Canscora agni

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Species*

Why in News?

Recently, researchers from IISER (Indian Institute of Science Education and Research) Pune and the Savanna Science Foundation discovered a new plant species.

Scientific Classification

- **Scientific Name –** *Canscora agni*.
- **Family –** Gentianaceae.
- **Genus –** *Canscora*.
- **Native Range –** Indian savannas (Western India).
- **Closest Relative –** *Canscora alata*.
- **Nomenclature** - The plant was named ***agni*** ('fire' in several Indian languages, including Marathi, the local language of the discovery site).
- It is to challenge the common misconception that all fires are destructive.

Key Characteristics

- **Growth –** Dwarf herb, maximum height 10 cm (vs. *C. alata* up to 60 cm).
- **Leaves –** Fewer, shorter, up to 11 mm long.
- **Stems –** Uneven wing-like structures, wider below flowers, narrower

towards stem.

- **Flowers –** White petals; calyx with distinct reticulate (web-like) veins.
- **Unique Traits –** Minute glandular hairs on leaves, shorter ovary, winged stems.
- **Habitat –** Fire-prone savannas; thrives in open grassy areas maintained by periodic natural fires.
- **Fire Adaptation -** *C. agni* thrives specifically in mesic savannas characterized by frequent surface fires (occurring every 1 to 5 years).
- **Conservation Threat –** Fire suppression and large-scale tree planting are harming the open savanna habitat this species needs.

Reference

Research Matters | C.agni

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