Neelus sikkimensis

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

Why in News?

Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have announced the discovery of a new species of in the high-altitude landscapes of Sikkim.

- It is a new tiny, ***soil-dwelling micro-arthropod species.***
- It is a rare species of springtail (Collembola).

Arthropods are invertebrates with jointed legs, possess an exoskeleton with a cuticle made of chitin, often mineralised with calcium carbonate, a body with differentiated segments, and paired jointed appendages.

- **Genus –** Neelus.
  - It is the first representative of the genus Neelus ever recorded in India.
  - With this addition, the global species count of the genus has risen to 8.
- **Characteristics -** The species has an extremely small body size; an adaptation suited to life deep within soil and moss layers.
- It ***completely lacks eyes,*** a trait commonly seen in organisms inhabiting dark, subterranean environments.
- **Uniqueness -** It possesses a unique labral chaetotaxy the arrangement of bristles on its mouth which clearly distinguishes it from other known species in the genus.



- **Significance -** They support organic matter decomposition and nutrient cycling in the topsoil. These are vital to the health of terrestrial ecosystems.

Reference

The Week | Neelus sikkimensis

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering