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## **Impact of water shortage in coastal areas discussed**

By Our Correspondent

THATTA, April 2: Pakistan People's Party MPA Humera Alwani has said that sea intrusion has badly affected economics and ecology of the coastal areas of Thatta and Badin districts.

She was speaking at a festival organized by the Indus for All Programme of the WWF, Pakistan in Keti Bunder on Wednesday evening. The festival was attended by a large number of people.

Ms Alwani said that people of the coastal areas were deprived of basic facilities as shown by social indicators. She said that Thatta district had only one maternity home and lacked clean drinking water. She said that the people were migrating due to diminishing livelihood opportunities.

Ms Alwani called for an end to the trend of ignoring the remote areas and said that development of the areas should be on the top of priority list of the Sindh government. She said that the disparity should be eliminated and under-developed areas should be brought at par with the developed ones.

Referring to the issue of release of water downstream Kotri, she said that the Sindh Assembly had passed a resolution, calling for implementation of 1991 water accord, and added that it was high time that the accord was enforced.

Nasir Ali Panhwar, coordinator, Indus for All Programme, said that Keti Bunder town had moved from its original location due to ecological changes mainly because of low flow of the River Indus. He warned that if the situation continued to prevail, the present town would also see major changes.

He said that the Keti Bunder area was famous for Palla fish, red rice and fruits and agriculture was major source of livelihood of its people but it had been ruined due to non-availability of water.

Zahid Hussain Jalbani, Keti Bunder site manager, WWF, said that solar and wind turbines had been installed in the area with the participation of local communities.

He said that a "farmers' school" had been established to make the growers aware about best management practices and drinking water was being provided to villages in the creek through a boat.

Representatives of community-based organisations spoke on their achievements.

Participants enjoyed melodies sung by Samina Kanwal and other vocalists till late night.

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