



Save Shahabad Forest Movement

Why in News?

Activists protest against the plan to cut trees for a **pump storage project** in **Shahabad forest of Rajasthan**.

Key Points

▪ About the Project:

- Shahpur Pump Storage Project is an off-stream closed loop pump storage project. Under this, two reservoirs will be constructed. At the same time, water will be pumped from the nearby [Kuno river](#) to fill the proposed lower reservoir.
- The [Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change \(MoEFCC\)](#) has approved Hyderabad-based company **Greenko Energies Pvt Ltd to set up Shahpur Pumped Storage Project in Shahabad tehsil of Baran district.**
- The project covers 624.17 hectares of land in Kalauni, Baint and Mungaoli villages. Of this, 408 hectares of area is forest.
- The project area falls within the **Shahabad Conservation Reserve**, which is home to wildlife species protected under Schedule-I of the [Wildlife \(Protection\) Amendment Act \(WPAA\) 2022.](#)

▪ Reasons for protest:

- Under this project, there is a plan to cut more than 4 lakh trees, which will destroy the forest.
 - Cutting down trees on such a large scale would have an adverse effect on the climate, and would also **stop the absorption of 22.5 lakh metric tons of carbon dioxide** that the region absorbs every year.
- The local **ecology** will be deeply affected and the livelihood of the local residents may also be in danger due to this project.
- Environmentalists say this could cause serious damage to **wildlife, flora and rare medicinal herbs**.
- Additionally, cutting down trees will lead to soil erosion and may also obstruct important environmental benefits.
- This hydropower project will also adversely impact the movement and welfare of [cheetahs](#) introduced **from Namibia and South Africa under the Kuno Cheetah Project.**

▪ Shahabad Forest:

- The Shahabad forest is rich in biodiversity and is home to protected wildlife species.
- This forest is located in Baran, Rajasthan, very close to the designated habitat for cheetahs in Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh.
- The forest area of Shahabad lies between **the [Madhav National Park](#) and the Cheetah corridor, which would be disrupted by the proposed project.**

Kuno River

- The Kuno River **flows through the middle of the Kuno National Park** and flows from south to north in Madhya Pradesh.

- This river **originates from the Vindhya mountain range** and passes through various districts of Madhya Pradesh like Guna, Shivpuri, Sheopur and Morena.
- The Kuno River area is also part of **India's famous Cheetah Project**, which is located in the Kuno National Park.
- The river supports regional biodiversity and plays a vital role in maintaining environmental balance.

Kuno National Park

- Kuno National Park (Sheopur, Madhya Pradesh) was **established as a wildlife sanctuary in the year 1981** and was upgraded to a **national park in the year 2018**
- **Geography:**
 - It consists mainly of **dry deciduous forests** and the Kuno River, a major **tributary of the Chambal**, flows through the park.
 - It is situated in the Vindhya mountain range.
- **Fauna:**
 - **Leopard, striped hyena, Indian wolf, blackbuck, sambar deer, gharial** (Kuno River).
 - It was selected under the [action plan for the introduction of cheetah in India](#).
- **Flora:**
 - The primary tree species are **Kardhaai, Khair and Salai**.

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