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The jumping spiders (Araneae: Salticidae) are easiest to recognize in the field. They play an important role in the biological control of insects. The unique characteristic of salticids is its very large prominent forwardly directed anterior median eyes accompanied by small anterior lateral eyes arranged in the front row or in some genera from the second row. Two posterior laterals, almost the same as anterior laterals constitute the last row.

The genus *Epocilla* Thorell, 1887 includes medium sized salticids. They are represented by 10 species in the world of which only two species, namely, *E. aurontia* (Simon, 1885) and *E. xylina* Simon, 1906 have been reported from India (Platnick 2013). While carrying out spider diversity survey in Manipur, a northeastern state, which geographically shares an international border with Myanmar, we came across male specimens of *Epocilla*, later identified as *E. praetextata* Thorell, 1887 based on palp structure and tibial apophysis provided in Jastrzebski (2007). *E. praetextata* have been previously reported from Bhutan, Nepal (Jastrzebski 2007), Myanmar (Proszynski 2007) and Java (Thorell 1887). The present paper deals with the report of the occurrence of *E. praetextata* from Manipur, which is the first record for India along with the description of the species.

FIRST RECORD OF THE JUMPING SPIDER *EPOCILLA PRAETEXTATA* THORELL, 1887 (ARANEAE: SALTICIDAE) FROM INDIA

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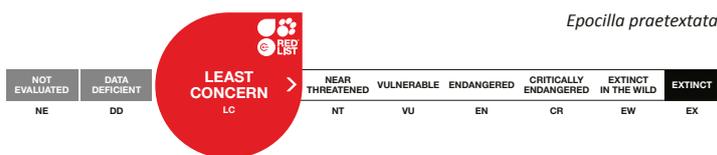
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Methods

Nine male spiders were collected during an UGC sponsored Spider Project Survey [MRP ref. No. – F. No. 39/589 (SR) Dt. 10.01.2011] from different districts of Manipur, the northeastern state of India with an area of 22,356km², 92°59'00"–94°45'00"E & 23°56'00"N–25°41'00"N, elevation ranges 700–3000 m.

The collected specimens were brought and studied in the Entomology Research Laboratory, P.G. Department of Zoology, D.M. College of Science, Imphal. Morphometry of the spider was taken with a vernier caliper and ocular meter. All measurements in mm. This species was identified by Manju Siliwal. Three male specimens are deposited at the Wildlife Information Liaison Development Society (WILD), Coimbatore and the



Epocilla praetextata



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remaining are deposited in the museum of Entomology Research Laboratory, D.M. College of Science, Imphal. Taxonomy includes standard abbreviations followed by Siliwal et al. 2013

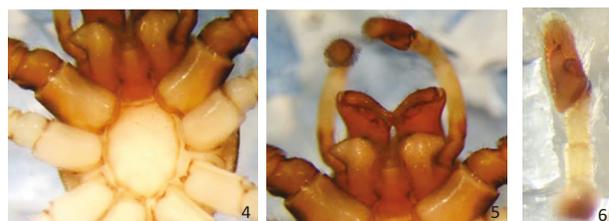
***Epocilla praetextata* Thorell, 1887**

(Fig. 1–3, images 1–6)

Epocilla praetextata Thorell 1877: 378; 1892:310; Proszynski, 1984:39; Jastrzebski, 2007:16.

Materials examined

WILD-10-AR539-540, two males, 11.vii.2010, Ishikha, Imphal East District, Manipur, elevation 782m, coll. M. Bhubaneshwari and O. Sandhyarani; WILD-10-ARA-541. one male, 2.iv.2010, from Mount Everest College



Images 1–6. *Epocilla praetextata* (male, WILD-10-ARA-539-540-541)
1 - dorsal view; 2 - eyes; 3 - cephalothorax; 4 - sternum; 5 - chelicerae & labium; 6 - pedipalp

campus, Senapati District, Manipur, elevation 1043m, coll. A. Kananbala and M. Bhubaneshwari.

Description of male (WILD-10-ARA-541)

Total length: 6.42; cephalothorax: 2.56 long, 2.22 wide; abdomen: 3.86 long, 1.76 wide; morphometry of legs and palp given in Table 1; leg formula: 1243.

Colour in Alcohol: Cephalothorax dark brown, yellow laterally, chelicerae brown, eyes reddish-brown, labium reddish-brown, maxilla yellow, sternum pale yellow, legs pale yellow except 1st leg. Abdomen brown in the middle and pale yellow laterally, ventrum greyish on the middle and yellowish-grey laterally.

Cephalothorax: Slightly wider than long, carapace broad, oval, flat with the thorax and sides sloping away to the margin 1.17 in thickness, ocular quad 1.62 long, 1.48 wide dark brown and black at the base of the eyes. Eyes eight in four rows with very large prominent anterior median eyes in the first row (Image 2).

Eyes: Diameter AME: ALE: PME: PLA = 0.048: 0.28: 0.47: 0.39; distance between AME-AME-0.16, PME-PME-1.12, PME-PLA-0.54, AME-ALE-0.37, ALE-PLA-0.37, ALE-ALE-1.13. Clypeus reddish-brown, height 0.67, glabrous, very narrow. Chelicera 0.94 long, small fang folded with cheliceral teeth, Promargin 2, retromargin 1, labium 0.34 long, longer than wide, maxilla 0.65 long, 0.46 wide, anterior end wider with a groove near the apex, scopulae present, sternum 1.18 long, 0.98 wide, no distinct hairs, legs long, first leg dark brown with swollen femora, patella and tibia as compared with all other segments. Tibia I provided with four big strong

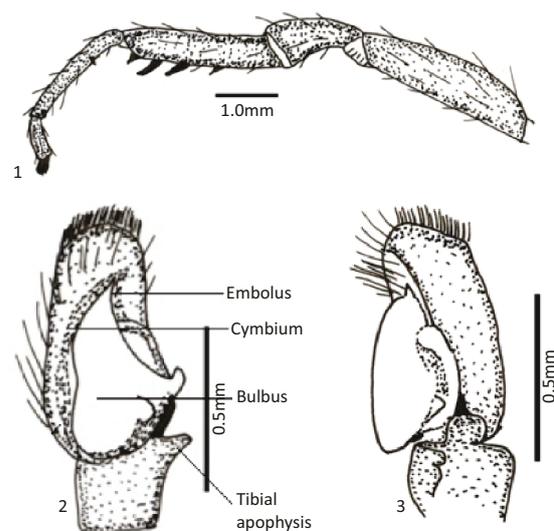


Figure 1–3. *Epocilla praetextata*
1 - Leg I, prolateral view; 2 - Male palp, ventral view;
3 - Male palp, lateral view, tibial apophysis

Table 1. Morphometry of legs and Palp of *Epicilla praetextata* from Manipur.

Legs	Femur	Patella	Tibia	Metatarsus	Tarsus	total
I	2.21	1.16	1.65	1.29	0.66	6.97
II	1.64	0.85	1.25	1.22	0.68	5.62
III	1.27	0.68	0.96	1.25	0.59	4.75
IV	1.55	0.71	1.14	1.21	0.63	5.24
Pedipalp	1.04	0.34	0.35	-	0.69	2.42

spines prolaterally. Apex of all tarsi rounded with black spot. All leg segments are clothed with trichobothria.

Spinination: Leg I fe r=1, p=1; ti p=4 (strong spines), 1 small spine; Leg II fe r=2, d=2, p=2; mt p=2; Leg III fe p=2, d=3, r=1; ti p=2, r=2; mt p=1; Leg IV fe r=1, d=3.

Pedipalp: Yellow elongated with moderately broad cymbium. Bulbus broad with smaller blunt embolus, double tibial apophysis retrolateral flat, dorsolateral slightly curved.

Abdomen: Slender elongated, brownish-orange along the middle dorsal area and yellow laterally. Ventrums grayish colour on the middle with yellowish-grey laterally. Anterior spinnerets 0.34 long, posterior 0.52 long.

Remark

We have considered the present species as *E. praetextata* based on the palp structure tibial apophysis and tibial spur structure provided in Jastrzebski (2007). We noticed that the male of *E. praetextata* closely resembled that of *E. calcarata* (Karch, 1880). On looking at the recently published literature (Jastrzebski 2007), epigyne and male structure of *P. praetextata* from Bhutan and Nepal were very much similar to *E. calcarata* (Proszynski 2007). The difference between the two species is in the tibial apophysis and tibial spine, which seems to be a weak characteristic to differentiate between the two species (Jastrzebski 2007;

Proszynski 2007). As stated by Jastrzebski (2007) male *E. praetextata* can be differentiated from *E. calcarata* in having blunt embolus and double apophysis. Similarly, the difference in the female epigyne is based on weak characteristics like width of copulatory duct opening and insemination duct's angle of attachment with spermathecae (Jastrzebski 2007). Interestingly, embolus is blunt even in *E. calcarata* and there is double tibial apophysis which could be clearly seen in the literature provided by Proszynski (2007). Similar is the case with illustrations provided for epigyne of both the species, basic structure is very similar. Based on the literature available on both the species, it is likely that these two are the same species with slight geographical variations in the tibial apophysis and spine structure or even it could be differences in the drawings by different authors. Therefore, a revision of this genus is required based on the type specimens.

Distribution

India (present record), Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar to Java.

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