Discovery of a new genus and species of miniature fish

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

Why in News?

Recently, an international team of researchers discovered a new genus and species of blind miniature fish and the findings were published in the journal Scientific Reports.

- **Scientific Name –** Gitchak nakana.
- **Genus –** Gitchak, new genus identified within the loach family.
- **Discovery –** Found living ***in a hand-dug well in a village in Assam.***
- It is the ***first time an aquifer-dwelling fish*** has been documented in the Eastern Himalayan region.
- **Nomenclature –** The name is derived from the ***Garo language.***
- "Gitchak" means red, while "na-tok/kana" refers to the absence of eyes, describing the fish's appearance.
- **Habitat –** Underground aquifer systems in water-bearing rock layers.
- **Distribution –** Found only in Assam in a single hand-dug well.
- **Key Characteristics –** Tiny fish growing up to 2 cm in length.
- Completely blind with no visible eyes.
- **Body –** Translucent body ***without skin pigment***, giving a bright red appearance as blood shows through.
- **Unique Feature –** Complete absence of a skull roof, with the brain covered only by skin instead of bone.
- **Threats –** Potential illegal collection for the international aquarium trade.
- However, a better understanding of its population size, wider distribution and potential threats to its habitats is still lacking.



Reference

TH | Gitchak nakana

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