

Money spider

May 28, 2022

In news- Money spiders have been **reported for the first time in the country** from the Muthanga range of the **Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**. They have also discovered ant-mimicking spiders, belonging to the group of jumping spiders, from the Mananthavady range.

About Money spider-

- The species is called so as it is “believed to bring luck” to the person who comes in contact with it.
- The spider belongs to the family of dwarf spiders (Linyphiidae) under the genus Prosoponoides.
- Linyphiidae spiders are commonly known as **sheet weavers** (from the shape of their webs).
- The newest such genus is Himalafurca from Nepal, formally described in April 2021.
- Only six species of spiders belonging to this genus have been identified from across the world so far.
- The male and the female money spiders are typically 3 mm and 4 mm long respectively.
- Both sexes are dark brown and have irregular silver patches and black spots on the elliptical abdomen.
- Females build triangular webs in between dry tree twigs and feed on small insects, while males prefer to hide beneath dry leaves.
- Two or more male spiders can be found in the web of a single female.
- Money spiders are known for drifting through the air via a technique termed **“ballooning”**.
- Money spiders are known to prey on aphids, springtails, flies, and other spiders.
- They are regarded as biological control agents against many pests species.

- Spiders of this family occur nearly worldwide and in Norway many species have been found walking on snow at temperatures of down to -7 °C.

About ant-mimicking spider-

- The ant-mimicking spider has been named *Toxeus alboclavus*.
- They mimic ants by lifting their front pair of legs while walking as a mechanism to escape from potential predators.
- Only three species of this genus have been reported from India, and this is the first species reported from the Western Ghats.
- The male and the female spiders of this species grow up to 4 mm and 6 mm long respectively.
- A pair of white stripes on the dark brown abdomen of females makes them distinct from other spiders of this group.