

## The Nation

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### Thar Coal to Ensure Energy Security for 300 years: PM

KARACHI - Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Saturday said that the disruption in democratic government and political uncertainty in the past led to energy crisis being faced by the country today. He, however, vowed the present PPP government was committed to fully exploit Thar coal reserves to overcome the energy crisis.

He was addressing the International Coal Conference 2011, organised by the Sindh Government in Karachi, which was attended by a large number of international investors and industrialists. The Prime Minister said energy was a key for economic progress and prosperity of the country. He said Pakistan had been gifted by Allah Almighty with abundant natural resources, which needed to be fully exploited, but unfortunately no plan was implemented due to inconsistencies in the policies and repeated disruptions in the democratic process in the past.

He said the present government was fully committed to develop and exploit the reserves of Thar coalfield, which was inaugurated by Shaheed Benazir Bhutto in 1993 for generating electricity. Now the PPP government was transforming the vision of Shaheed Benazir into reality by exploring the coal reserves for energy purpose, he added.

The Prime Minister said these reserves were ensure the energy security of Pakistan and with the utilisation of the coal reserves could produce 100,000 MW electricity for next 300 years, adding the surplus electricity could be exported. Gilani said the PPP-led government had launched Diamer-Bhasha Dam project, which would generate over 4,500 MW after completion.

He further said the present government was striving to ensure uninterrupted power supply to the people as at least 3,400MW power had been added to the system during the three years of his government, adding the other projects of power generation was in pipeline.

The Prime Minister said various institutions were effectively working under Thar Coal & Energy Board led by Sindh Chief Minister. He said the government would encourage foreign investment in this field.

The Prime Minister maintained that in view of the energy shortage being faced by the country it was an important event whereby a way forward has been devised to utilize the coal reserves.

He further said that our prime objective is to attract local and foreign investment in mining, power generation and infrastructure development in Thar coalfield. We offer enabling environment, guaranteed rate of return, unprecedented incentives and commit robust infrastructure to investors working in this vital sector that will usher a new era of economic sustainability and development.