



POST EVENT REPORT

INTEGRATED NATIONAL SEARCH & RESCUE (INSAR) MULTI-HAZARD SIMULATION EXERCISE

Date: 22 April 2026

Venue: NDMA Headquarters, Islamabad

Background

1. In pursuit of strengthening national preparedness and enhancing multi-agency coordination for disaster response, a **National Simulation Exercise on Integrated National Search and Rescue (INSaR)** was successfully conducted on **22 April 2026**. The exercise was designed to evaluate the readiness of response agencies, test coordination arrangements, and assess the practical application of incident management mechanisms under simulated emergency conditions. The simulation exercise focused on realistic disaster scenarios involving **flooding, hill torrents** and **earthquake emergencies**, requiring coordinated response actions from federal, provincial, military, and humanitarian stakeholders. These scenarios were selected in view of Pakistan's recurrent exposure to hydro-meteorological and seismic hazards, and the increasing need for an integrated national response framework.





Participants

2. The simulation exercise witnessed active participation from a broad spectrum of stakeholders representing national, provincial, military, and humanitarian response institutions. Participants included:

- a. Federal line ministries and departments.
- b. Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs).
- c. Rescue 1122 representatives from all provinces.
- d. Pakistan Army Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams.
- e. Civil Defence.
- f. Boys Scout & Girls Guide.
- g. National and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

2. Special recognition is accorded to NGO partners and volunteer groups who play an essential role as frontline responders, particularly in remote and hazard-prone areas where immediate state response may face operational constraints. Their participation enriched the discussions by bringing field-level perspectives on community response and volunteer mobilization. The presence of such a diverse group of responders ensured that the exercise reflected the realities of a whole-of-government and whole-of-society response approach, emphasizing collaboration across sectors and administrative levels.

Objectives of Exercise

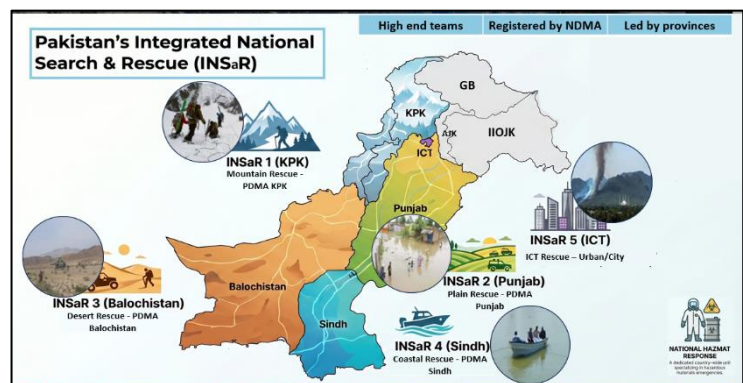
3. The primary objectives of the simulation exercise were to

- a. Assess the preparedness and operational readiness of national and provincial response teams.
- b. Test the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms among federal, provincial, military, and humanitarian actors.
- c. Evaluate the implementation of the Incident Command Management System (ICMS) in simulated disaster conditions.
- d. Review the deployment and response procedures of SAR teams under multiple hazard scenarios.



- e. Identify coordination, communication, and capacity gaps requiring improvement.
- f. Strengthen understanding of roles and responsibilities among stakeholders involved in disaster response.

4. The INSaR framework is structured around five specialized, pre-positioned teams aligned with regional hazard profiles. INSaR-1 covers Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu & Kashmir, with a focus on high-altitude and mountainous rescue, including Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF) events. INSaR-2 is designated for Punjab, specializing in riverine flooding, plain-area rescues, and hill torrent management. INSaR-3 operates in Balochistan, addressing flash floods, desert emergencies, and complex terrain conditions. INSaR-4 serves Sindh, focusing on coastal hazards, Indus River flooding, and urban inundation. INSaR-5 is responsible for the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), with advanced capabilities in Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), as well as forest fire and flood response. Collectively, this structure ensures a coordinated, risk-informed, and regionally tailored SAR response across the country.



Exercise Scenarios

5. To assess preparedness under varying disaster conditions, the exercise incorporated three simulated emergency scenarios, each designed to test operational coordination, command structures, and response capacity.



GLOF Scenario

6. The first scenario simulated a major flood emergency affecting vulnerable low-lying districts. Participants were tasked with outlining preparedness and response measures including:

- a. Early warning dissemination.
- b. Evacuation planning.
- c. Deployment of rescue teams and emergency supplies.
- d. Coordination between district, provincial, and federal responders.



7. The scenario highlighted challenges related to delayed evacuations, population exposure in flood-prone zones, and difficulties in reaching vulnerable communities.

Hill Torrent Scenario

8. The second scenario focused on **hill torrent flooding**, a recurring hazard in vulnerable mountainous and foothill regions. This exercise examined the readiness of response teams to manage:

- a. Sudden-onset flash flooding
- b. Rescue operations in inaccessible terrain
- c. Local volunteer mobilization
- d. Communication between district authorities and specialized rescue units

Earthquake Scenario

9. The third scenario simulated a significant earthquake affecting **Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK)** and **Islamabad**, triggering urban collapse incidents and requiring coordinated urban search and rescue operations. Teams were asked to respond to:

- a. Building collapses.
- b. Search and rescue of trapped victims.
- c. Emergency medical response.



- d. Command and control arrangements among civil and military responders.
- e. Resource mobilization from neighbouring provinces.

10. This scenario tested the readiness of **USAR teams**, inter-agency command mechanisms, and the integration of military and civilian capacities during large-scale seismic emergencies.



Proceedings of the Exercise

11. The simulation exercise was conducted as an interactive and participatory session, allowing stakeholders to actively discuss actions, response procedures, and operational decision-making in each simulated emergency. The exercise commenced with opening remarks by the Chairman, who emphasized the significance of preparedness, institutional coordination, proactive disaster management to reduce disaster impacts. He underscored the significant response capacity available at



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district

and provincial levels, complemented by the support of military formations, law enforcement agencies, and humanitarian partners, particularly in SAR operations. He emphasized the critical importance of leveraging early warning information as a trigger for anticipatory actions, strengthening institutional coordination, and enhancing community awareness and preparedness.

12. The initial phase focused on **pre-disaster preparedness**, during which agencies reviewed: -

- a. Existing preparedness plans.
- b. Availability of trained personnel.
- c. Equipment and logistical readiness.
- d. Coordination arrangements with partner organizations.



13. Following this, the discussion moved to the practical application of the **Incident Command Management System (ICMS)**. Participants examined command hierarchies, resource coordination, and information-sharing arrangements required for effective emergency management. The session then progressed to **first-response actions**, where participating agencies described the immediate steps they would take under the simulated flood, hill torrent, and earthquake scenarios. Rescue 1122 teams, USAR units, NGOs, and provincial representatives outlined their operational roles, response capacities, and coordination requirements. The interactive format enabled agencies to identify overlaps, operational bottlenecks, and opportunities for better integration.



Key Challenges Identified

14. The simulation exercise highlighted several important operational and systemic challenges:

- a. **Encroachment on Flood Plains.** Participants noted that settlements and infrastructure development in flood plains continue to increase vulnerability and complicate evacuation efforts during flood emergencies.
- b. **Public Resistance to Evacuation.** Despite the availability of early warnings, communities often resist evacuation orders, thereby increasing exposure to hazards and putting additional strain on rescue services.
- c. **Coordination Gaps.** While coordination mechanisms exist, participants observed gaps in communication and operational synchronization among agencies, especially during rapid-onset emergencies.
- d. **Accessibility Challenges.** Hill torrent scenarios demonstrated the difficulties of reaching remote and inaccessible communities during emergencies, underlining the need for decentralized preparedness.



- e. **Resource Mobilization Delays.** The earthquake simulation revealed possible delays in mobilizing specialized rescue resources across provincial boundaries, particularly during widespread emergencies.

Key Outcomes

15. The exercise yielded several positive outcomes:
 - a. Improved understanding of multi-agency disaster response arrangements.
 - b. Enhanced familiarity with **ICMS procedures** among participating institutions.
 - c. Better recognition of the role of NGOs and community responders in emergency operations.
 - d. Identification of operational gaps requiring immediate attention;
 - e. Strengthened collaboration between civilian and military response agencies.

Recommendations

16. Based on the lessons identified during the simulation exercise, following recommendations are proposed:
 - a. **Strengthen Community Preparedness.** Enhance community awareness regarding evacuation procedures, flood risks, and disaster preparedness through targeted campaigns and community engagement.
 - b. **Improve Enforcement of Land Use Regulations.** Strengthen policy enforcement to discourage encroachments in flood-prone areas and reduce hazard exposure.
 - c. **Institutionalize Regular Simulation Exercises.** Conduct periodic multi-hazard simulation exercises to sustain preparedness and improve coordination.
 - d. **Enhance ICMS Capacity.** Expand training on **Incident Command Management System (ICMS)** for responders at all levels.



- e. **Strengthen Decentralized Response Capacity.** Improve preparedness in vulnerable districts through pre-positioning of equipment and strengthening local volunteer networks.
- f. **Improve Inter-Provincial Resource Coordination.** Develop protocols for faster mobilization of specialized rescue assets during large-scale emergencies.

Conclusion

17. The National Simulation Exercise on International Search and Rescue (INSaR) provided an important opportunity to evaluate existing preparedness mechanisms and strengthen inter-agency coordination under realistic disaster scenarios. The exercise demonstrated the commitment of federal, provincial, military, and humanitarian stakeholders to improving emergency response readiness in Pakistan. At the same time, it underscored the need for stronger preparedness at community level, better enforcement of risk reduction measures, and continuous strengthening of coordination systems. The **Chairman**, in his concluding remarks, appreciated the active engagement of all participants and emphasized that strengthening preparedness through collaborative exercises remains essential for building a resilient and responsive disaster management system.