

# Power of popular participation: A key to effective environmental protection

Iran's Department of the Environment launches initiative to foster public participation in conservation efforts.



ISNA

Social Desk

EXCLUSIVE

In a recent announcement, the deputy of popular participation and the spokesperson for Iran's Department of the Environment (DoE) unveiled a new content production initiative aimed at educating the public on environmental protection. This initiative will provide a comprehensive report on the current state of environmental houses and their efficacy.

The principle 50 of Iran's constitution states that the environment is an inter-generational heritage that everyone is obliged to protect. Consequently, the plan to establish environmental houses was proposed to encourage public participation in environmental protection efforts. Ali Salajegheh, the head of the DoE, underscored the

significance of the public's role in safeguarding the environment, stating that the environmental houses project aims to harness the capacities of the people in a coordinated effort to protect the environment. Noorollah Moradi, vice president of education and popular participation of the DoE, further elaborated on the role of councils as a cornerstone of governance, facilitating public involvement in the management of cities and villages. He revealed that there are approximately 128,000 rural and urban councils in the country, representing a substantial group capable of contributing to environmental preservation, particularly village councils, given their social standing. With 39,000 villages boasting councils nationwide, there is considerable potential for disseminating educational concepts.

Moradi also highlighted that these councils are elected by the residents of villages and cities, and through their collaboration and participation, as well as the election of villagers and mayors knowledgeable about environmental issues, they can be highly effective in the realm of education and participation. The first step in this process is the establishment of environmental houses, which will host brainstorming sessions, experience-sharing events, and educational workshops in collaboration with city and village councils.

The recent announcement by the DoE regarding the establishment of environmental houses highlights the growing recognition of the importance of popular participation in environmental protection. As the world faces increasingly complex environmental challenges, the need for collective

action and public involvement in conservation efforts has never been more critical. Popular participation in environmental protection is essential for several reasons. First, it fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility among citizens, empowering them to take an active role in preserving their local environment. By involving the public in decision-making processes and environmental initiatives, governments can tap into the collective knowledge and expertise of their citizens, leading to more effective and sustainable solutions. Secondly, public participation helps raise awareness and promote education on environmental issues. Through initiatives like the environmental houses, citizens can engage in brainstorming sessions, experience-sharing events, and educational workshops, broadening their un-

derstanding of the challenges facing their communities and the planet as a whole. This increased awareness can lead to more informed choices and actions, both individually and collectively, contributing to the overall success of environmental protection efforts. Moreover, popular participation can foster a sense of community and solidarity in the face of environmental challenges. By working together, citizens can pool their resources, skills, and ideas to develop innovative solutions and strategies for tackling environmental issues. This collaborative approach can lead to more resilient and adaptive communities, better equipped to respond to the ever-evolving challenges posed by climate change and other environmental threats. Finally, public involvement in environmental protection can also serve as a powerful

tool for holding responsible authorities and corporations accountable for their actions. An informed and engaged citizenry can demand greater transparency and responsibility from those responsible, ensuring that environmental policies and practices are both effective and equitable. Popular participation, in short, is a vital component of successful environmental protection efforts. By involving citizens in the decision-making process and empowering them to take an active role in conservation initiatives, governments can harness the collective power of their people to create a more sustainable and resilient future for all. The DoE's recent announcement of the environmental houses project serves as a timely reminder of the importance of public involvement in safeguarding our planet for generations to come.

## Police arrest British man free-climbing South Korean skyscraper



REUTERS

A British man, previously jailed after free-climbing the Shard in London, has reportedly been arrested in South Korea after attempting to climb the country's tallest skyscraper without equipment, police said.

The man was scaling the 123-storey Lotte World Tower in southern Seoul early on Monday when staff spotted him, forcing him to stop his ascent as he reached the 73rd floor, The Guardian reported.

Local media identified him as George King-Thompson, 24, from Oxford, known previously for carrying out dangerous stunts and publicizing them on social media. "Lotte staff had to go on a gondola lift to persuade him to stop when he was still climbing above the building's 70th floor," an official from the National Police Agency said. "He finally gave in and we arrested him at the scene for obstruction of official business. He is currently being questioned at a police station in Seoul's Songpa district."

The 555-meter Lotte World Tower is the world's sixth-tallest building. He was said to be wearing just shorts, climbing shoes and carrying a small backpack.

In a pre-drafted press release before the climb, King had said he hoped to "evade Korean authorities and get on a flight out of the country, immediately after performing the stunt", the Times reported.

The former personal trainer made headlines when he was sentenced to six months in Pentonville prison for scaling the Shard in July 2019, and was released after serving half of his sentence.

Since his release he has scaled the 36-storey Stratosphere tower in Stratford, east London, and was reportedly arrested in 2022 in Spain for base-jumping off Europe's tallest rollercoaster. The Seoul fire agency said more than 90 emergency, police and other personnel were dispatched to the Lotte World Tower on Monday morning after he was spotted scaling the building.

The Korean newspaper Chosun Ilbo said police had arrested him on charges of trespassing. He reportedly entered South Korea three days ago, and was said to have told police it was a long-held dream to climb the Lotte Tower.

Alain Robert, widely known as the "French Spiderman", was jailed in 2018 after climbing the same building without permission. He ascended to the 75th storey.



IRNA/MOHSEN VANAEE

PIC OF THE DAY

City dwellers find solace in vibrant wall paintings, as urban art breathes life into the concrete jungle and shapes the identity of modern man; Tehran's efforts to enhance urban beauty, though commendable, still leave room for improvement.