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Madhuca Diplostemon: Rediscovered in Kerala

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Why in News

Recently, *Madhuca diplostemon* tree has been rediscovered after a gap of more than 180 years from a sacred grove in **Kollam district, Kerala**.



Key Points

- The tree is locally known as ***Kavilippa*** in Malayalam.
- It has been identified by the scientists at the **Jawaharlal Nehru Tropical Botanic Garden and Research Institute (JNTBGRI) at Palode, Kerala**.
- The **threatened species of the Western Ghats** was believed to be extinct.
- This is the **second time** a tree of this species has ever been located and **only one mature tree has been found so far**, which makes this remarkable rediscovery **extremely valuable from a scientific, environmental and conservation point** of view.
 - In **1835, Robert Wight, a surgeon-botanist with the East India Company**, found the first specimen.
 - Since its original collection, specimens of the tree were never collected again, neither from its locality nor elsewhere, and botanical explorations in Eastern and Western Ghats failed to locate the species.

- The **International Union for Conservation of Nature** (IUCN) has included it in the **endangered** species list.
However, since there is only one specimen left in a single locality, it is **eligible to be categorised** as '**Critically Endangered**'.
- The JNTBGRI is planning to undertake the **ex-situ conservation** of this species through the **institute's species recovery programme**.

Source: TH