Indus Consortium
Humanitarian Environment and Development Initiatives

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Editorial

Pakistan's Solar Crossroads: Reform or Reversal?

In 2015, NEPRA introduced net metering. It was a big step for Pakistan's energy future. People could install solar panels, use their own electricity, and sell extra power back to the grid. It sparked a citizen-led solar movement.

Two things pushed this shift faster. Electricity bills kept rising. Capacity payments and imported fuel made power expensive. At the same time, solar panels became much cheaper, mainly because China started producing them at scale. That made solar affordable for homes and businesses.

Pakistan imported more than 50 gigawatts worth of Chinese solar panels. Installations jumped across the country. Experts believe total installed solar capacity may now be between 27 and 33 gigawatts. This includes both net-metered and off-grid systems. Official data shows about 6.8 gigawatts under net metering by late 2025.

Then came a major change.

On 9 February 2026, NEPRA approved the Prosumer Regulations 2026 after a public hearing held on 6 February. The new rules replace net metering with net billing for new consumers. Under net billing, the government will buy exported solar electricity at around 9 rupees per unit. This rate reflects the National Average Energy Purchase Price. But consumers will still pay retail tariffs as high as 51 rupees per unit, depending on their usage slab.

Existing solar users can keep their current contracts. But only until those contracts expire. After that, they too will move to the new system.

Supporters say this change will stop cost shifting to non-solar users. Critics argue that rooftop solar still makes up a small share of total power generation. They say the real problem lies elsewhere. Long-term take-or-pay contracts, heavy capacity payments, and inefficiencies in the grid have pushed tariffs up.

There is also another risk. Lower buyback rates may push solar users to install batteries. They may choose to store power instead of sending it to the grid. That means less demand from distribution companies. It could increase financial pressure on an already fragile system.

Pakistan does need energy reform. But reform must be fair and clear. The grid needs modernisation. Storage should be encouraged. Policies should reward citizens who invested in clean energy in good faith.

Slowing rooftop solar might protect short-term revenues. But it could weaken the grid in the long run. It may delay climate targets. It may also erode public trust.

Pakistan's energy future depends on working with its people, not against them.

Community-Led Watershed Progress in Rajanpur Hill Torrents

Implementation activities under the project "Improving Range and Watershed Management in the Hill Torrent Areas of District Rajanpur Through Locally Owned Watershed Management Solutions" continued successfully during February, demonstrating steady progress toward strengthening community resilience and sustainable natural resource management.

As part of capacity-strengthening efforts, refresher training sessions were conducted for Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to enhance local ownership, technical understanding, and community engagement in watershed management practices. These sessions reinforced the importance of community-led approaches in ensuring the sustainability of project interventions.

Field implementation activities also advanced significantly. Key achievements included land leveling activities for forest development, completion of Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants in the villages of Basti Nizam and Basti Nawab Khan to improve access to safe drinking water, and the ongoing construction of water ponds aimed at increasing water storage capacity and enhancing climate resilience in target communities. Additionally, 5,000 plants were distributed among 500 households to promote environmental restoration and sustainable land use practices.

A field visit was conducted by Mr. Usman Kirmani, Country Head (OPM), along with his team, accompanied by Mr. Husain Jarwar, CEO of Indus Consortium, and Mr. Jamshaid Farid, President Help Foundation and Board Member of Indus Consortium. During the visit, the delegation interacted with community members, reviewed project progress, and inspected ongoing intervention sites.

Mr. Kirmani inaugurated the RO Plant at Basti Nizam and appreciated the strong community ownership and commitment demonstrated in implementing locally driven watershed management solutions.

Strengthening Flood Response Through Local Training

Indus Consortium organised a one-day training workshop to strengthen the capacity of local volunteers and health workers to provide psychosocial support during flood emergencies. The initiative sought to enhance community-level responses by equipping frontline workers with essential skills to recognise stress, offer emotional support, and help affected individuals cope with disaster-related trauma.

The training utilised the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) toolbox on Psychosocial Support in Flooding, combining practical exercises with interactive learning sessions. By empowering local responders with techniques for psychosocial care, the workshop promoted resilience, well-being, and compassionate support systems within flood-prone communities.

Cross-Training for Coordinated Flood Emergency Health Response for health workers, volunteers, and community leaders

A cross-training session on coordinated flood emergency response was conducted for volunteers, community leaders, and health workers to enhance community preparedness. The training focused on several key areas, including early warning dissemination, evacuation planning, first aid, flood-related health risks, and the protection of vulnerable groups.

Through practical exercises and simulations, participants gained a better understanding of their roles, improved communication, and developed teamwork skills during emergencies. The session emphasised the importance of inclusive and community-led response strategies to ensure timely and effective action during floods.

This initiative boosted participants' confidence and coordination abilities, contributing to stronger local resilience and an improved capacity to protect lives and livelihoods during disaster situations.

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Indus consortium pledges to highlight the environmental, disaster risk, and development issues of riverine communities living along the river Indus basin and its tributaries in Pakistan.