

# NEELUM VALLEY NEWS

Update on the work of the Murshid Hospital & Health Care Trust following the 8 October 2005 earthquake in Northern Pakistan and Kashmir

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## Welcome – more to come!

Welcome to this, the first issue of *Neelum Valley News*. It has been started to inform all those interested in the relief work being undertaken in the area of Northern Pakistan severely-hit by the 8 October 2005 earthquake.

## Neelum Valley – where and why

The devastation caused by the 8 October 2005 earthquake has been the worst natural disaster in the region's recorded history. One of the relief workers said, "The dead are in peace; the living in hell" and those in Kashmir, in particular the survivors of Neelum Valley, are at grave risk.

The Neelum River enters Pakistan from India and then runs West until it meets the Jhelum River North of Muzaffarabad. The valley makes up much of the Azad Kashmir area. It is 150km long and heavily forested with breathtaking views of the high mountains.

Like many in the area, the road to the Valley was completely destroyed in the quake. Until such time as the Army succeeds in re-establishing a passage, the only way to reach the villages on the slopes of Lower Neelum Valley is by mules or trekkers.

## The Current situation

The roads to Neelum Valley are not yet open, and the whole area remains cut off from the outside world. The road

between Muzaffarabad and Kuttan is damaged in 15 places and officials say it will take several months before it is opened to traffic.

Around 500 deaths have been reported and around 80 percent of the people there are homeless. Food, fuel and medicines will run out soon. Barian and Chalayana, two villages in the Neelum Valley, home to about 7000 people, have been completely destroyed.

## Fund-raising concert in London

On 22 November 2005, the London Orpheus Philharmonic Orchestra is organising a fund-raising concert at St Botolph's in Aldgate, EC3.

The concert is at 7:30 in the evening and tickets are only £10 – all proceeds will go to the relief work.

LOPO decided to run this concert both to raise awareness of the extent of the problems and to get much-needed cash to the areas affected.

The immediate need is for food, shelter and medicines and LOPO has decided to support the Murshid Hospital & Health Care Trust which is very active in the areas affected, bringing critical relief supplies to those suffering. The Hospital itself is also working 24 hours a day doing operations and plastic surgery to help those badly hurt.

Details of the concert and for donations can be found at:  
[www.lopo.org.uk/pk](http://www.lopo.org.uk/pk)