



EARLY EOCENE PRIMATES FROM VASTAN LIGNITE MINE, GUJARAT, WESTERN INDIA

SUNIL BAJPAI^{1*}, VIVESH V. KAPUR¹, J.G.M. THEWISSEN², DEBASIS P. DAS¹, B. N. TIWARI³, RITU SHARMA¹ and N. SARAVANAN¹

¹ DEPARTMENT OF EARTH SCIENCES, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, ROORKEE, INDIA

² DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY, NORTHEASTERN OHIO UNIVERSITIES COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, ROOTSTOWN, OHIO, U. S. A.

³ WADIA INSTITUTE OF HIMALAYAN GEOLOGY, DEHRADUN, INDIA

ABSTRACT

A new primate fauna of early Eocene (Ypresian, approximately 52 Ma) age is reported from the Vastan Lignite Mine, District Surat, Gujarat, western India. From the Indian subcontinent, this is the oldest known Cenozoic record as well as the largest single sample of Eocene primates, consisting of 3 fragmentary jaws and 4 isolated upper cheek teeth. The assemblage comprises at least three, but possibly 4 taxa, of which only two are being named here, an adapiform *Marcgodinotius indicus* n. gen. & n. sp., and an omomyid *Vastanomys gracilis* n. gen. & n. sp., distinguished mainly on the basis of their lower dental formula and lower molar characteristics. The fauna indicates considerable diversity of Eocene primates in Indo-Pakistan and is important in understanding early primate evolution in Asia and the mammalian dispersal into, or out of, from India in response to changing paleogeographic settings associated with the initiation of India-Asia collision.

Key words: Early Eocene, Primates, Vastan Lignite, Gujarat, India