



One of the Largest Dinosaur Hatcheries in the World Uncovered

Why in News?

According to recent discoveries by paleontologists, **Madhya Pradesh, is home to one of the largest dinosaur hatcheries in the world.**

Key Points

- The state's **Narmada Valley**, which spans several districts, has yielded hundreds of **fossilised dinosaur eggs and nests**, belonging to the **herbivorous Titanosaurs**, one of the largest known dinosaurs.
- The most recent discovery was made in the **Lameta Formation of the Dhar district**, where a team of paleontologists from various institutes found **92 closely located dinosaur nests and 256 eggs with each clutch containing between one and twenty eggs, dating back to about 66 million years ago.**
 - The eggs ranged from **15 to 17 cm in diameter**, and **each nest contained one to 20 eggs.** Some of the eggs showed evidence of hatching, while others did not.
- The Lameta Formation is of **Maastrichtian age (Late Cretaceous)**, and is also found in **Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh.**
 - It is notable for its **diversity of dinosaur genera**, including the **titanosaur sauropod Isisaurus and the abelisaurus Indosaurus, Indosuchus, Laevisuchus, and Rajasaurus.**
 - The Lameta Formation also **contains fossils of mammals, snakes, and other animals.**
 - The prehistoric structure represents the last phase of dinosaur evolution in India, before their **extinction** at the **end of the Cretaceous period.**
- The team, led by the **Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Delhi**, published their findings in the **scientific journal PLOS ONE.**
 - They concluded that the **Narmada Valley was a dinosaur hatchery zone**, where the Titanosaurs either came specifically to lay eggs or also hatched them.
 - They also suggested that the area had **a warm and humid climate**, with abundant **vegetation and water sources, suitable for the dinosaurs' survival.**
 - Previous studies have also reported similar findings in the **Jabalpur district and the Gujarat town of Balasinor.**
- Some of the **fossilized eggs found in the Dhar district** were not recognized as such by the local villagers, who **had been worshiping them as sacred stones for generations.**
 - These palm-sized objects, known as **'Kakar Bhairav' or the lord of the land**, were **believed to be the protective deities of farms and livestock.**
- The discovery of dinosaur fossils and eggs in Madhya Pradesh has **not only enriched the scientific knowledge of the region's palaeontological history**, but also opened up **new avenues for tourism and education.**
 - The state government has **plans to develop the sites as tourist attractions**, and to **create awareness among the public about the state's rich dinosaur heritage.**

Lameta Formation

- The Lameta Formation, also known as the **Infratrappean Beds** (not to be confused with the contemporaneous Intertrappean Beds), is a **sedimentary geological formation found in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh, India, associated with the Deccan Traps.**
 - The Intertrappean Beds are a **Late Cretaceous and Early Paleocene geologic formation** in India. The beds are found as interbeds between **Deccan Traps layers**, including the more diverse Lameta Formation.

Maastrichtian age (Late Cretaceous)

- The Maastrichtian is, in the **ICS geologic time scale**, the latest age (uppermost stage) of the Late Cretaceous Epoch or Upper Cretaceous Series, the Cretaceous Period or System, and of the Mesozoic Era or Erathem. It spanned the interval **from 72.1 to 66 million years ago.**

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