# Cnemaspis brahmaputra

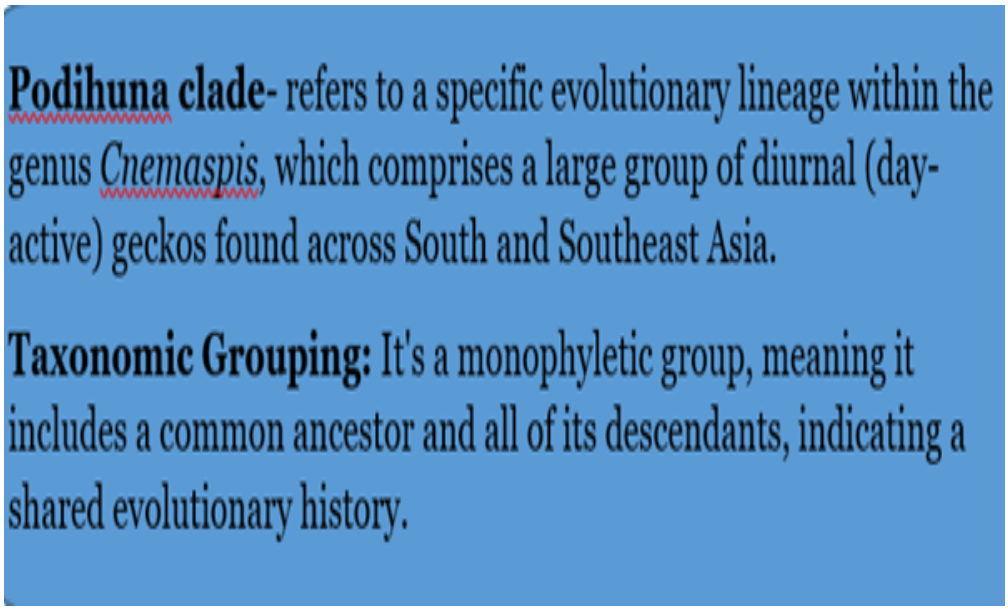
**Prelims: Environmental ecology. Mains: Conservation,**

## Why in news?

A new species of gecko, *Cnemaspis brahmaputra*, has recently been discovered in Assam, highlighting the rich biodiversity of Northeast India.

## About *Cnemaspis brahmaputra*:

- **Named in** - Honor of the Brahmaputra River
- **Location -** Discovered near the Dirgheswari Temple on the bank of Brahmaputra River in Guwahati, Assam.
- **Published by** - *Taprobanica, the Journal of Asian Biodiversity*.
- **Genus and Family** - It belongs to the genus *Cnemaspis*, which is widely distributed across South and Southeast Asia.
    - It falls within the *podihuna* clade, a grouping predominantly found in Sri Lanka.
    - *Cnemaspis brahmaputra* is only the 2nd representative of this clade on the Indian mainland, the other being *Cnemaspis assamensis.*




- **Morphological Features** - Unlike most geckos in Northeast India which are nocturnal, *Cnemaspis brahmaputra* is **diurnal** (active during day).
- **Distinguished from its close relatives by** -
    - A larger body size (30.8–35.7 mm).
    - Fewer midbody scale rows.

    - A higher number of ventral scales (enlarged scales on the underside).
    - Absence of tubercles (small rounded projections) on lower flanks.
    - 3 enlarged rows of thigh scales parallel to the enlarged femoral scale row.
- **Geographical Importance**- The discovery near the Brahmaputra River underscores the critical role of major rivers as:
    - **Geographic barriers** - Isolating populations and leading to speciation.
    - **Evolutionary engines** -Shaping the distribution and genetic diversity of species.
    - Its restricted range alongside the river enhances understanding of local endemism and biodiversity patterns in Assam.
- **Signifying rivers** - Environmental role as both a barrier and corridor for species evolution, and its symbolic connection to Assamese identity.
- **Cultural Importance**- Naming of the species pays tribute to the Brahmaputra River's deep importance in Assamese folklore, daily life, & regional pride.
- **Finding aims -** To boost local awareness about Assam's unique biodiversity and the urgent need for its conservation amidst ecological threats.
- **Significance** - Highlights Northeast India's status as a **biodiversity hotspot** and emphasizes the ongoing importance of scientific exploration in under-studied habitats to uncover new species and understand evolutionary processes.
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- **Reference**The Hindu| Cnemaspis Brahmaputra

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