



Plant Discoveries 2020: BSI

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Why in News

Recently, the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)**, in its new publication **Plant Discoveries 2020** has added 267 new taxa/ species to the country's flora.

Earlier, the **United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)** demanded an additional USD 200 billion fund flow to developing countries from various sources to manage nature through 2030.

Key Points

- **About:**
 - The **new Discovery to the flora of India** include **119 species of seed plants**, 57 species of fungi, 44 species of lichens, 21 species of algae, 18 species of microbes, five species of bryophytes and three species of fern and fern allies.
 - India has about **45,000 species of plants**, already identified and classified, which account for about **7% of the total plant species** of the world.
 - About 28% of the Indian plants are endemic to the country.
 - Few examples among the new discoveries are:
 - Nine new species of **balsams (Impatiens)** and one species of wild **banana** (*Musa pradhanii*) from Darjeeling.
 - One species each of **wild jamun** (*Syzygium anamalaianum*) from **Coimbatore**.
 - **Fern species** (*Selaginella odishana*) Kandhamal in **Odisha**.
- **Geographical Distribution of Species:**
 - **22% of the discoveries** were made from the **Western Ghats** followed by **Western Himalayas** (15%), **Eastern Himalayas** (14%) and **Northeast Ranges** (12%).
 - The West coast contributed 10% while the East Coast contributed (9%) in total discoveries; Eastern Ghats and South Deccan contributed 4% of each while Central Highland and North Deccan added 3% each.

- **Significance of the Discovery:**

India is a signatory to the '**Convention on Biological Diversity**' (CBD) and is committed to work towards a **global strategy of plant conservation**.

- Every year, **new plant discoveries are compiled and documented by BSI**, which plays a central role to fulfil **India's global commitment** of comprehensive documentation and identification of plant diversity of the country.
- CBD, a legally binding treaty to conserve biodiversity, has been in force since 1993.

Botanical Survey of India

- **About:**

- It is the **apex research organization** under the **Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEFCC)** for carrying out taxonomic and floristic studies on wild plant resources of the country. It was **established in 1890**
- It has **nine regional circles** situated at different regions of the country. However the **headquarter is located in Kolkata, West Bengal**.

- **Functions:**

- **Exploration, inventorying and documentation** of phytodiversity in general and protected areas, hotspots and fragile ecosystems in particular.
- **Publication** of National, State and District Floras.
- **Identification** of threatened and red list species and species rich areas needing conservation.
- **Ex-situ conservation** of critically threatened species in botanical gardens.
- Survey and documentation of **traditional knowledge (ethno-botany)** associated with plants.
- **Develop National database** of Indian plants, including herbarium and live specimens, botanical paintings and illustrations, etc.

Source: TH