Wild Eggplant – Solanum pandeyi

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Why in News?

Recently, A new species of wild brinjal, discovered in the evergreen forests of Middle Andaman by Dr. Lal Ji Singh of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).

- **Common Name –** Wild orange eggplant, has ethnobotanical significance for the Great Andamanese tribe.
- **Scientific Name –** *Solanum pandeyi*.
- **Genus –** *Solanum* (Leptostemonum clade).
- **Family –** Solanaceae.
- **Nomenclature –** Named after Prof. Arun Kumar Pandey, University of Delhi, for his contributions to plant systematics.
- **Morphological traits –** Variation in spines, stellate hairs.
- **Distribution –** Endemic to Middle Andaman, found along forest edges.
- **Genetic confirmation –** Phylogenetic analysis distinguishes it from Solanum lasiocarpum.
- **Ethnobotanical uses –**
  - Seeds and roots used by Great Andamanese tribe to treat tooth infection.
  - Ripe fruit consumed with jaggery, chilli, garlic, ginger, and salt by settler communities.

Ethnobotany – Study of how people of a culture or region use native plants for medicine, food, rituals, and daily needs.

- **Breeding Potential –** It as an excellent genetic resource, plant breeders could use to develop high-yielding, disease-resistant varieties of the commercial brinjal crop.

Reference

[The Hindu | Solanum pandeyi]

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