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## Lahore Submerged Again Due to Inadequate Planning

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Lahore, long celebrated as Pakistan's cultural capital, is submerged yet again following torrential monsoon rains and decades of failing infrastructure. In July 2025, some areas received as much as 360 millimeters of rain in just a few hours, smashing a 44-year intensity record and causing major flooding across the city.

From late June to mid-July, Lahore saw significantly more rain than average, with hotspots such as Gulshan-e-Ravi and Tajpura receiving over 500 mm. Floodwaters inundated roads, homes, hospitals, and parks. In low-lying districts such as Nishat Colony, residents were electrocuted or swept away in swiftly moving water.

Between late June and mid-July, flooding and storm-related accidents caused at least 123 deaths in Punjab, including 15 in Lahore city. Roof collapses, electrocutions, and drownings were among the leading causes.

Despite the devastation, responses have remained reactive. Authorities relied heavily on emergency pumps and temporary drainage, often redirecting water into parks with no long-term solutions. Engineers and infrastructure experts have emphasized the urgent need for constructing recharge wells and reviving underground storage systems—features built years ago but never scaled across the city.

The root of Lahore's vulnerability lies in unchecked urban expansion. Concrete surfaces have replaced approximately 70 percent of the city's green cover over the past decade, drastically increasing surface runoff and overwhelming clogged drainage networks. The city's drainage agency remains underfunded and overwhelmed, struggling to keep drains clear of debris and sediment.

Over half of Pakistan's urban population lives in informal settlements, many built on flood-prone land or near drainage channels. These areas are particularly vulnerable due to poor planning and lack of infrastructure.

Climate change has intensified the frequency and severity of monsoon downpours. Lahore's existing systems—designed for far lower rainfall thresholds—are ill-equipped to handle extreme weather events.

Lahore urgently needs comprehensive reform—a master drainage strategy, restored green spaces, strict zoning enforcement, and modernization of infrastructure. Without bold, long-term action, the city is destined to drown again, with far greater human and economic costs.