

Subsidence raises alarm for many parts in Iran: *MP*



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Mohammad-Saleh Jokar, a member of Iran's Parliament, issued a stark warning about the escalating environmental crisis of subsidence, a phenomenon that is wreaking havoc across various regions of the nation.

Jokar elucidated that subsidence, the sinking or settling of the ground's surface, is a direct consequence of long-term droughts and the excessive depletion of the underground water sources. "This environmental anomaly," he cautioned, "could precipitate catastrophic damages and disasters in diverse settlements and regions, thereby necessitating urgent action to secure stable water sources and facilitate water transfer to drought-stricken areas."

Iran has been grappling with a significant decrease in rainfall, leading to the digging of deep wells to extract water from underground aquifers. "Regrettably, the scanty rainfall is insufficient to replenish the depleted water reserves, resulting in the exhaustion of underground aquifers," Jokar said, adding, "This inability to counterbalance the pressures on



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the ground has triggered subsidence and the formation of deep fissures in water-deficient areas."

Jokar further expounded that the repercussions of land subsidence have manifested in numerous central, desert, and low-water regions of the country.

"This subsidence poses a grave threat, akin to an earthquake, capable of inflicting extensive damage to settlements and infrastructures in both urban and non-urban areas, thereby jeopardizing the country's capital."

The solution, according to Jokar, lies in the creation of sustainable water resources. He advocated for

the utilization of seawater as a viable means to offset the water scarcity in these regions. He highlighted that many of the high-risk areas, predominantly located in the central and southeastern parts of the country, have limited access to stable water sources, with the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea being the only exceptions.

"The desalination and transfer of seawater to arid regions could potentially alleviate the water shortage," Jokar proposed. Desalination and seawater transfer have been adopted as a solution by numerous countries grappling with water scarcity. In recent years, water transfer

projects from the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman have been initiated in Iran. "If expedited, the transferred water could be utilized for drinking, sanitation, agricultural, and industrial purposes, thereby effecting a significant transformation in the arid and water-scarce regions of the country."

However, Jokar warned that failure to address this issue promptly could lead to dire consequences, including increased subsidence threats, continuous droughts, and large-scale migrations due to uninhabitable conditions caused by water shortage. "In the country's Seventh Development Plan, com-

prehensive plans have been outlined for the implementation of water transfer projects from the Persian Gulf and the Oman Sea," he said, acknowledging that the progress of these projects varies across regions, with some areas witnessing good progress while others lagging behind.

He conceded that the government is grappling with a dearth of financial resources for the swift implementation of these projects. However, he suggested that in the mineral-rich low-water regions, the mineral revenues could potentially be leveraged to fund these water transfer projects.

National event on family and popular culture underway



Social Desk

The secretary of the National Event of Family and Popular Culture said Saturday that the event is the country's biggest festival that celebrates family and culture.

Farnaz Hooshyar Parsian, adviser and executive assistant to Iran's vice president for Women and Family Affairs, provided details on the event, saying it will continue for one year, ISNA reported.

Hooshyar said popular culture should be an Iranian family's biggest helper, adding that media productions are very important, and therefore, "Media and family is one of the festival's key sectors," she said.

She said the goal is to re-examine Iranian family culture and revive the original identity of the Islamic Iranian family while paying attention to the family ecosystem in governance and education by producing media content.

"This approach will create good moments and memories for families of all social classes, focusing on issues that are sometimes neglected," she said.

The event intends to identify, promote, and support the Iranian family ecosystem and highlight the family's role in society based on an Iranian Islamic model, Hooshyar said.

She noted that the event is the result of collective efforts by cultural institutions, social innovators, family experts, and popular activists.

She explained that the office of Vice Presidency for Women and Family Affairs is the main organizer, working with various government agencies and departments, which include: The public culture council, women, and family headquarters; Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts; state broadcasting; Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance; Ministry of Information and Communications Technology; Department of the Environment; Tehran Municipality; Institute for the Intellectual Development of Children and Young Adults; and Iranian National Tax Administration.

Workshops are planned to be conducted on topics like family media, management, success, Islamic fashion and lifestyle, culture and intangible heritage, games and leisure, family dining, environment and family, health, population, and family vitality.



Barakat Foundation, ICYF launch skill-learning initiative

Social Desk

In a move aimed at improving skill levels and fostering job creation among young individuals in Islamic countries, the Barakat Foundation and the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) have signed a memorandum of understanding.

The signing ceremony took place on Friday morning, July 21, in the presence of esteemed dignitaries, including the vice president of social affairs of Execution of Imam Khomeini's Order (EIKO), the CEO of Barakat Foundation, the president of the ICYF, and several senior managers from both organizations. The CEO of Barakat Foundation, Mohammad Torkmaneh, highlighted the foundation's role as a development institution that has effectively em-

powered people through various measures. He emphasized that Barakat Foundation's activities have spanned over 16,000 villages across Iran's provinces, resulting in the employment of 1.2 million individuals. Job creation and economic empowerment, in line with the vision of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution, have been key priorities for the foundation.

Torkmaneh further revealed that Barakat Foundation has successfully established over 300,000 small and micro projects, with more than a thousand facilitators operating in different provinces of Iran. Notably, the foundation has invested \$100 million in knowledge-based companies present in ten provinces, and a total of \$5.4 billion over the past 14 years

through the executive headquarters of EIKO.

"The decision to collaborate with the ICYF was the result of negotiations that commenced a year ago. Thirty webinar sessions and one in-person meeting were conducted to establish the partnership," Torkmaneh said, expressing that the objectives outlined in the memorandum align closely with Barakat Foundation's goals, emphasizing the shared focus on poverty eradication across all Islamic countries.

The CEO of Barakat Foundation emphasized that the memorandum primarily aims to facilitate the exchange of experiences. He highlighted the foundation's unique activities, which have set it apart from other countries. He also expressed readiness to combat pov-



erty in Islamic countries and expressed hope for fruitful outcomes through diligent follow-up. The first step outlined in the memorandum involves organizing an event in Iran, which will showcase the foundation's initiatives and the active participation of young people from Islam-

ic countries. Taha Ayhan, the president of ICYF, stressed the importance of skill development and job creation for societies. He commended Barakat Foundation's efforts in these areas, particularly in terms of skills development and market access measures.

Ayhan expressed hope that all young people in Iran would benefit from the collaborative measures. The memorandum emphasizes the significance of training programs for young individuals, aiming to assist them in finding suitable positions in the labor market.