

Pakistan Heatwave Kills Nearly 600



Islamabad, June 23 (RHC)-- Over 570 people have been killed across Pakistan due to a persisting heatwave in the country with casualty figures in the largest city of Karachi and other districts of the southern province of Sindh surpassing the 400 mark.

The latest casualty counts were announced late Monday by Pakistani health officials who noted that most of the fatalities occurred in Karachi, which has experienced temperatures as high as 45°C (113°F) in recent days, just short of an all-time high of 47°C (116°F), recorded in June 1979.

More than 100 people, many of them elderly, had died at the state-run Jinnah Hospital, said its head of the emergency department, Dr. Seemin Jamali, adding that "they all died of heat stroke."

The high temperatures were further complicated by frequent power outages, sparking protests in several parts of Karachi, a populous city of over 20 million. Electricity cuts also crippled Karachi's water supply system, hampering the pumping of millions of gallons of water to consumers, the state-run water utility announced as cited in local press reports.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif was cited by his office staff as warning electric supply companies that he would not tolerate power outages during the fasting month of Ramadan. Moreover, Sindh province's Health Secretary Saeed Mangnejo stated Monday that the provincial government had

put in place a state of emergency at all hospitals, canceling leave for doctors and other medical personnel and stocking up on medical supplies, AFP reported.

According to Pakistan's Meteorological Department, temperatures would likely drop in the coming days, although doctors are advising people to avoid exposure to the sun and wear light cotton clothing.

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