving education outcomes in Pakistan and will make a significant contribution to the country's development. The collaboration between OGDCL and TCF is a testament to the importance of public-private partnerships in improving education outcomes in Pakistan.

Poor gas supply



Sir: It is not surprising for the people of Pakistan that with increasing load shedding of electricity now we are facing load shedding of domestic gas. For the last three weeks, the supply of natural gas has been completely suspended in our area and the flame meaning the stove flame is quite low. Due to this we and others are unable to cook due to the suspension of gas people are compelled to buy LPG cylinders which are very costly dead people are sick and tired of paying bills and taxes and still they are

getting nothing but problems. The gas load shedding has made people cry. A person who comes home late now can't even eat. People of Pakistan are becoming depressed according to an investigation people most people are stressed out because of their never-ending problems. Our humble request is to fix this problem as soon as possible.
MAHNOOR JAMIL
Karachi

Gas breakdown

IT is indeed agonising for the people to put up with the shortage of natural gas along with frequent power breakdowns. Like many other localities of Karachi, the supply of gas has been virtually suspended in Liaquatabad, a densely populated area of the metropolis, for the last several months.

The highly troubling situation has made all gas-related domestic tasks, particularly cooking, quite difficult. Due to the suspension of gas supplies, people of the area are compelled to buy LPG cylinders, which is a significantly expensive affair for lower and lower-middle classes. The authorities concerned should look into the matter on a priority basis and restore routine gas supplies to the affected locality without any delay on any count.

**RUMMAN IQBAL
KARACHI**

PAC directs FIA to seize property, freeze bank accounts of Hascol

Oil falls 2pc as dollar strengthens on Fed rate hike expectations

RECORDER REPORT

ISLAMABAD: The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Wednesday directed the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to initiate the process of confiscation of the property and freeze the bank accounts of Hascol Petroleum Limited.

The committee met under the chairmanship Noor Alam Khan here at the Parliament House to examine the Audit Report of the Power Division for 2021-22. Chairman committee recalled that the committee had directed the FIA to investigate the Hascol Petroleum Limited.

Members committee took the matter pertaining to outstanding dues against HASCOL and BYCO Petroleum Limited (now CnergyicoPk Limited). Hascol is a defaulted company, while BYCO has also failed to pay Rs44 billion to the federal government.

The committee was further appraised on \$3 billion lent to 600 individuals at zero interest rate by the previous government and ordered FIA to present the list of these individuals after Eidul Fitr. The committee further directed to seize both moveable and immovable assets of alleged individuals in the list.

Members brought up the subject of foreign institutions working in the local space and discussed the award of contracts worth Rs22.78 billion to three Chinese companies.

Audit authorities informed the committee that a contract worth Rs17.69 billion for a 500 kV transmission line from Suki Kinari to Neelum Jhelum was awarded to China Construction Industrial and Energy Engineering Group (CCIEE). However, pre-conditions for nominating the company on the basis of its

experience were ignored during the bidding process.

A contract worth Rs868 million for the Shikarpur grid station was awarded to a Chinese joint venture without following regulations, meanwhile, another contract for a World Bank-funded 220 kV grid station was awarded to the Chinese JV, the audit officials informed the committee's members.

Chairman committee observed that the directive of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Energy Minister Khurram-Dastgir Khan regarding the load-shedding schedule for the holy month was violated. The committee also took notice of increased load-shedding across the country in the past few weeks. On another issue, committee members expressed their displeasure at the excessive load-shedding witnessed during the holy month of Ramadan.

NEW YORK: Oil prices fell about 2% to a two-week low on Wednesday despite a sharp decline in US crude inventories, as the US dollar strengthened on fears that looming US Federal Reserve interest rate hikes could curb energy demand in the world's top consumer.

A stronger dollar can hurt global demand for oil by making it more expensive in other countries, and investors were also discouraged by uneven economic data in China, the world's biggest crude importer.

Brent futures fell \$1.45, or 1.7%, to \$83.32 a barrel by 11:46 a.m. EDT (1546 GMT). US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell \$1.47, or 1.8%, to \$79.39.

WTI and Brent were headed for their lowest closes since March 31, erasing all price gains since the surprise oil output cut announced on April 2 by the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting

Countries, Russia and other allies in the OPEC+ group.

"The crude benchmarks are posting ... lows this morning in response to a strengthening in the US dollar that is, in turn, weighing on risky assets following some hot inflation data out of Europe," analysts at energy consulting firm Ritterbusch and Associates told customers in a note.

"We still believe that the market has been too focused on the supply side of the global oil equation following the OPEC output cuts and that world oil demand is significantly weaker than widely perceived," the note said.

US crude stockpiles fell by 4.6 million barrels last week to a 10-week low, according to the US Energy Information Administration (EIA).

That is a much bigger withdrawal than the 1.1-million barrel decline analysts forecast in a Reuters poll and the 2.7-million barrel decline

reported by the American Petroleum Institute late Tuesday.

In China, stock markets closed lower due to uneven first-quarter data indicating a bumpy economic recovery after the country dropped its strict zero-COVID policy.

Global stock markets also fell, while a rally in the US dollar gained momentum, as investors focused on possible Fed rate hikes to tame inflation, rather than on hopes it would ease up to reassure investors about the US banking sector.

The Fed is likely to have one more interest rate rise in store, Atlanta Fed President Raphael Bostic said on Tuesday.

Markets are pricing in an 86% chance of the Fed raising rates by 25 basis points in May.

In Europe, European Central Bank officials remained wary of inflation and have suggested further rate hikes also.—Reuters

Asia naphtha crack tumbles

NEW DELHI: Asia's naphtha market plunged to a more than three-month low on Wednesday as weaker prices of alternative feedstock liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) hit demand for the product at petrochemical units, traders said.

The profit margin on refining naphtha dropped by \$4.55 to \$37.03 a tonne over Brent crude oil, while the backwardation in markets narrowed by 50 cents to \$6 a tonne.

Swing petrochemical crackers can switch up to 10-20% of their feed to LPG to take advantage of cheaper raw material.

At the Singapore deals window there were two offers for first-half July cargoes without any bids, resulting in no trades. There were no bids, offers or deals for gasoline.

Light distillate inventories at the Fujairah commercial hub rose by 1.395 million barrels to the highest in eight months at 8.565 million barrels in the week to April 17, S&P Global Commodity Insights data showed.

US gasoline stocks fell by about 1.02 million barrels, market sources said, compared with analyst expectations of a 1.3 million barrel decline.

Oil prices dropped sharply on Wednesday, sliding by 2% as potential US interest rate hikes that could slow growth and curb oil consumption outweighed strong Chinese economic data and falling US inventories.

India and China have snapped up the vast majority of Russian oil so far in April at prices above the Western price cap of \$60 a barrel, according to traders and Reuters calculations.—Reuters

PRL – headwinds continue

The economic headwinds and liquidity crunch has hit all business and the refinery sector has been particularly vulnerable because of its age-old technology along with both domestic and global decline in the demand for furnace oil – a key fuel that is produced by the refining process in the country. Though Pakistan Refinery Limited (PSX:PRL) in its recently half yearly financial performance highlighted that it is committed to Refinery Expansion and Upgrade Project (REUP) with the Front End Engineering Design (FEED) progress on time; it had also mentioned that the company was facing problems in payments to the international consultants which could impact the timelines.

The refinery has also been facing issues in the confirmation of Letters of Credit (LCs) for crude imports as well as delays in opening of LCs for procurement of spare parts etc., which has impacted the company's profitability.

In its recently announced financial performance for 9MFY23 on the stock

exchange yesterday, PRL's revenues were however seen growing by 70 percent year-on-year. But higher prices of crude oil shrunk the gross refining margins to 3.25 percent in 9MFY23 from 7.71 percent in 9MFY22. The impact of higher cost seeped all the way down to bottomline where support was lent to the earnings by a jump in other income that increased by more than 15 times. However, the growth in income

could still not contain the decline in earnings for PRL that fell by 53 percent year-on-year during the 9-month period. Higher taxation incidence also had an adverse impact on the company's bottomline.

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Asia's spot cash premiums for 10 ppm sulphur gasoil falls

SINGAPORE: Asia's spot cash premiums for 10 ppm sulphur gasoil came under slight pressure on Wednesday as selling interest remained prevalent even as some traders came back to buy the lower-priced material.

Demand-supply fundamentals continued to be weak, with market talks of sufficient supply still prevalent for May. Several Korean refiners were still clearing their May stockpiles since early week via tenders.

Refining margins fell slightly to \$14.40 per barrel given the unchanged weak gasoil fundamentals.

Jet fuel refining margins likewise fell to \$13.15 per barrel, with regrade widening back to above \$1 per barrel as some buyers returned to the market to trade on the jet fuel-10ppm gasoil spread.

Middle distillates stockpiles at Fujairah Oil Industry Zone hit a fresh high at 3.439 million barrels since end-December 2022 for the week ended April 17, according to industry information service S&P Global Commodity Insights.

Oil dropped on Wednesday as the market weighed potential interest rate hikes from the US Federal Reserve that could slow growth and dampen oil consumption, offsetting falling US inventories and strong Chinese economic data.

Saudi Aramco offered more vacuum gasoil (VGO) supplies to be exported from its Jizan refinery in May, according to traders and shipping data, in a sign that the refinery is yet to ramp up to full output.

India and China have snapped up a vast majority of Russian oil so far in April at rates above the Western price cap of \$60 per barrel, according to traders and Reuters calculations.—Reuters

US natgas futures up on output decline

NEW YORK: US natural gas futures edged up about 1% to a four-week high on Tuesday on a preliminary daily output decline and forecasts for more cool weather and heating demand over the next week or so.

Prices also gained support as the amount of gas flowing to US liquefied natural gas (LNG) export plants remained on track to hit a record high for a second month in a row in April after Freeport LNG's export plant in Texas exited an eight-month outage in February.

Front-month gas futures for May delivery on the New York Mercantile Exchange rose 2 cents, or 0.9%, to \$2.295 per million British thermal units at 9:09 a.m. EDT (1309 GMT), putting it on track for its highest close since March 21 for a second day in a row.

That also set the front-month on track to rise for a third consecutive day for the first time since early March, gaining 15% during that time.

In addition, the contract moved closer to topping its 50-day moving average, a key point of technical resistance, for the first time since mid-December.

Freeport LNG's export plant, which shut in June 2022 after a fire, was on track to pull in about 2.2 billion cubic feet per day (bcfd) of gas on Tuesday, the same amount it has pulled in over the past two weeks, according to data provider Refinitiv.

That was above the 2.1 bcfd of gas Freeport LNG can

turn into LNG for export. LNG plants can pull in more gas than they can turn into LNG because they use some of the fuel to power equipment used to produce LNG.

Average gas flows to all seven big US LNG export plants rose to 14.1 bcfd so far in April, up from a record 13.2 bcfd in March.

The seven big US LNG export plants can turn about 13.8 bcfd of gas into LNG.

Refinitiv said average gas output in the US Lower 48 states rose to 100.1 bcfd so far in April, up from 99.7 bcfd in March. That compares with a monthly record of 100.4 bcfd in January.

On a daily basis, however, output was on track to drop about 1.7 bcfd to a preliminary one-month low of 98.9 bcfd on Tuesday due mostly to declines in Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

That would be the biggest one-day output drop since late January. Energy analysts, however, noted preliminary data is often revised later in the day.

Meteorologists projected the weather in the Lower 48 states would remain mostly colder than normal from April 18-25 before turning near normal from April 26-May 3.

Even though the weather will remain cooler than normal into next week, Refinitiv forecast US gas demand, including exports, would ease from 95.8 bcfd this week to 95.5 bcfd next week due to an expected decline in gas flows to LNG plants.—Reuters

Asia fuel oil
**Refining
cracks ease
despite drop in
crude prices**

SINGAPORE: Refining cracks for fuel oil softened in Asia on Wednesday despite lower crude prices, with supplies continuing to flood East.

Singapore's front-month crack for 0.5% very low sulphur fuel oil (VLSFO) dipped to a premium of \$8.52 a barrel at the Asia close (0830 GMT) while the crack for 380-cst high sulphur fuel oil (HSFO) fell to a discount of \$11.21 a barrel.

Fuel oil supplies to Asia hit three-month highs of 5.98 million tonnes in April, dominated by Russian flows that account for more than 85% of the total arrivals, based on Refinitiv Oil Research this week. However, out of this total volume, Middle Eastern exports dropped ahead of the region's summer demand season.

Singapore's cash premium for HSFO held steady at \$7.25 a tonne on Wednesday, with high-sulphur supplies likely to tighten amid lower exports from the Middle East.

Meanwhile, VLSFO's cash premium edged slightly higher at a premium of \$3.73 a tonne, though steady offers of blendstocks are expected to cap the market's recovery.

Poorer gasoil margins in recent weeks could prompt refiners in Asia to offer these components in the market instead of diverting them to middle distillate production, trade sources said.—Reuters

وزارت خزانہ کراس فیول سبسڈی فراہمی کی سمری کی سختی سے مخالفت کریگی

اسلام آباد (مہتاب حیدر) وزارت خزانہ کراس فیول سبسڈی کی فراہمی سے متعلق مجوزہ سمری کے سوسے کی سختی سے مخالفت کریگی جس کے تحت 1000 کئی کئی اور اس سے ذاکر کی

گاز بول کے لیے پیٹرول کی قیمت میں 75 روپے فی لیٹر اضافہ کیا جائیگا، وزارت پٹرولیم نے سمری کا مسودہ تیار کر لیا ہے جسے عید کی تعطیلات کے بعد باقی صنف 5 نمبر 4

ٹان پریڈیکٹ سولٹی کیس سمارٹین کے بلوں میں 500 روپے تکسٹ چارجز کا اضافہ

لاہور (اپنے نامہ نگار سے) وفاقی حکومت کی جانب سے ٹان پریڈیکٹ سولٹی کیس سمارٹین کے بلوں میں 500 روپے تکسٹ چارجز کا اضافہ کرنے کے متعلق ذرائع کے مطابق ایک سال تک مسلسل احتجاجی دہائیوں کے دوران 1 ماہ میں باقی صنف 8 نمبر 7

ٹیل اضافہ

ذرائع سمارٹین استعمال کرنے پر چارجز مقرر ہونے والے سمارٹین کے بلوں میں میٹرڈ تکسٹ چارجز شامل کئے گئے ہیں اور تکسٹ چارجز مقرر ہونے پر سمارٹین کو کم سے کم 500 روپے ادا کرنا ہوگا۔

مخالفت

ہو پھول اقتصادی رابطہ تنظیم کے سامنے پیش کرنے کیلئے مختلف وزارتوں میں تسلیم کر دیا گیا ہے جب وزارت خزانہ کے ایک اعلیٰ عہدیدار سے رابطہ کیا گیا تو انہوں نے کہا کہ پیٹرول سبسڈی مسودے کے مرتبہ میں ایسے ہیٹروگین ڈیزائن نے ای سی سی کو سمری کا مسودہ ارسال کیا تھا انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم اپنے تجربے تیار کر رہے ہیں اور آئی ایم ایف سے بھی مشاورت کر رہے ہیں یہ سمری بھی منظوری کے قریب نہیں ہے انہوں نے کہا کہ وزارت خزانہ کا رد عمل جلد ہی سب کو معلوم ہو جائیگا، عہدیدار نے یاد دلایا کہ اس طرح کی سبسڈی لینی آئی کے دور حکومت میں مجوزہ کی گئی تھی لیکن اس پر عملدرآمد نہیں ہو سکا تھا، سابق وزیر خزانہ مشرف اسٹیل نے بھی تڑپتے جھٹ میں سستا پیٹرول سبسڈی کی رقم 48 ارب روپے چھٹے کئے تھے لیکن ان وسائل کو سلا ب سے متاثرہ علاقوں کی جان بھرتی کر دیا گیا اس طرح کی سبسڈی کو پاکستان میں خلاف ورزی سے نافذ نہیں کیا جا سکتا اور وزارت خزانہ کی باضابطہ رائے کی ہے۔