

RAHBAR KISAN INTERNATIONAL

Punjab's electricity relief not funded by Centre, clarifies PM Shehbaz

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif clarified on Tuesday that the relief provided on electricity units by the Punjab government is entirely funded by the province's own resources, with no involvement from the federal government. Addressing the federal cabinet meeting, Sharif said, "The relief provided on electricity units by the Punjab government is from their own funds. The federal

government has no role in it. Other provinces are welcome to follow suit. His remarks followed Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah's recent statements criticising what he referred to as "foolish announcements," though he did not explicitly mention the Punjab government. CM Murad expressed concern over such decisions, stating they create unease in Sindh. The Maryam Nawaz-led Punjab government had announced a relief of Rs14 per unit for consumers using up to 500 units across the province for two months, following Nawaz Sharif's directives. Referring to the relief, Shehbaz Sharif said the province allocated Rs45 billion from its development funds for this purpose. "This is a gift from the Punjab government to its people. The federal government has not contributed to it," he stressed. The prime minister expressed disappointment over negative comments regarding this relief. "It is unfortunate that we hear negative remarks about this initiative. The Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) minister claimed that the federal government gave relief to Punjab, which is completely unfair. K-P should follow Punjab's lead in providing relief to its people," Sharif said, urging provincial governments to refrain from politicising such matters and distorting facts. He assured that his government would make decisions in consultation with the IMF, unlike the "reckless decisions" made by the previous Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) administration, which, according to him, nearly led the country to default. The prime minister in today's cabinet meeting highlighted that inflation has dropped to an 11.5% year-on-year rate,

down from 38% over the past three years. The prime minister emphasised the need to meet revenue and tax targets set by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), stating that there would be no compromise on achieving these goals. He also called for a reduction in power sector losses.

Sharif recalled that the federal government had cut the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) budget by Rs50 billion to provide three months of relief to 86% of domestic consumers. He mentioned a plan to distribute 28,000 solar panels in Balochistan, with the federal government contributing Rs55 billion, to curb electricity theft.