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Lack of drinking water persists in rural areas

Turkish Daily News

ANKARA—Nearly one-third out of a total 78,194 villages and other smaller settlements in rural areas in Turkey lack drinking water and up to 10,000 villages are still without electricity, the Rural Affairs General Directorate has announced.

At the end of 1985, about 40,000 villages and smaller settlements had drinking water. Another 13,500 have water, but it is insufficient, while more than 24,500 do not have drinking water at all. The general directorate's program for 1986 calls for the supply of drinking water to 3,634 of these villages and settlements.

The electrification of 23 villages and settlements was completed in the directorate's 1985 program and another 31 are to be hooked up into the electrical power grid in the current 1986 program.

Out of the total 251,190-kilometer network of village roads, 12,301 kilometers have been asphalted, 129,706 kilometers are stabilized but not asphalted, 60,294 kilometers have only been leveled, while 48,899 kilometers are still rough roads. In 1985, road construction work was carried out on a total of nearly 25,200 kilometers of village roads.

According to statistics, 22 percent of the land in Turkey is on a first-grade earthquake belt. There are a total of 7,508 villages and other settlements on this belt, and the area is inhabited by about five million people. Since 1980, 833 earthquake-proof houses have been built in nine villages by the general directorate.

Out of 8.5 million acres of land in Turkey which can be irrigated, 5.6 million acres are being irrigated. The Rural Affairs General Directorate is also rendering irrigation services on another 2.9 million acres of land.

The general director of the directorate, Gazi Barut, told the Anatolia News Agency that this year's allocation in the budget for his department has been increased by 40 percent, which will enable it to provide more services in rural areas.

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