

1. Radio Tagging Indian pangolins

Why in News?

- Scientists have, for the first time, radio-tagged the Indian pangolin, an endangered animal, that is rarely sighted in forests.
- Researchers say tagging the animal will help understand the habits of the reclusive, Nocturnal Animal.

Pangolins:

- **IUCN Status: Endangered**
- India is home to two species of pangolin.
- While the Chinese Pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) is found in northeastern India, the Indian Pangolin is distributed in other parts of the country as well as Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Pakistan.
- Both these species are protected and are listed under the Schedule I Part I of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 and under Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).
- Commonly known as ‘scaly anteaters’, the toothless animals are unique, a result of millions of years of evolution.
- Pangolins evolved scales as a means of protection. When threatened by big carnivores like lions or tigers they usually curl into a ball.
- The scales defend them against dental attacks from the predators.

Why Radio Tagging?

- Pangolins are among the most trafficked wildlife species in the world. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature says these toothless animals have seen a rapid reduction in population.
- The projected population declines range from 50% to 80 % across the genus. Out of the eight species of pangolin, the Indian Pangolin and the Chinese Pangolin are found in India.
- Both these species are listed under Schedule I Part I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- World Pangolin Day, celebrated on the third Saturday in February, is an international attempt to raise awareness of pangolins and bring together stakeholders to help protect these unique species from extinction.

Threats Faced by Pangolins:

- The primary threat to most pangolin species is illegal hunting and poaching for local use and illicit international trade.
- This trade mainly involves pangolin scales and meat, which are primarily trafficked to East and Southeast Asia, and to a lesser extent other body parts.
- Other threats include habitat loss and degradation, which places additional pressure on pangolin populations.

2. Saliva of Patients Contain COVID-19 Virus

Why in News?

- The Novel Coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 can also be found in saliva, according to a study carried out on 12 patients admitted in hospitals with laboratory-confirmed Infection.

Highlights:

- The study carried out by researchers in Hong Kong and published in the journal Clinical Infectious Diseases has demonstrated the potential of using saliva as a non-invasive specimen for confirming infection and for viral load monitoring during the period of hospitalisation.
- The use of saliva is preferred over nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal specimens because this would reduce the discomfort to the patient and reduce the health hazards to healthcare workers during repeated sampling.
- The virus taken from the patients was also cultured in the lab. Three viral cultures tested positive for the virus, while two tested negative. This confirms that saliva contain live novel virus SARS-CoV-2.
- The presence of live virus in saliva, as confirmed by positive culture, indicates that this body fluid may allow the spread of the virus. Besides direct or indirect contact, the SARS-CoV-2 virus can be transmitted through droplets.
- Not only saliva secreted by salivary glands, the saliva specimens can also contain secretions coming down from the nasopharynx, or coming up from the lung via the action of cilia lining the airway.
- Viral load often peaked at day 10 after symptom onset. Thus, early detection and isolation of cases was strategic for Infection Control.

3. Nagpur Orange

Why in News?

- The First Consignment of Nagpur oranges was flagged off to Dubai from Vashi, Navi Mumbai.

Nagpur Orange:

- Nagpur orange is rustic and pockmarked exterior which is sweet and has juicy pulp.
- It gives the city of Nagpur its pseudonym Orange City.
- It oranges blossom during the Monsoon season and are ready to be harvested from the month of December.
- The Geographical Indication was accorded to the Nagpur Orange by the registrar of GIs in India and is effective as of April 2014.
- Nagpur mandarin in one of the best mandarins in the world. Production of this fruit crop in the central and western part of India is increasing every year.
- Mrig crop (monsoon blossom), which matures in February – March, has great potential for export since arrivals of mandarin fruit in international market are less during this period.
- In the whole region only one variety of Nagpur Mandarin is Grown.

4. Allacta Kalakkadensis

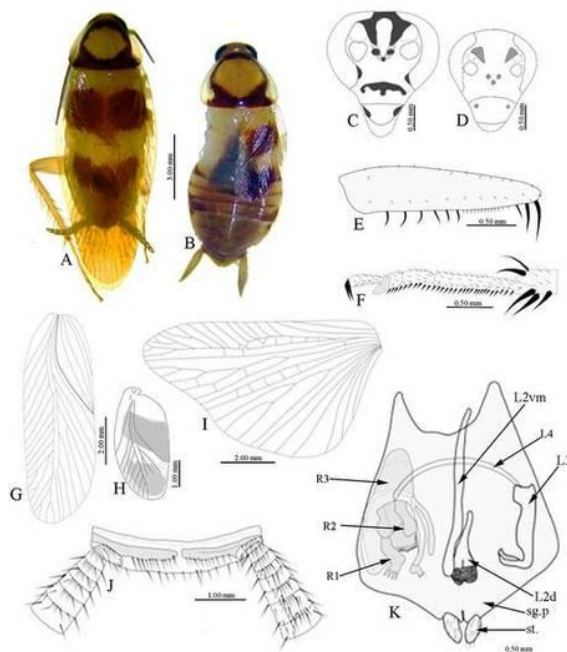
Why in News?

- Recently, a new cockroach species has been discovered at Western Ghats.

About Allacta Kalakkadensis

- It is discovered during a field survey in **Kalakkad-Mudanthurai**, which is named as Allacta Kalakkadensis.
- It is believed to be endemic to **Western Ghats** and subsequently they were found in the **Eastern Ghats**.
- It differs from others by sexual wing dimorphism, pronotal and facial markings, and the structure of male genitalia.
- They are found in the bark of a tamarind tree and a litter of leaves.
- Due to the distinct pattern difference between the male and female, it may be possible that they are two separate species, despite that they are considered the same on the premise that both were collected from the same tree.

- India is home to 182 cockroach species and 55 of them are in Tamil Nadu.



5. Cyrtodactylus Urbanus

Why in News?

- Recently, a new species of Urban lizard - the urban bent-toed gecko (*Cyrtodactylus Urbanus*) has been found.

About *Cyrtodactylus Urbanus*:

- It is zoologically named ***Cyrtodactylus urbanus***, is markedly different in molecular structure, blotch and colour from the *Cyrtodactylus guwahatiensis*, or the Guwahati bent-toed gecko, that was discovered two years ago.
- All geckos in Northeast India were thought to be a single species, the *Cyrtodactylus khasiensis* found primarily in the Khasi Hills of Meghalaya. It was also the **12th recorded** gecko from the Northeast.
- Though it falls within the **khasiensis group**, it differs from other members of this group in mitochondrial sequence data as well as aspects of morphology.



6. Lui Ngai Ni

Why in News?

- **Lui Ngai Ni** festival is recently celebrated by the Naga tribes of Manipur India.

About Lui Ngai Ni:

- It is seed sowing festival celebrated under the theme "**Oneness through Culture**" in Ukhrul, Manipur.
- It is the second major inter-tribe Naga festival after Hornbill Festival.
- It marks the start of the year for the Nagas.
- It is celebrated annually on **14–15 February** at the start of the **spring season**.
- Leaders from other communities of the State, mainly Meitei, Kuki and Zomi also participated in Festival to show mutual solidarity for peaceful co-existence.

