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Thar Coal Project - President directs officials to hold JEWG meeting

Karachi, March 1: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday directed the concerned officials to hold a meeting of the Pak-China Joint Energy Working Group (JEWG) on Thar Coal project.

President's directives for the Pak-China JEWG came after the Chinese government gave a proposal for financing of the project on soft credit terms by the Chinese financial institutions.

Briefing the newsmen, spokesman of President, Farhatullah Babar said the decision for holding the JEWG meeting was taken at a meeting on Tuesday by the President at Karachi. "The decision for the proposed meeting is aimed at reviewing progress on these mega projects in Sindh," he said.

The meeting on mega projects in the province were attended by the province Chief Minister, Provincial Ministers and relevant federal provincial government officials.

Farhatullah Babar said the meeting on the "Thar Coal Project" was informed that bankable feasibility of the project has been completed and the project is ready for execution as soon as the financing is achieved and critical infrastructure completed.

The infrastructure projects linked with the Thar Coal include water supply for the coalfields, erection of power transmission lines to distribute power, disposal of effluent from Thar Coal, provision of road and rail link to the project site and the construction of an airport at Islamkot, Babar said.

He recalled that during the visit of Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao to Pakistan last December, Pak-China JEWG was formed.

He said the forum of JEWG should be used to secure Chinese financing for the project through that country's financial institutions and directed the relevant agencies to immediately convene a meeting of this body for taking the project forward.

"In view of liquidity crunch it is imperative that the projects associated with the Thar Coal are executed on the basis of Public Private Partnership for which all the available resources will be used as public sector's equity," he said.

It was also informed in the briefing that the Sindh Government has submitted proposal of its flagship Joint venture project with Engro for project financing under JEWG.