**Suffering Revisited**

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Recent devastating floods in Pakistan are a sobering example of the pernicious impact of human-caused climate change. The ominous trajectory starts with high temperatures that cover the area in a scorching haze. Deadly heat waves continue to sweep relentlessly across the affected area, worsening an already dire situation, which causes the disease to worsen. Unusually, a larger-than-normal amount of water vaporizes from the vast Indian Ocean, eagerly welcomed by a warmer atmosphere. When the seasonal monsoon finally does arrive, it does so with unrelenting fury, dumping a staggering three times more rain on the country than the national average for the previous three decades. Tragically, the dried-out soil, which had been hardened by the previous drought, acts like uncrackable concrete and callously repels the torrential downpours.

The desolate melt waters that cascade from the melting Himalayan glaciers fall on the South Asian expanse, adding to the unmitigated catastrophe and instilling a sense of dread and apprehension. This worrying story is made even more concerning by careless development planning, which recklessly approved agricultural and residential settlements in places that are constantly at risk of flooding and dangerously close to river shores. The increase in silt levels, along with the reduced capacity of dams along the largest river in the country, further increases the region’s susceptibility of the region to such climate assaults. This confluence of risky variables is what has essentially created the recipe for what could end up being Pakistan’s most catastrophic climate disaster to date.

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Now, a tropical cyclone by the name of Biparjoy, located in the Arabian Sea, is ominously travelling in a northerly direction. The Kutch district in the Indian state of Gujarat is expected to be the target of this ferocious natural force as it makes a dangerous right turn towards the Pakistan-India border in the coming days. The winds on Tuesday afternoon at the hurricane’s epicentre, which were greater than 100 mph, confirmed its classification as a Category 2 hurricane, as well as its counterparts in the Atlantic Ocean.

Biparjoy is expected to make landfall on Thursday afternoon, causing havoc as it crosses the border between Karachi, Pakistan, and Mandvi, Gujarat, according to officials in both Pakistan and India. Winds that can gust as high as 150 km/h (93 mph), with a maximum sustained speed of 125 to 135 km/h (78 to 84 mph), are expected to cause untold destruction. It is extremely worrying that the Thatta district in Sindh, which was tragically destroyed by the Keti Bandar cyclone in 1999 and tragically lost 6,200 lives, is once again on the path of a disaster.

Unfortunately, history records a similar tale of misery from Gujarat, India. At least 4,000 lives were lost, and hundreds of millions of dollars in damage were inflicted by a malevolent cyclone in 1998, which also took a devastating toll. Biparjoy’s wrath, which will likely bring back painful memories, will probably make the suffering of those affected worse.

The once powerful cyclone has been diminished and is now a weak but still powerful and very severe cyclonic storm. The cyclone is currently lingering 380 kilometres south of the city of Karachi as it travels in a north-northwesterly direction, casting a foreboding shadow over the area. The authorities have determined that it is imperative to halt all fishing operations to combat this immediate threat, mobilize diligent rescue personnel, and implement thorough evacuation plans to protect the lives of those who are most vulnerable.

Unlike a fearsome sea breeze, the South Asian monsoon gracefully rises from the depths of the Indian Ocean, carrying the gift of moisture as it sweeps north, enveloping Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh in its seasonal embrace. But the complexities of a changing climate are deeply ingrained in the fabric of this monsoon phenomenon. The atmosphere, like a voracious sponge, imbues itself with an ever-increasing capacity to accommodate moisture with each small increase in temperature. These climatic extremes, which are by nature erratic, can appear at any time and choose to strike the area all at once or repeatedly, wreaking havoc on unfortunate locals.

An amalgam of common ingredients, symbolic of an unforgiving warming world, works maliciously to wreak havoc on Pakistan’s already vulnerable lands. Extreme weather events with unbridled ferocity birth air that is heavily laden with moisture, glaciers that are succumbing to a relentless thaw, communities that are perilously perched on the edge of danger, and the unstoppable spectre of poverty hanging over everything. Such is the mixture that spins the thread of fate, bestowing upon Pakistan the ruthless deluge of unrelenting rain and catastrophic floods.

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