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Pakistan Turns Down Foreign Aid for Earthquake Relief

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"There is no dearth of resources and we are fully capable of handling the situation on our own," Information Minister Pervaiz Rasheed said in a press conference in Islamabad.

The minister added Pakistan was grateful for the concern shown by several countries, who offered aid for the victims of the quake that struck Monday afternoon and claimed 268 lives and left 1,864 people injured in the country.

The worst affected region is the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province bordering Afghanistan in which 221 people were killed, 1,664 were injured and 12,968 houses destroyed or seriously damaged.

A major part of the aid is being sent to this mountainous region, where it's starting to snow now, signaling the onset of winter, and an urgent need for shelters and other equipment to keep out the cold.

Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority, or NDMA, said it has distributed 8,750 tents, 13,000 blankets, 3,500 plastic sheets, 7 tonnes of food packets and 14 tonnes of bottled water, especially in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region.

"NDMA and all associated departments are mobilizing maximum possible rescue and relief efforts to save precious human lives, ensure minimum loss of assets," said the agency in a statement.

The Pakistani army also distributed 25 tonnes of food, 3,764 tents, 37,000 food packets, 2,000

blankets, and 5 tonnes of medicines, and set up 49 water filtration plants.

A 7.5-magnitude earthquake with its epicenter in Badakhshan in northwestern Afghanistan struck the region Monday causing at least 115 deaths and injuring 556 people in Afghanistan.

The quake was followed by 14 aftershocks between 4.8 to 4.1 on the Richter scale.

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