

**Ailing energy sector – affordable solution in sight?**

The Saudi initiative to help solve our energy sector issues (major news item, BR, Feb. 20) is a wonderful news since our Federal Minister for Power acknowledged that the government is seriously considering the real solar option which would provide affordable power, based on our own solar energy resource, without creating pollution nightmare as presently coal-based and existing HFO power plants are doubly ensuring. The recommended solar power plants will not be PV-based as the real experience of solar park in Punjab has proved that such power plants in utility-scale are neither affordable nor reliable.

The present recommendations cover Concentrated Solar Power (CSP) design which would provide affordable power and reliable rated supply far beyond the daily few hours (which the PV power plant produces, at best).

If we are more amenable to listen to reason if it comes from a friend, let it be so as long as we take urgent action to ensure a workable solution within a reasonable time but just for record, I have been recommending this option for a long time, and Business Recorder has been publishing my write-ups in its Letters to the Editor column regularly, the latest one was carried by the newspaper on September 14, 2018 which stated that economical concentrated solar power is available but as a country, we are absurdly ignorant in this field also.

Though we have lost a lot of time in encouraging this environment-friendly and economical option of power generation, it is never too late to accept a good option!

It is recommended that we urgently start work on this "friendly" option both on utility scale as well as in industrial sector, specially covering those industries which also need considerable quantities of steam and/or hot water to give a very efficient and low-cost power tariff.

We need to change and since the Government of Change is presently in-charge, we really need to adopt CSP option immediately for utility-scale power plants and encourage/facilitate the industrial sector to make a big difference in cost of production, without giving subsidies which the economy really cannot afford.

Time to take control of our ailing energy sector?

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