

A leopard has been sighted in the heights of Firouzkuh, Tehran Province, said Caretaker of Firouzkuh Department of the Environment Mohammad Faridi.



Yemen, world's largest humanitarian crisis

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With 18.8 million people — nearly three in four inhabitants — in need of humanitarian aid, including 10.3 million requiring immediate assistance, Yemen is now the largest single-nation humanitarian crisis in the world, the United Nations informs while warning that the two-year war is rapidly pushing the country towards 'social, economic and institutional collapse'.

More worrying, the conflict in Yemen and its economic consequences are driving the largest food security emergency in the world, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) has reported, Ipsnews wrote.

According to OCHA, over 17 million people are currently 'food insecure', of whom 6.8 million are 'severely food insecure' and require immediate food assistance, and two million acutely malnourished children. The Yemeni population amounts to 27.4 million inhabitants. "We can avert a humanitarian catastrophe, but need \$2.1 billion in funding to deliver crucial food, nutrition, health and other lifesaving assistance," the UN estimated.

The world organization plans to hold a high-level pledging meeting for the humanitarian crisis in Yemen. Co-hosted by the governments of Switzerland and Sweden, the conference will take place at UN in Geneva on April 25, 2017.

"The time is now to come together to prevent an 'impending humanitarian catastrophe' in Yemen, the

organizers warned. OCHA has also reminded that even before the current conflict escalated in mid-March 2015, Yemen had faced 'enormous levels' of humanitarian needs stemming from years of 'poverty, under-development, environmental decline, intermittent conflict, and weak rule of law'.

Meantime, it has stressed the need to protect civilians. "The conduct of hostilities has been brutal. As of December 31, 2016, health facilities had reported nearly 48,000 casualties (including nearly 7,500 deaths) as a result of the conflict."

These figures significantly under-count the true extent of casualties given diminished reporting capacity of health facilities and people's difficulties accessing healthcare.

OCHA stressed the impact of this crisis in which "all parties appear to have committed violations of international humanitarian law and international human rights law".

On-going air strikes and fighting continue to inflict heavy casualties, damage public and private infrastructure, and impede delivery of humanitarian assistance, it explains, adding that parties to the conflict and their supporters have created a vast protection crisis in which millions of people face tremendous threats to their safety and well-being, and the most vulnerable struggle to survive. According to the UN humanitarian body, since March 2015, more than three million people have been displaced within Yemen. Roughly 73 percent are living

with host families or in rented accommodation, and 20 percent in collective centers or spontaneous settlements. A substantial numbers of returnees live in damaged houses, unable to afford repairs and face serious protection risks.

The Yemeni economy is being destroyed, OCHA informed. Preliminary results of the Disaster Needs Assessment estimated \$19 billion in infrastructure damage and other losses — equivalent to about half of gross domestic product in 2013.

"Parties to the conflict have targeted key economic infrastructure. Mainly air strikes — but also shelling and other attacks — have damaged or destroyed ports, roads, bridges, factories and markets. They have also imposed restrictions that disrupt the flow of private sector goods and humanitarian aid, including food and medicine."

For months, nearly all basic commodities have been only sporadically available in most locations, and basic commodity prices in December 2016 were on average 22 percent higher than before the crisis, reports OCHA.

An estimated eight million Yemenis have lost their livelihoods or are living in communities with minimal to no basic services, the UN informed, adding that about two million school-age children are out of school and damage, hosting IDPs, or occupation by armed groups.

Yemen is an Arab country situated in the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula. It is the second-largest country in the peninsula, with nearly occupying 528,000km², and its coastline stretches for about 2,000kms.

Income inequality pushes people to take greater risks

A trio of American researchers, two with the University of North Carolina and the other with the University of Kentucky, has conducted two kinds of experiments with results suggesting that income inequality in a society can lead those on the bottom to take more risks in hopes of increasing their position.

In their paper published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, Keith Payne, Jason Hamay and Jazmin Brown-Iannuzz describe their experiments and why they believe their results indicate that rising inequality in the world today could lead to a range of poor outcomes, phys.org wrote.

It is no secret that those on the lower end of the economic spectrum would like to move higher, nor is it a secret that the income inequality gap is growing in many countries across the globe.

To learn more about the possible real-world impact of this change the researchers carried out two types of experiments designed to learn more about the behavior of those living below the standard of those at the top.

The first type of experiment consisted of asking online volunteers to play a gambling game. Players were shown what they believed to be the average results of previous players — half of the volunteers were told that the best players earned significantly more than other players, while the other half were told the winnings gap was relatively small.

Each of the volunteers was then asked how much they felt they needed to win to feel like they had done well and then were given a chance to play by placing bets where they could win real-world money. The betting options were arranged such that the greater the risk, the bigger the potential payoff.

In studying how the volunteers performed, the researchers found that those who were told that prior players had won a lot more than other players tended to place riskier bets, hopefully leading to greater rewards — they also generally expressed a higher need to win than the other players.

To learn more about real-world conditions, the researchers studied Google search string data regarding risky behavior and financial gain, such as people searching for information about lottery winning, or other ways to win money.

They found that people who lived in states where the income gap was the highest tended to conduct many more such searches.



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The researchers conclude by suggesting that exposure to high-income lifestyles entices lower-income people to engage in risky behavior in attempting to lift themselves higher.

Rising seas push some US migration to areas far from coast

Rising sea levels caused by climate change may drive US coastal residents to areas far from the seaboard, not just to adjacent inland regions, according to a study published online in the journal Nature Climate Change.

Even landlocked states such as Arizona and Wyoming could see significant increases in population because of coastal migration by 2100, and may be unprepared to handle the surge, said the analysis from a University of Georgia researcher, Reuters reported.

"We typically think about sea-level rise as being a coastal challenge or a coastal issue," Mathew Hauer, author of the study and head of the Applied Demography program at the University of Georgia, said in an interview on Tuesday. "But if people have to move, they go somewhere."

The US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration predicted in January a 1-to-8-foot (0.3-2.5 meters) increase in sea levels by the year 2100. Previous research by Hauer and others has put the number of Americans displaced by rising seas over the same period as high as 13.1 million.

While a movement of residents from low-lying coastal regions to adjacent inland communities will likely occur, Hauer said that according to his model, even landlocked states such as Nevada, Arizona and Wyoming will see an influx.

Nevada's Clark County, home to Las Vegas, is projected to see an influx of up to 117,000 climate migrants by the end of the century, and nearly every county in Wyoming is predicted to see some increase, as are many counties in western Montana, central Colorado and northern Utah, the study found.

Hauer said previous studies had shown that people permanently leaving their homes often choose destinations where they have family connections or better job prospects, even if those locations are far away.

"A lot of these places, although they might seem like they're very far (from the coast), people may have kin ties or economic ties or economic reasons for moving," he said. "People could go to school in an area and they come back years later, maybe that's closer to family."

Although municipalities typically are not considering climate migrants in their long-term planning, Hauer said, they should start to do so because the effects of sea-level rise were already being felt.

"It's not like we go from zero feet of sea-level rise to 6 feet right at the end of the century — it's an incremental process," he said.

Housing problems causing mental illness in UK



theoslotimes.com

- Depression — 48 percent
- Panic attacks — 30 percent

About one in 20 had visited their GP because of their mental state and a worrying minority had contemplated suicide.

Shelter said that if these figures were replicated across the whole of England's population, one million people would have sought medical intervention because of mental health issues

brought on by poor housing or worries about eviction or affording rent or mortgage payments over the past five years.

Additionally, one in six said housing worries had also affected their physical health, causing symptoms like hair loss, nausea, exhaustion, dizzy spells and headaches, while damp or moldy homes can exacerbate respiratory conditions like asthma, said the charity. Telephone interviews with 20

inner-city GPs highlighted the extent to which housing has an impact on mental health.

Housing difficulties can be particularly harsh for people "on the line of coping or not coping. Then, they really do tip over the edge," said one London GP. A Sheffield GP said parents could become depressed because "they're unable to provide a nice environment for their children".

"In the children, they tend to get a little bit, sometimes withdrawn, sometimes a bit anxious and angry."

London GP Andrew Carr said housing was a major contributing factor to mental illness.

"With evictions on the rise in my area, I've seen people with acute anxiety or severe stress because they're facing the threat of losing their home."

With support from Shelter, Brenda and her family eventually found stable, rented accommodation.

"It was the beginning of me taking back some control," said Brenda.

Shelter's legal adviser, Liz Clare, said people with problems like Brenda's seek help from the charity on a daily basis.

"We hear from people at breaking point because they can no longer cope with their unstable, unlivable or unaffordable housing."

"From families in fear of falling further behind on the rent to people dealing with the misery of raising young children in a tiny, mouldy, freezing flat, people can feel completely overwhelmed," said Clare.

Housing problems in England are causing people to suffer anxiety, depression and panic attacks, said Shelter, the housing and homelessness charity.

Of people who had experienced housing worries within the past five years, 69 percent said their mental health was affected, suggested research for the charity, according to BBC.

The researchers interviewed 1,050 people from across England who reported poor housing, rent problems or being threatened with eviction.

One grandmother, facing eviction, even considered suicide.

"It just felt like all the doors were closing in my face," said Brenda, who is from Oldham.

Her daughter, Helen, and granddaughter, Lily Mae, were living with her so she feared her whole family might become homeless.

"You blame yourself and you feel a sense of total helplessness."

"I remember not wanting to go on and wondering if I should end it."

The polling company ComRes carried out online interviews for the report in February this year with a representative sample of 3,509 adults from across England.

Of these, about 30 percent or 1,050 people, said they had experienced housing problems within the last five years.

Among this group the most common mental health problems were:

- Stress — 64 percent
- Anxiety — 60 percent
- Sleep problems — 55 percent