

Effective solutions needed to deal with land subsidence crisis

Social Desk

Threats posed by land subsidence have been in the spotlighting in Iran over the past years. The phenomenon is currently discussed as a serious problem.

Land subsidence is a gradual settling or sudden sinking of the Earth's surface due to subsurface movement of earth materials. It is mainly caused by aquifer-system compaction, drainage, and decomposition of organic soils, underground mining, oil and gas extraction, hydro compaction, natural compaction, sinkholes, and thawing permafrost. Nonetheless, it is most often caused by human activities, mainly from the removal of subsurface water.

Ali Beitollahi, director of Earthquake and Risk Department of Road, Housing and Urban Development Research Center, has said that about 40 million people in Iran, equivalent to 49% of the country's population, live in the land subsidence zone.

Masoomeh Amighpey, a senior official with the National Cartographic Center



● eghtesadonline.com

of Iran, has also said 14 metropolises including Tehran, Isfahan, Karaj and Kerman are involved in the subsidence crisis.

She said subsidence is occurring at a high speed in the northern coasts of the country adding that the highest rate of subsidence

pertains to Kerman Province with 42 centimeters per year.

According to statistics, over 250 regions in Iran, including Tehran, have been identified as regions where subsidence is occurring.

Alireza Zakani, the mayor of Tehran, said the extraction

of underground water in the Iranian capital and the lack of replacement has created a situation where subsidence is moving from the southeast of the city to its center.

Helia Sadat Hosseini, caretaker of the Environment and Sustainable Develop-

ment Department of Tehran Municipality, has called land subsidence "silent earthquake" and "cancer of the Earth".

Citing statistics, she said most land subsidence takes place in areas in the south, center, west and southwest of Tehran calling for mea-

asures to stop the phenomenon.

"Stopping the growing trend of water consumption, providing opportunities to revive aquifers, reducing water consumption especially in the agricultural sector, directing surface water into underground aquifers, making efficient use of water resources, banning overuse of underground water basins and treating urban wastewater for use in factories are among solutions which help tackle subsidence in Tehran," Sadat Hosseini said.

The Research Center of Iran's Parliament recently warned against the consequences of land subsidence in Tehran and plains across the country. It said 17 centimeters of annual land subsidence have been recorded in southwestern Tehran.

Presently, some regions in Iran are grappling with adverse consequences of land subsidence. Hence, officials and related bodies should come up with comprehensive and effective solutions to avert the crises in other areas across the country.

WHO recommends new COVID shots should target only XBB variants



● okcfax.com

A World Health Organization (WHO) advisory group recommended that this year's COVID-19 booster shots be updated to target one of the currently dominant XBB variants.

New formulations should aim to produce antibody responses to the XBB.1.5 or XBB.1.16 variants, the advisory group said, adding that other formulations or platforms that achieve neutralizing antibody responses against XBB lineages could also be considered, Reuters wrote.

The group suggested no longer including the original COVID-19 strain in future vaccines, based on data that the original virus no longer circulates in human beings and shots targeting the strain produce "undetectable or very low levels of neutralizing antibodies" against currently circulating variants.

COVID-19 vaccine makers like Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna Inc and Novavax Inc are already developing versions of their respective vaccines targeting XBB.1.5 and other currently circulating strains.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration is also set to hold a meeting of outside experts in June to discuss the strain compositions of COVID-19 shots for later this year; vaccine manufacturers will be expected to update their shots once the strains are selected.

The bivalent booster shots developed and distributed last year targeted two different strains - the Omicron variant as well as the original virus.

WHO's advisory group, which recommends if changes are needed to the composition of future COVID-19 shots, said currently approved vaccines should continue to be used in accordance with the agency's recommendations.

In late March, WHO had revised its COVID vaccination recommendations and suggested healthy children and adolescents might not necessarily need a shot, but older and high-risk groups should get a booster between six and 12 months after their last vaccine.

The latest recommendations come about two weeks after WHO ended the global emergency status for COVID-19.

'I am so ugly' may cost you an arm and a leg

Social Desk

Aesthetic norms have evolved in Iran's contemporary society, leading some to perceive physical features like facial creases, abdominal fat, large noses, and mild obesity as intolerable. In response, individuals are resorting to cosmetic procedures like injectable fillers, Botox, and liposuction, even at the risk of their own lives. While information abounds on these procedures, there is less awareness about weight loss surgeries like gastric bypass.

Is society unfairly judging those who carry excess weight, or have beauty standards shifted, forcing people to conform to new norms? The issue of self-perceived ugliness is also a subjective matter. It is unclear whether society's new beauty standards are pressuring individuals to undergo potentially dangerous procedures or whether people are simply seeking to improve their appearance on their own volition. Regardless, it is essential to have access to accurate information on all forms of cosmetic procedures and their risks to make informed decisions. Mina underwent gastric bypass surgery as a means of quickly losing weight due to obesity and other health issues. She was apprehensive about the procedure at first but consulted with multiple reputable doctors and observed others who underwent the procedure before deciding to go through with it. The surgery involves reducing the stomach's size, resulting in

less food consumption and rapid weight loss. However, there are also risks involved, as seen in a relative of Mina who developed an infection and passed away after the operation. Mina's taste preferences also underwent a drastic transformation, where she found herself less enamored with sweet foods after the surgery. Although every surgery has its risks, it is crucial to locate an expert surgeon. Mina underwent the classic bypass operation.

her inability to stick to a strict diet, Mina decided to undergo the surgery to improve her appearance and regain her self-confidence. Hossein, another "victim" of such surgeries, explains that metabolic procedures, such as gastric bypass and gastric sleeve surgeries, are typically recommended for individuals who are medically considered overweight, with a BMI above 40 and over 30-40 kilograms of excess weight. These individuals may also

lesterol levels. The gastric sleeve operation involves removing approximately two-thirds of the stomach, leaving only 150 cc. After the operation, patients must be careful not to overeat, as the remaining stomach expands in size. Hossein notes that many obese individuals who undergo these procedures tend to fall into two categories: those who eat large, heavy meals, and those who consume small portions but eat frequently. The latter is more

likely to experience diabetes or cardiovascular issues. Gastric bypass is a weight loss procedure that doctors recommend, but it can result in low vitamin uptake and a need for vitamin supplements. Patients must monitor their sugar intake and engage in physical activity to maximize the body's metabolic system to trigger fat burning. For some patients, orthopedic difficulties can limit physical activity, but they can still achieve weight loss with the procedure. Patients must also adhere to a prescribed food intake to avoid weight gain. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic closing fitness centers and gyms, Hossein still managed to lose 33 kilograms.

According to psychologist Parvaneh Beigi, cosmetic

blood fat, sugar levels, and other physiological issues. People who are obsessed with their appearance often lack self-confidence and suffer from mental health problems, feeling that they are not beautiful, young, or attractive enough. They seek validation and self-acceptance by competing with their peers through cosmetic surgeries.

Some countries require mental evaluations prior to undergoing cosmetic surgery, and a license is only issued upon passing. This disorder is also known as "body dysmorphic disorder" or "self-ugliness." Many people who are dissatisfied with their appearance resort to cosmetic procedures excessively, leading to the disruption of their daily activities. Beigi highlights the issue of non-doctors and hairdressers practicing cosmetic surgeries, which may lead to individuals opting for these procedures instead of exercising self-discipline and following a proper diet. This obsession with beauty and thinness can easily become an unhealthy habit, with individuals prioritizing the short-term benefits of these procedures without considering the potential health risks involved. She reminds that beauty is a reflection of one's inner image and self-acceptance, and excessive fixation on cosmetic procedures can lead to an unhealthy habit. Therefore, it is important not to let such concerns develop into obsessions and to prioritize our physical and mental health over external appearances.



● TASNIM

Her decision to undergo gastric bypass surgery was influenced by the judgments of others regarding her obesity, which had a significant impact on her self-esteem, confidence, and social life. She felt discouraged, anxious, and had trouble finding clothes that fit. Despite

have health complications such as vascular or adipose tissue issues, diabetes, or orthopedic problems. His decision to undergo a gastric sleeve operation was mainly due to severe orthopedic issues and joint degeneration, as well as slightly elevated blood cho-

lesterol levels. The gastric sleeve operation involves removing approximately two-thirds of the stomach, leaving only 150 cc. After the operation, patients must be careful not to overeat, as the remaining stomach expands in size. Hossein notes that many obese individuals who undergo these procedures tend to fall into two categories: those who eat large, heavy meals, and those who consume small portions but eat frequently. The latter is more

likely to experience diabetes or cardiovascular issues. Gastric bypass is a weight loss procedure that doctors recommend, but it can result in low vitamin uptake and a need for vitamin supplements. Patients must monitor their sugar intake and engage in physical activity to maximize the body's metabolic system to trigger fat burning. For some patients, orthopedic difficulties can limit physical activity, but they can still achieve weight loss with the procedure. Patients must also adhere to a prescribed food intake to avoid weight gain. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic closing fitness centers and gyms, Hossein still managed to lose 33 kilograms.