Gynacantha khasiaca

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

Why in News?

An insect that enjoys a near-360° vision with thousands of lenses, and can stay still in the air, has resurfaced in Arunachal Pradesh's Changlang district.

- **Scientific Name** – Gynacantha khasiaca
- An extremely rare and elusive species of dragonfly commonly known as the long-tailed duskhawker.
- **Family** – Aeshnidae.
- **Order** – Odonata (dragonflies & damselflies)
- **Genes** – Gynacantha
- **Diversity** – The global diversity of Odonata comprises 6,442 species across 693 genera.
- India is home to 504 species and 27 subspecies across 152 genera and 18 families; the total number of species in Arunachal Pradesh is 110.
- This genus comprises 92 species globally, with approximately 30 species recorded in Southeast Asia, and 10 species documented in India.
- **Rediscovery** – In Arunachal Pradesh, *after a gap of 110 years* from the Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve.
- Prior to this, the last confirmed record of the dragonfly in the state dated back to the historic Abor Expedition of 1914.
- **Habitat** – It survives by hiding in shaded forests by day and relying on fresh water & dense tropical or sub-tropical rainforest ecosystems for its life cycle.
- **Distribution** – It has been recorded in Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Nepal.
- In India, beyond Arunachal Pradesh, it has been documented in Assam, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal.
- **Key Features**
- **Eyes** – Large compound eyes featuring a pale blue-green or olive-brown tint, packing thousands of tiny lenses that provide near-360° vision.
- **Head** – The upper surface of its frons (forehead) is distinctively marked with a thick, black "T"-shaped mark.
- **Wings** – Completely transparent but washed with a delicate amber-brown tint.
- **Colouration** – Pale brown and green colouration.



- **Behaviour** – Like other members of the Gynacantha genus, it is *crepuscular*.
- This means it is highly active during twilight hours (dawn and dusk) or on heavily overcast, cloudy days.
- **Ecological Role** – It plays a role as both predator (controlling insect populations) and prey in aquatic food webs.
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN** – Data Deficient

References

1. The Hindu | Rare dragonfly resurfaces in Arunachal after 110 years
2. Odonata of Bangladesh | Gynacantha khasiaca

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