

## Centre Vows to Assist Sindh in Coal Power Projects



KARACHI: Federal minister for information Pervaiz Rasheed on Tuesday called for joint efforts and organisational steps to end the power crisis that he said was a challenge being faced by the nation. He added that the federal government would assist the provincial government in the implementation of coal-based power projects by providing required infrastructure and fast-track official proceedings.

The minister was speaking at a meeting of the Thar Coal Energy Board at the CM House. The meeting was presided over by Chief Minister Syed Qaim Ali Shah, who is chairman of the board. The meeting was informed that there were many companies that had expressed their interest in making investment or had entered into agreement, bringing the total investment up to \$8 billion.

The Chief Minister said that the Sindh government was actively implementing the coal-based power projects under a joint venture with national and international investors for power generation that would most probably be started from 2017-18.

Mr Shah assured the investment companies of the provision of fool-proof security to them.

Recalling the importance of Thar coal, the chief minister said that Thar coal had the potential to bring the whole country out of a power crisis.

At present, he said, different coal-based power projects were being implemented by national and international power companies under a joint venture.

After a detailed discussion, the board decided that oil-based power plants be converted into the Thar coal-based power plants. The meeting also recommended that new power plants should be designed on the Thar coal specification.

The chief minister constituted a technical committee to be headed by managing director of Thar coal energy board, with two members from the private sector for finalising the efficient mechanism for Thar coal tariff determination and asked the committee to simplify it so that it could be reverted within two to three months.

The board further called for early implementation of the Thar-Jamshoro transmission line to restore the confidence of investors. With an amendment to the Thar energy board act, the board was empowered to issue LOI to the project having share of the Sindh government.

The meeting expressed satisfaction over the ongoing work on the infrastructure including water supply and construction of roads network.

The board was informed that 67 per cent work on the first scheme of water supply had completed while work on the other two schemes was under way.

Besides the federal minister, Adviser to Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, provincial ministers Rubina Qaimkhani and Syed Ali Mardan Shah, Chief Secretary Sajjad Saleem Hotiyana, Principal Secretary to the CM Alamdin Bullo, Thar coal energy board managing director and other members of the board attended the meeting.