

NEW GECKO FROM NE GETS ARMY TAG

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Distinct identity:The Indian Army's bent-toed gecko, recorded from a forest in Meghalaya.SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT | Photo Credit: Special Arrangement

A lizard new to science is wearing the Indian Army's tag.

A team of herpetologists have recorded a new species of bent-toed gecko from a wooded part of the Umroi Military Station in Meghalaya. Its scientific name is *Cryptodactylus exercitus* and English name is Indian Army's bent-toed gecko. *Exercitus* in Latin means army.

"The name was given to honour the Army for its services to the country. The military station where the bent-toed gecko was discovered was also a factor behind its name," Jayaditya Purkayastha of green NGO Help Earth and one of the authors of a study on the gecko told *The Hindu* on Friday.

The finding of the study was published in the latest issue of the European Journal of Taxonomy. The paper recorded another new bent-toed gecko, the *Cyrtodactylus siahaensis* named after Mizoram's Siaha district where it was found.

These lizard specialists had in a separate study recorded the *Cyrtodactylus lungleiensis*, a new species of bent-toed gecko named after Mizoram's Lunglei town.

Mr. Purkayastha said a team of researchers has been scanning the urban, rural and jungle areas across the northeast to uncover the herpetofaunal diversity of the region. India is now home to 40 species of the bent-toed gecko with the northeast accounting for 16 of them.

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