

# DAWN

*Published in Dawn, September 24th, 2021*

## **Connectivity between Thar coal and Keti Bandar to help reduce circular debt: CM**

KARACHI: Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said on Thursday that connectivity between Thar coal and Keti Bandar and Islamkot and Mirpurkhas would help in replacing power plants operating on expensive imported coal with much cheaper Thar coal and thus reducing energy circular debt.

“Great potential exists for connecting Thar coal with Keti Bandar and thus develop Keti Bandar port for coal blending and power generation. In addition, rail connectivity between Islamkot and Mirpurkhas will help in replacing power plants operating on imported coal with much cheaper Thar coal thus reducing the unnerving energy circular debt,” he said.

The Chief Minister said at CPEC-related 10th Joint Cooperation Committee (JCC) meeting held in Islamabad through video link that under the China Pakistan Economic Corridor’s (CPEC) next level of engagement, Thar Coal should be considered for moving from mine-mouth power generation to coal transportation to potential sites.

He said that his government had been working closely with Chinese on Thar coal-based power projects under the CPEC. “We believe it’s about time we move to the next level by employing Thar coal for coal-to-gas and coal-to-liquid conversion,” he said.

He said that this conversion was crucial for reducing energy sector’s circular debt, ensuring Pakistan’s food security through fertilizer production and meeting energy needs of the country for economic growth.

Shah said that he had discussed these issues at the 9th JCC meeting and it was high time they devised ways and means to implement and capitalize on these potentials, including coal to liquid engineering plant based on Thar coal at Thar Block-VI for coal gasification to fertilizer projects.