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## Punjab Faces Severe Flood Crisis Amidst Heavy Monsoon Rains

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Punjab has declared a rain emergency following devastating downpours that have claimed 63 lives in just the past 24 hours. The province continues to grapple with widespread flooding, structural collapses, and disruptions as monsoon rains intensify, putting thousands at risk and straining emergency response systems.

Punjab Chief Minister (CM) Maryam Nawaz announced the emergency on the social media platform X, highlighting the critical situation caused by the relentless stormy weather and floods. She assured that government agencies are working tirelessly to manage the crisis

and emphasized the importance of public cooperation. Citizens have been urged to follow safety protocols, avoid unnecessary travel, and steer clear of hazardous areas such as downed power lines and open manholes.

The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) of Punjab released a detailed report underscoring the gravity of the situation. So far this monsoon season, the PDMA reports 103 fatalities and 393 injuries across the province due to rain-related incidents. Structural damage includes 128 houses destroyed and six livestock deaths. The most affected cities in the last 24 hours include Lahore with 15 deaths, followed by Faisalabad and Okara with 9 each, Sahiwal with 5, and Pakpattan with 3. The PDMA attributes most deaths to the collapse of aging and poorly maintained buildings, stressing the need for residents, especially those in vulnerable homes, to exercise caution.

The PDMA's Director General confirmed that, under CM Maryam Nawaz's directives, all injured are receiving top medical care. Financial compensation will also be provided to the families of the deceased according to government policy. Meanwhile, the report warns that heavy rain is expected to continue, accompanied by flood alerts as river and stream levels rise dangerously.

In Rawalpindi, urban flooding has surged due to heavy rains, particularly near Nullah Leh, where water levels at the Gawalmandi Bridge have reached 15 feet, just five feet shy of the critical 20-foot evacuation threshold. Authorities have placed all emergency services on high alert and are prepared to evacuate nearby neighborhoods if water levels continue to climb. Low-lying areas of the city remain submerged, trapping hundreds of residents.

Further east, Chakwal and surrounding areas faced record-breaking rainfall measuring 423 millimeters, leading to roof collapses and at least two deaths, including a child. The PDMA declared flood emergencies in Chakwal, Kallar Kahar, and Choa Saidan Shah. Rescue teams, including Rescue 1122 and local officials, have been actively evacuating affected residents while hospitals remain on standby for emergencies.

The Pakistan Army has been instrumental in rescue operations, deploying helicopters to save families stranded in floodwaters. Notably, a family trapped on their rooftop in Ladian village near Chakri Road, Rawalpindi, was successfully airlifted to safety.

Looking ahead, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) forecasts continued heavy rainfall across Punjab and other regions over the next 24 to 48 hours. Rawalpindi and

Islamabad are particularly vulnerable to intermittent heavy downpours, raising the risk of further flooding in Nullah Lai and adjacent low-lying areas. Cities including Lahore, Chakwal, Attock, and Faisalabad are also expected to face increased rainfall, heightening concerns of urban flooding and river overflows.

As Punjab confronts this mounting crisis, the need for effective disaster preparedness and infrastructure resilience remains paramount. Citizens are encouraged to remain vigilant and comply with official warnings to minimize loss of life and property. The ongoing situation highlights the urgent demand for long-term solutions to address the province's vulnerability to seasonal floods.