

## **Kerala girl Juhu finds rare fish in a bucket, now named a new species after 4 years**

A small fish spotted in a bucket by a young girl in Kerala four years ago has now been confirmed as a new species. In 2021, Dhanvi Dheera—affectionately known as Juhu—saw the tiny fish while playing with water drawn from her home's well in Naduvannur, Kozhikode district. The fish was no bigger than a needle. She showed it to her mother, Lalu.

Lalu, surprised by the fish's unusual look, contacted Dr B. Pradeep at the Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Peruvannamuzhi. That simple step led to a scientific study, which has now confirmed a major discovery in the study of underground water species.



### **New species confirmed by research team**

A team of scientists led by Dr K.R. Sreenath, Director General of the Fishery Survey of India and working with the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI), Kochi, identified the fish as a new species of eel loach. This type of fish lives only in underground habitats and is called troglobitic.

The team included Dr K.R. Aju, Dr Sandhya Sukumaran, Dr Wilson Sebastian, Alvin Anto and Grinson George. Their findings were published in the January–March 2025 issue of the Indian Journal of Fisheries.

### **Pangio juhuae: named after the child**

The new fish has been named *Pangio juhuae*, to honour Juhu who first noticed it. This fish is different from other species in the *Pangio* group because it has a well-developed dorsal fin and large eyes.