Palaeoloxodon namadicus in Narmada River

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Why in News?

A fossilised prehistoric elephant jaw measuring approximately 75 cm in length and 25 cm in width has been discovered along the Narmada River.

- Palaeoloxodon namadicus is an ***extinct giant straight-tusked elephant*** widely regarded as one of the largest land mammals ever to have lived.

Key Highlights

- **Anatomical Clues -** The preserved jaw displays molars with distinct parallel enamel ridges and grooves.
- Tooth row counts (six rows on one side and seven on the other) suggest the specimen may belong to a sub-adult or young individual rather than a fully grown adult.
- **Geological Context-** Found in yellowish sediments linked to the Pleistocene epoch (around the Baneta formation), initial estimates place the fossil roughly **7 to 8 lakh years old**, pending detailed lab examination and scientific dating.
- **Narmada Valley Palaeontology -** The Narmada Basin is renowned for preserving Pleistocene megafauna and hominin remains most famously the 1982 Narmada hominin fossil from Hathnora.



Features	Detail
Scientific Name	*Palaeoloxodon namadicus* (Extinct Asian / Indian straight-tusked elephant)
Discovery Site	Patai Ghat (Deori tehsil, Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh) along the Narmada River
Epoch & Estimated Age	Pleistocene epoch (preliminary estimate ~7–8 lakh years for the jaw; species range Middle to Late Pleistocene)
Size & Megafauna Status	Among the largest proboscideans and land mammals known (estimated shoulder heights ~4.5–5 m and masses often cited around ~18–19+ tonnes)
Indian Distribution	Narmada and Godavari basins, post-Siwalik Pleistocene beds, Ganga valley, and parts of eastern/central India

Evolutionary Context

- Believed to have descended from an ancestral African *Palaeoloxodon recki* lineage that dispersed into Eurasia, diverging from European *Palaeoloxodon antiquus*.
- High-crowned (hypsodont) ridged molars were well adapted to processing abrasive grasses and tough Pleistocene vegetation.

Reference

[Money Control | Prehistoric Elephant Jaw]



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