Metadon ghorpadei and Metadon reemeri

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

Why in News?

Recently, two new extremely rare ant fly species have been discovered in India, and their findings have been published in the international journal Zootaxa.

- **Genus –** Metadon.
- **Family –** Syrphidae.
- **Discovery**
  - **Metadon Ghorpadei** - Discovered in the northern ridge forest of Delhi.
  - **Metadon reemeri -** Discovered in the Sirvuvani hills of Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu.
- **Habitat –**These insects are generally associated with ant nests, where their larvae *often live as inquilines* (living within the nest without causing harm to the host ants).
- Moderately dense vegetation patches within thorny scrub forest.
- **Behavior –** Exhibit specialised behaviour known as myrmecophily.

> *Myrmecophily is the beneficial relationship between ants and other organisms, often plants or insects, where both species gain advantages.*

- Larvae ***live inside ant nests and feed on ant brood.***
- Adults seldom visit flowers and tend to remain close to ant nests.
- Extremely rare and difficult to detect.
- **Uniqueness –** Highly specialized ant-associated lifecycle.
- Only 27 Microdontinae species are known from the Indian subcontinent.
- **Threats –** Habitat fragmentation and human pressure.
- Urbanisation and infrastructure development.

- Invasive plant species.
- **Ecological Significance –** Demonstrate the ***ecological value of conserving urban forests*** such as the Delhi Ridge and biodiversity hotspots.





Reference

TH | Two new rare ant flies

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