

# MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## Editorial

### Pakistan's Looming Water Crisis: The Indus River System Under Threat

Pakistan faces a dire water crisis as rain shortfalls and drought forecasts signal a severe shortage in the Indus River System, the nation's lifeline. Supplying over 90% of agricultural irrigation and supporting millions, the Indus is under strain from reduced snowfall, erratic monsoons, and overexploitation. This scarcity threatens people, agriculture, industry, and ecosystems, demanding urgent action.

For communities, dwindling water supplies jeopardize access to clean drinking water, exacerbating health risks like waterborne diseases. Rural areas, home to 70% of Pakistan's population, face heightened vulnerability, with women and children bearing the brunt of fetching water over long distances. Agriculture, contributing 20% to GDP, is at risk as irrigation canals run dry, delaying sowing seasons for crops like wheat, rice, and cotton. This could spike food prices and deepen food insecurity for millions.

Industries, particularly textiles and hydropower, face disruptions as water-intensive processes falter and energy shortages loom. Ecosystems suffer as well—reduced river flows degrade wetlands, threaten fish populations, and erode the Indus Delta's mangroves, vital for coastal protection and biodiversity.

To restore natural water flow, Pakistan must prioritize sustainable measures. Building small, decentralized reservoirs can store monsoon surplus, reducing flood risks and ensuring year-round supply. Adopting efficient irrigation techniques, like drip systems, can cut agricultural water waste by up to 30%. Reforestation in catchment areas will enhance groundwater recharge and stabilize flows. Strengthening water governance through community-led management and stricter regulations on groundwater extraction is critical to curb overexploitation.

The Indus crisis is a wake-up call. By investing in conservation, innovation, and equitable distribution, Pakistan can safeguard its water future, ensuring prosperity for its people and ecosystems alike.

## World Rivers Day 2025: A Global Call for River Conservation



On March 14, 2025, Pakistan and over 100 countries observed World Rivers Day, a global event dedicated to raising awareness about the vital role rivers play in ecosystems, economies, and communities.

Communities worldwide pledged to safeguard rivers through clean-up drives, tree planting, and advocacy for equitable water access. In Pakistan, activists rallied along the Indus River, demanding its free flow and protection from dams and pollution, emphasizing its role as a lifeline for millions. Globally, pledges focused on reducing industrial waste and promoting biodiversity.

Governments play a critical role by enforcing stricter environmental regulations, investing in watershed restoration, and supporting community-led initiatives. In Pakistan, policies are urged to prioritize sustainable irrigation and groundwater recharge to address the Indus crisis, ensuring rivers remain healthy for future generations.