

## NEWS IN BRIEF

**U.N. allocates \$250m million for crises like famine threat in Africa**



A security officer is seen at the opening of the 36th Ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union at the African Union Headquarters in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, on February 18, 2023.

● TIKSA NEGERI/REUTERS

The United Nations will spend \$250 million from its emergency fund to tackle “forgotten crises” around the world, including helping communities that are facing the risk of famine in Africa, its secretary general said on Saturday.

“I’m announcing the largest-ever allocation from our United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund,” Antonio Guterres told a news conference on the sidelines of the annual African Union summit in Ethiopia, Reuters reported.

**Education world mobilizes to support students in quake region**



HÜRRİYET DAILY NEWS

– Following the devastating earthquakes on Feb. 6, many educational institutions, associations and foundations have initiated relief campaigns to support students in the 11 earthquake-affected provinces in the Türkiye’s south.

In the first days after the quakes, institutions immediately tried to communicate with their scholarship holders and families in the region, while education foundations doubled the amount of scholarships to support students during these difficult days.

After giving aid to their own scholarship students, they are now rushing to provide both scholarships and renovation and material donations to schools. Some private schools also increased their quotas to reach more students in the earthquake zone.

# Glimmer of hope as rainfalls revive Iran’s lakes and lagoons



## Social Desk

Iran has been experiencing water scarcity for decades. However, recent rainfalls and snowfalls have brought a glimmer of hope for the revival of the country’s lakes and lagoons.

Water levels in several lakes and lagoons in the southern province of Fars, including Maharlu, Bakhtegan, Tashk, Kamjan, Arzhan and Käftar, rose simultaneously thanks to days of winter

rain.

Bakhtegan Lake, the second largest saltwater lake in Iran, is especially important as its unique ecosystem supports a diverse range of plant and animal species. It is a key stopover for migratory birds, such as flamingos, pelicans, and ducks, during their annual migrations.

Maharlu saltwater lake, designated as a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO, provides a habitat for fish spe-

cies such as carp and catfish.

Many bodies of water in Iran have environmental challenges, ranging from declining water levels to pollution. Efforts are currently underway to address these challenges including the implementation of conservation and management plans, as well as the construction of wastewater treatment facilities and other infrastructures to reduce pollution.

Life was brought back to Gavkhouni, in the central province of Isfahan, after floodwaters triggered by recent torrential rains streamed into the lagoon via Zayandehrud River.

According to a local environment official, four million cubic meters of water are estimated to have poured into Gavkhouni lagoon.

The wetland is home to a variety of migratory birds including flamingos, ducks,

geese, gulls, pelicans, and grebes. It has also been subject to pollution from the city of Isfahan.

The recent increase in water levels has provided a favorable environment for marine life and migratory birds. However, the revival of these bodies of water is not a permanent solution. The government needs to adopt sustainable practices to ensure the long-term survival of its natural resources.

## Turkish FM thanks Iran for quake aid



Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu (L) shakes hands with head of the Army’s Health and Medical Department Dr. Habib Sadr in Adiyaman, Türkiye, on February 18, 2023.

● ISNA

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu extended his gratitude to the Iranian government and nation for the generous support to the country in the wake of a massive earthquake that killed tens of thousands of people and left many more in need of shelter and aid.

Cavusoglu visited a field hospital set up by the Iranian Army in the hard-hit southeastern Turkish city of Adiyaman, which has been providing medical treatment and various services to quake victims.

He met with head of the Army’s Health and Medical Department Dr. Habib Sadr and was briefed about the services of the facility, Press TV reported.

The Turkish minister appreciated Iran’s humanitarian assistance to the earthquake victims and wished the government and the people of Iran health and success.

The Iranian field hospital has various departments, including emergency, radiology, laboratory, pharmacy and surgery. It is staffed by 12 physicians, 63 nurses as well as emergency, surgery, laboratory and radiology specialists. More than 40,000 people were killed after the magnitude 7.8 quake jolted southern Türkiye on February 6. The quake was centered in Kahramanmaraş and struck 10 other provinces – Adana, Adiyaman, Diyarbakir, Hatay,



Gaziantep, Malatya, Kilis, Osmaniye, Elazig, and Sanliurfa. More than 1.3 million

people have been affected by the devastating quake. Around 100 countries

have offered assistance so far, with many having sent rescue teams.

## Is it fair to blame social media for teenagers’ mental health?



Rates of depression and suicidal thoughts among American teenagers increased dramatically between 2011 and 2021, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The CDC’s report is the latest evidence of a severe teen mental health crisis in the U.S. that has become worse over the past decade. In the eyes of some psychologists and lawmakers, social media is to blame, Yahoo News reported.

Today’s teenagers, with smartphones in their pockets, spend far more time online than any other previous generation. Nearly all say they use the internet daily, and almost half use it “almost constantly,” according to a Pew poll taken last year. The bulk of that time is spent on social platforms like YouTube, TikTok, Snapchat, Instagram and, to a

lesser extent, Facebook.

Last month, public schools in Seattle sued several major social media companies, accusing them of exploiting the “vulnerable brains of youth” for profit. Utah Gov. Spencer Cox has announced plans to file a similar lawsuit. Several members of Congress have promoted legislation that would impose new guardrails on child social media use, with some calling for a legal age minimum for users.

There’s an enormous amount of evidence, including both academic research and testimony from kids themselves, that today’s youth are struggling with mental health.

But the question is far from settled as to how much social media is to blame.

Many experts make the case that social media is clearly the root cause of the teen mental health crisis. They argue that constant social media use fuels feelings of inadequacy, isolation, anxiety, stress and sadness in American youth. Instagram has come under fire for promoting eating disorder accounts to young girls, for example.

These platforms are designed to maximize the amount of time spent on them, with algorithms feeding users endless targeted content. There are concerns that the sheer

amount of time kids are spending online means that they’re missing in-person experiences that would improve their mental health.

But others say the teen health story isn’t so simple. They argue that there are so many other factors creating stress in teens’ lives — including the pandemic, political tensions, mass shootings and fear of climate change — that it’s impossible to isolate the impact that social media alone is having. Some experts argue that excessive social media use may ultimately prove to be a symptom of mental health challenges, rather than a root cause.