



UPSC & STATE PCS CURRENT AFFAIRS · UJIYARI.COM

DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

Vaccinium piliferum Rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh after 188 Years

26 May 2026

ENVIRONMENT

SCIENCE & TECH

GS3

CURATED & WRITTEN BY

**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)**ALSO FROM THE CREATOR****BharatNotes**Free UPSC notes, MCQs, PYQ analysis. **100% Free.**bharatnotes.com →**ADVERTISE****Advertise with Ujiyari**

Reach thousands of UPSC aspirants daily.

epicbharat@gmail.com

Vaccinium piliferum Rediscovered in Arunachal Pradesh after 188 Years

26 May 2026 · 4 min read ·

2 tags ▾

WHY IN NEWS:

Researchers from the **Society for Education and Environmental Development (SEED)** and **CSIR-North East Institute of Science and Technology (NEIST)** have rediscovered *Vaccinium piliferum* — a wild blueberry relative — in **Vijoyagar, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh**, near tributaries of the **Noa-Dihing River, 188 years after its first recording in 1836**. Only 16 individual plants have been located. The research was published in a German botanical journal in May 2026.

The rediscovery underscores Arunachal Pradesh’s status as a “lost-and-found” frontier of botanical exploration, where remote terrain, dense forest cover and limited road access continue to conceal species long thought extinct.

ABOUT THE SPECIES — VACCINIUM PILIFERUM

The plant is a member of the heath family and a close relative of the cultivated blueberry. Its rediscovery widens India’s known genetic pool of wild crop relatives, which are vital reservoirs for breeding climate-resilient food crops.

ATTRIBUTE	DETAIL
Scientific name	<i>Vaccinium piliferum</i>
Family	Ericaceae (heath family)
Genus	<i>Vaccinium</i> (~450 species)
Common relatives	Blueberry, cranberry, bilberry, lingonberry
First recorded	1836 by William Griffith
Rediscovered	2026 (after 188 years)
IUCN status	Endangered
Distribution	Eastern Himalayan endemic
Plants found	16 individuals

About Family Ericaceae

Ericaceae is a globally important family of flowering plants that includes blueberries, cranberries, rhododendrons and heathers. Members are typically indicators of **acidic, well-drained soils**.

- **Rhododendron** is the **national flower of Sikkim** and the **state flower of Himachal Pradesh**.
- Many Ericaceae species form symbiotic associations with mycorrhizal fungi, allowing growth on nutrient-poor soils.

ABOUT THE REDISCOVERY SITE

Vijoyanagar — Changlang District

- An extremely remote settlement in Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh.
- Accessible mainly by **helicopter from Miao**; a foot trek of ~157 km from the nearest road is the only alternative.
- Located near **Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve**.
- The **Noa-Dihing River** flows in the area — a tributary of the **Lohit**, which joins the **Brahmaputra**.

Namdapha National Park

FEATURE	DETAIL
Notified	1983 (National Park and Tiger Reserve)
Location	Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh
Area	1,985 km ²
Rank	3rd largest National Park in India ; easternmost tiger reserve
Big cats	Only park in the world with all four — tiger, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard
Notable fauna	Hoolock gibbon, red panda, Mishmi takin, slow loris
Indigenous community	Lisu (also called Yobin)

EASTERN HIMALAYAN BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT

Arunachal Pradesh lies in the **Himalaya biodiversity hotspot**, one of **36 global biodiversity hotspots** identified by Conservation International. The state is part of the broader **Hindu Kush–Himalaya (HKH)** region.

- State area: ~83,743 km²; forest cover ~80%.
- Renowned for orchid, amphibian and mammal diversity.
- A frequent source of new species descriptions and rediscoveries.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE REDISCOVERY

Wild relatives of cultivated crops are central to global food security because they carry traits — drought tolerance, pest resistance, cold hardiness — that domesticated crops have lost.

- **CGRFA** — Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, under FAO.
- **ITPGRFA** — International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, **2001**; India ratified in **2002**.
- Aligns with **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) Target 9** — sustainable use of biodiversity for human well-being.

INDIA'S BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

INSTRUMENT	DETAIL
Biological Diversity Act	2002 (amended 2023)
Apex body	National Biodiversity Authority (NBA), Chennai
Wildlife (Protection) Act	1972 (amended 2022) – Schedules I/II/III
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan 2024–2030 (submitted at CBD COP-16, Cali , October–November 2024)
Megadiverse status	1 of 17 megadiverse countries
Hotspots in India	4 – Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats–Sri Lanka, Sundaland

WAY FORWARD

- **Community-led conservation** with Vijoyanagar's Lisu/Yobin community as primary stakeholders.
- Strengthen **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** field documentation in border districts of the Northeast.
- Ex situ conservation through the **National Bureau of Plant Genetic Resources (NBPGR, ICAR)**.
- Backup deposits at international gene banks such as the **Svalbard Global Seed Vault**.

UPSC RELEVANCE

- **GS Paper 3** – Conservation, environmental biodiversity, biotechnology and food security through wild crop relatives.
- **GS Paper 1** – Geography of mountain ecosystems and the Eastern Himalayan region.
- **Prelims** – *Vaccinium piliferum*, Namdapha NP, Noa-Dihing, ITPGRFA, biodiversity hotspots in India.
- **Mains** – Role of wild crop relatives in climate-resilient agriculture; community participation in conservation in border districts.

FACTS CORNER

Vaccinium piliferum: Family Ericaceae; genus *Vaccinium* (~450 species).

First recorded 1836 by William Griffith; rediscovered 2026 (after 188 years).

IUCN status: Endangered.

Location: Vijoy Nagar, Changlang district, Arunachal Pradesh.

Research institutions: SEED + CSIR-NEIST (Jorhat).

16 individual plants documented.

Family Ericaceae includes blueberry, cranberry, rhododendron.

Rhododendron — national flower of Sikkim; state flower of Himachal Pradesh.

Namdapha NP: 1,985 km²; 3rd largest NP in India; easternmost tiger reserve; notified 1983.

Namdapha — only park in the world with all 4 big cats (tiger, leopard, snow leopard, clouded leopard).

Noa-Dihing River: tributary of Lohit → Brahmaputra.

Arunachal Pradesh: ~83,743 km²; ~80% forest cover.

India hosts 4 biodiversity hotspots (Himalaya, Indo-Burma, Western Ghats–Sri Lanka, Sundaland).

ITPGRFA: 2001; India ratified 2002.

BSI (Botanical Survey of India): HQ Kolkata; established 1890.

Sources: [MoEFCC](#), [BSI](#), [CSIR-NEIST](#)

← **NEWER ARTICLE**

PM Modi Bilaterals with Wong and Motegi on Quad Margins

OLDER ARTICLE →

Loktak Protocluster: Manipuri Astrophysicist Names...

RELATED EDITORIALS

BUSINESS STANDARD

[Rising Energy Demand Needs Faster Infrastructure Upgrades](#)

25 May

THE HINDU

[India's Green Transition Still Runs on Coal](#)

25 May

THE HINDU

[Cyber Warfare is Outpacing Global Legal Accountability](#)

23 May

INDIAN EXPRESS

[For India, Weakening Monsoon and Fertiliser Crisis: A Double Whammy](#)

23 May

RELATED KEY TERMS

KEY TERM

[Active Case Finding \(TB\)](#)

A proactive public health strategy where health workers systematically...

KEY TERM

[Advanced Technology Vessel \(ATV\) Programme](#)

India's classified, decades-long programme to indigenously design and...

KEY TERM

[AERB](#)

India's regulatory body for nuclear and radiological safety,...

KEY TERM

[Agri-Photovoltaic](#)

A dual land-use technology that integrates elevated solar panels with...



CURATED & WRITTEN BY

Bharat Choudhary

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

[linkedin.com/in/epicbharat](https://www.linkedin.com/in/epicbharat)[Read Full Article on Ujiyari →](#)<https://ujiyari.com/daily/2026/05/26/vaccinium-piliferum-rediscovered-arunachal-2026/>

ALSO FROM THE CREATOR

BharatNotes

Free UPSC study platform — subject-wise notes across all 4 GS papers, Prelims MCQs, Mains answer frameworks, PYQ analysis & progress tracking. **100% Free • No Login Required.**

[Start Preparing → bharatnotes.com](http://bharatnotes.com)

📌 OPPORTUNITY

Advertise with Ujiyari

Reach **thousands of serious UPSC & State PCS aspirants** daily through our PDFs, website, and social channels.

Ideal for: Coaching institutes • EdTech platforms • Book publishers • Exam prep apps

[✉ epicbharat@gmail.com](mailto:epicbharat@gmail.com)

Write to us for rates & media kit

Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs · ujiyari.com · bharatnotes.com