

Scientists spotted a new species of Indian Muraingrasses

December 11, 2020

In news

A new species of Indian Muraingrasses known for their ecological and economic importance, such as fodder, have been spotted by scientists in Goa in the Western Ghats

About Indian Muraingrasses

- A new species of Indian Muraingrasses **known for their ecological and economic importance, such as fodder**
- The species **has adapted to survive harsh conditions, low nutrient availability, and blossoms every monsoon.**
- Globally 85 species are known from *Ischaemum*, of which 61 species are exclusively found in India.
- **The Western Ghats have 40 species with the highest concentration of the genus.**

Other key highlights

- **A team of scientists from Agharkar Research Institute (ARI), Pune, an autonomous institute of the Department of Science & Technology, has been exploring the biodiversity of the Western Ghats for the last few decades.**
- The team discovered a novel species named *Ischaemum janarthanamii* from plateaus of Western Ghats of Goa, and a research paper describing this species was published recently in *Annales BotaniciFennici*, a Finland based journal.
- **The species was named *Ischaemumjanarthanami* in honour of Prof. M. K. Janarthanam, Professor of Botany, Goa**

University, for his contribution to the Indian grass taxonomy and documentation of the floristic diversity of Goa state.

- **The first collection of this new species was made in the 2017 monsoon.**
- The population was kept under observation for the next two years to confirm the consistency of its characters.
- **Morphological and molecular data of the species were used to confirm the novelty of the species.**
- ***Ischaemumjanarthanami* grows on low altitude lateritic plateaus in the outskirts of Bhagwan Mahavir National Park, Goa.**
- The vegetation is exposed to extreme climatic conditions like desiccation in drier months and soils with low nutrient availability.
- However, withstanding these, the species has adapted to survive harsh conditions and blossom every monsoon