

FIRST REPORT OF *AZANUS JESOUS* (GUÉRIN-MÉNEVILLE, 1849) (LEPIDOPTERA: LYCAENIDAE: POLYOMMATINAE) FROM CHOTANAGPUR PLATEAU, INDIA.

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ABSTRACT

Azanus jesous (Guérin-Ménéville, 1849) was recorded for the first time from the Chotanagpur plateau, India with photographic evidence. The current communication helps to update the range distribution of this butterfly in India.

Key words: Bokaro, Butterfly, Chotanagpur Plateau, Distribution, Record.

INTRODUCTION

Chotanagpur plateau is situated in the eastern part of India, covering most parts of Jharkhand state, three districts (Purulia, a part of Bankura and Jhargram) of West Bengal, two districts (Mayurbhanj and Sundergarh) of Odisha and Jashpur district of Chhattishgarh (Singh, 2012; Sisodia *et al.*, 2019). The global distribution of *Azanus jesous* (Guérin-Ménéville, 1849) also known as African Babul Blue is in western, southern and central parts of India to Africa, Arabia, Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka and it is commonly seen in grasslands and open clearings, up to an elevation of 2100 m (Bingham, 1907; Kehimkar, 2016).

During the expedition, the first author sighted and photographed an individual of an unidentified butterfly

species at Sector 1 (23.6525°N, 86.1608°E) of Bokaro Steel City (in Bokaro district), in Jharkhand using Samsung SM-A207F at 6:43 am (GMT+6.00) on 20th August 2021 (Fig. 1). The observed butterfly was prolonged roosting on a *Parthenium hysterophorus* plant, in foggy weather (Fig. 2). Later, the individual photographed was compared with photographic field guide (Kehimkar, 2016) and a key characterized by Bingham (1907). The observed individual was pale brown and had tailless hindwings. Additionally, it had a brown costal margin on the underside of the forewings, a dark chestnut-brown streak between vein 12 and the subcostal vein; and a transverse sub-terminal row of white encircled black spots. *Azanus jesous* resembles *Azanus ubaldus* but it can be distinguished by its complete series of white-ringed jet-black spots in interspace 1,2,4,5,6 and 7 on the underside of the hindwings. Moreover, a sub-terminal spot in interspace 3 and a terminal small spot in interspace 7 are present (Kehimkar, 2016; Bingham, 1907).

In India, the species is known from the Western Ghats, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Orissa and Bihar (Van Gasse, 2018). Also, the species was recorded from in and around Pusa (in

Bihar state) (Karthik *et al.*, 2020), which is close (aerial distance: ~263 kms) to the study area. There is no report of *Azanus jesous* from Chotanagpur plateau till the present study (Verma, 2009; Singh, 2010; Payra *et al.*, 2016; Samanta *et al.*, 2017; Boruah *et al.*, 2018; Biswas *et al.*, 2019; Dey *et al.*, 2020; Mahata *et al.*, 2020; Nayak, 2020; Mukherjee & Mondal, 2020; Dwari & Mondal, 2020; Roy *et al.*, 2021; Tandan *et al.*, 2021; Choudhary & Basu, 2022; Patra *et al.*, 2022; Mandal & Roy, 2022; Singha Deo *et al.*, 2023). Hence, this photographic record is the first report from Chotanagpur plateau region. However, the species is known to occur in Bihar and Odisha states, so the presence of this species is not highly unexpected from this region. The connecting state West Bengal (Central and Southern part) also comprises host plant *Acacia* sp. habitat similar to Bokaro region.

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Figure 1: *Azanus jesus* roosting on a *Parthenium hysterophorus* plant.



Figure 1: *Azanus jesus* was recorded from this location in the present report.