Indiaphonte bijoyi

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

Why in News?

A microscopic crustacean discovered in Lakshadweep has been formally recognised as a new genus and new species.

- **Scientific name – *Indiaphonte bijoyi***
- **Genus -** The genus name *Indiaphonte* honours India.
- **Discovery–** Discovered from the ***Kavaratti lagoon, Lakshadweep.***
- **Nomenclature -** Species name *bijoyi* honours S. Bijoy Nandan, Dean, Faculty of Marine Sciences, Cochin University of Science and Technology (Cusat).
- **Habitat –** It lives in sediments of aquatic environments, including lagoon ecosystems.
- **Distribution –** Kavaratti lagoon, Lakshadweep islands.
- South-eastern Arabian Sea, off India's south-west coast, known for high meiofaunal diversity.
- **Morphological characteristics –** It is a microscopic crustacean, observable only under a microscope.
- It is a *part of meiofauna* (invertebrate animals <1 mm).
- The body is partly cylindrical and slightly flattened.
- It is broader in the middle and narrows towards the back.
- Males and females look almost the same, which is rare in this group.
- It is identified by distinct features in its swimming legs, tail part and antennae.
- **Ecological importance –** It contributes to marine and freshwater ecosystem health.
- ***Produces and converts omega-3 fatty acids*** such as Eicosapentaenoic Acid (EPA) and Docosahexaenoic Acid (DHA) that support fish and shellfish growth.
- Important for human nutritional security.
- Acts as a *bio-indicator* due to sensitivity to pollution, oil spills, heavy metals and climate change.
- Used in aquaculture and fisheries as live feed for fish larvae.



References

1. The Hindu | Indiaphonte bijoyi
2. ToI | Indiaphonte bijoyi

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