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## 99-million-year-old bird trapped in amber is reclassified as lizard

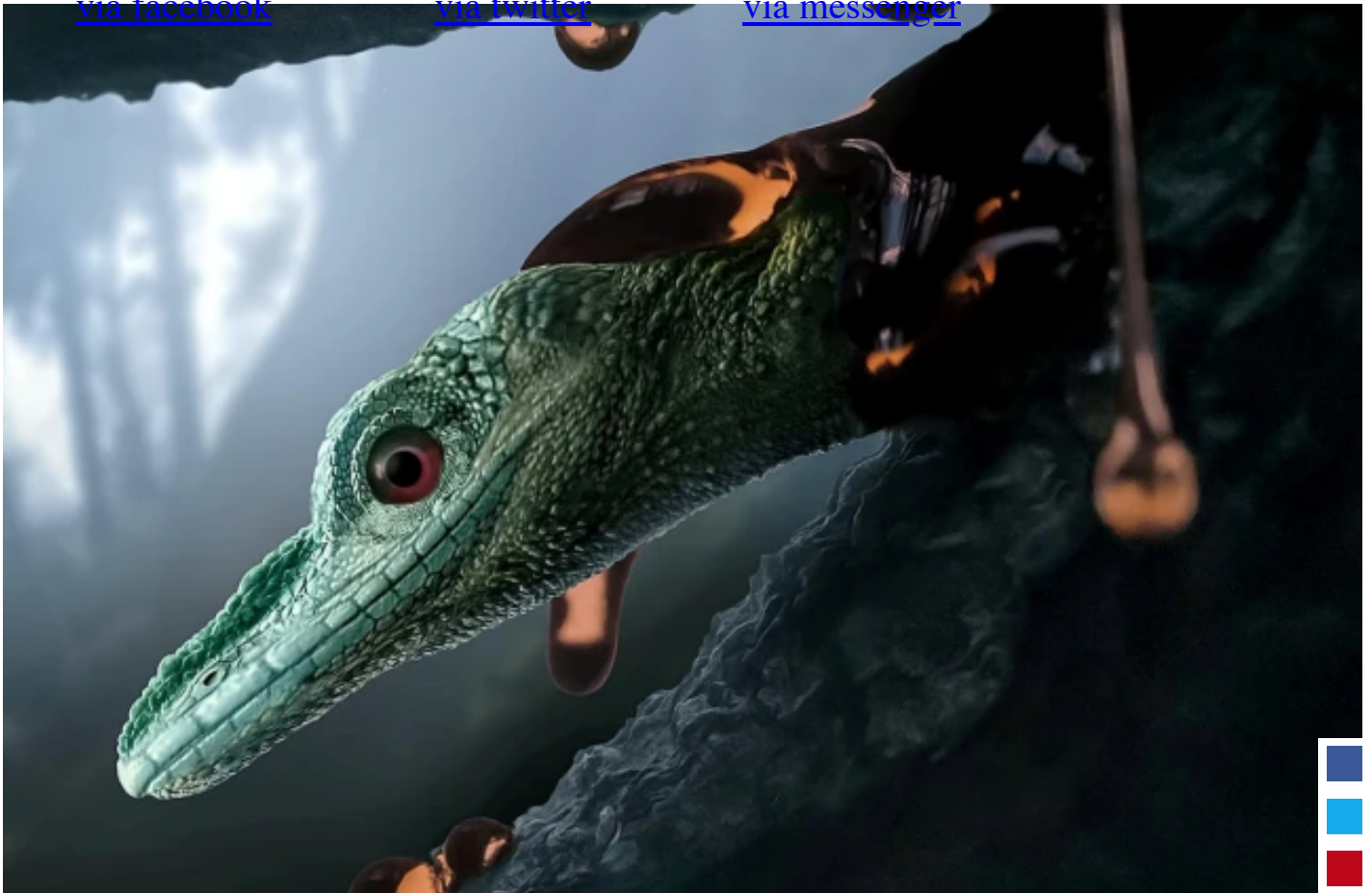
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An artist's impression of the *Oculudentavis naga* lizard when it was alive (Credits: Stephanie Abramowicz / SWNS)

**A bizarre lizard locked in Burmese amber for 99 million years has opened a new window into the 'lost world of the dinosaurs.'**

Its exquisitely preserved remains include the skull, teeth, scales, skin and soft tissue.

A raised crest running down the top of the snout can also be seen through the fossilised tree resin.

There is flap of loose skin under the chin, too. That may have been inflated when displaying to mates or warding off rivals.

Co author Dr Juan Diego Daza said: 'It's a really weird animal. It's unlike any other lizard we have today. We think it represents a group we were not aware of.'

The bug eyed creature inhabited a tropical forest in what is now Myanmar during the age of the dinosaurs.

Oculudentavis naga, named after after the local Naga people, is a cousin of Oculudentavis khaungraae.

Its controversial identification as the smallest bird-like dinosaur was retracted last year.



**CT scans of this fossilized Oculudentavis naga showcase the specimen's scales, skin and soft tissue. (Credits: Adolf Peretti / SWNS)**

An international team used CT scans to compare each bone in the two species digitally.

They became entombed in amber around the same time and place. The sticky sap is the superglue of the fossil record.

It can preserve skin, scales, fur, feathers or even whole creatures in near perfect condition. Whatever it touches is frozen in time inside.

The analysis uncovered a number of physical characteristics that earmark the tiny animals as lizards.

Oculudentavis naga is so odd it was hard to categorise without close examination of its features.