



## Khalanga Reserve Forest

### Why in News?

Recently, Local residents of **Dehradun** united to **save 2,000 Sal trees** in [Khalanga Reserve Forest](#). Due to public protest against tree felling, the state government will **relocate the planned drinking water plant** from the forest.

### Key Points

- Environmental activists **protested the marking of 2000 Sal trees in Khalanga Reserve Forest** for the [Song Dam drinking water project](#), causing deep annoyance among locals who started protesting against the project.
- A social media **campaign was launched to spread awareness** and some groups tied Raksha-Sutras to the trees for protection.
- A drinking water project worth Rs. 524 crores will be built under the **Song Dam project** in Dehradun, with an estimated total cost of 3000 crores.
  - The **project includes the construction of a reservoir** near the Song Dam and a 150 MLD (Megaliters Per Day) **water treatment plant on 4.2 hectares of land**.
  - The project aims to **supply drinking water to 60 wards of the capital from Kanar village**, ultimately helping Dehradun's 60 wards.

### Sal Tree



- [\*Shorea robusta\*](#), the sal tree, is a **species of tree in the family Dipterocarpaceae**.
- The tree is **native to India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Tibet** and across the [Himalayan regions](#).
  - **Description**
  - It can **grow up to 40 metres tall** with a **trunk diameter of 2 metres**.
  - The **leaves are 10-25 cm long and 5-15 cm broad**.

- In **wetter areas**, sal is **evergreen**; in **drier areas**, it is **dry-season deciduous**, shedding most of the leaves from February to April, leafing out again in April and May.
- The sal tree is **known also as sakhua in northern India**, including Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand.
- It is the **state tree of** two Indian states – **Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand**.

#### ▪ Culture

- In Hindu tradition, the **sal tree is sacred**. It is also **associated with Lord Vishnu**.
- The tree's common name, sal, comes from the word shala, which **means 'rampart' in Sanskrit**.
- Jains state that the **24<sup>th</sup> tirthankara, Mahavir**, achieved **enlightenment under a sal tree**.
- Some cultures in **Bengal worship Sarna Burhi**, a goddess **associated with sacred groves of Sal trees**.
- Buddhist tradition holds that **Queen Māyā of Sakya gave birth to Gautama Buddha while grasping the branch of a sal tree or an Ashoka tree** in a garden in Lumbini in south Nepal.
- Also according to Buddhist tradition, the **Buddha was lying between a pair of sal trees when he died**.

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