

Bharitalasuchus Tapani

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In news- Recently, an international team has thrown light on *Bharitalasuchus Tapani*, a carnivorous reptile that lived 240 million years ago.

Key updates-

- In the mid 20th century, researchers from the **Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata**, carried out extensive studies on **rocks of the Yerrapalli Formation** in **Telangana**, uncovering several fossils.
- By studying some of these specimens stored at the Institute, an international team has now thrown light on this carnivorous reptile.
- A precise identification had not been possible earlier because the family was not known from other examples in India.

About the *Bharitalasuchus Tapani*-

- It belongs to a genus and species previously unknown to science.
- ***Bharitalasuchus*** is an **extinct genus of erythrosuchid archosauriformes** known from the Middle Triassic Yerrapalli Formation of India.
- It contains a **single species**, *Bharitalasuchus tapani*, known from a holotype and paratype consisting of tooth-bearing cranial fragments.
- The species is **named after paleontologist Tapan Roy Chowdhury** in honour of his contribution to Indian vertebrate paleontology and especially his **extensive work on the Yerrapalli Formation** tetrapod fauna.
- *Bharitalasuchus tapani* were robust animals with big heads and large teeth, and these probably predated other smaller reptiles.
- They were approximately the size of an adult male lion

and might have been the largest predators in their ecosystems.

- In the **Telugu language, Bhari means huge, Tala means head**, and Suchus is the name of the Egyptian crocodile-headed deity.
- The first Erythrosuchidae remains were discovered in South Africa in 1905 and more were found in China and Russia.
- The South African one is about 245 million years old, while the ones from China and Russia are around 240 million years old.
- So the Indian one is one of the youngest fossil records we have of an erythrosuchid.

Yerrapalli Formation-

- **It is a Triassic rock formation** that outcrops in the **Pranhita–Godavari Basin in southeastern India.**
- It **preserves fossils of freshwater and terrestrial vertebrates** as well as **trace fossils of invertebrates.**
- Apart from this erythrosuchid reptile, the fossil assemblage of the Yerrapalli Formation includes many other extinct creatures such as ceratodontid lungfish, rhynchosaur and allokosaurian.

Most of the Yerrapalli Formation consists of **red mudstones.**