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News: Armoured Sailfin Catfish

- Recently, scientists from **CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB)** have discovered that the invasive armoured sailfin catfish has proliferated to 60% of the water bodies in the Eastern Ghats, causing harm to fishing nets and disrupting the ecosystem.

Armoured Sailfin Catfish

- The Armoured Sailfin Catfish, a collection of several morphologically similar species belonging to the genus *Pterygoplichthys* of the Loricariidae from South America, has been widely introduced to tropical and subtropical freshwater environments worldwide and has caused serious ecological impacts.
- It is one of the most serious invasive species.
- In India, the fish species was originally introduced for its distinct appearance and its capacity to remove algal growth in tanks and aquariums, but its population has since increased dramatically.

Features

- Sailfin catfish have worm-like dark markings on the head over a dark-golden background, stout pectoral fins with rough surfaces, and a disc-like, protrusible mouth used like a suction cup to attach and feed on algae.
- Female fish are generally smaller, while those larger than 18 inches are likely to be male.

Habitat

- Sailfin catfish live in various slow-moving water bodies and are most commonly found near the shore and in shallow waters.
- They are known to create spawning burrows along shorelines, sometimes undermining canal banks and lake shorelines.

Age and Growth

- Armoured Sailfin Catfish is known to grow to more than 20 inches and weigh 3.0 pounds.