

# SH College team tracks down rare spider

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**T**he investigations by a team of scholars from the Arachnology Division of the Department of Zoology, Sacred Heart College, Thevara, has identified a rare spider earlier spotted only in eastern Himalayas.

The spider *Araneus Himalayaensis* was identified after pioneering investigations on the spider fauna of the shola by scholars including A V Sudhikumar, Aby P Varghese and Sunil

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Jose under the guidance of Dr P A Sebastian who heads the division of arachnology, Sacred Heart College. The team had extensively surveyed the Marayur and Kanthalloor areas of Idukki district. So far the famous India arachnologist Dr B K Tikader has recorded existence of this species in eastern Himalayas in 1975. He described the specimen in his book titled 'Fauna of Indian Spiders'.

The spider has yellowish brown legs with dark patches and shades. The abdomen is greyish white with black patches and the total body length is about 9 mm. It has an elongated triangular abdomen with a pair of shoulder humps. The ventral side of the abdomen is greyish brown. The team has identified as many as 38 spiders from the fragile Mannavan Shola.

Environmentalists have recently demanded conservation of the shola forests including the controversial Mathikettan Shola because of their bio-diversity and ecological significance.

