

Turkey finds itself amidst water crisis

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Turkey is staring at its most severe drought as water crisis looms large over its major cities. The water reservoirs of Istanbul find themselves at their lowest level in 15 years. According to Turkey's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Turkey has received below- average rainfall nearly every month since July 2020. From October to December, precipitation across the country was 48 percent lower than the average for 1981-2010.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, earlier in December, while the opening of a dam in the southern province of Antep said, "We are having a very dry year. In this period that the rainfall decreased almost by half, we must all be careful about saving water." Ankara's mayor, Mansur Yavas stated in a tweet that there would be a gradual increase in the bills after 10 cubic meters of water use to prevent high consumption.

Earlier in December, Turkey's Religious Affairs Directorate ordered citizens to pray for rains amidst the lowering water levels. NASA's Earth Observatory released maps which show shallow groundwater storage in the country, measured by the GRACE Follow On satellites.

Turkey has always been a water-stressed country. That is, the demand of water exceeds the amount of available water. Robin Suyesh, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Sri Venkateswara College said, "Climate change is the biggest reason for the inadequate rainfall in Turkey. The most immediate solution is conserving water and using it in bare minimum quantity. Also, Turkey is just an example of the severe water crisis every country is going to face in the coming decade."

Turkey's water crisis is just the visible tip of the iceberg; countries around the world are fast moving towards a water scarce state. Places like New Delhi and Chennai in India face alarming level of water shortage every summer.