

# Flood causes massive destruction in Hunza, adjoining areas of NA

**HUNZA:** A flood caused by the melting of glaciers have resulted in massive destruction in Hunza and other areas of Gilgit-Baltistan.

The flood was a result of a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) at the Shishpar glacier located upstream Hassanabad. The rampaging floodwaters swept away homes, roads and power houses and damaged water channels. On Friday, a concrete bridge on the Karakoram Highway collapsed in Hunza's Hassanabad area, disrupting traffic and forcing travelers to take a detour. The traffic movement has been diverted to alternative routes from Nagar.

The authorities have begun the construction of a temporary bridge for the movement

of heavy traffic carrying vital supplies to the area. The bridge is expected to be built in a week. Hunza Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Usman Ali said that the traffic movement from Shayar bridge in Murtazabad to Ganish has been stopped and alternative routes are being used for the supply of petroleum products and the movement of tourists.

GB chief secretary Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani also visited the affected areas and ordered the authorities to undertake rescue and relief efforts on war footing. Flood-like situation emerges every year in the area and this year, the government had already mobilized rescue authorities before the flood hit, said Wani. Advisor to the Prime Minister

on Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan Affairs Qamar Zaman Kaira also contacted the chief secretary and issued directives to prioritize the construction of the bridge.

Kaira said the administration was mobilised in time for timely rescue and relief efforts. He added the chief secretary, deputy commissioners, National Disaster Management Authority and the National Highway Authority chairmen are also present in the area. An alternative route to build a temporary bridge has been finalised as the bridge is vital for the connectivity to the area, said Kaira. He said the work on the reconstruction of bridge was expected to begin soon.

Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman said Saturday her ministry

warned the country is vulnerable to floods due to high temperature. "[M]any such areas are vulnerable up in the north, especially GB, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Pakistan has the highest number of glaciers outside the polar region and many are losing mass due to high global temperatures," she tweeted.

The minister further said that she has been told that FWO will have a temporary bridge up in 48 hours. Last week, the ministry issued an advisory of possible GLOF events and flash floods in Gilgit Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The advisory stated that precautionary actions must be taken mitigate the any losses to lives, property and livelihoods. A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) is a type of out-

burst flood caused by the failure of a dam containing a glacial lake.

The dam of a glacial lake can consist of glacier ice or a terminal moraine. Failure can happen due to erosion, a buildup of water pressure, an avalanche of rock or heavy snow, an earthquake or cryoseism, volcanic eruptions under the ice, or massive displacement of water in a glacial lake when a large portion of an adjacent glacier collapses into it.

Increasing glacial melting because of climate change, alongside other environmental effects of climate change mean that regions with glaciers are likely to see increased flooding risks from GLOFs. This is what has happened in Hunza. —DNA

## US companies break long silence on abortion rights

**NEW YORK:** After carefully avoiding the taboo topic for decades, more and more US companies are taking a stand on the right to abortion, a sign of a new generation with growing influence and very different expectations than their predecessors.

Mere hours after the leak of a draft Supreme Court opinion indicating the national right to abortion would be overturned, a variety of American businesses began to react publicly. "Given what is at stake, business leaders need to make their voices heard and act to protect the health and well-being of our employees," Levi Strauss said in a statement. "That means protecting reproductive rights."

Like the iconic denim brand, Apple has also pledged to cover costs for employees who have to travel to another state to get an abortion.

Revoking the nationwide right to abortion "will jeopardise the human rights of millions of women," the review platform Yelp told AFP, saying it would have "a seismic impact on our society and economy" and urging other companies to "step up to safeguard their employees". Since Texas in September implemented a law banning abortion after six weeks - before many women even know they are pregnant, and with no exceptions for rape or incest - the stigma on speaking out has started to break. Amazon, Uber and even the bank Citigroup have all announced they will cover the additional costs that the Texas legislation might cause for their employees.

"We're in a very unusual political time where this issue's come back up as a pressing political issue, and it will force companies to take a stand," said Maurice Schweitzer, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton business school.

"Businesses that are located in states that might overturn (abortion access), they have to make a decision one way or the other: Are they going to offer that benefit in terms of travel to a location where those services could be accessed? Or are they not?" said Neeru Paharia, a professor at the Georgetown University McDonough School of Business.

"It kind of forces a lot of these (companies) to take a stand on this issue."

According to The New York Times, Tesla, which moved its headquarters from California to Texas, has also pledged to cover its employees' abortion-related expenses. The newfound boldness of US businesses is also tied to the fact that "in this country, people who are pro-choice are larger in number than people who are anti-abortion", said Paharia. The announcements by several leading companies are part of a "general trend" that has been developing for the past decade and "picked up steam" under former US president Donald Trump, she said. Immigration, LGBT rights, gun regulations, the Black Lives Matter movement, voting rights - hot-button issues keep coming up, in a climate of heightened polarisation, and many companies have been pressured to respond by their employees. —Reuters

## Crews work through 2nd night after Cuba hotel blast kills 27

**HAVANA:** Crews worked through a second night searching for victims of a hotel explosion that killed at least 27 people in Cuba's capital and left more than a dozen missing and two dead.

The Hotel Saratoga, a luxury 96-room hotel in Old Havana, was finishing renovations when an apparent gas leak produced a massive explosion on Friday. Just steps from Cuba's capitol, the Saratoga's facade was sheared off, burying workers inside and apparently passersby outside under concrete and twisted metal. The explosion came in the late morning when the streets and plaza in front of the stately hotel would have been full of pedestrians.

On Saturday evening, Dr Julio Guerra Izquierdo, chief of hospital services at the Ministry of Health, raised the death toll to 27 with 81 people injured.

The dead included four children and a pregnant woman. Spain's President Pedro Sánchez said via Twitter that a Spanish tourist was among the dead and that another Spaniard was seriously injured. Some 37 people remained hospitalised, according to the Health Ministry. Earlier Saturday

afternoon, a representative of Grupo de Turismo Gaviota SA, which owns the hotel, said 13 of its workers remained missing. Governor Reinaldo García Zapata said Saturday evening that 19 families had reported loved ones missing and that rescue efforts would continue.

At least one survivor was found early Saturday in the shattered ruins.

Authorities said the cause of the explosion was still under investigation, but believed it to have been caused by a gas leak. A large crane hoisted a charred gas tanker out of the rubble Saturday.

The explosion is another blow to the country's crucial tourism industry.

Crews busily worked to clean up the surrounding streets and by late Saturday, substantial pedestrian traffic had resumed. Some nearby buildings were also heavily damaged by the explosion that blew out windows and rattled walls. Even before the coronavirus pandemic kept tourists away from Cuba, the country was struggling with tightened sanctions imposed by former U.S. President Donald Trump and kept in place the Biden administration.



## Between searing drought and Ukraine war, Iraq watchful over wheat

**JALIHA:** Iraqi farmer Kamel Hamed looks at the golden ears of wheat waving in the wind, unable to hide his anguish over the baking heat that is decimating his harvest.

"The drought is unbelievable," said the 53-year-old in a white dishdasha robe and keffiyeh head covering at his farm in Jaliha village of central Diwaniya province.

"Even the well water can't be used, it's salt water."

Searing heat and a lack of rain were already threatening his harvest. Then came Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February, driving up the cost of fuel, seeds and fertiliser. Like all farmers in Iraq, Hamed must follow the instructions of the state authorities who are the main grain buyers. They determine the areas to be planted and the level of irrigation, depending on rain and water reserves. This year, due to water shortages, Iraq has reduced the area under cultivation by half.

As a result, Hamed has planted just one quarter of his 100 donums (10 hectares), where the combine harvester was now throwing grain into a truck bed.

"This year we didn't even get 500kg of wheat from one donum" - less than half the usual harvest - he said.

The war in Ukraine has "pushed up the price of motor oil and of high-yield seeds", he added - yet "another financial burden for farmers". "I don't know how to support my family. No salary, no job, where can I go?"

After decades of war and insurgency, Iraq faces another huge challenge: Severe water scarcity driven by climate change. It is highly sensitive issue for Iraq and its 41 million people, who feel the impacts on a daily basis, from depleted rivers to rapid desertification and more intense sandstorms. Iraq's big rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, and their tributaries originate in Turkey and Syria as well as Iran, which dam them upstream, reducing the flow as they enter Iraq. Irrigated by the Euphrates, Diwaniya province, where Jaliha is located, normally receives 180 cubic metres of water per second. This year the volume has been at least halved to "80 to 90 cubic metres", said Hani Shaer, who heads a farmers' collective responsible for distributing the water.

The result can be seen in the stagnant water in the main irrigation canal, which serves the 200,000 donums of surrounding land, with some gullies now completely dry. Shaer denounced a lack of support from authorities, charging that the agriculture ministry provided just 5kg of fertiliser this season, down from 40kg in previous years. "The farmer will leave, abandon the land and head to the city to look for any kind of work," he said. Agriculture ministry spokesman Hamid al-Nayef said the state was helping by raising the purchase price in order to pay producers around US\$500 per tonne of wheat. —Reuters

## WHO gathers evidence for possible war crimes investigation against Russia

**KYIV:** The World Health Organization (WHO) is gathering evidence for a possible war crimes investigation into attacks it says it has documented by Russia on healthcare facilities in Ukraine, it said in Kyiv.

WHO Emergencies Director Mike Ryan, on an unannounced visit together with WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, told a news conference it was the explicit responsibility of warring parties to avoid attacking health facilities, yet the WHO had already documented 200 attacks on hospitals and clinics in the country.

"Intentional attacks on healthcare facilities are a breach of international humanitarian law and as such - based on investigation and attribution of the attack - represent war crimes in any situation," Ryan said.

"We continue to document and bear witness to these attacks ... and we trust that the UN system and the International Criminal Court and others will take the necessary investigations in order to assess the criminal intent behind these attacks."

Russia has denied previous accusations by Ukraine and Western nations of possible war crimes and has also denied targeting civilians in the war. Ryan said the 200 cases did not represent the totality of attacks on Ukrainian medical facilities, only those the WHO had verified. Kyiv has said there have been around 400 such attacks since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb 24.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Thursday that Russian troops had destroyed or damaged nearly 400 healthcare institutions in Ukraine.

Tedros told the same news conference: "My message to all the people of Ukraine



is this: 'WHO stands by you' ... We continue to call on the Russian Federation to stop this war."

WHO member states will on Tuesday consider a resolution against Russia that includes the possible closure of a major regional office in Moscow, a document obtained by Reuters showed last Thursday. The draft resolution stops short of harsher sanctions such as suspending Russia from the U.N. global health agency's board, as well as a temporary freeze of its voting rights, three diplomatic and political sources said.

The draft, prepared largely by EU diplomats and submitted to the WHO's regional office for Europe this week, follows a request by Ukraine signed by at least 38 other members including Turkey, France and Germany.

Moscow calls its actions since Feb 24 a "special military operation" to disarm Ukraine and rid it of what it calls anti-Russian nationalism fomented by the West. Ukraine and the West say Russia launched an unprovoked war of aggression.

Putin 'doesn't believe he can afford to lose' in Ukraine: CIA chief

Russian President Vladimir Putin believes that he cannot afford to lose in Ukraine and is "doubling down" on the war, but shows no signs of planning to use tactical nuclear weapons, CIA director Bill Burns said.

Despite the failure of Russian forces to capture Kyiv and their struggle to advance along the war's main frontlines in the southeastern Donbas region, the Russian leader has not changed his view that his troops can defeat Ukraine's, Burns said. Putin's belief in the Russian military's ability to wear down Ukrainian resistance probably has not been shaken despite key battlefield defeats, the US spy chief told a Financial Times conference. "I think he's in a frame of mind in which he doesn't believe he can afford to lose," Burns said.

He said Putin has been "stewing" for years over Ukraine - once part of the Soviet Union - in a "very combustible com-

bin of grievance and ambition and insecurity."

Putin has not been deterred by the resistance in the war "because he staked so much on the choices that he made to launch this invasion," Burns said.

"I think he's convinced right now that doubling down still will enable him to make progress," Burns said.

Burns, a former US ambassador to Russia who has spent much time studying the Russian leader, said his and other Western intelligence agencies see no sign that Moscow is prepared to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in order to gain a victory in Ukraine or to target Kyiv's supporters.

Russia placed its nuclear forces on high alert shortly after launching the invasion on Feb 24.

Since then Putin has made thinly veiled threats hinting at willingness to deploy Russia's tactical nuclear weapons if the West directly intervenes in the Ukraine conflict. "We don't see, as an intelligence community, practical evidence at this point of Russian planning for the deployment or even potential use of tactical nuclear weapons," Burns said.

"Given the kind of saber-rattling that ... we've heard from the Russian leadership, we can't take lightly those possibilities," he said. "So we stay very sharply focused as an intelligence service ... on those possibilities at a moment when the stakes are very high for Russia," he said.

Burns did not offer any assessment of the current battlefield situation or predict how the war would end. But he said that China, which Washington now sees as its primary adversary, is studying closely the lessons of the war and what they mean for Beijing's desire to take control of Taiwan. —Agencies

## Unseen footage of Britain's young Queen Elizabeth to be aired



**LONDON:** Previously unseen footage of Britain's Queen Elizabeth as a young girl before acceding to the throne will feature in a new documentary airing at the end of this month, Buckingham Palace and broadcaster BBC said.

The May 29 programme, drawing from home movies in the queen's personal collection showing life as a princess, will precede celebrations for her seven decades as monarch.

"This documentary is an extraordinary glimpse into a deeply personal side of the Royal Family that is rarely seen, and it's wonderful to be able to share it with the nation as we mark her Platinum Jubilee," said BBC history commissioning editor Simon Young.

Producers viewed more than 400 reels of film, including behind-the-scenes recordings of state events, and have dipped into more than 300 speeches she made, the BBC said.

Among the footage is a beaming Elizabeth showing off her ring from husband Prince Philip, who died last year aged 99, before their engagement was made public. The queen is 96.

Soy boom for Argentina as Ukraine war boosts prices: Russia's war on Ukraine has sent grain prices skyrocketing - a worry for consumers worldwide but potentially a boon for producers like Argentina, which hopes an influx of soybean "agribusiness" will boost its faltering economy. South America's third-largest economy is the biggest exporter of soybean meal and oil in the world, and only the United States and Brazil export more soybean grains. Soy represents nearly a third of Argentina's exports and in 2021 contributed US\$9 billion to the state coffers. —AFP

### COURT NOTICE

**In the court of Muhammad Azhar Qayum Civil Judge 1st Class Kharian**  
Suit for declaration title of the suit Nida Anisa vs Secretary union council field office chakorri Bheilwol etc, Notice to Muhammad Naveed Akhtar s/o Bashir Ahmad r/o Chak Jani khurd tehsil kharian district gujrat. The above titled case is pending adjudication in the court of undersigned. Many times process has been issued against the above-said defendants but all in-vain. So the defendants are hereby informed through this proclamation and directed to appear before this court on the next date of hearing 12/05/2022 in person or through their counsel, otherwise ex-party proceedings shall be initiated against the defendant otherwise no excuses will be entertained.