



## Current Affairs of the Day

*Explained: What is Allium negianum?*



1. A plant discovered in Uttarakhand in 2019 has been newly confirmed as a new species of Allium — the genus that includes many staple foods such as onion and garlic, among 1,100 species worldwide.
2. In 2019 researchers came across plants of this onion species, which they have named Allium negianum, in the border area of Malari village, in Chamoli district of Uttarakhand.
3. It grows at 3,000 to 4,800 m above sea level and can be found along open grassy meadows, sandy soils along rivers, and streams forming in snow pasture lands along alpine meadows, where the melting snow helps carry its seeds to more favourable areas.
4. With a narrow distribution, this newly described species is restricted to the region of western Himalayas and hasn't yet been reported from anywhere else in the world, according to a blog post from Pensoft Publishers, which brings out the journal.
5. According to locals, the onion from Niti valley was particularly good, even deemed the best on the market.



20.10.2021 Wednesday



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## Arctic melt: will polar bears vanish by 2100?

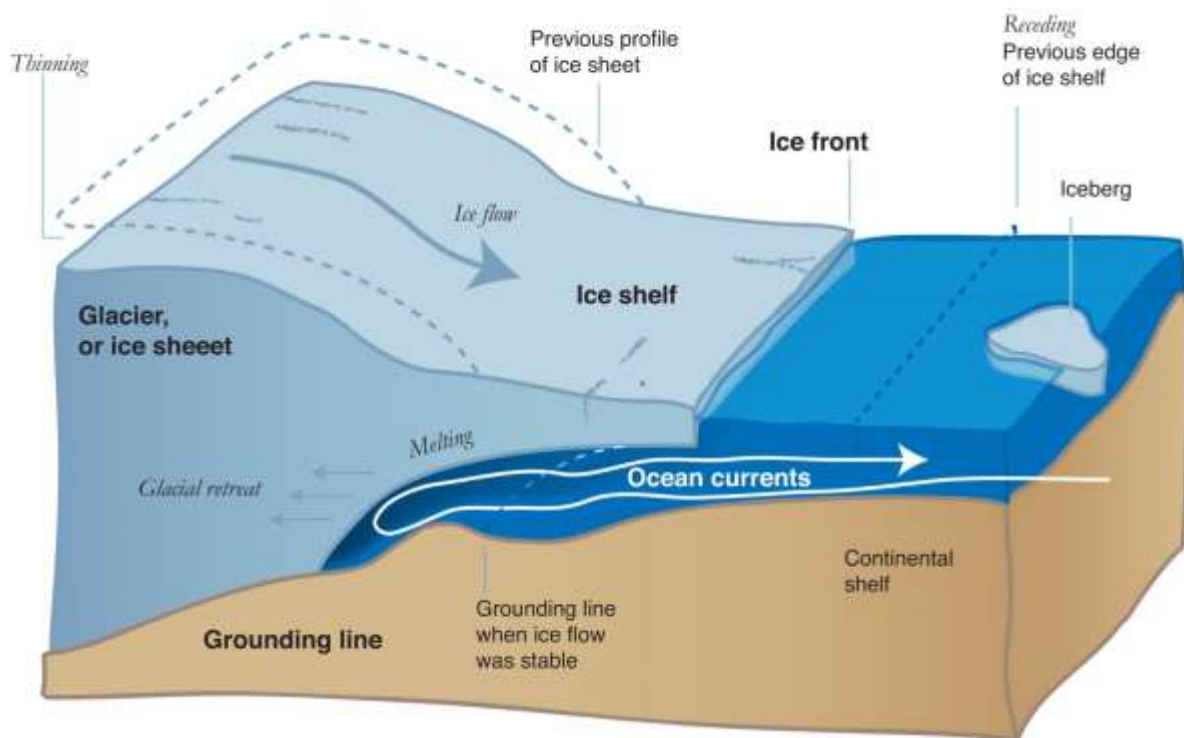
1. With a warming climate, summer sea ice has been shrinking fast, and now consistently spans less than half the area it did in the early 1980s.
2. The shrinkage of summer sea ice in the Arctic has long been a concern, as has been the survival of the species that depend on it for survival. A new study has now put a timeline to an impending disaster: If carbon emissions continue at current levels, summer ice will disappear by 2100 — and, along with it, creatures such as seals and polar bears.



3. On the Arctic ice, algae bloom. These feed tiny animals, which in turn feed fish, which in turn feed seals, which feed polar bears at the top of the chain. The irregular topography also helps create lairs for seals, and ice caves for polar bears during the winter.



## ICE SHEETS and ICE SELVES:



## North East to be developed as India's Bio-Economic Hub

1. The Eastern Himalayan Region is one of the mega-biodiversity rich zones and is among the 34 biodiversity Hotspots of the world. There is a need to put these invaluable genetic resources to use for the economic growth of the region in particular and to the nation in general, through biotechnological interventions.
2. India will be recognized as a Global Bio-manufacturing Hub by 2025 and will figure among the top 5 countries of the world. India's Bio-Economy is on its way to achieving a 150-billion-dollar target from the current 70 billion-dollar by 2025 and will contribute effectively to the Prime Minister's vision of a 5 trillion-dollar economy by 2024-25.
3. The DBT has established a Biotech-KISAN Hub at Horticultural Research Station, Assam Agricultural University (AAU), Kahikuchi, for large scale



THE HINDU

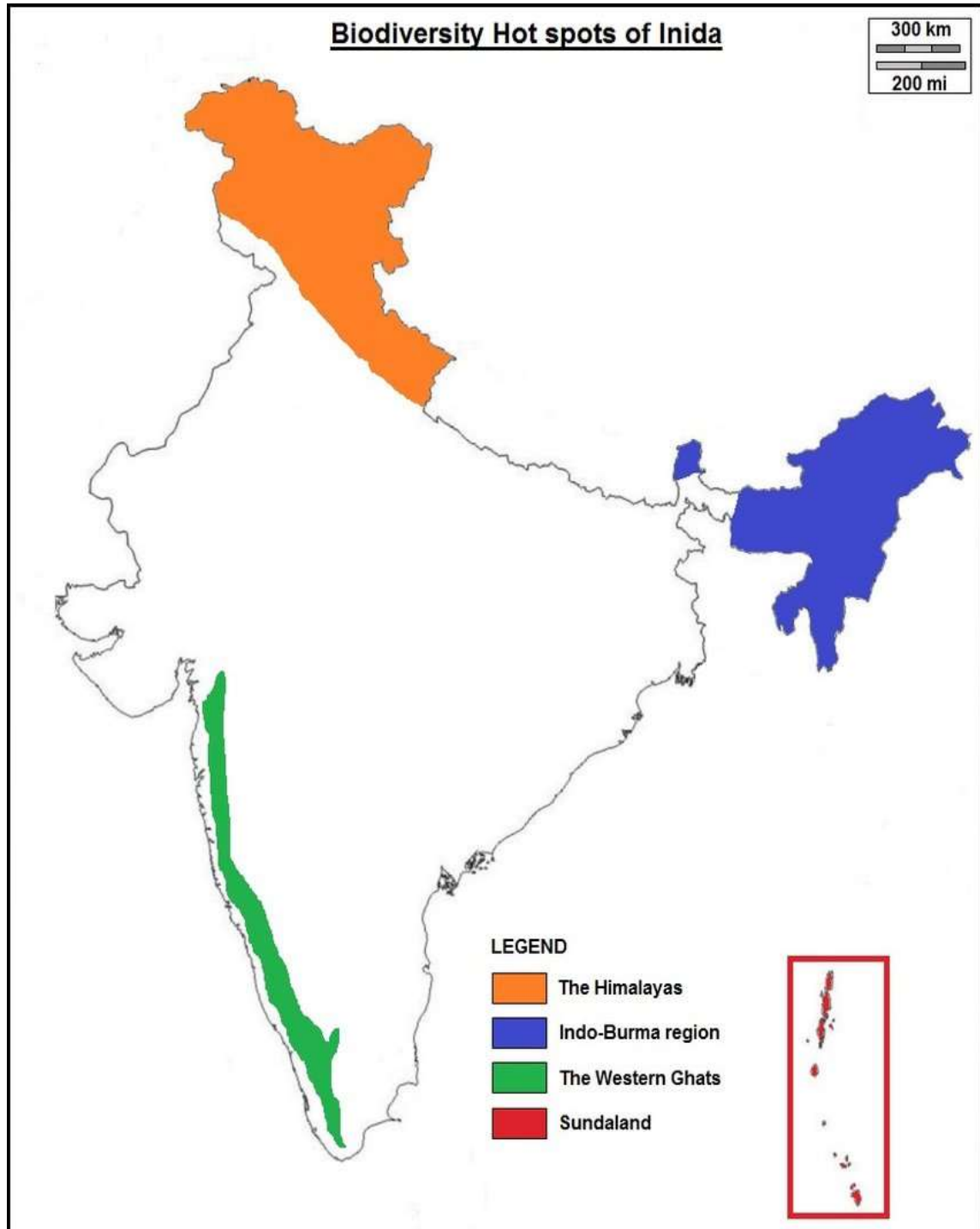
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production of quality planting material of Malbhog banana, which is in high demand in the state of Assam.



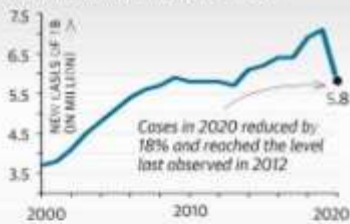


DATA POINT

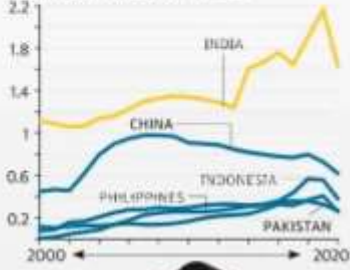
## The overlooked epidemic

As many as 1.3 million fewer cases of Tuberculosis were detected in 2020 compared to 2019, according to the WHO. The drop in cases can be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic as there was reduced access to disease diagnosis and treatment as well as curtailed spending since the since the infection outbreak. This reversed the gains made over the past few years in detection of TB cases. Following a drop in detection of new cases, deaths attributed to TB rose for the first time in the last 16 years in the world. The estimated TB deaths in India were the highest in seven years in 2020. Visits for treatment also fell sharply. Worryingly, among high-burden nations, India spent the least on TB drugs per patient despite accounting for an estimated 28% of the new cases last year. **By Jasmin Nihalani and Sumant Sen**

**1. SHARP DROP** | The chart depicts the year-wise number of new TB cases reported globally. The pandemic year saw a sharp decline in new diagnosed cases, which were otherwise following an increasing trend till 2019



**2. COUNTRY-WISE DROP** | The chart shows the new cases of TB detected (in million) in select nations between 2000 and 2020



These nations shown in the chart accounted for over 75% of the global drop in new cases in 2020 compared to 2019. An estimated 1.63 million new cases were registered in India in 2020, which is 0.5 million cases lower than 2019

**Fighting TB:** A doctor examining a TB patient in Guwahati, Assam. >>>



An estimated 5.8 million cases of TB were detected in 2020

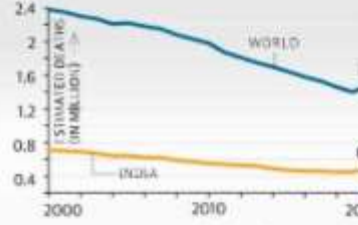


India contributed to 41% of the global drop in cases in 2020, the highest among all nations

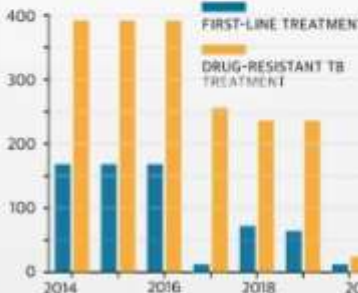


Deaths due to TB in the country also rose by 13% compared to 2019

**3. FATALITY COUNT** | An estimated 1.48 million people died due to TB globally in 2020. India accounted for 34% of them



**4. TREATMENT NEGLECTED** | Outpatient care visits for first-line and drug-resistant TB treatment fell sharply in 2020 in India. In first-line treatment, drugs which are used to treat the most common form of the disease are given. Patients who do not respond to such drugs are given drug-resistant treatment



**5. TREATMENT COST** | The table shows the average spending on drugs per patient for both forms of treatment in the 10 high TB-burden countries in 2020. India's spending on TB medication for both forms is among the lowest despite high disease prevalence.

| Country                          | First-line treatment (\$) | Drug-resistant TB treatment (\$) |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| China                            | 93                        | 20,287                           |
| Indonesia                        | 46                        | 2,188                            |
| Pakistan                         | 24                        | 1,723                            |
| Ethiopia                         | 45                        | 1,600                            |
| Myanmar                          | 47                        | 1,352                            |
| Philippines                      | 67                        | 1,339                            |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | 45                        | 913                              |
| Bangladesh                       | 26                        | 864                              |
| Vietnam                          | 63                        | 713                              |
| India                            | 33                        | 700                              |

SOURCE: WHO'S GLOBAL TUBERCULOSIS REPORT 2021



**Mains  
DAWP**

*Q1. Newly framed QUAD in West Asia is reflecting fundamental shifts in west Asian politics bringing many opportunities for India. Critically discuss.*

**MCQ**

*Q1. Consider the following statements*

- 1. Ice plays the same role in the arctic as played by soil in a forest*
- 2. Algae is the basis of the arctic food chain*

*Which of the statements given above is/are correct?*

- a. 1 only*
- b. 2 only*
- c. Both 1 and 2*
- d. Neither 1 nor 2*