Samauma tree

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

Why in news?

Queen of the rainforest, the sacred Samauma tree is key to what makes Amazon the planet's lungs.

- **Scientific name –** Ceiba pentandra.
- **Family –** Malvaceae.
- **Distribution –** It covers 40% of Latin America, including large parts of Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, among others.
- **Height –** It is also known as the ***Kapok tree***, can grow up to a height of 70 metres and 3-4 meters in diameter forming a natural canopy and towering over other trees in the rainforest.



- **Life span –** These trees have an average lifespan varying from ***300-400 years***, its buttress roots sturdy in nature and taller than a full-grown human.

- **Used for –** Its fluffy white fibers have been traditionally used to make pillows, mattresses, and insulation for clothing.
- **Ecological Importance**
  - **Carbon Sink –** As one of the tallest trees in the Amazon (up to 70 meters), Samauma stores vast amounts of carbon, aiding climate regulation.
  - **Rainmaker Role –** Its deep roots and expansive canopy help recycle moisture, contributing to the Amazon's self-sustaining rainfall system.
  - **Biodiversity Hub –** Provides habitat for birds, bats, monkeys, and insects, supporting complex food webs.
- **Cultural significance –** The Amazon is home to over 400 indigenous communities whose cultures are closely connected to the region's plants and animals, which they also worship and consider spiritually important.
- **Threats –** Deforestation and habitat loss, primarily due to human activities such as logging, infrastructure projects as well as commercial ventures like mining and agricultural business.
- **Global Relevance –** Protecting Samauma aligns with SDGs on climate action, biodiversity, and indigenous rights.

References

1. Indian Express | Queen of the rainforest, the sacred Samauma tree
2. Queen of Forest | Samauma tree

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