Lactifluus khasianus

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Why in news?

Recently, the researchers have discovered a new mushroom species in Meghalaya.

- **Scientific name** - Lactifluus khasianus
- It is the ***edible mushroom species***.
- **Genus –**Lactifluus.
  - ***More than 34 species*** of Lactifluus are now documented from India, with Meghalaya contributing significantly.
- **Discovered in** – ***East Khasi hills of Meghalaya***.
- **Altitude -** It grows in association with Khasi pine (Pinus kesiya) at altitudes of around 1,600 metres.

East Khasi Hills region *part of the* ***Indo-Burma biodiversity hotspot****, is increasingly recognised as a* ***treasure trove of fungi****.*

- **Locally known –** It is known as "Tit iongnah" by Khasi tribal communities, has long been gathered from the forest floor, sold in local markets during the monsoon, and savoured as a seasonal delicacy.
- **Appearance –** The mushroom is distinguished by its chocolate-brown cap, distinctive microscopic features, and genetic markers.
- It has its close relatives with Lactifluus gerardii found in North America and Asia, but differs in its larger cystidia (specialised fungal cells) and DNA signatures.
- **Edibility -** It is now the ***5th confirmed species*** of this section in India and notably, ***the first to be reported as edible***.
- **Significance -** The documenting of this fungus helps to safeguards local food heritage, informs conservation of forest ecosystems, and may even open doors to future applications in nutrition and medicine.

Reference

[Hub News | New Mushroom species]