

**17– 11- 2024**

- News: UNESCO Global Geoparks tag
- The Geological Survey of India wants Dinosaur Fossil Park and Museum in Raiyoli village in Gujarat to get a UNESCO Global Geoparks tag.

## **Dinosaur Fossil Park and Museum**

- The Geological Survey of India wants Dinosaur Fossil Park and Museum in Raiyoli village in Gujarat to get a UNESCO Global Geoparks tag.
- In the early 1980s, geologists discovered large dinosaur bones and fossilised eggs.
- The bones belong to the *Rajasaurus Narmadensis* and *Rahiolisaurus Gujaratensis*, carnivorous dinosaurs from the Late Cretaceous period (~67 million years ago).
- **Global Position:** It is one of the largest dinosaur egg hatcheries in the world, ranking third globally after Aix-en-Provence (France) and the Mongolian Gobi Desert.
- **International Interest:** The site gained international attention in the 1990s when a team of 50 palaeontologists, visited to study the dinosaur eggs.

## History of Dinosaurs in India

- **Early Dinosaur Discoveries:** Asia's first dinosaur bones were discovered in India in 1828 in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, by Captain William Henry Sleeman which were later named *Titanosaurus indicus* in 1877.
- *Titanosaurus*, a large herbivorous dinosaur that lived during the Late Cretaceous period.
- **Dinosaur Fossils:** Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat, are key fossil-rich regions that have yielded many dinosaur skeletons and eggs.
- Several important species have been discovered in this region are *Barapasaurus* (herbivorous), *Isisaurus* (herbivorous), *Indosuchus* (carnivorous), and *Rajasaurus Narmadensis* (carnivorous).
- **Dinosaur Hatcheries:** India is believed to be one of the largest dinosaur hatcheries in the world, with major nesting sites discovered in regions like Jabalpur (MP), Balasinor (GJ), and Dhar District (MP).

## Global Geopark Network

- UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.

- Geo Heritage Sites are **locations that have geological significance due to their unique rock formations, fossils, mineral deposits, or landforms.**
- UNESCO Global Geopark is **not a legislative designation** – though the defining geological heritage sites within a UNESCO Global Geopark must be protected under indigenous, local, regional or national legislation as appropriate.
- UNESCO Global Geopark status **does not imply restrictions on any economic activity inside the site** where that activity complies with indigenous, local, regional and/or national legislation.
- As of November, there are **213 UNESCO Global Geoparks spread across 48 countries**, mostly in Europe and China. None of the Geoparks are from India.
- A UNESCO Global Geopark is **given this designation for a period of four years after which the functioning of the site re-examined during a revalidation process.**

### **Designation Process**

- **Green Card:** **Awarded if the area continues to meet the criteria.**
- **Yellow Card:** **Issued if the area no longer meets the criteria, allowing two years for improvement.**
- **Red Card:** **Issued if the area fails to meet the criteria within two years after a yellow card, leading to loss of status.**

- Recently, Lonar Lake in Maharashtra and St. Mary's Island and Malpe beach in coastal Karnataka and Dinosaur Fossil Park and Museum in Gujarat were selected by Geological Survey of India (GSI) as candidates for UNESCO Global Geopark Network status.

### **Difference between UNESCO Global Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites**

- Biosphere Reserves focus on the harmonised management of biological and cultural diversity.
- World Heritage Sites promote the conservation of natural and cultural sites of outstanding universal value.
- UNESCO Global Geoparks give international recognition for sites that promote the importance and significance of protecting the Earth's geo diversity through actively engaging with the local communities.
- A World Heritage Site or Biosphere Reserve can apply for the UNESCO Global Geopark status. However, clear evidence has to be provided on how UNESCO Global Geopark status will add value by being both independently branded and in synergy with the other designations.

## Global Geoparks Network (GGN)

- The Global Geoparks Network (GGN), of which membership is obligatory for UNESCO Global Geoparks, is a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation.
- The GGN was founded in 2004 and is a dynamic network where members exchange ideas of best practice to raise the quality standards of a UNESCO Global Geopark.
- While the GGN as a whole comes together every two years, it functions through the operation of regional networks, such as the European Geoparks Network that meets twice a year to develop and promote joint activities. It is managed under the UNESCO's Ecological and Earth Sciences Division.