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PAKISTAN



SCORCHING WEATHER

Heatwave toll tops 180

KARACHI: An intense heat wave over three days has killed more than 180 people in Pakistan's southern Sindh province, officials said on Monday, leading authorities to declare an emergency as the electricity grid crashed and bodies stacked up in the morgues.

The outages hit large portions of Pakistan's financial heart of Karachi and home to 20 million people, where residents lit bonfires in protest.

Unclaimed bodies were being rapidly buried to create space in the morgues, Anwar Kazmi, a senior official of the charitable Edhi Foundation, told Reuters.

"We are urging people to bury their dead at the earliest in view

of the current heat wave and poor power situation," he said. "We have not run out of capacity at the morgue, but buried 30 unclaimed bodies this morning to create more space."

At least 180 people had died of heat-related problems since Friday night, Sabir Memon, Sindh province's additional secretary for health, told Reuters. Leave for all medical staff had been cancelled and authorities were distributing extra drips and rehydration salts to hospitals, he said. Casualties were still being tallied.

"Hundreds of patients suffering from the heat wave are being treated at government hospitals," Saeed Mangnejo, the provincial

health secretary, told Reuters.

Temperature soared to 44 degrees Celsius (111 Fahrenheit) on Saturday and hovered at 43 degrees Celsius (109 Fahrenheit) on Sunday, coinciding with a surge of demand for power as families observed Ramadan.

Power cuts

Both the federal government and K-Electric, the private company that supplies Karachi with power, had promised there would be no outages during the time when families gathered to break their fast at sunset.

But power cuts left many families without water, air-conditioning, fans and light. — Reuters

REGULATION

Foreign aid groups to be monitored

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's interior ministry will monitor the activities of international aid agencies, the government announced on Monday, after authorities sealed the offices of Save the Children and suspended its operations.

Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan said the government planned to centralise responsibility for monitoring and regulating

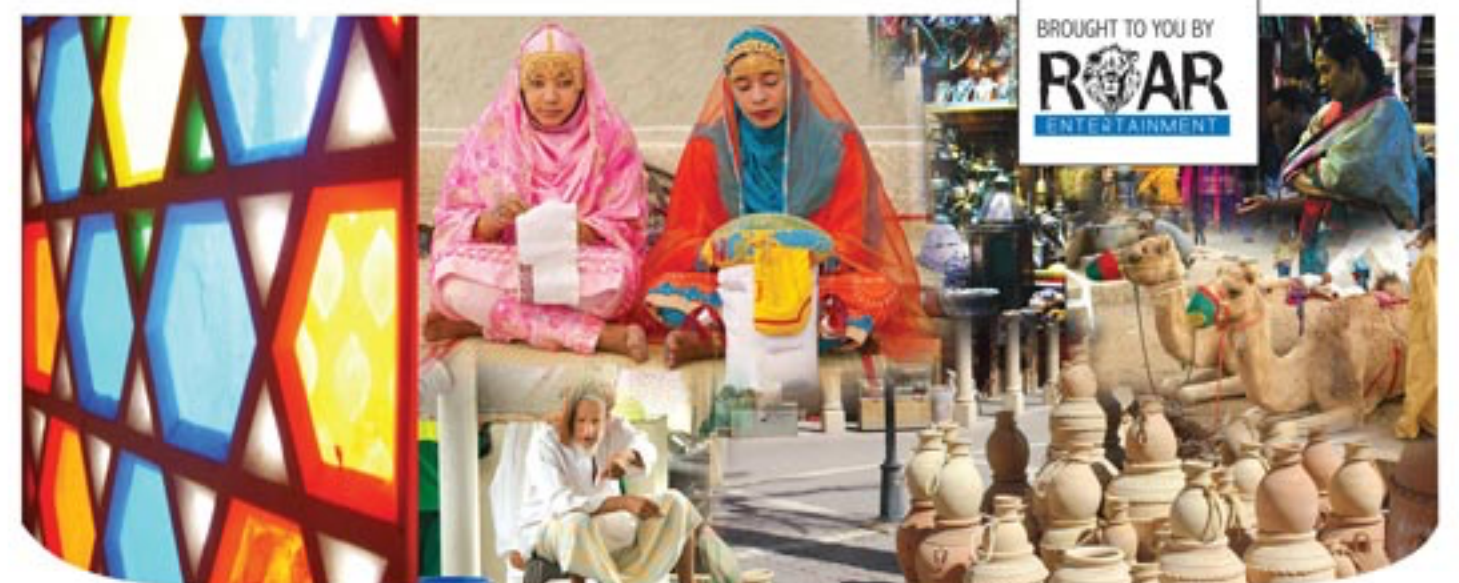
the activities of foreign aid organisations under his ministry.

"The government wants a comprehensive registration system of the groups to be in place to ensure a transparent system of accountability," Khan told reporters.

"We should know funding sources of the groups and the purpose for which the money is being given."

He said aid groups including Save the Children would be allowed to operate for the next six months but must re-register with the authorities within three months, in line with an announcement last week.

The operations of Save the Children were suspended this month for unspecified activities "against the country". — AFP



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