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## Devastation in Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa: 18 Lost to Cloudburst and Flash Floods

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A cloudburst at Babusar Top in Gilgit-Baltistan triggered flash floods that killed three tourists and left 15 others missing, according to official sources. The torrent swept away multiple vehicles and caused 14–15 blockages along Babusar Road—a key link between the Kaghan Valley and the Karakoram Highway (KKH). Rescue teams, aided by military helicopters, evacuated over 200 stranded tourists. Local residents in Thak Babusar offered shelter to more than 100 individuals, reflecting a

strong spirit of community support. Search efforts continue, though operations were slowed by nightfall, according to a Gilgit-Baltistan government spokesperson.

Meanwhile, nationwide monsoon rains have resulted in more than 225 deaths and over 500 injuries since June 26, with northern regions—Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa—bearing the brunt. In just ten days, 72 deaths and over 130 injuries have been reported in these areas.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Swat district, six children died due to flash floods and landslides. In Madyan's Shanko area, a landslide killed three children and injured their mother, while in the Sodher area of Malam Jabba, a seven-year-old boy was swept away by floodwaters.

The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has issued warnings for glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and heavy monsoon rainfall in the region, emphasizing the increasing risks posed by climate change in Pakistan's mountainous north.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and National Highway Authority (NHA) have mobilized resources for rescue and relief operations. Crews are working to clear the KKH and restore vital connectivity, while the Gilgit-Baltistan administration is distributing aid in affected areas. Infrastructure damage has been extensive, with roads, bridges, power lines, and hotels impacted.

These events have again highlighted the fragility of infrastructure in remote regions and raised concerns over Pakistan's preparedness for escalating climate-related disasters. Despite the destruction, the resilience of local communities and the efforts of rescue teams offer a measure of hope amid the crisis.