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## Indopotamon alipurduarensis — New Freshwater Crab Discovered in Sub-Himalayan Dooars, West Bengal

6 May 2026 · ENVIRONMENT · GS3

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# Indopotamon alipurduarensis — New Freshwater Crab Discovered in Sub-Himalayan Dooars, West Bengal

6 May 2026 · 3 min read · 1 tag

## WHY IN NEWS

Scientists discovered **Indopotamon alipurduarensis**, a **new species of freshwater crab** in the **sub-Himalayan Dooars region** of **Alipurduar district, West Bengal**. Found living in **deep burrows** in muddy rice fields, this is only the **second species in the Indopotamon genus**, and brings India's total known freshwater crab species count to **183**.

## SPECIES PROFILE

FEATURE	DETAIL
<b>Scientific name</b>	<i>Indopotamon alipurduarensis</i>
<b>Common name</b>	Dooars freshwater crab (informal)
<b>Discovery location</b>	Sub-Himalayan Dooars, <b>Alipurduar district, West Bengal</b>
<b>Genus</b>	<i>Indopotamon</i> — only the <b>2nd species</b> in this genus
<b>India's total freshwater crabs</b>	<b>183 species</b> (post-discovery)
<b>Habitat</b>	Deep burrows (up to <b>1.5 metres</b> ) in muddy rice field soil
<b>Active period</b>	<b>May–August</b> (heavy monsoon rains); remains underground rest of year
<b>Appearance</b>	Greyish shell with vibrant <b>orange-red edges and claws</b>
<b>Ecology</b>	Fossorial (burrowing); rice field ecosystem

## THE DOOARS REGION — GEOGRAPHY

FEATURE	DETAIL
<b>Dooars</b>	Foothill zone of the eastern Himalayas; “door/gateway” in Nepali
<b>Location</b>	Sub-Himalayan belt of West Bengal + Assam; at the base of Bhutan and Arunachal foothills
<b>Ecology</b>	Dense forests, tea gardens, rivers (Tista, Jaldhaka, Torsa, Raidak, Sankosh)
<b>Districts</b>	Alipurduar, Jalpaiguri (West Bengal); Kokrajhar, Dhubri (Assam)
<b>Wildlife</b>	Jaldapara NP (one-horned rhino), Buxa Tiger Reserve, Gorumara NP
<b>Rivers</b>	All eventually drain into the Brahmaputra system

## INDIA’S FRESHWATER CRAB BIODIVERSITY

India has extraordinary freshwater crab diversity — among the highest in Asia:

REGION	FRESHWATER CRAB HOTSPOTS
<b>Western Ghats</b>	Largest diversity (~100+ species); many endemic
<b>Eastern Ghats</b>	Significant species richness
<b>Northeast India</b>	High endemism; poorly explored
<b>Sub-Himalayan belt</b>	Including this new Dooars discovery
<b>Andaman &amp; Nicobar Islands</b>	Several endemic species

**Key families:** Gecarcinucidae (freshwater crabs — most Indian species), Potamidae, Trichodactylidae.

**Threats:** Habitat loss (wetland drainage, rice field conversion, forest clearing), pollution, collection for consumption.

## THREE NEW PLANT SPECIES — EASTERN GHATS, ANDHRA PRADESH (SAME DAY DISCOVERY)

Separately, three **Critically Endangered** plant species were also newly described from Andhra Pradesh’s Eastern Ghats:

SPECIES	LOCATION	POPULATION	THREAT
<i>Euphorbia ananthapuramensis</i>	Nigidi Forest, Sri Sathya Sai district; 450–550 m elevation	~80 individuals in ~2.5 sq km	Granite mining, forest fires
<i>Euphorbia chalamensis</i>	Chalama Forest, Gundla Brahmeswaram WLS, Nandyal district; 300–500 m	>100 individuals in ~2 sq km	Forest fires, human activity
<i>Ceropegia andhrlica</i>	Paderu forest division, Alluri Sitharamaraju district; >1,000 m	~200 individuals in <1 sq km	Grazing, habitat loss

**Ceropegia andhrlica** is notable for:

- Being **leafless during flowering** (May–June)
- Having **edible tubers** (potato-sized)
- Belonging to the *Ceropegia* genus — a group of unique tubular-flowered plants common in the Ghats

**Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary** (Nandyal district): Core area adjoining Nagarjunasagar-Srisaïlam Tiger Reserve — important for wildlife corridor conservation.

## UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS3 — Environment	Biodiversity, new species discovery, freshwater crab ecology, Eastern Ghats conservation
GS1 — Geography	Dooars region, sub-Himalayan ecology, Eastern Ghats
GS3 — Environment	IUCN Critically Endangered category, ex-situ vs in-situ conservation

**Mains Keywords:** Indopotamon alipurduarensis, Dooars, Alipurduar, freshwater crab biodiversity, sub-Himalayan ecology, Eastern Ghats plants, Euphorbia, Ceropegia, Western Ghats crab diversity, fossorial species, rice field ecology

### Prelims Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
New crab species	<i>Indopotamon alipurduarensis</i>
Location	Sub-Himalayan Dooars, <b>Alipurduar district, West Bengal</b>
Habitat	Deep burrows up to <b>1.5 m</b> in muddy rice fields
Active season	<b>May–August</b>
Genus position	<b>2nd species</b> in Indopotamon genus
India’s total freshwater crabs	<b>183 species</b>
Appearance	Greyish shell, <b>orange-red edges and claws</b>
Dooars ecology	Sub-Himalayan foothill zone; Tista, Jaldhaka, Torsa rivers
Eastern Ghats new plants	<i>Euphorbia ananthapuramensis</i> , <i>Euphorbia chalamensis</i> , <i>Ceropegia andhrlica</i> — all <b>Critically Endangered</b>
<i>Ceropegia andhrlica</i>	Leafless during flowering; edible tubers; Alluri Sitharamaraju district, AP

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