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Gilgit-Baltistan CM Seeks Urgent Federal Aid

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Amid relentless rainfall and flash floods, Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) Chief Minister Haji Gulbar Khan has appealed for immediate federal intervention, stating that the scale of the disaster has exceeded the provincial government's capacity to manage alone.

Speaking to the media on Saturday, Khan urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to visit the flood-affected areas and assess the damage firsthand. He emphasized the urgent need for a relief package amounting to Rs6 to 7 billion to repair damaged infrastructure and support displaced communities.

“The scale of the disaster has pushed the region beyond its financial limits,” Khan said. He noted that preliminary assessments show damages could reach as high as Rs20 billion.

Khan recently toured flood-hit areas including Thak, Niat, Khanda, and Thor in Diamer district. These locations have now been officially declared calamity-hit zones. He reported that six to seven districts across the region have been seriously impacted by the heavy downpours and subsequent flash floods that inundated multiple streams and villages.

According to the chief minister, at least ten people have died and four others sustained injuries due to the flooding. Around 300 homes were completely destroyed, with another 200 partially damaged. Critical infrastructure including electricity and water systems has been disrupted, while nearly 20 kilometers of roads, including sections of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), have suffered heavy damage. Between 30 and 40 irrigation and water channels have also been destroyed.

Despite the extent of destruction, relief operations are underway. Government agencies have begun distributing tents, food, and other essential items to families affected by the disaster. Khan also appealed to non-governmental organizations and charitable groups to step in and assist with ongoing recovery and rehabilitation efforts.

In a related update, G-B government spokesperson Faizullah Faraq confirmed that the Karakoram Highway was reopened to all traffic on Saturday after being blocked by landslides a day earlier. The rapid deployment of heavy machinery helped clear debris and restore access.

“Floods in Gilgit-Baltistan have caused widespread damage to homes, water channels, crops, communication roads, shops, and electricity infrastructure,” Faraq said. He added that emergency response teams, including personnel from the Pakistan Army, G-B Scouts, Rescue 1122, and local volunteers, are actively engaged in rescue and relief work.

A focused search is ongoing in Babusar Valley, where 10 to 12 tourists are believed to be missing. So far, nine bodies have been recovered. Despite continued challenges posed by landslides and rising waters, rescue teams remain fully operational.

As Gilgit-Baltistan copes with the aftermath of the flooding, provincial authorities continue to call for a coordinated federal response to ensure long-term recovery and resilience for the affected communities.