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## DISASTER

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### **87% Birth Cases Attended By Unskilled Midwives in Thar**

In the first ever official briefing focused on the famine-like situation in Thar since the situation hit headlines, Sindh Health Secretary Iqbal Hussain Durrani admitted that health officials were way away from providing adequate health care facilities to a large population living in the desert but said the authorities were trying their best to improve the situation by taking certain concrete steps. He said 193 deaths had been registered in Thar since the situation, considered to be an unprecedented drought, was flashed in headlines. Out of 103 children who died in Thar, 88 children aged a month or less, he said. It was because of poor infrastructure and poverty, which exacerbated the disaster, he said. "Many precious lives could have been saved if those babies were timely shifted to hospitals," the secretary said. Mr. Durrani said 87 percent birth cases in Thar were attended by unskilled midwives at home in and many of those babies later died because of pneumonia and other infections. The ratio of birth was high in Thar with each house comprising six to eight children, he said. Also, he added, mothers were suffering from malnutrition which too contributed in the deaths of newborn babies.

Mr. Durrani said repeated crises in desert was not unusual nor was the fact that infant mortality rates in Sindh were 74 per 100,000. He said screening of pregnant women and children aged less than two years would start soon in 20 out of 44 union councils (UCs) of Thar for improved healthcare and nutrition. He said that USAID had agreed to expand its maternal and child health programme to the remote areas of Sindh, which would complement the World Bank-sponsored nutritional project aimed at providing therapeutic food to the malnourished children. He said certain non-governmental organizations of repute had too been got engaged in the multi-faceted strategy to improve situation in Thar and several other remote districts. He said community midwives were being trained to improve access to quality reproductive health facilities with equal attention to modify public behavior vis-à-vis their nutritional and health needs coupled with hygiene and cleanliness. He said the government was planning to enhance the circle of community midwives and lady health workers in Thar to reduce the mother and children mortality rate. He said special food with necessary nutrition supplements would be provided to pregnant women and children in 20 UCs of Thar. Later, he said, the remaining 24 UCs too would be covered in similar manner.

**Dawn - April 02, 2014**

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### **Tharparkar Crisis: Where Relief Goods Cannot Reach, Election Material Did**

The remote areas of Tharparkar that the relief authorities find hard-to-reach are the same locations where election material reached promptly. A court official appointed by the Sindh High Court (SHC) to inspect the relief operations - Mian Fayyaz Rabbani, the in-charge additional district and sessions judge Mithi - pointed this out in a report presented on Tuesday to an SHC bench headed by Chief Justice Maqbool Baqar. The relief inspector also revealed that consumption of toxic water; malnutrition and a lack of healthcare facilities are responsible for the large number of deaths in Thar. The judge observed that during the 2013 general elections there were about 515 polling stations in the area. All the election material reached each and every individual of this district so they could all cast their votes. If the polling material could reach then why the relief goods can't be taken to the drought victims in the same manner, the report questioned. "Therefore, it is suggested that the relief goods be distributed, keeping in view the same principles adopted at the time of the elections," it stated.

**Water:** The report stated that a majority of the people and cattle in far-flung areas of Tharparkar are drinking rain water that they store and which has become 'toxic' over time. This

leads to various diseases. The report recommended installing several reverse-osmosis water plants.

**Food:** The inquiry report declared that hunger and drought have the worst effect on pregnant women and children. It suggested that the government take serious steps to ensure fair distribution of relief items, including wheat, fodder for animals and property. Highlighting the loopholes in the relief operations, the report pointed out that the government is providing 50 kilograms of wheat to each family but it is not including unmarried men. “Do bachelors not eat food or were they exempted from the drought?” the report asked. Rabbani suggested supplying wheat bags to all those whose names are present on the electoral rolls and after verifying their names on their CNICs.

**Health:** During his visits, the relief inspector also found that the government hospitals and dispensaries are not functioning in all the districts - Diplo, Chachro, Islamkot and Nangarparkar - except the headquarters, civil hospital. He found that seven women medical officers were working under the Memorandum of Understanding with the Sindh government. There was only one child specialist and one gynecologist at Civil Hospital, Mithi, while a surgeon was working in the Nangarparkar’s taluka hospital. There is a sufficient stock of drugs available in the hospitals but there are no medical facilities in the far-flung areas, he added. The report suggested improving the link-road infrastructure throughout the district to make the desert areas accessible. All the medical dispensaries in the entire district should be made thoroughly functional and all medical officers and the paramedical staff must be present at all times.

**Livestock:** The report pointed out that livestock is a major source of livelihood for the Thari people but a large number of the animals have died due to the unavailability of treatment and diagnostic facilities. The living standards of Tharis have fallen below the poverty line due to the deaths of their animals, the report said.

CJ Baqar accepted the report and adjourned the hearing.

The Express Tribune - April 09, 2014

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## FOOD SECURITY

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### **Climate Change Boosts Conflict Risk, Floods, Hunger: UN**

Soaring carbon emissions will amplify the risk of conflict, hunger, floods and migration this century, the UN's expert panel said in a landmark report on the impact of climate change. Left unchecked, greenhouse gas emissions may cost trillions of dollars in damage to property and ecosystems, and in bills for shoring up climate defenses, it said, adding the impact would increase with every additional degree that temperatures rise. "Increasing magnitudes of warming increase the likelihood of severe, pervasive, and irreversible impacts," a summary said, in a stark message to policymakers. The report is the second chapter of the fifth assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), set up in 1988 to provide neutral, science-based guidance to governments.

The last overview, published in 2007, unleashed a wave of political action that at one point appeared set to forge a worldwide treaty on climate change in Copenhagen in 2009. But a global consensus failed to emerge as the developing world and developed world squabbled, with big polluters like China insisting it was up to rich countries to take the lead, and arguing they could not be expected to sacrifice growth. And in the United States, President Barack Obama's attempts at passing climate change legislation have been stymied in Congress, where many Republicans remain unconvinced of the scientific case for warming and argue that mitigation efforts are an unnecessary block on economic growth. The new document, unveiled in Yokohama after a five-day meeting, gives the starkest warning yet by the IPCC of extreme consequences from climate change, and delves into greater detail than ever before into the impact at regional level.

It builds on previous IPCC forecasts that global temperatures will raise 0.3-4.8 degrees Celsius (0.5-8.6 degrees Fahrenheit) this century, on top of roughly 0.7 Celsius since the Industrial Revolution. Seas are forecast to rise by 26-82 centimeters (10-32 inches) by 2100. Warming of around two degrees Celsius over pre-industrial times may cost 0.2-2.0 percent of global annual income, said the new report. UN members have pledged to hammer out a global pact by the end of 2015 to limit warming to 2 C above pre-industrial levels. The impact amplifies with every degree and beyond 4 C could be disastrous, said the report. Climate change could drive turbulence and conflict, prompted by migration from newly uninhabitable areas and jockeying for water and food, it said. Rainfall patterns will be disrupted, resulting in a significantly higher flood risk, especially for Europe and Asia - and magnified drought risks will add to water stress in arid, heavily populated areas, the report said.

The report says climate change will also have a ricochet effect on health, through the spread of mosquito- or water-borne diseases and heat waves. Vulnerable plant and animal species, especially in fragile coral reefs and Arctic habitats, could be wiped out. Adding a further grim layer to the warning, the report said the most vulnerable ecosystems faced a potential "tipping point" that could pitch them into unstoppable decline. US Secretary of State John Kerry said the report sounded an alarm that could not be ignored. "Unless we act dramatically and quickly, science tells us our climate and our way of life are literally in jeopardy," he said. "Denial of the science is malpractice. "There are those who say we can't afford to act. But waiting is truly unaffordable. The costs of inaction are catastrophic," he added. The report said the danger could be substantially reduced, especially for those alive at the end of the century, if greenhouse-gas emissions are cut swiftly.

**Pakistan Today - April 01, 2014**

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## INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS - IDPs

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### **IDPs Repatriation in Kurram Begins**

Political authorities have started repatriating thousands of people of Ali Sherzai tribe to their native area in the Kurram tribal region. Kurram political agent Riaz Mahsud said that 55,000 tribal people had been displaced in June 2010 following a military operation to cleanse the area of militants. "So far 7,500 people have been sent to their area and the rest would be repatriated over the next couple of weeks," he said. "We intend to complete the process by April 24." He said the returnees were being provided free transportation and food for six months, although the area had been cleared of militants. It was because of hectic efforts made by the Fata administration that Rs5 million had been arranged for the purpose, they added. Displaced people have been holding protests for their repatriation without further delay, but donors and the federal government, despite pledges, have not provided funds to facilitate their return.

**Dawn - April 07, 2014**

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