

# New deep-sea 'octopus squid' discovered off Kollam coast

**KOCHI:** Scientists from the ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) have discovered a new species of deep-sea squid from the Arabian Sea.

This marks the second confirmed species of the globally rare genus *Taningia*. The species, scientifically named *Taningia silasii* (Indian octopus squid), has been formally described in the international journal *Marine Biodiversity*, a CMFRI statement said here on Friday. The specimen was collected from nearly 390 metres depth off the Kollam coast.

Measuring 45 cm in length (dor-

sal mantle length), the squid belongs to the family Octopoteuthidae, whose adults are known for their distinctive absence of tentacles, though they are true deep-sea squids, it said.

The research was led by Dr Geetha Sasikumar, Principal Scientist and Dr Sajikumar K K, Technical Officer. "We have been studying cephalopods in the Arabian Sea for more than a decade, and this 'octopus squid' was something we had never encountered," said Dr Geetha Sasikumar.

Until now, *Taningia danae*—found in Atlantic waters—was the only known species in this genus.

"Previously, squids of the ge-

nus *Taningia* were considered monotypic. DNA barcoding showed more than 11% genetic divergence from the Atlantic species, confirming the specimen as a distinct species", she added.

Explaining the unusual features of this genus, Dr Sajikumar said, although called the 'octopus squid', it is in fact a squid that possesses only eight arms and lacks the two long tentacles typically seen in other squid species.

"Members of this family can also attain large sizes, with the Atlantic species growing up to 2.3 metres (7.5 feet) in length and weighing approximately 61.4 kg," he said.