Myiophanes kempi

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Why in News?

A rare thread-legged assassin bug described from Siju Cave in Meghalaya a century ago has been rediscovered by scientists from the Andaman Islands.

- **Recent Identification -** Two thread-legged assassin bug specimens collected by a team of biologists from limestone caves in the Andaman Islands in 2019 were identified as *Myiophanes kempi* recently.
- **First Described in –** 1924 by British entomologist Willian Edward China.
- It had not been reported for the past 100 years after its first description.
- **Assasin bug -** It is a species of **assassin bug**, commonly known as thread-legged bugs.
- **Genus –** *Myiophanes*, distinguished from other Emesines by specific wing venation patterns and the structure of the prothorax.
- **Sub family** - Belonging to the subfamily of Reduviidae.
- **Morphology -** It has an extremely slender, delicate body with long, stilt-like legs.
- **Habitat** - It is a *specialised predator* of the subterranean ecosystem and lives in its complete lifecycle in the darkness.
- **Distribution -** This specific species is primarily associated with the Indian subcontinent, particularly reported from cave systems in regions like Meghalaya.
- **Feeding Behaviour -** It uses the long raptorial forelegs for snatching prey like small arthropods of the dark cave environment (troglophiles).
- **Ecological Significance -** Myiophanes kempi is a troglobitic species, meaning it is adapted to live permanently in caves.
- It plays a role in subterranean food chains, preying on other cave-dwelling organisms.
- Its rediscovery suggests that cave ecosystems may harbor many undiscovered or forgotten species.



Reference

The Hindu | Myiophanes kempi

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