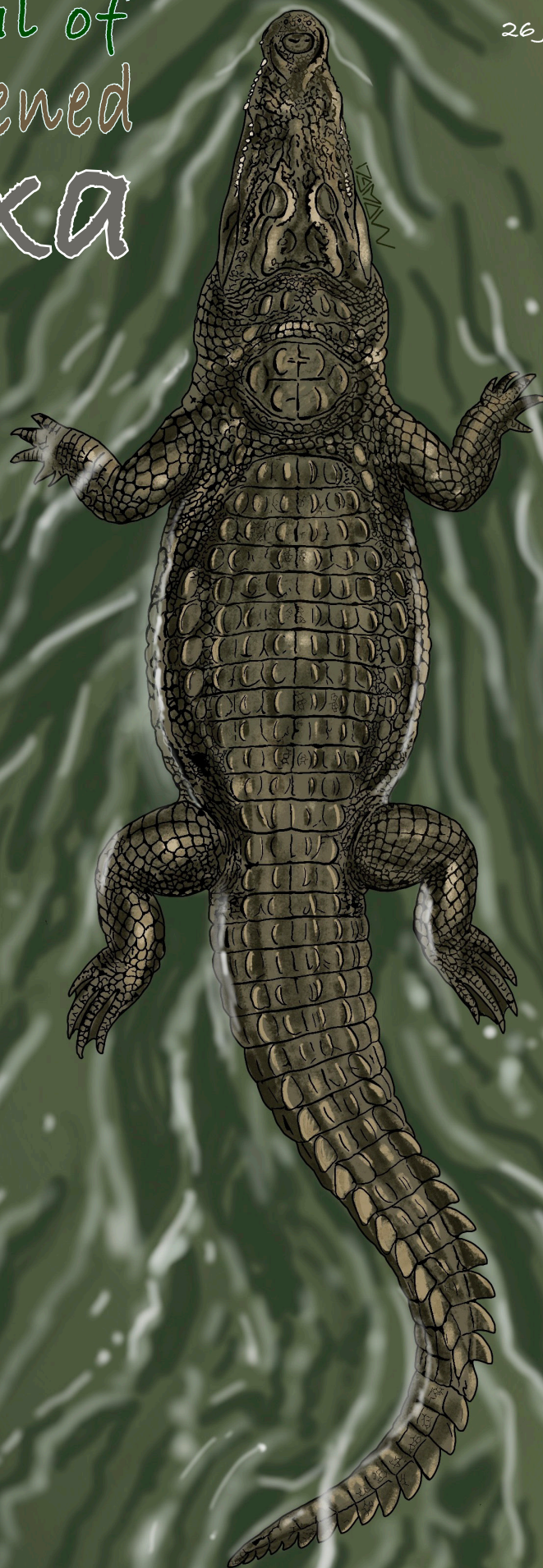


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Cover: Nile Crocodile *Crocodylus niloticus* regulating body temperature on a warm day. Digital art on Procreate by © Aakanksha Komanduri.



An evasive naticid surfaces in India: first confirmed report of *Gennaeosinum perobliquum* (Dautzenberg & Fischer, 1907) (Gastropoda: Naticidae)

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Abstract: This study provides the first record of the naticid species *Gennaeosinum perobliquum* in Indian waters. Previously documented from Vietnam, Indonesia, and South Africa, *G. perobliquum* was collected during a benthic survey, from the intertidal zone of Chandipur, Balasore, Odisha, on the eastern coast of India. A clear description of the shell morphology is provided, along with detailed morphometric and imaging analyses. By comparing *G. perobliquum* with related naticid species found in India, this work aims to refine taxonomic understanding and contribute to knowledge of naticid biodiversity in the region. This newly documented record not only expands the known geographic distribution of *G. perobliquum* but also underscores the importance of continued benthic faunal surveys for further exploration of molluscan biodiversity in the Bay of Bengal and adjacent regions.

Keywords: Bay of Bengal, benthos, Chandipur, first record, geographic distribution, Indian waters, intertidal, mollusc biodiversity, moon shells, Odisha.

Abbreviation: TSL—Total Shell Length | WB—Width of the last whorl | HB—Height of the last whorl | SL—Spire Length | CL—Columella Length | UL—Length of the Umbilical callus | (AW)_a—Aperture Width towards anterior side | (AW)_p—Aperture Width towards posterior side | dd—Dead specimen | RZEV—Ravenshaw University Zoology Environmental Science Budhabalanga Estuary | ZSI M—Zoological Survey of India Mollusca.

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INTRODUCTION

Members of the cosmopolitan family Naticidae within the phylum Mollusca and class Gastropoda inhabit a wide range of environments, from intertidal to the deep sea. Commonly called moon shells, these oval-shaped predatory gastropods are known for their distinctive drilling behavior, which they use to prey on various bivalves and gastropods. They typically dwell in sandy and muddy substrates, where they remain hidden (Huelsen et al. 2008). The Naticidae family includes four subfamilies, 38 genera, and about 260–270 species (Kabat 1996; WoRMS 2025).

The genus *Gennaeosinum* Iredale, 1929, comprises three valid species. Kilburn (1976) classified it as a subgenus of *Eunaticina*; *Gennaeosinum* is consistently characterized by a thick funicle, a feature absent in all *Eunaticina* species. Although 36 Naticidae species across 12 genera have been documented in India, no *Gennaeosinum* species has been reported from the region (Tripathy et al. 2024). This study documents the first record of *Gennaeosinum perobliquum* (Dautzenberg & Fischer, 1907) in the Bay of Bengal, expanding its known distribution. *Gennaeosinum perobliquum* was described initially from “Ben-Son” (probably Binh Son, south of Da Nang) in Vietnam (Dautzenberg & Fischer 1907) and later recorded from Durban, Kwazulu-Natal, South Africa (Kilburn 1976) and Indonesia (Bakker et al. 2026). This species is often misidentified as *Eunaticina papilla* (Gmelin, 1791) due to similar spiral lirae patterns. As detailed here, *G. perobliquum* can be reliably distinguished from *Eunaticina* species occurring in India.

A recent study (Mishra et al. 2024) identified the naticid *Sinum laevigatum* (Lamarck, 1822) along Odisha's coast, underscoring the need for further research on Naticidae in this region. Consequently, extensive surveys were conducted along Odisha's entire coastline, with particular focus on the intertidal zone of Chandipur, where specimens were collected.

This study not only adds *G. perobliquum* to the list of species known in Indian waters but also highlights the rich malacofaunal diversity present along the largely unexplored eastern coast of India. It provides a thorough examination of the specimen, including the holotype description and comparative analyses with closely related species, aiming to mitigate future taxonomic ambiguities. Enhanced photographic documentation and detailed morphometric measurements are included to enrich the understanding of shell sculpture and address existing gaps in the literature.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A survey was conducted in the Chandipur intertidal region (21.455° N, 87.045° E) (Figure 1) during September 2025. Samples were randomly collected during low tide by hand-picking and stored; dead specimens were placed in ziplock pouches, and live specimens were preserved in 4% formalin. Dead specimens were carefully washed, air-dried, and sorted. Sediment samples were obtained through manual excavation using a hand shovel for the purpose of analyzing soil texture. Morphometric measurements were obtained using a dial caliper (Safeseed, China; resolution 0.1 mm, accuracy ± 0.2 mm), while shell surface structures were examined under a stereo microscope (Leica E24W, Germany). Specimen photographs were captured with a Nikon Z 30 camera (MC 50 mm / 2.8 f). Following vouchering, specimens were deposited in the Environmental Science Laboratory, Department of Zoology, Ravenshaw University, Cuttack, Odisha, India.

Morphological identification was performed based on the holotype description (Dautzenberg & Fischer 1907), supplemented by additional information from Kilburn (1976). A critical comparison was made with other naticids reported from India, as documented by Rao (2003). The taxonomic status was verified through the World Register of Marine Species (WoRMS 2025).

RESULT

Systematics

Family: Naticidae Guilding, 1834

Subfamily: Sininae Woodring, 1928

Genus: *Gennaeosinum* Iredale, 1929

Type species: *Gennaeosinum peleum* Iredale, 1929 (type by original designation)

Gennaeosinum perobliquum (Dautzenberg & H. Fischer, 1907) (Image 1A–H)

Chresonony

Sigaretus (Eunaticina) perobliquus Dautzenberg & H. Fischer, 1907: p. 178, pl. 5, figures 4–5.

Eunaticina papilla (non Gmelin); Kensley, 1973: 93, fig. 323.

Eunaticina (Gennaeosinum) perobliqua (Dautzenberg & Fischer, 1907) - Kilburn 1976; p. 872, figure. 22 (c).

Eunaticina (Gennaeosinum) perobliqua (Dautzenberg & Fischer, 1907) - Bakker H, Gill A, Creuwels J (2026). Naturalis Biodiversity Center (NL) - Mollusca. Naturalis Biodiversity Center. Occurrence dataset <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-1234567/v1>

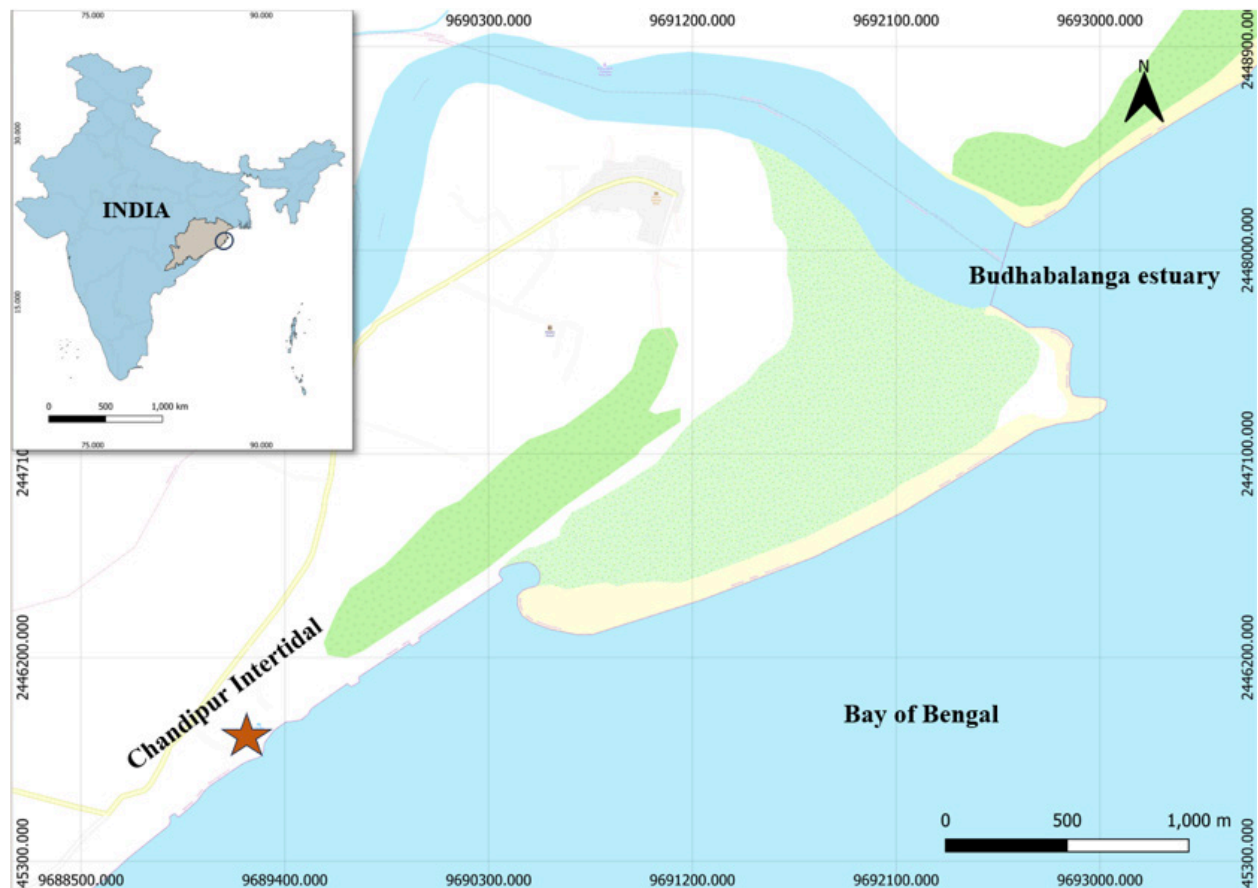


Figure 1. Map showing the sampling location of the Chandipur intertidal region, Odisha, eastern coast of India.

org/10.15468/yefvnc accessed via GBIF.org on 2026-05-05. <https://www.gbif.org/occurrence/2444340122>.

Type Locality: “Ben-Son” (probably Binh Son, south of Da Nang) in northern Vietnam

IUCN status: Not Evaluated.

Material examined: Two specimens (dd), Accession number: RZEB18 (TSL 13.5 mm, WB 10.2 mm); RZEB19 (TSL 13.9 mm, WB 10.5 mm) were examined from the Chandipur intertidal, Balasore, Odisha, eastern coast of India (21.455° N, 87.045° E), coll. Sanjaya Dalai & Aparna Mishra.

Additional material studied: Figured type material of *Sigaretus (Eunaticina) perobliquus* Dautzenberg & Fischer, 1907 (images examined from Dautzenberg & Fischer 1907; p. 178, pl. 5, figure 4–5).

Topotype of *Eunaticina papilla* (Gmelin, 1791) (Zoological Survey of India, Registration number ZSI M 22150/4).

Specimen of *Eunaticina linnaeana* (Récluz, 1843) (Zoological Survey of India, Kolkata, Registration number M25925/5).

Description: Shell solid, white, moderately elongated

oval; aperture strongly prosocline. Low, depressed spire with blunt tip; deep suture. Protoconch slightly convex, smooth, glossy white with brown tinge; two whorls. Transition to teleoconch not well defined; feeble spiral ribs present. Teleoconch with two whorls, last whorl highly convex much larger than previous whorls. Teleoconch surface initially smooth, later marked by strong arc-like growth lines; faint spiral ribs becoming distinct and unevenly distributed on last whorl. Around 9–10 spiral ribs on penultimate whorl, separated by shallow, broad interspaces. Ribs more elevated below suture, flattening with lower interspaces on last whorl. Spiral ribs become denser towards base; growth lines become stronger towards outer lip. Spiral threads continue into inner side of umbilical groove. Aperture semicircular, wider anteriorly. Inner lip almost straight, slight concavity towards parietal region; anterior region curved. Thick parietal callus extends over umbilicus, forming a funicle that covers umbilicus backwardly. Funicle divided by shallow groove. Wide open anteriorly, deep umbilical groove. Operculum corneous.

Remarks: A thick callus pad covers the umbilical

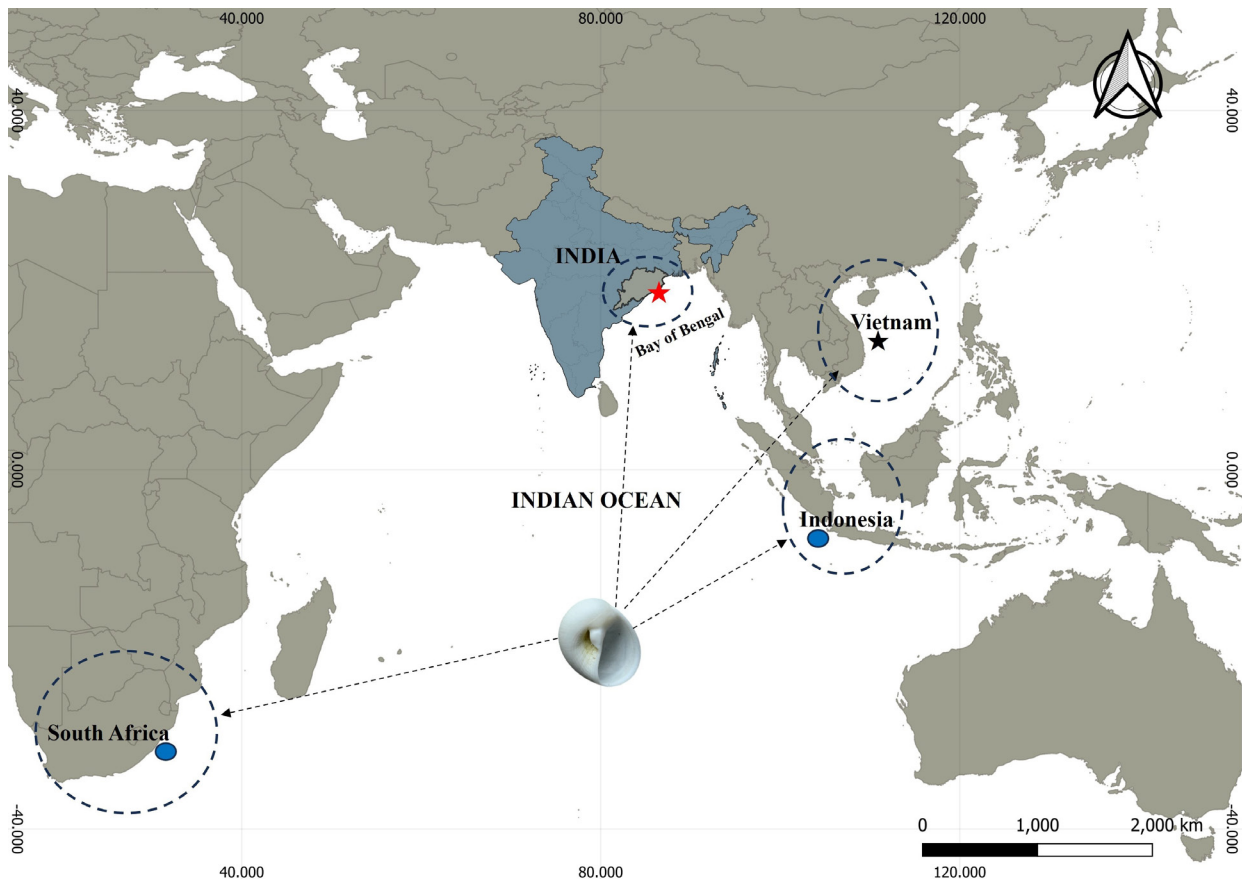


Figure 2. Distribution of *Gemmaeosinum perobliquum* in the Indo-West Pacific region (Black star: type locality; Red star: Present report; Blue circles: Natal and Indonesia).

Table 1. Morphometrics of *Gemmaeosinum perobliquum* collected from Odisha.

Specimen	TSL	WB	HB	SL	CL	UL	(AW) _s	(AW) _p
RZVB18	13.5	10.2	7.8	3.8	11.3	4.0	6.8	3.9
RZVB19	13.9	10.5	8.9	3.9	11.0	3.8	7.4	4.3

groove and the funicle, which has a shallow groove that divides it into two. These are the key identification features that confirm the first report of the genus *Gemmaeosinum* and the species *G. perobliquum* from India. The multi-spiral protoconch with two whorls signifies a planktonic veliger larval stage (Vendetti, 2007). This developmental form implies improved dispersal abilities; therefore a large distribution area is to be expected.

Distribution: From Vietnam (Holotype) through Indonesia (GBIF) and India to South Africa (Kilburn, 1976) (Figure 2).

Locality within India: Chandipur Intertidal, Balasore, Odisha, east coast of India, present study (Figure 2).

Habitat: The species has repeatedly been recorded

from shallow water. Chandipur's intertidal stretch shows diverse sedimentary conditions, with a silty mudflat in the middle region. The upper intertidal region has a coarse, sandy substratum, encompassing high diversity.

DISCUSSION

Identification of Naticidae can be challenging because of their highly cryptic morphology and very minor interspecific variation (Sharma et al. 2021). In India, three genera of the Sininae subfamily are represented: *Eunaticina* P. Fischer, 1885, *Sigatica* O. Meyer & Aldrich, 1886, *Sinum* Röding, 1798. The genus *Gemmaeosinum* herein reported is the fourth,

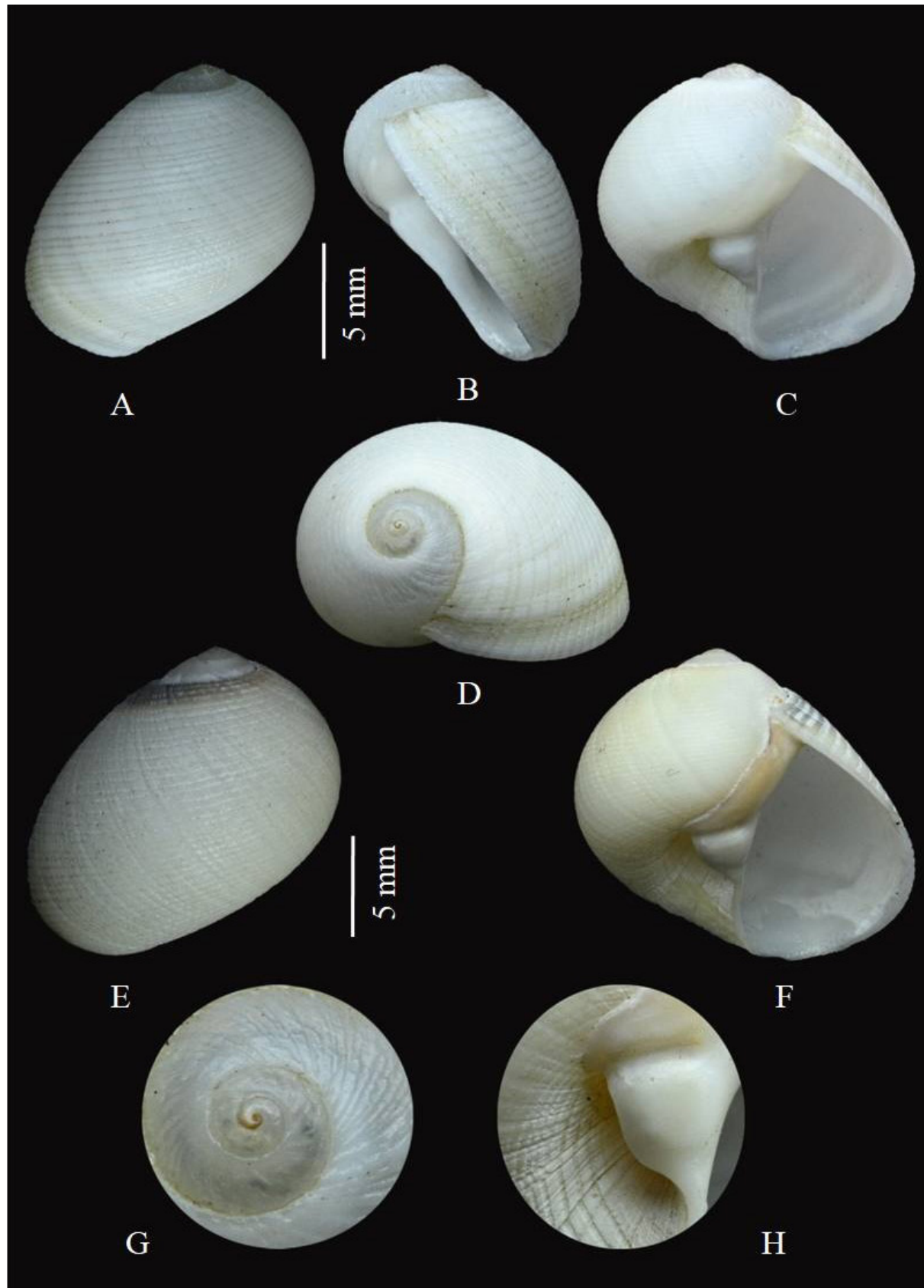


Image 1. *Gemmaeosinum perobliquum*. RZEB18 (A–D): A—dorsal view | B—side view | C—ventral view | D—apical view. RZEB19 (E–H): E—dorsal view | F—ventral view | G—protoconch | H—callus pad. © Aparna Mishra and Sanjaya Dalai.

represented by a single species. The aforementioned three genera are unique in several ways. *Eunaticina* differs from *Sinum* by its auricular, more depressed shape and wider aperture. *Gennaeosinum* is similar to *Eunaticina* and was treated as its subgenus by Kilburn (1976). *Gennaeosinum* is differentiated from *Eunaticina* by a thick callus pad in the parietal region, which is absent in *Eunaticina*. *Gennaeosinum* includes three species: *G. intercisum* Iredale, 1931, *G. peleum* Iredale, 1929, and *G. perobliquum* (Dautzenberg & Fischer, 1907). Kilburn included several other species, namely *G. kraussi* (E.A. Smith, 1902) and *G. linguifera* Thiele, 1925, but now *G. kraussi* is accepted as *Eunaticina kraussi* whereas *G. linguifera* is accepted as *Natica Linguifera*. This work confirmed the first report of the *Gennaeosinum* genus and the species *G. perobliquum* from Indian marine waters. Previously, this species was found in the western and central Indo-Pacific regions. It now extends its range into the Bay of Bengal. There are few descriptions or images of the species besides the original description, which has excellent figures. Kilburn (1976) did not provide an illustration. The Indian specimens align with the original description and Kilburn's description of the features of the South African specimen.

The species can be confused with two *Eunaticina* species well known from the Indo-West Pacific: *E. papilla* (Gmelin, 1791) and *E. linnaeana* (Récluz, 1843). Kilburn (1976) compared *G. perobliquum* with *E. linnaeana*, but the specimens are more similar to *E. papilla*. *Eunaticina linnaeana* is larger and broadly ovate, while *G. perobliquum* is smaller and moderately ovate. Both have low spires, but the conical shape distinguishes the latter. *Eunaticina linnaeana* has fine spiral grooves, whereas *G. perobliquum* is ornamented with well-developed, flat spiral ribs. *Eunaticina linnaeana* has an aperture that is wider, elongated, and larger, giving it a distinct look compared to the semicircular opening in *G. perobliquum*. *Eunaticina linnaeana* has frequently been misidentified as *E. papilla*, leading to similar confusion with *G. perobliquum*. *E. papilla* has an exerted spire, shallow suture, and ovate aperture. *G. perobliquum* resembles *E. papilla* in size, spiral ribs, and moderately large aperture. Distinctively, *G. perobliquum* stands out from both *Eunaticina* species because it features a thick callus pad in the parietal region, divided into two by a shallow groove, a feature always absent in *Eunaticina*.

Various factors influence the dispersal of naticid species in Indian marine waters. Oceanic currents and ballast water from ships play a major role (Ruiz et al. 2000; Cowen & Sponaugle 2009; Treml et al. 2015). The Bay of Bengal, located in the northern Indian Ocean,

shares environmental and habitat characteristics with the central and western Indo-Pacific marine regions. These include high sea surface temperatures, a variety of coastal and open-water habitats, and rich biodiversity, all characteristic of tropical Indo-West Pacific ecosystems (Spalding et al. 2007). Climate change and rising sea temperatures are likely to shift the ecological niches of these species. This could extend their distribution beyond previously established ranges (Wallingford & Sorte 2022; Lin et al. 2024). Changes in species distribution may be hard to establish due to a lack of comprehensive surveys and challenges in species identification, especially given the cryptic nature of *Gennaeosinum perobliquum* (D'Souza & Shenoy 2023). Research on the Naticidae family in India has been limited, particularly along the eastern coast. This highlights the need for further exploration, including the collection of live specimens and the establishment of a DNA database to elucidate intraspecific and interspecific relationships among Indian naticid species.

CONCLUSION

The discovery of *G. perobliquum* underscores significant connections among molluscan fauna in the Indo-West Pacific and highlights the urgent need for a comprehensive taxonomic review of naticid species in India. This study also confirms the limited exploration of malacofaunal diversity along the eastern coast. Additionally, this record expands the regional species list and deepens the understanding of biogeographical patterns in the Indo-West Pacific. These findings are crucial for developing effective conservation strategies and for protecting biodiversity in the region.

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