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Kochi researchers win laurels at arachnology meet



STAFF REPORTER

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(Right) Anesh Mathew Vergis receiving the award for best poster, and (above) a female of the spider *Coenopychus pulcher* that mimicks the wasp *Biscocoffitilla*.

City designated as host of next Asian Arachnology Conference in November 2020

Researchers from Sacred Heart College, Thevara, won awards for their research on arachnids – spiders and invertebrates belonging to the spider family – at an international conference in Bangkok this week.

At the Asian Arachnology Conference conducted from November 19 to 22 by Chulalongkorn University, research student Aneesh Mathew Vergis bagged the first prize in the poster presentation competition for his studies on pseudoscorpions (an invertebrate related to the spider family) while Jithin Jonson secured the third position for his work on the same animals.



A female of the spider *Coenoptychus pulcher* that mimicks the wasp *Biocoffitilla*.

Spider diversity

The students also presented findings on the spider diversity of the high-altitude shola ecosystems of the Western Ghats, including the recent description of a spider (genus *Coenoptychus*) which imitates wasps. The spider was sighted in a high-altitude shola-grassland patch in the Parambikulam Tiger Reserve for the first time after 1885 when French naturalist Eugene Simon spotted it in Ramanathapuram, Tamil Nadu. This finding, made by a team consisting of the director of the research division, Dr. P.A. Sebastian, along with Dr. Joseph and other research students, was published in the international science journal *Zootaxa* in April this year.

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(Right) Ance

"These awards can be deemed as an international recognition for the quality of research being done at our centre," said assistant professor Dr. Mathew M. Joseph, who supervised the research.

During the conference, Kochi has also been designated as the host of the next Asian Arachnology Conference, where it will be jointly organized by Dr. Joseph and Dr. Sunil Jose K. of Devamatha College, Kuravilangad, in November 2020.