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Reforestation as a Global Urgency

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2. Why Reforestation is a Global Urgency?

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2.1.2. Forests as shield against global warming

2.2. Escalating Heat Waves and Health emergencies: The Call for Reforestation

2.2.1. Increased frequencies of deadly heatwaves across Asia, Europe, and Africa.

2.2.2. Urban trees reduce improve air quality and lower health risks.

2.3. Forests and Water Security: A Lifeline at Risk, Demanding Reforestation

2.3.1. Freshwater resources depend on forest ecosystems.

2.3.2. Deforestation leads to water scarcity

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2.4.1. Forests prevent soil erosion, and

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support sustainable agriculture
2.4.2 Deforestation directly contributes to rising hunger and malnutrition, making reforestation an global urgency.

2.5. Reforestation as the Ark of Life To Prevent Biodiversity Collapse

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3. Challenges to Global Reforestation:

3.1. Underdeveloped countries cannot afford large-scale reforestation

3.2. Rapid industrialization leads to deforestation, posing a challenge to reforestation.

3.3. Reforestation is difficult for countries already suffering from water scarcity

4. Conclusion

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The Essay

Michael Somare, former Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, once said, "The answer is simple. If we lose the world's forests, we lose the fight against climate change. Rainforests are our Earth's greatest utility, our planet's lungs, thermostat and air-conditioning system." This timeless reminder underlines the urgency of reforestation as a survival strategy for humanity. Around the world, deforestation is accelerating global warming, biodiversity loss, and water scarcity. According to World ^{Wildlife} ~~Wild~~ Fund for Nature (WWF), nearly 11,000 hectares of forests vanish annually due to wildfires, illegal logging, and conversion of forest lands into housing schemes. Earth's temperature is rising every year due to global warming and deforestation, resulting in increasingly severe heatwaves. These extreme events

claim numerous lives annually. During the 2024 Hajj pilgrimage, over 1,300 people lost their lives due to extreme heat. Such alarming casualties underscore the urgent need for global attention and immediate action. Reforestation emerges as a vital solution, as it helps regulate temperatures^{and} mitigates the effect of climate change. Planning and restoring forests is no longer optional, it is essential for protecting life on earth. Reforestation is not just desirable but an urgent global urgency because it is the strongest shield against climate change, the key to biodiversity conservation, ~~and~~ the guarantee of water and food security essential for national security, vital to prevent natural disasters, and crucial for urban survival for present and future generations.

Forests stand as the planet's first line of defense against the unfolding climate catastrophe. They absorb billions of tons of carbon dioxide annually, helping regulate the Earth's climate and maintain atmospheric temperature. The World Wildlife Fund (WWF) highlights that nearly thirty percent of all greenhouse gas emissions are naturally absorbed by global forests, a service no human

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technology can replicate. However, when trees are cut down at unsustainable rates, this shield weakens, releasing stored carbon back into the atmosphere and intensifying global warming. Pakistan has one of the lowest forest covers in South Asia leaving the country more vulnerable to temperature extremes and erratic weather patterns. So, forests act as a shield against global warming. For example, Amazon Rainforest is responsible for absorbing around 2 billion tons of carbon dioxide each year which is approximately 5% of the world total emissions. Thus, forests are not merely environmental assets; they are life supporting systems. Protecting and restoring them is essential if humanity wishes to slow down the climate crisis.

Escalating heatwaves and public health ~~crises~~ crises are making reforestation an urgent necessity. In recent years, Asia, Europe, and Africa have witnessed record-breaking heatwaves that have endangered millions of ~~leaves~~ lives, with Pakistan itself experiencing prolonged spells of extreme heat. At a Karachi Conference on Climate Change, Dr. Tipu Sultan warned that sixty percent

Of the world's population endured the hottest June on record, with South Asia predicted to face unbearable temperatures if greenhouse gas emissions persist. This global reality has direct implications for the world, where rising heat and deforestation combine to create unliveable cities. Such heatwaves lead to thousands of casualties worldwide. Urban trees, however, can provide a shield by improving air quality and maintaining atmospheric temperature. Trees like neem not only give shade and clean air but also work as natural repellents against mosquitoes, protecting human health. Thus, large scale reforestation, particularly in urban centres like Kochi already termed "Unliveable" by international institutions can reduce health crisis caused by escalating heatwaves and ensure a safer environment for ^{the} population. ~~Living there~~

Forests play a crucial role in maintaining water security, and their rapid loss has put this vital lifeline at risk, making large-scale reforestation an urgent global necessity. Freshwater resources heavily depend on forest ecosystems, as forests capture rainfall, recharge rivers and aquifers, and maintain soil moisture. Two thirds of the world's

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Accessible freshwater comes from forested watersheds and wetlands, making forests critical for both human survival and agricultural sustainability. Deforestation disrupts these natural water systems, leading to water scarcity, soil erosion, and reduced river flows. In countries like Pakistan, the clearance of trees for agriculture, urbanization, and industrial projects has intensified water stress, threatening food security and livelihoods. Reforestation can restore watershed functions, improve groundwater recharge, and ensure that communities and ecosystems continue to receive reliable water supplies. Thus, protecting and expanding forest cover is an urgent global necessity to secure freshwater lifelines.

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