

## Iran to plant one billion saplings in four years



● UNSPLASH

Planting saplings should be considered an investment for a country, not an expenditure, according to the forest deputy of Iran's General Department of Natural Resources and Watershed Management. "Industrial countries that emit carbon are obliged to plant saplings in order to move toward carbon neutrality," said Naqi Sha'banian.

According to a four-year plan, Iran will plant one billion saplings throughout its territory. The plan is now underway, beginning with 30 million saplings planted from March 2022 to March 2023. This number will reach 250 million by March 2024.

The plan aims to help reduce air pollution via the carbon absorbing potential of the trees; it also helps with the overall quality of the country's water cycle.

"Every day, forests replenish the supply of water vapor in the atmosphere. They draw up water through their roots, and release it from their leaves via transpiration. Along with evaporation from the oceans and other water bodies, this is what drives the water cycle and charges the atmosphere with water vapor," according to Forest News.

Sha'banian proclaims that the plan includes planting native saplings compatible with the climate of every region, adding, "The water used for foresting is not an expenditure, but an investment. During the first years, we consume water in order to maintain the trees, but soon these trees will prove very beneficial in water cycle and its adjustment. They might return the water consumed several-hundred-fold."

He further stated that research shows planting saplings will help with the adverse effects of climate change, including dust storms, greenhouse gases, and air pollution, as well as water and soil erosion; all issues that Iran deals with on a regular basis.

"Planting saplings is a useful way to counter these phenomena. During the past 100 years, the world saw the elimination of 1.5 trillion trees, a problem that our country grapples with."

## Raeisi launches major project to help save dying lake

# Opening a new chapter in Lake Urmia's life

The water transfer system to Lake Urmia is the largest environmental project in the West Asia region, which officially became operational yesterday.

Raeisi went on to highlight that his administration is determined to restore Lake Urmia, stating that all administrative and executive bodies, especially the Ministry of Energy, worked cooperatively to complete the large-scale project. The operation of the water transfer system will open a new chapter in the life of Lake Urmia.

In his speech, Raeisi also congratulated the IRGC on the Day of the Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps, as well as the arrival of the blessed days of the month of Sha'ban, saying, "West Azerbaijan Province and the border areas of our country have witnessed the sacrifices of the Guards, the Basij, the Army, all the armed



and security forces, and the people to ensure our security."

The president went on to add, "The fact that we are gathering here today and

inaugurating a beneficial plan for the region and for the entire country is due to the efforts and sacrifices of those who have worked for years to ensure and stabilize the security of the region, and we should appreciate these efforts."

Stating that religious and different groups of people are demonstrating an exemplary unity and cohesion today, Raeisi said, "The enemy does not want us to gather here in complete security, with unity and cohesion, and celebrate the inauguration of a national environmental plan."

Emphasizing that these achievements should be respected, the president stated, "The project that was inaugurated today is a national project that, although based in Urmia,

its benefits are not related to this province alone, but also to the region and the entire country, and it shows the importance the Islamic Republic attaches to the life of Lake Urmia and the protection of the environment."

President Raeisi called the implementation of the water transfer system to Lake Urmia a manifestation of collective effort and national unity, and expressed his gratitude to all those involved in the implementation of the project.

Raeisi continued, "We should appreciate all those who sacrificed themselves to defend the security, interests and freedom of the people, as well as those who tried to implement this plan all these years."

Noting that the implementation of the project was one of the serious demands of the people of West and East Azerbaijan provinces, he added, "Thank God, it has been put into operation today. The efforts of the workers and others involved; the efforts of the forces that were working to ensure security yesterday; and the forces that are working in the construction camps for the development of the country today."

President Raeisi also inaugurated another project, via videoconference, to transfer water from Shahid Kazemi Dam to Lake Urmia.

The dam will reportedly supply a total of 300 million cubic meters of water to the endangered lake per annum.



Drying up of Lake Urmia is a major threat to the livelihood of millions of people living in the region.

● IRNA



### PIC OF THE DAY

Gwadar Bay, located in the Gulf of Oman on the maritime border of Pakistan and Iran, is one of the lesser known attractions of Iran. The name is from Persian, Khalij-e Gavader or "Gulf of Gwadar" on the Arabian Sea. It is an inlet of the Arabian Sea indenting the sandy Makran coast at the Iran-Pakistan border.

The photo shows a group of young boys playing in the waters of the Gwadar Bay shoreline.

● AHMAD BELBASI/IRIB NEWS