

QUETTA VOICE

Editor :Asim khan

Wednesday, December 06,2023

dquettavoice@gmail.com



File Photo: Levies personnel reached the house that was collapsed as a result of the earthquake in Chaman. Photo provided by Sardar Muhammad Khondaj

Balochistan Earthquake Raises Urgent Concerns: Are We Prepared for Looming Threats?

Syed Ali Shah Analysis:

The recent earthquake in Balochistan's Khuzdar district has sparked concern and shed light on the vulnerable position of the province. Despite being located in earthquake-prone zones, the impact on mud-walled houses in Wadh from the 5.5 magnitude quake is only the latest episode. Official secrecy has clouded the exact number of damaged houses, but local journalists' videos depict dozens affected. The true extent of displacement and homelessness is yet unknown,

but the recurring threat of earthquakes in the region cannot be ignored. **Balochistan Has A History Of Earthquakes** Balochistan has a tragic history with earthquakes, claiming lives in Ziarat, Mashkai, Awaran, Harnai, and the devastating 1935 quake that razed Quetta. Unfortunately, the lessons seem unheeded, with risky constructions in Quetta violating building codes. Congested streets and poorly constructed high-rises

pose a severe risk to human lives. Despite these dangers, authorities have not implemented adequate awareness and precautionary measures. The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) lacks the resources and expertise needed to handle natural disasters effectively. **PDMA Lacks Capacity To Tackle Disasters** Political influence in recruitment and machinery purchases further compromises

the PDMA's performance. Urgent measures, including establishing a dedicated department with experts and proper equipment, are crucial to address future emergencies. Adding to the complexity, the looming threats of global warming and climate change exacerbate challenges. Last year's devastating floods should serve as a wake-up call to rectify mistakes and enhance communication strategies before it's too late.

BCS Cabinet Denounces BSS Group, Challenges Government Inquiry

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: The Balochistan Civil Services (BCS), Executive Branch Officers Welfare Association's cabinet has issued a strong response to a press conference by the BSS group. The cabinet accuses BSS of engaging in politics of upheaval, and blackmail. It specifically points to a 2020 incident where the civil secretariat was allegedly held hostage for 54 days. The statement questions the government's inquiry into the 2020 incident, particularly regarding individuals who reportedly broke the gate of the Chief Minister Secretariat. It emphasizes the role of deputy commissioners in Balochistan, stating that they represent the government. The cabinet also



asserts that field share is reserved for specific groups, namely the Pakistan Administrative Service and BCS. **BSS Officers Criticized**

Furthermore, the statement advises BSS against protesting and suggests they seek participation in institutions such as the Pakistan Army, Pakistan Air Force, Pakistan Navy, Customs, and Police Service of Pakistan. It strongly opposes any attempts to fulfill what it perceives as illegal desires, especially regarding field share. The cabinet concludes by mentioning the competitive exam for becoming a Deputy Commissioner and warns against unacceptable practices like marriage through illegal means. It threatens disciplinary action, including legal measures for defamation, insult, and slander against the Deputy Commissioner.

Secretary Information Lauds DGPR Balochistan, Urges Prompt Setup of Digital Lab

Staff Reporter:

QUETTA: Information Secretary, Imran Khan visited the Directorate General of Public Relations (DGPR) Balochistan, where he was warmly received by Director General of Public Relations Muhammad Noor Khetran and other officers. During his visit, the Information Secretary thoroughly reviewed various sectors, including the Electronic Media Monitoring System. DGPR Muhammad Noor Khetran provided a comprehensive briefing to the Information Secretary about the overall performance of the Directorate. He particularly highlighted the progress made in securing support from the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan for the establishment of a digital lab. Recognizing the significance of the digital age, Secretary Information Imran Khan directed the DGPR team to expedite the establishment of the digital lab, emphasizing the need for swift action. **Technology Transformed the World Into A Global Village**



Secretary Information Imran Khan commended the crucial role played by DGPR in disseminating government policies and welfare initiatives through the media. He emphasized that in the modern era, where technology has transformed the world into a global village, the advent of digital media enables instantaneous updates, allowing information to reach the audience within seconds. Secretary Khan acknowledged the substantial role of Public Relations in this context. In conclusion, Information Secretary Imran Khan expressed confidence in the ongoing success of DGPR Balochistan and assured them of his full cooperation and support.

'Criminal activity': Senator Raza Rabbani wants action against Discos for overcharging consumers

ISLAMABAD: PPP Senator Mian Raza Rabbani on Tuesday "strongly condemned" malpractices by the country's power distribution companies (Discos), saying that it amounted to criminal activity and action should be initiated against them. The statement comes after, in one of the most damning indictments of over-billing in the provision of electricity, Discos across Pakistan were accused of fleecing customers and overcharging them as much as 100 per cent. In a comprehensive inquiry, the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra) found that distribution companies, without exception, were overcharging and over-billing their consumers. "There is (not a) single Disco in the country who is charging bills in 100pc correct manner," the power sector regulator concluded in its 14-page report. The allegations come at a time when Discos are carrying out a countrywide campaign against power theft.

Dr. Alia Haider Honored with Frontline Climate Health Award at COP 28

Syed Ali Shah:



QUETTA: Dr. Alia Haider, a beacon of resilience from Quetta's Hazara community, emerged victorious at COP 28, securing the Frontline Climate Health Award. Her unwavering commitment shone through as she organized medical camps in flood-stricken regions of Sindh and Balochistan last year. Despite countless challenges, Dr. Haider's efforts earned her the prestigious award at the summit in Dubai. Notably, Dr. Alia Haider shares her commitment to humanitarian causes with her sister, Jalila Haider, a renowned human rights activist in Balochistan. Their collective impact resonates as a testament to the power of community service and resilience in the face of adversity. In an exclusive conversation with Daily Quetta Voice, Dr. Alia Haider expressed immense joy, stating, "This recognition is a source of great pleasure for me." Her dedicated services during the merciless floods, which claimed numerous lives and displaced thousands in Naseerabad, Jaffarabad, Sohbat Pur, and other Balochistan districts, garnered well-deserved acclaim.

Firing In Chaghi Leaves A Tribal Elder Dead

Riaz Baloch:



CHAGHI: Armed accused opened fire at a vehicle and killed a tribal elder in district Chaghi on Tuesday morning. Levies sources said armed accused opened an indiscriminate firing on the vehicle of Haji Saiful Hassani. The tribal elder was dead on the spot. The attackers escaped without leaving a single mark. The dead body was

PTI Convention Schedule Unveiled for Balochistan

News Desk:



Following the directives of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf Central General Secretary Umar Ayub, the convention schedule for Balochistan has been announced. The convention is set to take place in the 8th, Pishin district on the 9th, and Zhob district on the 10th. Former Governor Balochistan, Syed Zahoor Ahmed Agha and PTI Secretary General Balochistan, Salar Khan Kakar would address the upcoming conventions of the party in the province. The decision regarding the convention was made during a meeting attended by Nazir Zardari, Senior Vice President of Pishin District, Sahab Khan Kakar, Abdul Hadi, Shamsuddin, Shafi Khan, Sajjad Khan, and others.

Finance division releases Rs17.4bn to ECP for elections

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Finance Division on Tuesday said it has released Rs17.4 billion to the Election Commission (ECP) for the upcoming general elections slated to be held on February 8, 2024.

The amount was in addition to the Rs10bn released in July 2023, the Finance Ministry said, highlighting that the latest disbursement brought the total funds released for polls to Rs27.4bn. The Finance Division remains committed to provision of funds as and when required by the Election Commission of Pakistan, it added.

The development comes a day after the electoral body raised alarm over the delay in the release of the urgently needed amount for the conduct of polls. Earlier, sources told Dawn that the ECP had asked for Rs51bn for the elections, but later after a series of meetings settled for Rs7bn, out of which Rs5bn had been released during the previous fiscal year. In the budget passed in June, the government had allocated Rs42bn for the elections.

They said the Finance Ministry was repeatedly approached and a writ-

ten reminder was also sent for an immediate release of funds. However, there was no positive response, compelling the ECP to summon the finance secretary.

Subsequently, the finance secretary had assured the poll watchdog that the funds required by the ECP would be released in a day or two. In a post X (formerly Twitter), caretaker Minister for Information and Broadcasting and Parliamentary Affairs Murtaza Solangi had also ruled out any crisis in meeting the ECP's financial needs.

Last week, the

electoral watchdog had rejected what it said were "baseless and misleading" reports about a delay in the upcoming general elections.

The statement had come in response to media reports that a request was submitted to the ECP to postpone the general elections, citing security concerns in Balochistan and the recent wave of terrorism.

The ECP and President Arif Alvi had agreed earlier this month on Feb 8, 2024, as the date for polls — an announcement that has stirred activity in the camps of major political parties.



ISLAMABAD: President Dr Arif Alvi in a group photo with a delegation of Center for Peace and Development initiatives comprising social activists and persons with disabilities, at Atiwan-e-Sadr.

President stresses need to eliminate harassment against women at workplace

ISLAMABAD (INP): President Dr. Arif Alvi has emphasized the need of eliminating harassment against women at workplace to ensure their vibrant role in country economy.

Addressing an awareness event "16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence and Harass-

ment of Women" in Islamabad on Tuesday, he termed provision of property rights to women as pre-requisite for their economic empowerment.

Dr Arif Alvi granted the property rights to women in 1904 but Islam awarded immense rights to women four-

teen hundred years ago. He lauded the role of banks of achieving all targets related to the provision of employment to women. The President called upon religious scholars to educate the society about the rights of women. He said there is no place of honourkilling in Islam and the country's

law also abhors this cruelty. He also highlighted the role of media in imparting awareness among people to effectively resolve the issues related to women. Dr Alvi said women and children both prove to be the most vulnerable section during wars. He lamented the tragic situation of Gaza.



QETTA: Caretaker provincial minister Amjad Rasheed addressing a press conference.

Sanjrani, Jordan's Envoy for strengthening bilateral ties, addressing key issues

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador of Jordan to Pakistan, Maen Khrisat called on Chairman Senate, Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani at Parliament House on Tuesday and discussed with him strengthening bilateral ties and addressing pressing humanitarian issues.

The Ambassador and Chairman Senate discussed the prevailing situation in the Gaza Strip and West Bank, condemning the Israeli actions and emphasizing the broader implications for the Middle East region.

Muhammad Sadiq Sanjrani appreciated the

efforts of King Abdullah bin Hussein of Jordan in seeking an end to the ongoing crisis, recognizing Jordan's pivotal role as the custodian of Masjid Al Aqsa Compound and underscoring its historical significance in maintaining peace in Aquds Jerusalem.

Ambassador Khrisat highlighted Jordan's continuous support for the Palestinian people, including the establishment and replenishment of a hospital in Gaza to provide crucial medical services.

Given Jordan's historical commitment to Palestinian refugees, the Ambassador stressed their on-

going efforts to assist in times of need.

The Chairman Senate called for efforts to achieve heightened international awareness of the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the West Bank. He urged collective efforts to end the suffering of innocent Palestinians and emphasized the necessity of a resolution in accordance with international law.

Genocidal actions and war crimes of Zionist Israeli regime in Palestinian territories were condemned.

Acknowledging the enduring fraternal ties between Jordan and Pakistan, noted in shared

religious and cultural values, Jordanian Ambassador expressed a commitment to further strengthening these bonds.

Sadiq Sanjrani proposed an increase in bilateral trade and economic relations, reflecting the mutual desire for enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and Jordan.

The meeting concluded with a shared determination to foster collaboration not only in addressing immediate challenges but also in building a stronger foundation for sustained partnership between the two nations.

Pakistan's sesame seed exports reach all-time high of USD 113 million

BEIJING (INP): Pakistan has witnessed an unprecedented surge in its Sesame seed exports, reaching an all-time high of USD 113.66 million just in October 2023.

The surge not only underscores the nation's prowess in the agricultural sector but also highlights its ability to capitalize on global market demands, said Ghulam Qadir Commercial Consul, Pakistan Embassy, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.

Ghulam Qadir said that the Sesame

seed industry continues to thrive, experts attribute this remarkable achievement to a combination of favorable climatic conditions, strategic agricultural policies, and adept market positioning.

This surge in exports not only reflects positively on Pakistan's economy but also positions the country as a key player in the international Sesame seed market.

"In the first ten months of 2023, Pakistan's sesame seed exports to China

increased 100% amounting to USD 170.06 million, whereas last year in the same period (January-October) it was USD 84.67 million worth of sesame seed Pakistan exported to China.

In October Pakistan exported 64,711.149 tons of sesame seed to China worth USD 113.66 million while in last year's same month, it was 16,727.774 tons worth USD 25.57 million, he stated.

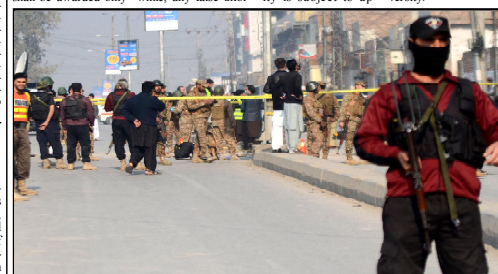
He further said that as per the General

Administration of Customs of the People's Republic of China, China imported 97,069.705 tons of sesame seed from Pakistan in the first ten months of 2023, an increase of 72.53% by volume worth USD 170.063 million. In the same period last year, it was 56,261.629 tons worth USD 84.67 million. It is worth mentioning that Pakistan's exports to China crossed USD 2.82 billion in the first ten months of this year, up 1.27 percent year on year.

Earlier prime minister had expressed grave concerns over the unwarranted delay in completion of the PSPD projects including "Replace and Upgrade of HVAC Plant Room Equipments and Allied Works at PIMS, Islamabad" which led to

the PMIC for effective supervision, said a press release. The inspection team that visited the project, comprised PMIC Member Zahir Shah and Co-opted Member Sadiq Abul Director Muhammad Saleh Narejo and Assistant Director Ahmed Waseem.

The team inspected the ongoing work of the HVAC regarding installation of the centrally air conditioning system in the whole buildings of the hospital. PMIC Chairman Brigadier (Retired) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha had assigned the task to the inquiry team headed by Zahir Shah for vigorously pursuing the project and ensure its completion at the earliest. The PIMS administration the officers of Ministry of Housing and Works and Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, the matter had been referred



PESHAWAR, Pakistani security officials inspect the scene of the explosion of an improvised explosive device (IED) on a roadside in Peshawar, Pakistan, 05 December 2023. At least seven explosive including three children were injured in an explosion targeting police personnel and took place on Peshawar's Warsak Road.

PMIC emphasizes completion of PIMS HVAC project by Dec 20

ISLAMABAD (INP): A team's visit on November 24,

to the PMIC for effective supervision, said a press release. The inspection team that visited the project, comprised PMIC Member Zahir Shah and Co-opted Member Sadiq Abul Director Muhammad Saleh Narejo and Assistant Director Ahmed Waseem.

The team inspected the ongoing work of the HVAC regarding installation of the centrally air conditioning system in the whole buildings of the hospital. PMIC Chairman Brigadier (Retired) Muzaffar Ali Ranjha had assigned the task to the inquiry team headed by Zahir Shah for vigorously pursuing the project and ensure its completion at the earliest. The PIMS administration the officers of Ministry of Housing and Works and Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination, the matter had been referred

and PWD in the light of directions issued in the

ber 24.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Executive Engineer Roads CWP/PSH Department District Hamar involves sealed bids from eligible bidders who can prove their eligibility and qualification as mentioned in the bidding documents for the works mentioned below. The estimated cost and other information of works are as under: percentage tender based on Comprehensive Schedule of Rates 2019. Government of Punjab has amended up-to-date from interested contractors / firms for the work listed below under BPPRA Rules & Tender complete details please visit <http://www.cwp.gov.pk>. Bid Security @ 2%. Tender Fee Rs. 1000/- A/C # C02716

S. No Name of Work E/Coat
1 CONSTRUCTION OF BLACK TOP ROAD 9,90000
SHAHNED MALK GUL SHAH HWAY
CRICKET GROUND TONEW JALALABAD
PARNVAL LENGTH 10.61 KM (TSE-23241294643)

DEADLINE OF SUBMISSION: Technical and financial proposals from intending contractors/firms sealed in two separate envelopes (seal one must be VVAK like & type of proposal must be delivered by hand or through registered mail to the address mentioned below on before procurement committee in the presence of bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to attend. The second sealed envelope containing "financial bids" of technically responsive qualified bidders will be opened on the same date. Bids Validity: Ninety (90) days Bid Submission Tender opening Date is 01st January 2024. Place: The place of issuance, submission, inquiries and opening will be: The office of the Executive Engineer Roads CWP/PSH Department District Hamar.

Executive Engineer Roads
CWP/PSH Department
Hamar.

PRO No. 11/10/05-19-2023
www.apr.gov.pk | @aprc-pan | @aprc | @aprc.kabul@afghanistan



ISLAMABAD: Excise and taxation officer putting off illegal black papers from cars as part of their citizens safety campaign.

Desalination plant & Pak-China Hospital: Gwadar achieves major milestone

ISLAMABAD (INP): Inauguration of Desalination plant and Pak-China hospital is a major milestone in improving the living conditions of the local people in Gwadar.

It was a significant move forward towards Gwadar's progress and strengthening of Pakistan and China relations. Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.

The Desalination plant in Gwadar and Pak-China Friendship Hospital were financially supported projects by the Chinese government.

These were inaugurated by Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar, Baluchistan's caretaker Chief Minister Mir Ali Mardan Khan Domki, and the Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zidong.

Addressing the ceremony, they termed both projects a major milestone and a significant step in the development of Gwadar.

The projects signify the deepening ties and the strategic importance of CPEC for both nations.

With a budget of USD 12.7 million, the Desalination plant carries a capacity of 1.2 million gallons of water. The project implementation started in 2021 and completed successfully on November 7, 2023.

After years of neglect, Gwadar's water crisis was finally getting relief through the Water Supply Project. The development of a desalination plant will provide clean water to thousands of homes in the region.

Under the visionary development of Gwadar Port, the desalination plant addresses water supply issues and creates employment opportunities within Baluchistan, a crucial step for the region's prosperity. The 1.2 MGD Sea Water Desalination Plant at Gwadar Port was a game-changer.

The positive impact was not only on water availability but also the socio-economic landscape, breaking the chains of bad governance.

The water desalination plant has been done in collaboration with Gwadar Port Authority (GPA), National Engineering Services Pakistan, and China Harbor Engineering Company (CHEC).

Whereas, the Pak-China Friendship Hospital in Gwadar with a budget of USD 100 million has a capacity of 300 beds. The civil work was started in November 2020 while the project was completed in October 2023.

Pak-China Friendship Hospital in Gwadar will provide free and high-quality treatment for residents. It has offered employment opportunities regarding gynecology, pediatrics & neonatal medicine, and family medicine to the coastal community as well.



ISLAMABAD: Caretaker Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives, Muhammad Sami Saeed on Tuesday chaired a meeting to review progress of Power sector at the Ministry.

Electricity bills shock consumers with hidden charges of up to 100 percent

ISLAMABAD (INP): A comprehensive inquiry by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) has found that distribution companies across the country are sending excessive bills to consumers. The report found that the companies have been charging up to 100 percent additional charges from consumers.

The allegations come at a time when power distribution companies are on a nationwide drive against power theft.

According to media reports, the inquiry was launched on complaints of extra, excessive and incorrect bills from customers across the country in July and August 2023. The report raised questions regarding the entire income of the discos. Which includes everything from meter reading to billing and fines.

The inquiry found that the amount charged to the consumers was different from the picture

of the meter reading on the bill, in some cases the picture was either unclear or deliberate. has not been done. Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO), Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO), Quetta Electric Supply Company (QESCO) and Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO) sent the highest number of bills with incorrect images to consumers during the mandatory 30-day billing period. This resulted in protected customers being billed at the above slab rates, which are customers who use less than 200 watts per month for at least 6 months continuously.

According to the law, meter readings must be done for not less than 30 days or not more than 30 days, but NEPRA found that more than 1 crore 37 lakh domestic customers were sent bills for more than 30 days during these two months. While 3.2 lakh customers were sent charges as per the above slab as a result of over-

due bill and as a result of this initiative 840 thousand customers left the protected category, while 52 thousand 800 customers were non-billable. Moved into the category, customers who consume up to 100 kilowatts per month are termed "lifeline".

According to the report, Mapco alone sent overbills to 79 lakh 90 thousand consumers in July and August, Gujranwala Electric Power Company (Gepco) 16 lakh 50 thousand consumers, Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (Fesco) to 11 lakh 90 thousand consumers, LESCO 11 lakh 70 thousand, Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO) 7 lakh 30 thousand 105, Sepco 3 lakh 26 thousand 249, Peshawar Electric Supply Company (PESCO) 3 lakh 13 thousand 596, Kisco 1 lakh 64 thousand 987 and Islam Abad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) sent excess bills to 45 thousand 850 consumers, this data is for 9 out of 11 discos.

China-speed, State-of-the-art facility in DGK, boasted production capacity to 6,500 tons

ISLAMABAD (INP): In an impressive feat, SINOMA HCRDI accomplished the swift construction of Fauji Cement Company Limited's (FCCL) Greenfield Cement Manufacturing Plant within a record 13-month timeframe, marking a pivotal milestone for FCCL as they successfully commissioned the state-of-the-art facility in Dera Ghazi Khan, boasting a production capacity of 6,500 tons per day of clinker. The Embassy of China, in a post on its X account, characterized the rapid completion as "an amazing China-Speed, with the joint efforts of both

countries' engineers". The plant, located in the Shadan Lund area of District Dera Ghazi Khan, was commissioned last Thursday.

According to FCCL's statement, the commencement of the operation of the new line, the total cement production capacity of the Company has been increased to 10.6 million tons per annum and it established FCCL's position as the 3rd largest Cement producer in the country.

This project includes state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment and also includes emissions control features and

a Waste Heat Recovery Power Plant.

"The addition of this Greenfield Cement Plant at an extremely impoverished area of Shadan Lund in Southern Punjab will not only provide livelihood to the locals but also help in major uplift of the area," reads FCCL's statement, according to Gwadar Pro.

It is apt to mention that SINOMA HCRDI has also established the 3rd line of cement manufacturing, with a capacity of 6,500 tons per day of clinker, at FCCL's existing site in Nizampur, KP in October 2022.



QUETTA: Sardarzada Faisal Jamali meeting Caretaker Home Minister Zubair Jamali



ISLAMABAD: The spiritual leader of Dawood Bohra Community, Dr Sayedna Mufaddal Saifuddin, along with a delegation called on Caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar.

Biden's top official in India to discuss plot to kill Sikh leader Pannun on US soil

WASHINGTON (INP): In a significant development strongly indicating India as a rogue state and a threat to global peace, US Deputy National Security.

Adviser Jon Finer led a US delegation to New Delhi on Monday to see progress on the formation of an investigative panel to probe a plot to assassinate a Sikh leader on the US soil.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the White House in a statement in Washington on Monday said, "Finer acknowledged India's establishment of a Committee of Enquiry to investigate lethal

plotting in the United States and the importance of holding accountable anyone found responsible".

Last week, the US Justice Department alleged that an Indian government official directed an unsuccessful plot to assassinate a Sikh activist on US soil, while it announced charges against a man accused of orchestrating the attack.

US officials have named the target of the attempted murder as Gurbhagat Singh Pannun, a Sikh Khalistan leader and dual citizen of the United States and Canada.

In response, India ex-

pressed concern about one of its government officials being linked to the plot, from which it dissociated itself, as being against government policy.

India said last week it would formally investigate the concerns aired by the US, and take "necessary follow-up action" on the findings of a panel set up on November 18.

News of the incident came two months after Canada said there were "credible" allegations linking Indian agents to the June murder of another Sikh separatist leader, Hardeep Singh Nijjar, in a Vancouver suburb, a contention India has rejected.

Petroleum sales in Pakistan plummet 16%

ISLAMABAD, Dec 05 (INP): The sale of petroleum products in Pakistan has decreased by 16% on an annual basis, according to a report released by the Oil Companies Advisory Committee (OCAC).

In the period from July to November 2023, the sale of 64 lakh 50 thousand tons of petroleum products was recorded in the country, which is 16% less than the same period of the last financial year.

The highest decline was seen in the sale of residual fuel oil (RFO), which is used primarily in power production. RFO sales decreased by 24% compared to the

first half of financial year 2022.

The decline in petroleum product sales is due to a number of factors, including the economic downturn that the country has been going through, as well as the government's efforts to reduce the import bill.

In contrast to the decline in petroleum product sales, the retail price of cement in the country recorded a slight increase on weekly basis during the last week.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the average retail price of cement per sack in the northern regions of the country was recorded at Rs 1,271 in the week ending November 30,

which is 1.55 percent higher than the previous week.

The increase in cement prices is due to a number of factors, including higher input costs and increased demand.

A general downward trend was recorded in the price of pulses in the country during November.

According to the monthly report of Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, the average retail price of dal masoor was recorded at Rs 320.99 per kg during November.

The decline in pulse prices is due to a number of factors, including increased supply and lower demand.



CHAMAN: Robbers under the custody of Chaman levies

Punjab govt raises learner's driving licence fee to Rs1,000

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab government, in a highly unwise move, has decided to raise fee of learner's driving licence from Rs60 to Rs1,000.

The raise in fee was approved during the 33rd meeting of the provincial cabinet held here on Tuesday, with caretaker Chief Minister Mohsin Naqvi in the chair. The fee will be applicable from Jan 1, 2024.

The cabinet also decided to raise fee for LTV (light transport vehicle), HTV (heavy transport vehicle) and PSV (public service vehicle) licence, while the citizens will be able to transfer from high grade merit to low grade merit colleges. The Punjab cabinet has approved allotment of state land to landless farmers of Cholistan. It has been decided to give 344,000 acre to landless farmers - 12.5 acre each farmer. The land will be allotted at a nominal rate.

To provide better health facilities to prisoners, the provincial cabinet entrusted the management of prison hospitals to the Department of Primary and Secondary Health.

The cabinet also approved funds to double the number of nursing students in Punjab and the establishment of a management committee for the Institute of Public Health, Lahore.

The plan to renew the contract between the Specialized Healthcare and Medical Education Department and the Recep Tayyip Erdogan Health Trust for the management and operation of Regional Blood Centres of Multan and Bahawalpur was also approved.

The government also decided to upgrade the Children's Hospital, Faisalabad, to the status of a medical institute under the Punjab Medical and Health Institutions Act 2003, while the Multan Institute of Kidney Diseases will be established as PKLI-2 for South Punjab.

The caretaker provincial cabinet also approved setting up of a committee for the selection of vice chancellors of the University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences of Lahore

Bugti condemns blast near Peshawar school

ISLAMABAD (INP): Caretaker Federal Minister for Interior Sarfraz Ahmed Bugti Tuesday strongly condemned the explosion near the school on Warsak Road Babu in Peshawar.

Expressing deep sorrow and regret over the injuries of innocent children in the blast, he said that no effort should be spared in the treatment of children and other injured.

Sarfraz Bugti prayed for the early recovery of those injured in the explosion, especially children.

He said that children were the future of this country and they would be protected at any cost.

By targeting innocent children, the terrorists have proved their cowardness, he said adding that such cowardly acts could not sabotage peace and prosperity in the country.

The interior minister said that the elements involved in the incident were indeed punished and the entire nation was united to eliminate terrorism completely from the country.