Sheathia Rosemalayensis

Syllabus

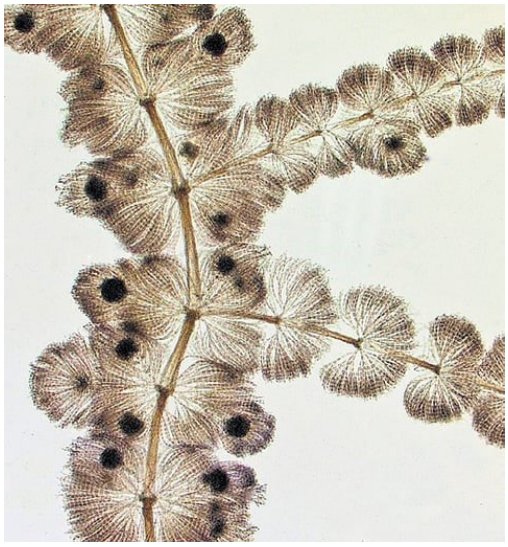
Prelims *– General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.*

Mains *– GS- III | Conservation*

Why in the News?

A team of researchers from Mar Athanasius College, Kothamangalam, have discovered a new species of freshwater algae.

- **Sheathia Rosemalayensis** – It is a new species of ***freshwater red algae*** from the Western Ghats.
- **Discovered in** – Rosemala in Kollam district, Kerala.
- **Taxonomy**
  - **Family** – Batrachospermaceae.
  - **Scientific name** – Sheathia Rosemalayensis, which has been named after the place where it was found.
  - **Genus** – Sheathia.
- The Sheathia species are *extremely rare in India*.
- **Habitat** – It has been documented ***only in the southern Western Ghats***, a geographically distinct region.
- It is the *4^{th} new species* of the Batrachospermaceae family described from this region.
- **Distinguished from other species** – It is distinguished based on *morphology and molecular sequence* data from previously identified 3 other new species of freshwater red algae:
  - Kumanoa chaugulei, Kumanoa periyarensis, and Macrosporophycos sahyadricus.
- **DNA barcoding** – It was performed on all 4 newly discovered species, confirming their unique identity.



- **Significance** – It is crucial to study the freshwater red algae which are thrive only in pristine (fresh) water and undisturbed habitats.
- Their presence has significant bio-geographical and environmental implications.

References

1. The New Indian Express|New freshwater algae species discovered in Western Ghats
2. Phycologia| Sheathia Rosemalayensis

SHANKAR IAS PARLIAMENT
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