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First records of *Medmassa* Simon, 1887 from India, with the description of two new species (Araneae: Corinnidae)

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Abstract

Medmassa Simon, 1887 is recorded for the first time from India, including the description of two new species: *M. sagax* Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran **sp. nov.** (♂ ♀) and *M. postica* Kadam, Tripathi & Sankaran **sp. nov.** (♀). The discovery of *Medmassa* increases the number of known corinnid genera in India to eight. Detailed descriptions and illustrations of the copulatory organs of both species are provided, their natural history is briefly discussed, and a map of the currently known distribution of both species is presented.

Key words: Kerala, natural history, spider, Tamil Nadu, taxonomy

Introduction

Simon (1877) erected the dark sac spider genus *Megaera* based on a subadult female specimen collected from the Philippines. Karsch (1880) proposed the name *Medmassa* as a replacement name for *Megaera*, which was preoccupied in Diptera by Robineau-Desvoidy (1830). *Medmassa* currently consists of 11 nominal species distributed in Africa, Australia, Southeast and East Asia (World Spider Catalog 2024). The most diagnostic feature of *Medmassa* is that both sexes bear an unusually high number of ventrolateral tibial spines on the anterior legs, a feature shared with many liocranid genera as well as corinnine corinnids, while there are no more than three pairs in typical castianeirines, except the Southeast Asian genus *Pranburia* Deeleman-Reinhold, 1992, which can easily be distinguished from *Medmassa* by the presence of large femoral brushes on leg I in both sexes (Deeleman-Reinhold 2001; Haddad & Bosselaers 2010). In addition, the male palp with an oval-elongate tear-shaped tegulum with the subtegulum exposed prolaterally, and with a well-developed retrolateral tibial apophysis, and female genitalia with anteriorly placed copulatory openings, short copulatory ducts or copulatory ducts apparently absent, and simple oval spermathecae lacking two distinct lumens are other features that clearly separate *Medmassa* from other corinnid genera (Deeleman-Reinhold 2001; Haddad & Bosselaers 2010).

Deeleman-Reinhold (2001) reviewed the species of *Medmassa* from Southeast Asia and synonymised *Astratea* Thorell, 1890 with it, and Haddad & Bosselaers (2010) revised the genus in the Afrotropical region. Raven (2015) and Jin *et al.* (2019) recorded *Medmassa* for the first time from Australia and China, respectively. *Medmassa* can be separated from the South Asian *Allomedmassa* Dankittipakul & Singtripop, 2014 by the flat and subcircular carapace, normal male palpal tibia with a simple retrolateral tibial apophysis, U-shaped sperm duct, circular, pit-like copulatory openings, and the distinctly enlarged spermathecae (Dankittipakul & Singtripop 2014). It can be separated from the South Asian *Paramedmassa* Jin, H. Zhang & F. Zhang, 2019 by the flat and subcircular carapace, procurved anterior eye row in frontal view, U-shaped sperm duct, small copulatory openings, simple copulatory ducts, and enlarged spermathecae (Jin *et al.* 2019).

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In this paper, we record *Medmassa* in India for the first time, and describe two new species collected from Kerala and Tamil Nadu in southern India, thereby increasing the number of known corinnid genera in India from seven (Sankaran 2021; Caleb & Sankaran 2024) to eight.

Material and Methods

All measurements are in millimeters (mm). Lengths of palp and leg segments are given as: total (femur, patella, tibia, metatarsus (except for palp), tarsus). The micrographic images were taken with a Leica DFC500 digital camera attached to a Leica M205A stereomicroscope with the software package Leica Application Suite (LAS, version 3.8) for stacking images taken at different focal planes. The specimens examined are deposited at the Western Ghat Regional Centre, Zoological Survey of India, Kozhikode, Kerala, India (ZSI/WGRC).

Abbreviations used in the text. *Morphology*: ALE—anterior lateral eye; AME—anterior median eye; do—dorsal; pl—prolateral; pld—prolateral dorsal; PLE—posterior lateral eye; plv—prolateral ventral; PME—posterior median eye; rl—retrolateral; rld—retrolateral dorsal; rlv—retrolateral ventral; RTA—retrolateral tibial apophysis; v—ventral; vt—ventral terminal; I–IV—1st to 4th leg. *Institution*: ZSI/WGRC—Western Ghat Regional Centre, Zoological Survey of India, Kozhikode, India.

Taxonomy

CORINNIDAE Karsch, 1880

Medmassa Simon, 1887

Type species: *Megaera frenata* Simon, 1877, by monotypy.

Diagnosis. For genus description and diagnosis, see Deeleman-Reinhold (2001) and Haddad & Bosselaers (2010).

Comments. The type species of *Medmassa* is still known from subadult female from Philippines (Simon 1877; World Spider Catalog 2024). There is another Philippine species of the genus, *M. kltina* (Barrion & Litsinger, 1995), which is only known from the female (Barrion & Litsinger 1995; World Spider Catalog 2024) and it could be conspecific with the generotype.

Distribution. Subsaharan Africa, Australasia, South Asia east of Pakistan (World Spider Catalog 2024).

Medmassa sagax Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran sp. nov.

Figs 1A–B, D, G, 2–5, 8

Etymology. The specific epithet is an adjective and referring to the sharply pointed inner protuberance of the RTA of the new species (Fig. 5B–C). Latin *sagax* = sharp.

Type material. Holotype ♂ and paratype ♀ (ZSI/WGRC/I.R.INV.26127 & 26128 respectively) from **INDIA: *Kerala*:** Kottayam: Kanjirappally: Mundakayam: HML Rubber estate (9°31’03.9”N, 76°52’44”E; 130 m a.s.l.), 7.V.2023, leg. R. Tripathi & G. Kadam, tree trunk, by hand.

Diagnosis. Males of *M. sagax* **sp. nov.** are most similar to those of *M. torta* Jin, H. Zhang & F. Zhang, 2019 by having a bifurcated RTA, well developed prolateral lobe of the tibia (as prolateral tibial tubercle in Jin *et al.* (2019)), and a very short embolus, but can be distinguished by the longitudinally narrow cymbium (*vs.* oval in *M. torta*), the tip of embolus blunt and directed at 1-o’clock in ventral view (*vs.* pointed and directed at 2-o’clock in *M. torta*), and the inner protuberance of the RTA short, with a prolaterally directed tip in ventral view (*vs.* comparatively long, with retrolaterally directed tip in *M. torta*) (cf. Figs 4A, B, D, 5A, B and Jin *et al.* 2019: figs 8E, F, 9A, B). Females are similar to those of *M. celebensis* (Deeleman-Reinhold, 1995), as both share roughly bean-shaped spermathecae that are in contact posteriorly, but can be separated by the copulatory openings being placed below the anterior margin of the spermathecae (*vs.* above the anterior margin of spermathecae in *M. celebensis*), and very short and straight copulatory ducts (*vs.* long and undulating in *M. celebensis*) (cf. Figs 4E–G, 5D, E and Deeleman-Reinhold 2001: fig. 541).

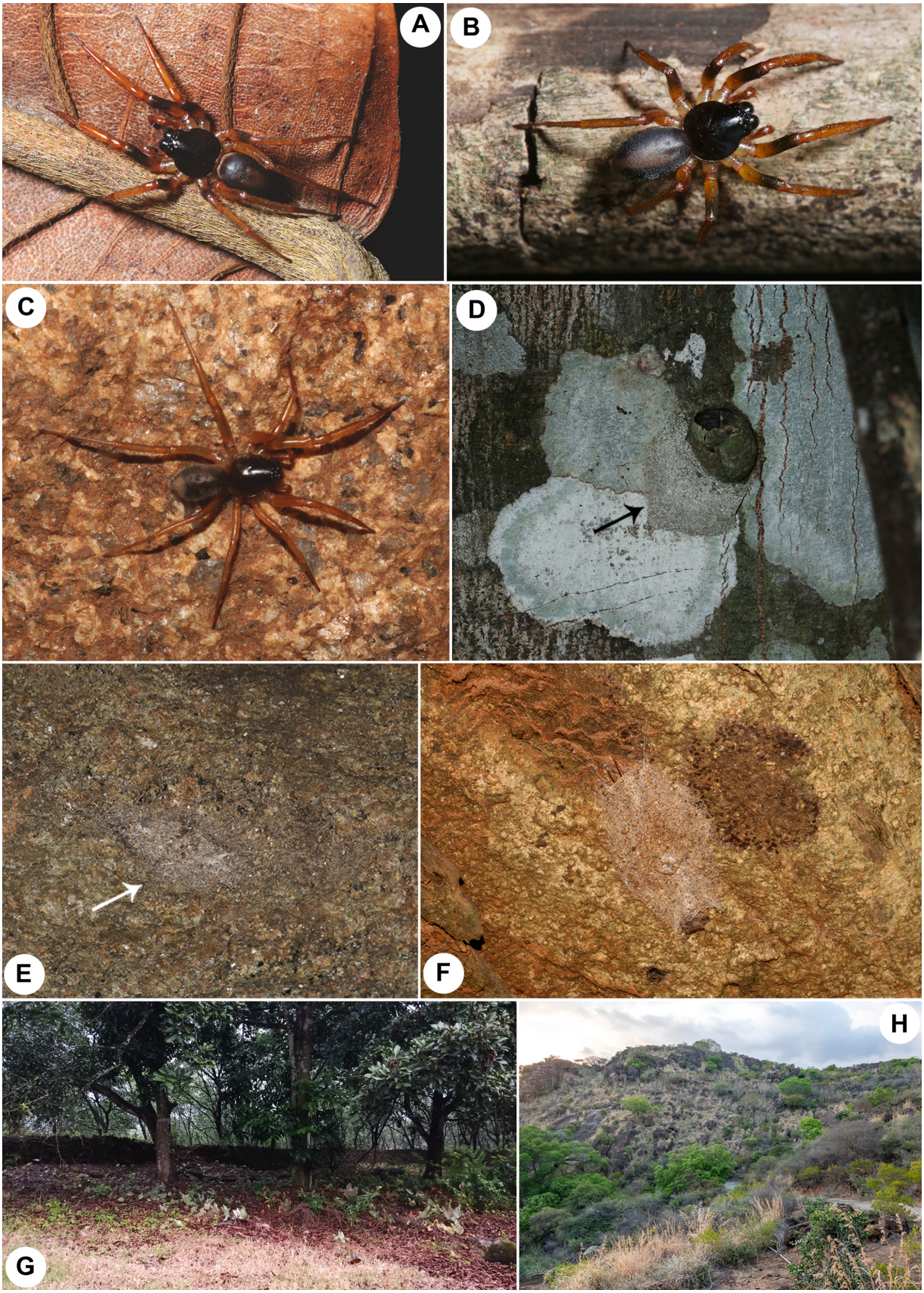

FIGURE 1. Field photographs of *Medmassa* spp.. A–B, D, G *M. sagax* Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran **sp. nov.**: A & B paratype female in different views; D retreat; G collecting locality. C, E–F, H *M. postica* Kadam, Tripathi & Sankaran **sp. nov.**: C holotype female; E–F retreats (F retreat with spider resting inside); H collecting locality. Figures are not to scale. Arrows indicate retreats. Photo credits: A–B, D, Rishikesh Tripathi, C, E–F Gautam Kadam, G Roshin Tom, H Vinod Sadhasivan.

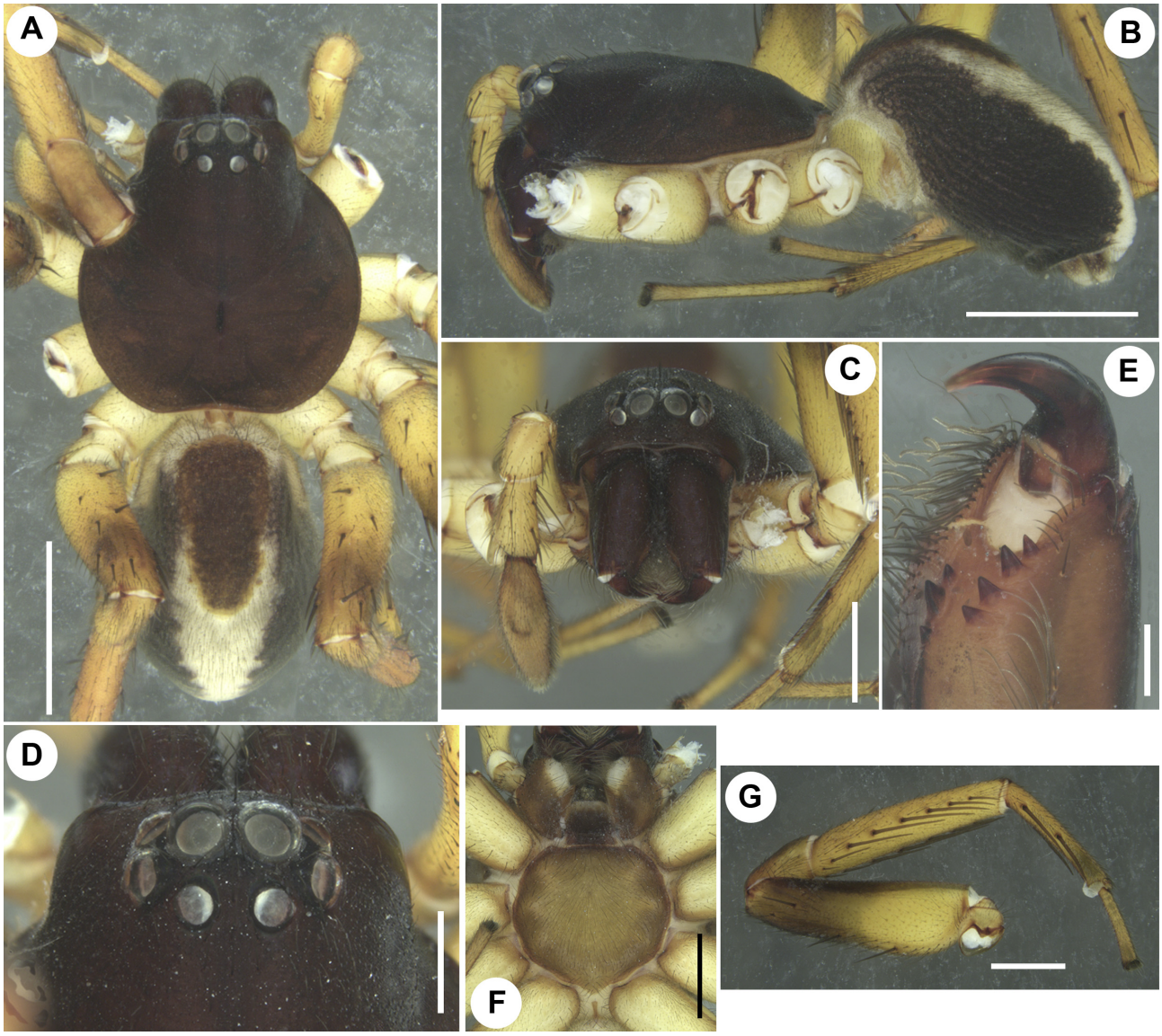

FIGURE 2. *Medmassa sagax* Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran **sp. nov.**, holotype male. A Habitus, dorsal view; B Same, retrolateral view; C Same, frontal view; D Eye area, dorsal view; E Left chelicera, retrolateral view; F Prosoma showing labium, endites and sternum, ventral view; G Left leg I showing long spines on tibia, prolateral view. Scale bars: A–B, 2 mm; C, F–G, 1 mm; D, 0.5 mm; E, 0.2 mm.

Description. *Male* in alcohol (Fig. 2). Carapace, eye region, clypeus, chilum, chelicerae, endites, labium, sternum, scutum brown; thoracic part with indistinct black blotches; leg segments yellow-brown to brown, distal half of all femora with black shade; dorsum, sides and anterior half of venter of opisthosoma black, posterior half of venter creamy white to yellow, dorsum medially with broad, longitudinal creamy white band; spinnerets creamy-white with black shade basally; anal tubercle creamy white; colulus black. Carapace sparsely covered with black setae; cephalic part squarish, thoracic part circular (Fig. 2A, D). Fovea short, straight, longitudinal (Fig. 2A). Chilum narrow, inverted triangular (Fig. 2C). Cheliceral boss prominent. Cheliceral promargin with three teeth, retromargin with four (Fig. 2E). Endites diverging, with distolateral hair tufts (Fig. 2F). Sternum rounded, rebordered, with weakly W-shaped anterior margin, covered with black setae (Fig. 2F). Opisthosoma oval, covered with fine appressed setae (Fig. 2A); anterior half of dorsum medially with scutum (Fig. 2A). Anterior tibiae with long paired ventral spines (Fig. 2G); all tarsi without scopulae, with claw tuft (Fig. 2G). Body length 6.54. Carapace 3.38 long, 3.28 wide. Opisthosoma 3.16 long, 2.33 wide. Eye sizes and interdistances: ALE 0.18, AME 0.30, PLE 0.23, PME 0.20; ALE–PLE 0.03, AME–ALE contiguous, AME–AME contiguous, AME–PME 0.10, PME–PLE

0.11, PME–PME 0.19. Clypeus height at AMEs 0.24, at ALEs 0.19. Chilum 0.05 long, 0.41 wide. Chelicerae 1.22 long. Length of palp and legs: palp 4.50 [1.55, 0.69, 0.76, 1.50], I 9.90 [2.98, 1.15, 2.69, 2.04, 1.04], II 9.77 [2.85, 1.15, 2.31, 2.26, 1.20], III 10.78 [2.96, 1.18, 2.32, 2.88, 1.44], IV 13.53 [3.35, 1.31, 2.82, 3.92, 2.13]. Leg formula: 4312. Spination of palp: femur pld 1 do 2, patella pl 1 pld 1, tibia pl 1 pld 2 plv 1 do 1 rlv 1, tarsus/cymbium spineless. Spination of legs: femur I pl 2 do 3, II pl 1 do 3, III pl 2 pld 1 do 3 rl 2 rld 1, IV pl 1 pld 3 do 3 rl 2; patellae I–IV spineless; tibia I plv 8 rlv 7, II pld 2 plv 6 rlv 5, III pl 3 plv 3 rlv 3, IV pl 2 plv 4 rl 2 rlv 3; metatarsus I plv 2 rlv 2, II plv 3 rlv 2, III pl 2 plv 2 rl 2 rlv 2 vt 1, IV pl 2 plv 2 rl 3 rlv 2 vt 1; tarsi I–IV spineless.

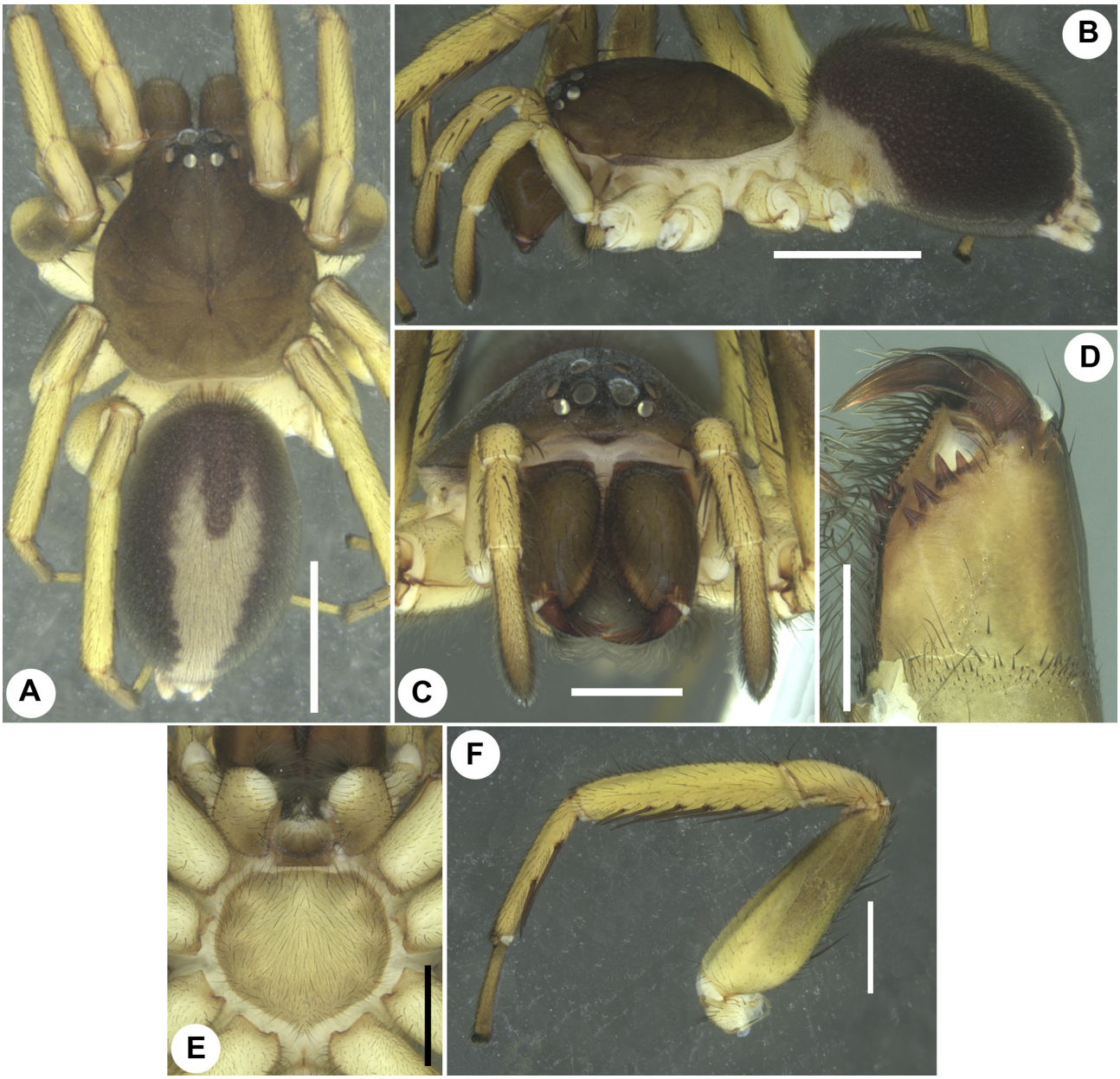

FIGURE 3. *Medmassa sagax* Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran **sp. nov.**, paratype female. A Habitus, dorsal view; B Same, retrolateral view; C Same, frontal view; D Left chelicera, retrolateral view; E Prosoma showing labium, endites and sternum, ventral view; F Left leg I showing long spines on tibia, retrolateral view. Scale bars: A–B 2 mm; C, E–F 1 mm; D 0.5 mm.

Palp (Figs 4A–D, 5A–C): cymbium dorsally with cymbial scopula, tip slightly narrowing towards anteriorly, ventrally with deep furrow reaching to anterior margin (Figs 4A–C, 5B). Prolateral lobe of tibia triangular (Figs 4A, 5A). RTA slender, with rounded tip, with short, claw-like inner protuberance (Figs 4B, C, 5B, C). Tegulum long, tear-shaped (Figs 4A–C, 5A–C). Subtegulum large, exposed prolaterally (Figs 4A, 5A). Sperm duct thick, U-shaped (Figs 4B, C, 5B, C). Embolus tiny, with blunt tip directed at 1-o'clock ventrally (Figs 4B–D, 5B, C).

Female in alcohol (Fig. 3). General aspects essentially as in male except for below: carapace, eye region, clypeus, chilum, chelicerae black-brown. Body length 6.91. Carapace 3.25 long, 2.95 wide. Opisthosoma 3.66 long, 2.50 wide. Eye diameters and interdistances: ALE 0.18, AME 0.26, PLE 0.19, PME 0.17; ALE–PLE 0.02, AME–AME 0.09, AME–PME 0.12, PME–PLE 0.13, PME–PME 0.19. Clypeus height at AMEs 0.21, at ALEs 0.15. Chilum 0.09 long, 0.52 wide. Chelicerae 1.30 long. Length of palp and legs: palp 4.33 [1.41, 0.68, 0.90, 1.34], I 9.03 [2.73, 1.25, 2.24, 1.81, 1.00], II 8.43 [2.50, 1.11, 2.00, 1.79, 1.03], III 9.14 [2.62, 1.05, 2.11, 2.35, 1.01], IV 10.79 [2.84, 1.15, 2.39, 2.90, 1.51]. Spination of palp: femur pld 1 do 2 v 3, patella pl 1 pld 1 do 1, tibia pl 2 plv 1 do 1 v 2, tarsus pld 1 plv 1 v 1. Spination of legs: femora I–II pl 1 pld 1 do 3, III pld 1 do 3 rl 3, IV pl 1 do 3; tibia II plv 6 rlv 5, III plv 2 rld 2 rlv 1, IV pl 1 pld 1 plv 2 rlv 1; metatarsus II plv 2 rlv 2, III pl 1 plv 2 rl 2 rlv 2 vt 1, IV rl 1 rld 2 rlv 2 vt 1.

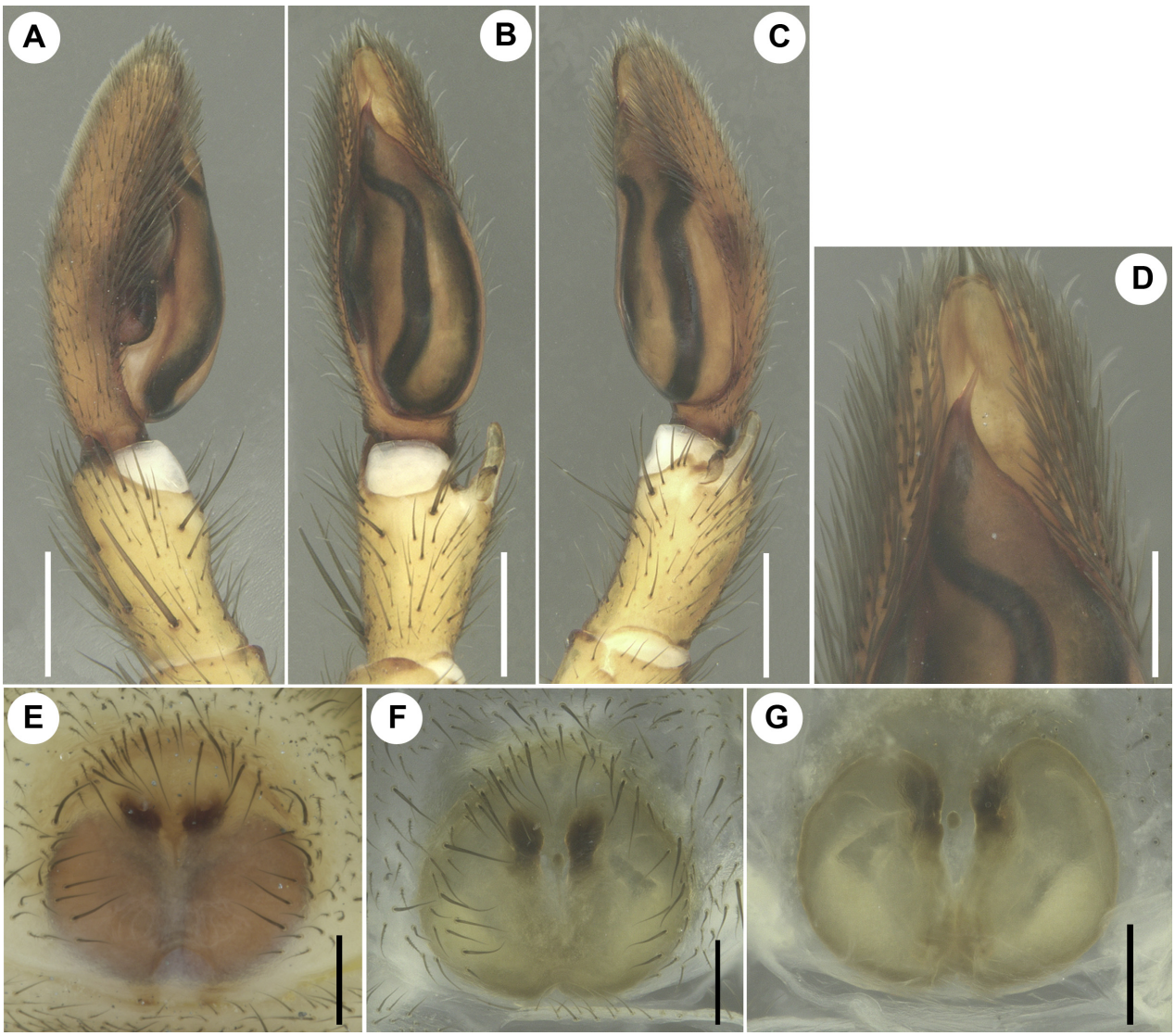

FIGURE 4. *Medmassa sagax* Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran **sp. nov.**, genitalia of holotype male (A–D) and paratype female (E–G). A–D Left palp in prolateral (A), ventral (B) and retrolateral views (C), and enlargement of embolus in ventral view (D); E–G Female genitalia: E Intact epigyne, ventral view; F Same, after clearing, ventral view; G Epigyne, dorsal view. Scale bars: A–C 0.5 mm; D–G 0.2 mm.

Female genitalia (Figs 4E–G, 5D, E): epigynal plate triangular in shape, with convex posterior epigynal margin, medially with deep depression (Figs 4E, F, 5D). Copulatory openings small, separated from each other by about twice their diameter, lying just below anterior margin of spermathecae, with laterally thickened rim (Figs 4E, F, 5D). Copulatory ducts short, lying anterior to spermathecae, parallel to each other (Figs 4G, 5E). Spermathecae large, bean-shaped, contiguous posteriorly (Figs 4G, 5E). Fertilization ducts diverging (Fig. 5E).

Distribution. Known only from the type locality (Fig. 8).

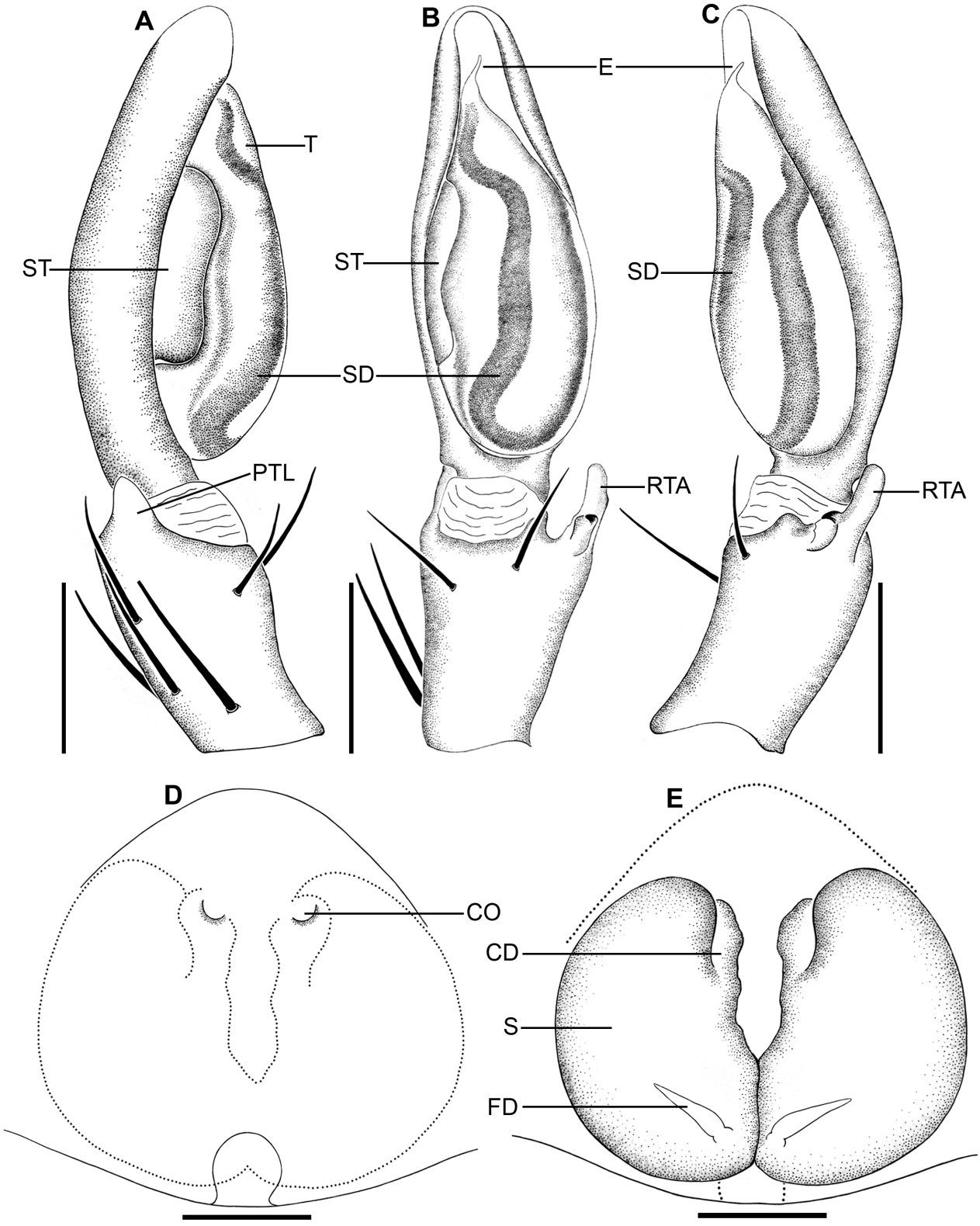

FIGURE 5. *Medmassa sagax* Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran **sp. nov.**, genitalia of holotype male (A–C) and paratype female (D–E). A–C Left palp in prolateral (A), ventral (B) and retrolateral views (C); D–E epigyne in ventral (D) and dorsal views (E). Abbreviations: CD, copulatory duct; CO, copulatory opening; E, embolus; FD, fertilization duct; PTL, prolateral lobe of tibia; RTA, retrolateral tibial apophysis; S, spermatheca; SD, sperm duct; ST, subtegulum; T, tegulum. Scale bars: A–C, 0.5 mm; D–E, 0.2 mm.

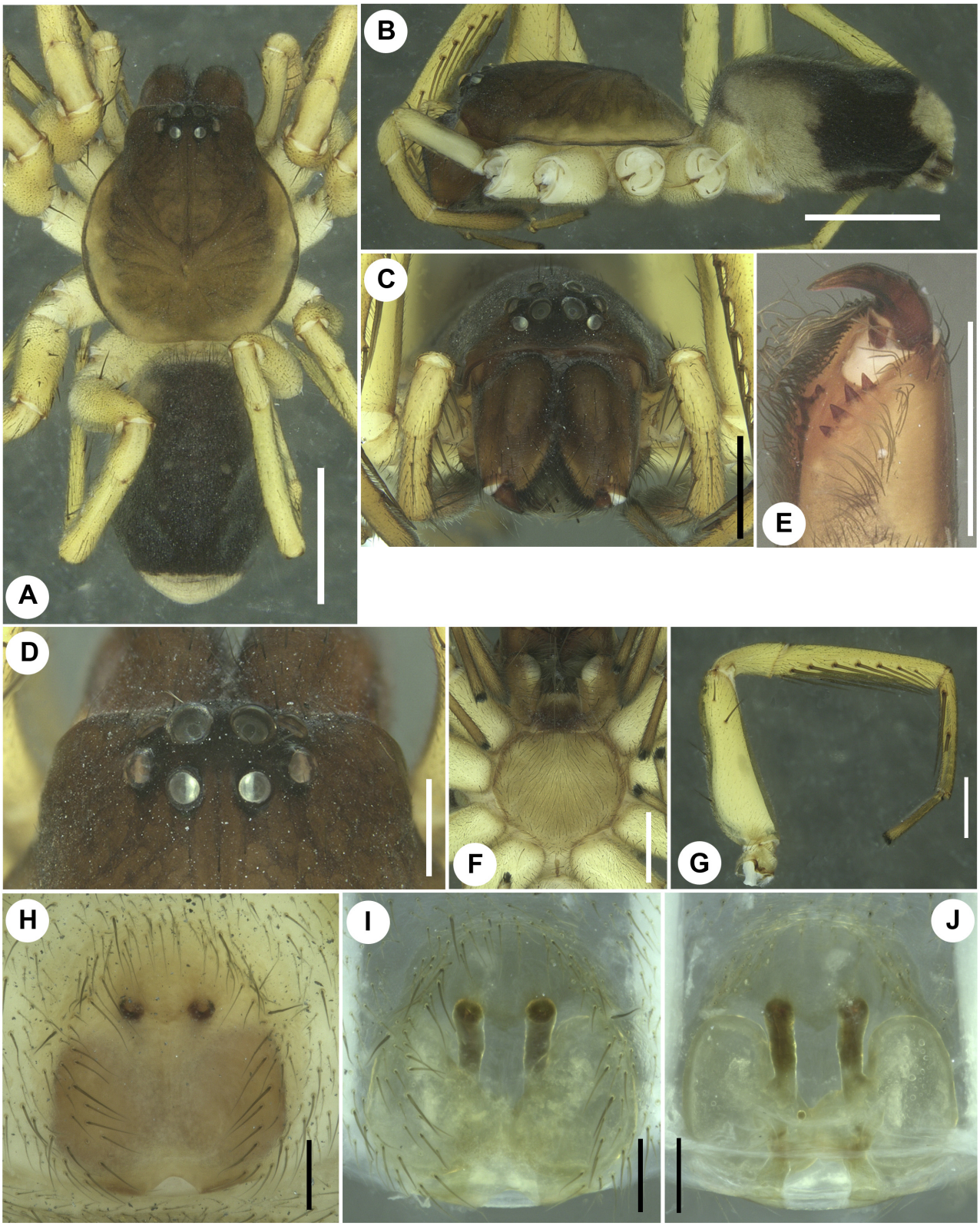

FIGURE 6. *Medmassa postica* Kadam, Tripathi & Sankaran **sp. nov.**, holotype female. A Habitus, dorsal view; B Same, retrolateral view; C Same, frontal view; D Eye area, dorsal view; E Left chelicera, retrolateral view; F Prosoma showing labium, endites and sternum, ventral view; G Left leg I showing long spines on tibia, prolateral view; H Intact epigyne, ventral view; I Same, after clearing, ventral view; J Epigyne, dorsal view. Scale bars: A–B 2 mm; C, E–G 1 mm; D 0.5 mm; H–J 0.2 mm.

***Medmassa postica* Kadam, Tripathi & Sankaran sp. nov.**
Figs 1C, E–F, H, 6–8

Etymology. The specific name is an adjective and referring to the creamy-white posterior part of the opisthosoma of the new species (Fig. 6A). Latin *posticus* = posterior.

Type material. Holotype ♀ (ZSI/WGRC/I.R.INV.26129) from **INDIA: *Tamil Nadu*:** Kanniyakumari/ Kanyakumari: Thovalai: near Anjaneyar temple (8°13’33’’N, 77°30’24’’E; 84 m a.s.l.), 30.VI.2022, leg. G. Kadam, from rock, by hand.

Diagnosis. *Medmassa postica* **sp. nov.** is closely related to *M. insignis* (Thorell, 1890) by having the copulatory openings placed above the anterior margin of spermathecae, long copulatory ducts, and subtriangular spermathecae, but can be separated by the parallel copulatory ducts (*vs.* posteriorly converging in *M. insignis*) and the spermathecae with a smoothly rounded anterior margin (*vs.* pointed in *M. insignis*) (cf. Figs 6H–J, 7A, B and Deeleman-Reinhold 2001: fig. 530). Male: Unknown.

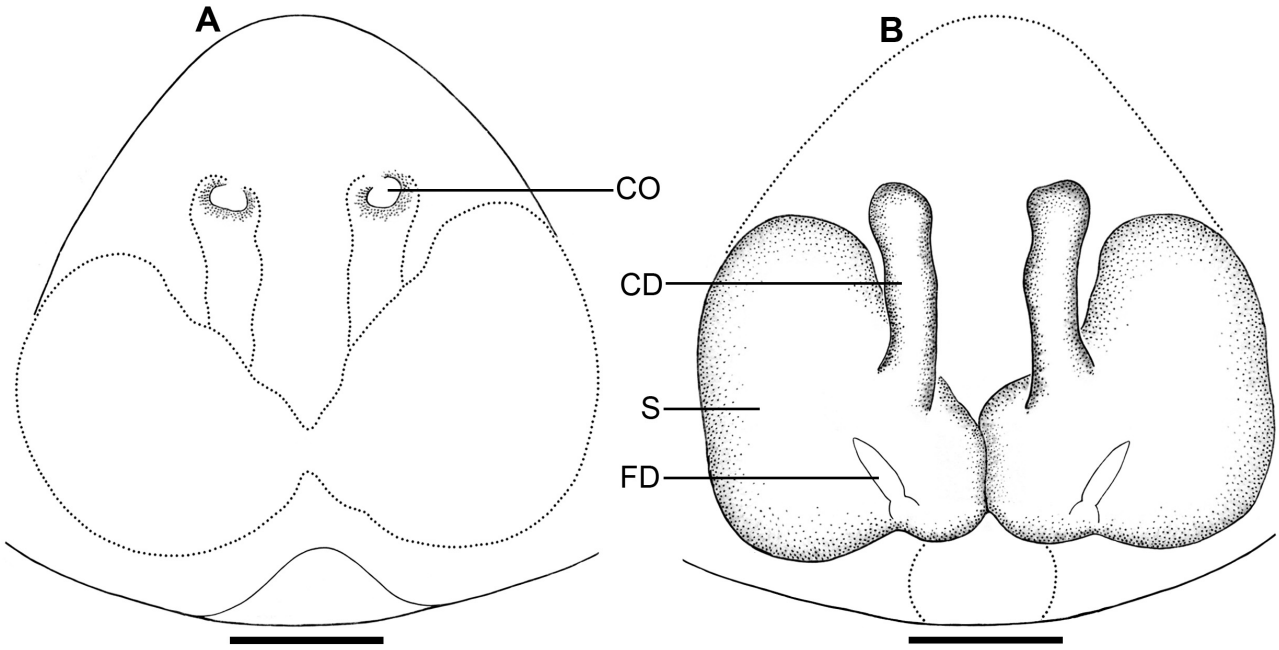

FIGURE 7. *Medmassa postica* Kadam, Tripathi & Sankaran **sp. nov.**, epigyne of holotype female in ventral (A) and dorsal views (B). Abbreviations: CD, copulatory duct; CO, copulatory opening; FD, fertilization duct; S, spermatheca. Scale bars: A–B, 0.2 mm.

Description. *Female* in alcohol (Fig. 6A–G). Carapace, eye region, clypeus, chilum, chelicerae, endites, labium, sternum brown; carapace with indistinct black blotches; thoracic part marginally dark yellow; leg and palpal segments gradually deepen in colour from yellow-brown proximally to brown distally; dorsum, median part of sides and venter of opisthosoma black, rear end, anterior and posterior parts of sides and venter creamy white (Fig. 6B); spinnerets creamy-white with black shade; anal tubercle creamy white; colulus black. Carapace sparsely covered with black setae; cephalic part squarish, thoracic part circular (Fig. 6A, D). Fovea short, straight, longitudinal. Chilum narrow, inverted triangular (Fig. 6C). Cheliceral boss prominent. Cheliceral promargin with three teeth, retromargin with four (Fig. 6E). Endites diverging, with distolateral hair tuft (Fig. 6F). Sternum rounded, rebordered, with W-shaped anterior margin, covered with black setae (Fig. 6F). Opisthosoma oval, covered with fine appressed setae (Fig. 6A). Tibiae I–II with paired long ventrolateral spines (Fig. 6G); all tarsi without scopulae, with claw tuft (Fig. 6G). Body length 6.98. Carapace 3.43 long, 3.19 wide. Opisthosoma 3.55 long, 2.45 wide. Eye sizes and interdistances: ALE 0.18, AME 0.23, PLE 0.20, PME 0.15; ALE–PLE 0.06, AME–ALE 0.02, AME–AME 0.09, AME–PME 0.12, PME–PLE 0.10, PME–PME 0.19. Clypeus height at AMEs 0.25, at ALEs 0.14. Chilum 0.02 long, 0.36 wide. Chelicerae 1.36 long. Length of palp and legs: palp 4.75 [1.52, 0.78, 1.00, 1.45], I 10.23 [2.98, 1.20, 2.69, 2.19, 1.17], II 9.45 [2.80, 1.13, 2.35, 1.98, 1.19], III 10.97 [2.93, 1.21, 2.40, 2.84, 1.59], IV 12.39 [3.21, 1.27,

2.69, 3.37, 1.85]. Leg formula: 4312. Spination of palp: femur pld 1 plv 1 do 2 rlv 4, patella pl 1 pld 1 do 1, tibia pl 1 pld 2 do 1 rlv 1, tarsus pl 1 pld 1. Spination of legs: femora I–II pl 1 pld 1 do 2, III pld 1 do 3 rld 3, IV do 3 rld 1; patellae I–IV spineless; tibia I plv 8 rlv 7, II plv 6 rlv 5, III plv 3 rl 2 rlv 2, IV plv 2 rl 2 rlv 1; metatarsi I–II plv 2 rlv 2, III plv 3 rl 1 rlv 3 vt 1, IV plv 1 rl 1 rlv 3 vt 1; tarsi I–IV spineless.

Female genitalia (Figs 6H–J, 7A, B): epigyne forming triangular plate, with convex posterior margin having deep median depression (Figs 6H, I, 7A). Copulatory openings small, separated from each other by twice their diameter, lying above anterior margin of spermathecae, with thickened rims (Figs 6H, I, 7A). Copulatory ducts long, parallel to each other, and close to spermathecae (Figs 6J, 7B). Spermathecae large, subtriangular, contiguous posteriorly (Figs 6J, 7B). Fertilization ducts diverging (Fig. 7B).

Distribution. Known only from the type locality (Fig. 8).

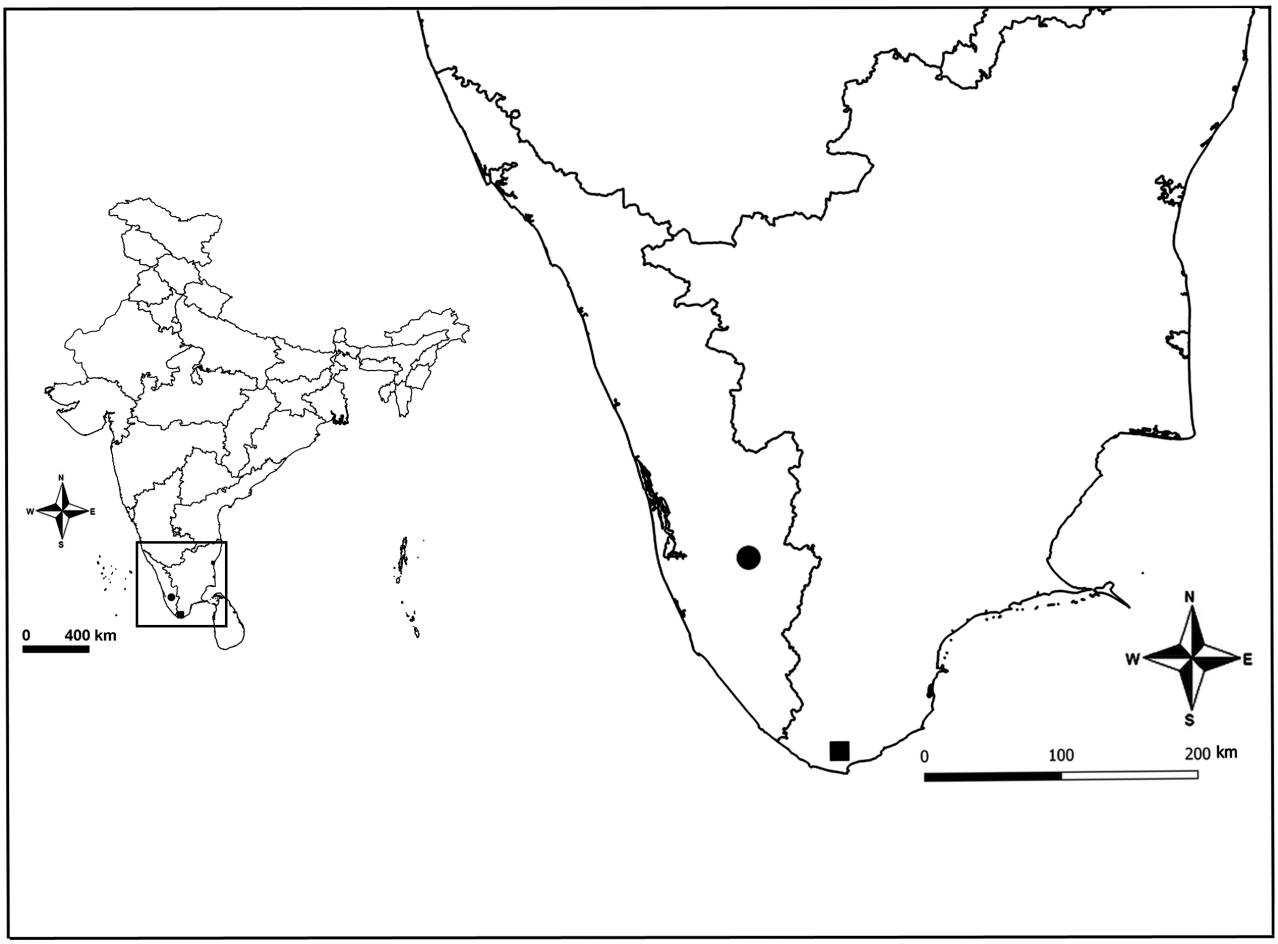

FIGURE 8. Distribution of the genus *Medmassa* in India. ● *M. sagax* Tripathi, Kadam & Sankaran **sp. nov.**; ■ *M. postica* Kadam, Tripathi & Sankaran **sp. nov.**.

Discussion

Natural history. Both the two new species described here are rapidly-running, nocturnal hunting spiders that were commonly found on tree trunks or rocks. Both species built silken retreats on tree trunks or rocks that camouflage with the lichen-covered surroundings (Fig. 1D–F, arrows). Both ends of the retreat being open, which may increase the spider's chances of evading potential threats, and thereby increasing its survival rate. It was observed that these spiders were running on the ground during the night time, possibly searching for prey or mates, and seem to remain concealed within their retreats during the daytime (Fig. 1F).

Note. A series of photographs of two *Medmassa* morphospecies from Karnataka, which are most probably new to science, were published in the online photographic field guide 'iNaturalist' (https://www.inaturalist.org/observations/151923877 and 166043491). The second author spotted a different species of *Medmassa* in the nearby

regions of his house in Maharashtra. Images of an additional, but different *Medmassa* species from West Bengal (Mondal, pers. comm.) was presented in the book of Mondal *et al.* (2020: 210), but they misidentified it as a species of the phrurolithid genus *Otacilia* Thorell, 1897. On this account, as well as the present findings, it is speculated that the diversity of the genus *Medmassa* in India is even higher, and more *Medmassa* species will be discovered in the future if extensive surveys can be conducted throughout the country.

Acknowledgements

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