Dicliptera pakhalica

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Why in News?

Recently, a new species of plant has been discovered in Telangana by scientists from the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).

- The new ***flowering plant belongs to the Acanthaceae family.***
- **Genus –** *Dicliptera*.
- **Nomenclature – *Named after Pakhal Lake***, a historic man-made reservoir from the Kakatiya period.
- **Habitat –** Grows along stream banks and rocky areas near waterfalls inside Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary.
- **Distribution –** The species is ***known only from its type locality in Pakhal Wildlife Sanctuary.***
    - **Family Trait –** Notably, the Acanthaceae family of plants are distributed across tropical and subtropical regions worldwide.
- **Key Characteristics –**
- **Plant –** Stem has tiny hairs lying flat and pointing downward
- Leaf-like parts near the flowers are smooth, without a central ridge
- **Flowers and fruits –** Lack sticky or oil-secreting hairs
- Seeds have a rough, spiny surface
    - Flowers between November and January
    - Fruiting extends from December to March.
- **Similar species** – It closely resembles *Dicliptera parvibracteata*, a species native to parts of the Eastern Ghats in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.
- **Unique association –** The species occurs in association with other native plants such as *Tarenna asiatica, Eranthemum purpurascens, Ruellia prostrata and Mallotus philippensis.*
- **Conservation Status –**
    - **IUCN Red List –** Data Deficient (DD).

- **Ecological Significance –** It adds to the plant diversity of the Eastern Ghats landscape.
- Highlights the importance of protected sites as a centre of plant diversity.



References

[The New Indian Express | Dicliptera pakhalica]

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