New plant species Disporopsis crispata found in Arunachal Pradesh

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News

A new flowering plant species, Disporopsis crispata, has been found near Vijoynagar, close to the Myanmar border, in Changlang district of Arunachal Pradesh. (Disporopsis is the genus; crispata is the new species.) It is the first record of the genus in India (PTI). It was published in the international botanical journal Phytotaxa (784(1): 95–100) on 10 November 2026. It was described by Aaron Floden (Missouri Botanical Garden), Vinay Kumar Sahani and Krishna Chowlu (Botanical Survey of India, Arunachal Pradesh Regional Centre, Itanagar), Kate E. Armstrong (New York Botanical Garden) and Colin Pendry (Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh); Sahani collected the flowering material in June 2026. The site lies where three biodiversity hotspots meet – the Himalaya, Indo-Burma and the Mountains of Southwest China; the nearest other known collection is in Myanmar, about 65 km to the south. It is named 'crispata' for its strongly wavy, crinkled leaf margins; it has reddish stems, white-and-green flowers and fleshy white fruits. It grows on damp slopes of temperate rhododendron–bamboo forest at about 2,500–2,800 m; only one population of fewer than five plants is known in India, so the authors recommend the IUCN category 'Data Deficient'. Arunachal Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein hailed the find.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Species / genus	Disporopsis crispata (new species) / Disporopsis (genus)

Point	Details
Family	Asparagaceae – subfamily Convallarioideae
Location	Vijoynagar, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh (near Myanmar border)
Altitude / habitat	2,500–2,800 m; temperate rhododendron–bamboo forest
Significance	First record of the genus in India; westward extension of its range
Journal	Phytotaxa 784(1): 95–100 – 10 November 2026
Institutions	BSI (Arunachal Regional Centre), Missouri Botanical Garden, New York Botanical Garden, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
Status (proposed)	IUCN Data Deficient (DD); fewer than 5 plants known in India
Flowering / fruiting	May–June / July–December

Background

- Taxonomy: in Linnaeus's binomial system the first word is the genus and the second the species. So in 'Disporopsis crispata', Disporopsis is the genus and crispata the species epithet. The genus has about 12 species and is close to Polygonatum ('Solomon's seal'). A flowerless specimen collected in Myanmar's Kachin Hills in 1962 was at first wrongly identified as Polygonatum.
- Geography: Changlang district lies at Arunachal's south-eastern tip on the Myanmar border; Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve is also in this district. Vijoynagar is a remote valley on Namdapha's eastern edge. The Eastern Himalaya–North-East is one of India's richest biodiversity regions.
- Biodiversity hotspots: Norman Myers proposed the 'biodiversity hotspot' idea in 1988; Conservation International now lists 36 hotspots worldwide. Four extend into India – the Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats–Sri Lanka and Sundaland (Nicobar Islands).
- Institution: the Botanical Survey of India (BSI) was set up on 13 February 1890, with headquarters in Kolkata; under the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change it surveys and documents the country's plant wealth. On the IUCN Red List, 'Data Deficient' (DD) means there is not enough information to assess extinction risk – it does not mean 'not threatened'.

Tamil Nadu link: BSI's Southern Regional Centre has functioned at Coimbatore since 1955; the 'Madras Herbarium' (MH), one of India's oldest herbaria, is housed there. 'Thanneervittan kizhangu' (Shatavari, Asparagus racemosus), of the same family Asparagaceae, is used in Tamil Nadu's Siddha medicine. Tamil Nadu's Western Ghats forests belong to the 'Western Ghats–Sri Lanka' hotspot.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Species / genus: Disporopsis crispata (new species) / Disporopsis (genus); Family: Asparagaceae – subfamily Convallarioideae; Location: Vijoynagar, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh (near

Myanmar border); Altitude / habitat: 2,500–2,800 m; temperate rhododendron–bamboo forest.

What is the background to this news?

Taxonomy: in Linnaeus's binomial system the first word is the genus and the second the species. So in 'Disporopsis crispata', Disporopsis is the genus and crispata the species epithet.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Disporopsis crispata was found at Vijoynagar, near the Myanmar border. Which Arunachal district is it in?

A) Tawang

B) West Kameng

C) Papum Pare

D) Changlang

Answer: D – Explanation: Changlang – Arunachal's south-eastern tip; Namdapha National Park is also here. Tawang borders Bhutan and Tibet.

2. Of the world's 36 biodiversity hotspots listed by Conservation International, how many extend into India?

A) 4

B) 3

C) 2

D) 5

Answer: A – Explanation: 4 – Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats–Sri Lanka and Sundaland (Nicobar). Norman Myers proposed the idea in 1988.

3. The genus Disporopsis belongs to which plant family?

A) Orchidaceae

B) Zingiberaceae

C) Asparagaceae

D) Fabaceae

Answer: C – Explanation: Asparagaceae – Shatavari (Thanneervittan kizhangu) is in it too. Orchidaceae is orchids; Zingiberaceae is ginger; Fabaceae is legumes.

4. With fewer than five plants known in India, which IUCN category did the authors recommend for the new species?

A) Critically Endangered

B) Data Deficient

C) Vulnerable

D) Near Threatened

Answer: B – Explanation: Data Deficient (DD) – too little information to assess extinction risk; it does not mean the species is safe.

5. The 'Madras Herbarium' (MH) of the Botanical Survey of India is kept at its Southern Regional Centre in which city?

A) Coimbatore

B) Chennai

C) Madurai

D) Udhagamandalam

Answer: A – Explanation: Coimbatore – centre set up in 1955 on the TNAU campus; MH is one of India's oldest herbaria. BSI (1890) is headquartered in Kolkata.

Sources: PTI (Itanagar, 12 Nov 2026), nagalandpost.com/new-flowering-plant-species-discovered-in-arunachal/; Northeast Now – nenow.in (11 Nov 2026); Phytotaxa 784(1) – phytotaxa.mapress.com, 'A new species of Disporopsis (Asparagaceae: Convallarioideae) from India and Myanmar' (DOI 10.11646/phytotaxa.784.1.8); MoEFCC – moef.gov.in/index.php/botanical-survey-of-india; BSI – bsi.gov.in (Southern Regional Centre, Coimbatore). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.