

Quetta irrigation plan allocated Rs8 billion

By Our Correspondent

QUETTA, Aug 16: The National Economic Council (NEC) has allocated Rs8 billion for greater Quetta irrigation project.

A meeting, presided over by Chief Minister Jam Mohammad Yousuf, held here on Saturday was informed that under the irrigation project old pipelines would be replaced, two dams would be constructed, a water recycling plant would be installed and new tubewells set up.

The meeting also discussed the progress of drought emergency recovery assistance (Dera) and drought impact mitigation recovery component (DIMRC) projects besides reviewing the public sector development programme (PSDP).

The chief minister directed that the funds for the new financial year should be released after submission of the progress reports of the ongoing projects for the rehabilitation and monitoring should be made effective besides taking assistance from the chief minister's inspection commission.

Mr Yousuf ordered that monitoring system should be made effective and implementation of Dera and DIMRC projects should be ensured.

TERRORISTS WARNED: Balochistan Chief Minister Jam Mohammad Yousuf has declared that neither terrorist acts nor anonymous threatening letters could stop him and his government from serving the people and the province.

Talking to newsmen after performing national flag-hoisting ceremony at the Provincial Assembly lawn on Thursday, he stated that the terrorists involved in the Asna-i-Ashari mosque attack of July 4, which left more than 50 people dead, would be tried in Anti-Terrorism Court.

Referring to rocket and hand-grenade attacks and other acts of terrorism being committed by terrorists in different parts of the province, he said through such acts the terrorists were trying to destabilize the democratic process, but pledged that these terrorists would not succeed in their designs.

He said that anonymous threatening letters had been distributed on the eve of the Independence Day to frighten the people not to take part in the Aug 14 celebrations but such nefarious acts could not stop them from showing their love for the country and the province.

He bitterly criticized the political groups who were opposing the construction of Gwadar seaport by misleading the people that its construction would pave the way for the flow of the people from Punjab to the town.

He observed that the Gwadar mega project would be a national asset and "we should look at it with a broad angle to encourage investors to invest in the project to develop the area which would create job opportunities for the people of the area."

Mr Yousuf said that the people should not forget that without capital and without skilled labour no area in the world could be developed and the province badly needed these two things to develop the province and to rid it of the backwardness.

*Agriculture
17.8.03
Daw*

Pakistan needs pro-poor water plan: UN

By Our Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD, Aug 29: Pakistan needs a water management strategy comprising pro-poor, affordable technologies such as small-scale water harvesting instead of the conventional focus on formal irrigation systems, says the UN Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) in a report.

The report, "Freshwater for Agriculture", prepared in connection with the International Year of Freshwater 2003, observes that global food production will have to increase by 60 per cent to fill nutrition gaps resulting from the growth in population over the next three decades.

To meet this requirement, water withdrawals for agriculture are expected to go up by some 14 per cent, representing an annual growth rate of 0.6 per cent. Much of the increase will take place on arable irrigated land, forecast to expand globally from some two million sq km to 2.421 million sq km.

For Pakistan, the FAO sees broad scope for policy interven-

tion to help "re-invent" agricultural water management. It has recommended a strategic approach to develop available land and water resources in order to meet demand for food products and agricultural commodities and a broader awareness of the productivity gains that can be achieved through the use of water wisely.

Individual farmers and households need to be assured "stable engagement" with land and water resources, that is, land tenure and water use rights that are flexible enough to promote comparative advantage in food staples and cash crops, observes the report.

Those rights, it further stresses, must be matched by access to rural credit and finance and dissemination of technology and good practices in water use, particularly, through technologies which redound to the well-being of the poor.

Terming the existing command-and-control systems of irrigation, the report calls for measures that could transform these

into much more "flexible service-delivery" systems.

It adds that agriculture should—and can—shoulder its environmental responsibilities much more effectively by minimizing the negative environmental impacts of irrigated production and seeking to restore the productivity of natural ecosystems.

The report goes on to stress the need of a government policy that facilitates investment and helps local markets for agricultural produce to become more effective in meeting local demands. "This means investment in key public goods such as roads and storage as well as institutional capacity, but will also demand a more progressive role for large-scale private investment."

To ensure the economic use of the available water resources for sustained agricultural productivity, the FAO has proposed a number of measures by the government, civil society and other stakeholders under the captions, "Modernisation", "Participation" and "Investment".

*Down
Agriculture
30.8.03*