Kanchuria Tripuraensis & Kanchuria Priyasankari

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Why in News?

Tripura University and scientists from Kerala recently identified two new earthworm species.

- The specimens were first collected between 2004 and 2010.
- The new team later managed to recollect the specimens, paving the way for formal classification and scientific description.

Eastern Himalayas and the Northeastern Hill regions are the 2nd-richest zones in India for earthworm diversity.

- **Genus -** Kanchuria, first described by Julka in 1988, is endemic to this region and previously comprised 8 species.
- **Kanchuria tripuraensis –** It stands out for its ***unique anatomical feature***, a single ventromedian spermatheca located in segments 7 and 8, a trait not seen in other species of the genus.
- It has been named after Tripura, where it was found thriving in *rubber and pineapple plantations*, highlighting the ecological diversity of even agriculturally modified landscapes.
- **Kanchuria priyasankari -**It belongs to the turaensis-species group and is characterised by three pairs of spermathecal pores.
- It is a tribute to Prof. Priyasankar Chaudhuri, whose long dedication to earthworm taxonomy has placed Tripura on the national and international map for soil biodiversity studies.
- Though similar to Kanchuria turaensis, it can be easily distinguished by its *smaller body size* and *distinct reproductive structures.*

With these additions, the total number of known species in the genus now *rises to 10.*

References

1. Assam Tribune | Two new earthworm species
2. MSN | Two new earthworm species