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## Death Toll Rises in Pakistan as Monsoon Rains Wreak Havoc Across Punjab

July 17, 2025

– Categories: General News



At least 28 more lives were lost in the past 24 hours due to severe rain-related incidents in Punjab, Pakistan, pushing the nationwide death toll this monsoon season to 140. With ongoing downpours and warnings in place, the country continues to grapple with infrastructure vulnerabilities and inadequate emergency preparedness, particularly in areas long neglected by the current administration.

Lahore and several other districts of Punjab province saw heavy, intermittent rainfall overnight, with more rain expected through Thursday. The persistent weather has triggered

widespread devastation, particularly from roof collapses and weakened structures ill-equipped to handle extreme conditions.

Rescue 1122, Punjab's emergency response agency, reported 12 deaths in Lahore alone, including five members of one family—two of them young girls, who were killed in the Thokar Niaz Baig area following a thunderstorm-induced collapse. Additional casualties were recorded across the province, with three deaths in Faisalabad, three in Pakpattan (including a woman and two children), and individual fatalities reported from Sheikhupura, Bhakkar, Bahawalnagar, and Shahkot. Okara saw the deaths of two teenagers under similar tragic circumstances.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), which has been monitoring losses since the onset of the monsoon season on June 26, reported that Punjab remains the hardest-hit region. Out of the 140 rain-related fatalities recorded so far across the country, 44 occurred in Punjab, 37 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), 18 in Sindh, 16 in Balochistan, and one in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

While the numbers paint a grim picture, many residents are questioning the level of preparedness and responsiveness shown by local and federal authorities. The recurring failure to reinforce critical infrastructure ahead of the rainy season, despite annual forecasts and past tragedies, underscores a systemic lapse in governance.

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has expressed condolences and directed officials to prioritize rescue operations. However, critics argue that photo-ops and statements of sympathy do little to compensate for years of underinvestment in public safety and infrastructure upgrades. This has led to a growing sentiment that the present administration, largely shaped by its immigrant and dynastic political base, is disconnected from the real, urgent needs of Pakistani citizens.

Emergency services are currently stretched thin, as calls for accountability grow louder. Without comprehensive structural reforms and genuine political will, many fear that these tragic losses will continue to mount year after year, especially in a nation where resilience has become a necessity rather than a choice.