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# Amazon's Stingless Bees Granted Legal Rights

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**Why in news:** Peruvian municipalities have passed a landmark ordinance granting **legal rights to Amazonian stingless bees (Meliponini)**, making them the **first insects in the world** to be legally recognised as entities with rights.

## About Stingless Bees (Meliponini)

- **Ancient Origin:** Oldest bee lineage on Earth, existing for nearly **80 million years**.
- **Anatomy:** Possess highly reduced stingers, functionally useless for defense.
- **Diversity:** ~500 species globally, with over **170 species in Peru**.
- **Honey:** Produces "liquid gold" honey with potent **antibacterial and anti-inflammatory properties**.
- **Ecological Role:** Pollinate **~80% of Amazonian flora**, including **cacao, coffee, avocados, blueberries**, sustaining forest biodiversity.

## Habitat & Cultural Significance

- Found in **tropical forests worldwide**, especially **Amazon rainforest**.
- Integrated into **Indigenous traditions**, including cultural, medicinal, and spiritual practices (e.g., Asháninka and Kukama-Kukamiria communities).

## Significance of Legal Recognition

- **Rights Granted:** Bees now have the **right to exist, maintain healthy populations, regenerate natural cycles, live in pollution-free habitats, and legal representation when threatened**.
- **Global First:** First instance of **insects granted legal rights** anywhere.
- **Conservation Impact:** Strengthens the fight against **deforestation, pollution, and habitat destruction**.
- **Advances Rights of Nature:** Moves environmental law from **human-centred protection to ecosystem-centred justice**.

## Implications for Biodiversity & Policy

- Provides a **legal framework** for protecting keystone pollinators.
- Could inspire **Rights of Nature legislation globally**, promoting ecosystem-level conservation.
- Highlights the role of **legal innovations in climate and biodiversity policy**.

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