Channa bhoi

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

Why in news?

Recently, the Scientist have discovered the new snakehead fish species in a village in Ri-Bhoi district of Meghalaya.

- **Nomenclature –** Named as Channa bhoi to honour the Bhoi community, who are the original inhabitants of Ri-Bhoi region.
- **Family –** Channidae.
- **Location –** It was found in a small mountain stream near Iewmawlong village in Ri-Bhoi district.
- **Endemic –** It is ***endemic*** to Ri-Bhoi district, Meghalaya.
- **Taxonomy –** It belongs to the ***"Gachua group"*** of snakehead fishes, a group known for its high diversity in the Eastern Himalayan region.
- **Habitat –** Found in a small, shallow mountain streams with boulders and riparian vegetation, a typical of Ri-Bhoi's upland landscapes.

Features

- **Colour –** It features a striking ***bluish-grey body***, which is unique colour pattern differentiates it from other snakehead species.
- **Markings –** Each scale on its body has a ***minute black spot***, forming eight to nine horizontal rows of broken lines along the sides.
- **Fins –** The fish also exhibits distinctive banding patterns on its pectoral fins.



- **Distinctiveness –** Its genetic analysis confirmed that it is distinct from all other known species, including those already recorded in Meghalaya.
- **Genetic Distinctness –** DNA barcoding (cox1 gene) showed 3.3–20% divergence from other Gachua group species.
- It is identified as a sister species to Channa bipuli, another snakehead from Northeast India.
- **Significance –** The discovery brings the ***total number of Channa species recorded from India to 26*** and highlights Meghalaya as a major hotspot for snakehead fish diversity.

References

1. Meghalaya Express | New snakehead fish found in Ri Bhoi stream
2. Shillong Times | New snakehead fish found in Ri Bhoi stream

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