

pravahini

WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS

1 JAN – 7 JAN



MRP ₹ 50.00



1. India's Fisheries Minister Shri Parshottam Rupala Inaugurated the 10th Edition of Sagar Parikrama.

Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Shri Parshottam Rupala led the Sagar Parikrama Yatra Phase-XI from Arjipalli Fishing Harbour, Ganjam district, Odisha.

Key Focus Areas

The 15-day journey spans fishing harbors and villages across Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry. Interactions center on:

- Familiarizing beneficiaries with existing initiatives
- Distributing assets provisioned under fisheries development schemes
- Facilitating credit access through fisher Kisan Credit Cards
- Addressing grievances and ground realities
- It also explores sustainable fishing opportunities while recognizing exemplary efforts.

Takeaways

- Sagar Parikrama signifies the government's hands-on approach to further empower the fishing community.
- The coast-to-coast outreach drive promotes participatory last-mile delivery across the fisheries value chain.
- Officials hope that translating training and assets into enhanced, sustainable marine productivity will unlock the sector's immense growth potential.



2. CCRAS and NCISM Launch 'SMART 2.0' to Mainstream Ayurveda Research

- The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) along with the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) has initiated the 'SMART 2.0' program on January 3rd.



- It aims to promote evidence-based clinical research on priority Ayurveda interventions by fostering collaboration between research bodies and academic institutions.

About SMART 2.0

- 'SMART' expands to 'Scope for Mainstreaming Ayurveda Research among Teaching Professionals'.
- Under it, the CCRAS and NCISM invite expressions of interest from Ayurveda colleges, hospitals and universities to jointly undertake robust studies demonstrating the efficacy and safety of Ayurveda formulations targeting key healthcare challenges.



Areas of Focus

Initial research span pediatrics, women's health, malnutrition and lifestyle diseases:

- **Childhood Nutrition:** Wasting, lactation issues
- **Menstrual issues:** Abnormal uterine bleeding
- **Nutrition:** Malnutrition, calcium deficiencies
- **Lifestyle Diseases:** Diabetes mellitus, osteoporosis

CCRAS will provide scientific inputs and project monitoring during the multi-center trials.

3. India Joins Square Kilometre Array Observatory (SKAO)

India has formally signed up for the Square Kilometer Array Observatory (SKAO) – an ambitious multinational initiative to build the world's largest radio telescope spanning over a square kilometer.



What is the SKAO?

- The SKAO is not one instrument but a vast collection of thousands of telescope antennas at sites in South Africa and Australia.

- These will interconnect as a single giant telescope array.
- It will enable astronomers to probe celestial phenomena out to extreme distances, advancing cosmic understanding.

India's Past Involvement and Contributions

- Indian scientists have participated in SKAO's development for decades via the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics (NCRA) in Pune and other institutes.
- A key contribution is the advanced 'Telescope Manager' software designed by NCRA on an international group. This neural network will control and optimize observations.
- The software skills leverage India's expertise running the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT), the world's largest of its kind, also located near Pune.

Why it Matters

- Joining SKAO allows India a front-row seat in decoding mysteries of the universe through ultra-sensitive technology.
- Findings can enrich knowledge regarding galaxy evolution, stars, black holes and more while opening up new research directions.

4. Nationwide strike of truck drivers

Truck drivers across multiple states in India have declared a month-long strike starting from January 1, protesting against stricter punishment for hit-and-run cases under the newly enacted Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) of 2023.



- The strike has led to road blockades and demonstrations, raising concerns about potential fuel shortages.
- The focal point of the agitation is Section 106 of the BNS, which prescribes severe penalties for causing death due to rash or negligent driving.

Issues

- Hit-and-Run Clause in BNS

- Section 106 (1): Imposes imprisonment of up to five years for causing death by a rash or negligent act.
- Section 106 (2): Specifies imprisonment of up to ten years for causing death by rash and negligent driving, coupled with escaping without reporting the incident promptly.

Comparison with Existing Laws

- BNS replaces Section 304A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), where the punishment for causing death by negligence is two years imprisonment or a fine, or both.
- BNS lacks the relief provision in Section 134 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, which mandates drivers to secure medical attention for the injured person in case of an accident.

5. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal to chair first Inland Waterways Development Council Meeting in Kolkata

- Union Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Sarbananda Sonowal will chair the first Inland Waterways Development Council Meeting in Kolkata.
- During the meeting, Mr Sonowal will unveil groundbreaking initiatives, including Harit Nauka - Guidelines for Green Transition of Inland Vessels and the River Cruise Tourism Roadmap 2047.
- The Ministry has set a target to elevate the modal share of Inland Water Transportation from the current two per cent to five per cent, aligning with the goals outlined in the Maritime India Vision 2030.
- The establishment of the Inland Waterways Development Council in October last year underscores the government's commitment to the comprehensive development of inland waterways and the associated Inland Water Transport



ecosystem for improved cargo efficiency, passenger movement and river cruise tourism.

6. Election Commission tweaks rules for allocation of symbols to unrecognized political parties

- The Election Commission of India introduced new regulations for allocating symbols to Registered Unrecognised Political Parties (RUPPs).
- Now, these parties must provide:
 - audited accounts from the last three financial years,
 - expenditure statements from the last two elections, and
 - the signature of the authorized party official along with their symbol application.
- Article 324 of the Indian Constitution grants the ECI the authority to register political parties.
- The registration of all political parties is governed by the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.
- According to the ECI, any party seeking registration must file an application (to the Secretary to the ECI) within 30 days of its formation.
- The Election Commission of India (ECI) is responsible for the allotment of symbols.
- This is done under The Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968.
- The new rules would come into effect from January 11 this year.



7. The Hatti Community of Himachal Pradesh Has been included in Schedule Tribes.

- In the Trans-Giri area of Himachal Pradesh, the Hatti community attained Scheduled Tribe (ST) status several months ago; however, the delayed

implementation of this classification has sparked discontent and anger within the community.

- Thousands of Hatti members gathered in Nahan district to protest, demanding the immediate issuance of ST certificates.
- The Kendriya Hatti Samiti and Hatti Vikas Manch led a march, submitting a memorandum to the Chief Minister's Office through the District Collector for swift action.



Who are the Hattis?

- The Hattis, known for their close-knit community, are deeply rooted in unique traditions and a distinct way of life.
- Primarily concentrated in the Shillai area of Himachal Pradesh's District Sirmour.
- Referred to as trans-Giri communities, indicating the influence of the Giri River on their geopolitical and socio-cultural landscape.

Name origin

- The community's name, Hattis, is derived from their traditional occupation of selling locally grown produce in small markets known as "haats" in towns.
- Two Hatti clans, one in Trans-Giri and the other in Jaunsar Bawar, share similar customs, fostering a culture of frequent inter-marriages.

Geographical Homeland

- The Hatti homeland is situated along the Himachal-Uttarakhand border, encompassing the Giri and Tons river basins, both tributaries of the Yamuna.
- The Tons river serves as the border between the two states.
- Hattis in the trans-Giri area (Himachal Pradesh) and Jaunsar Bawar (Uttarakhand) were originally part of the royal estate of Sirmour until the separation of Jaunsar Bawar in 1814.

Occupation and Lifestyle

- The Hattis derive their name from their traditional occupation of selling home-grown crops, vegetables, meat, and wool at small-town markets called 'haats.'

- The community is known for its close-knit nature.

8. AtmaNirbhar Bharat Utsav is being organized in New Delhi.

- Atmanirbhar Bharat Utsav 2024 to showcase and celebrate the self-reliance in India is being organized from 3rd January to 10th January, 2024 at Bharat Mandapam, Pragati Maidan, New Delhi.
- The Ministry of MSME's Pavilion in Hall no. 5 is based on the theme "PM Vishwakarma".
- It was inaugurated by Minister of State (MSME), Shri Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma in the presence of senior officers of the Ministry.
- Atma Nirbhar Bharat Utsav 2024 is being organized by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Atma Nirbhar Bharat Utsav and National One District One Product Awards Ceremony celebrate India's journey towards self-reliance.
- It showcases the country's rich cultural heritage, diverse talents, and spirit of innovation.
- The event represents a significant step in the country's progress towards the 'Vocal for Local' initiative.



9. ASI assured to send a note to UNESCO over the inclusion of the Srimukhalingam temple in Andhra Pradesh in the World Heritage Structures' list.

Background:-

- Srimukhalingam temple's chief priest Naidugari Rajasekhar says the architecture of the temple is similar to Lingaraja temple located in Bhubaneswar of Odisha.

About Srimukhalingam temple:-

- It was constructed in the 9th century CE.
- It was built by kings of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty.
- Eastern Ganga Dynasty also known as Chodagangas ruled Kalinga (consisting of present-day Odisha, parts of West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh) from the 11th – 15th century.
- It is located on the Vamsadhara River.
- It is dedicated to Lord Srimukha Lingeswara (a form of Shiva).
- The Shivalinga here has a mukha or facial representation of Lord Shiva.
- It contains exquisite sculptures from that period.
- It is built in the Kalinga architectural style similar to that of the Lingaraja temple located in Bhubaneswar of Odisha.
- The Nagara style of northern India and the Dravida style of south India were combined to create the Kalinga architecture.



10. The Indian government has formed the 16th Finance Commission:-

To review fiscal distribution between the Union and States for 5 years from 2026. Dr Arvind Panagariya, former NITI Aayog Vice Chairman, will helm the panel.

Constitutional Mandate

- Under Article 280(1) of the Constitution, the Finance Commission is constituted every 5 years for:
 - Determining States' share in central tax revenue
 - Laying principles governing central grants to States
 - Recommending measures to augment local government resources
- The 16th Commission was created via a January 2023 notification. Former Columbia University professor Dr Panagariya is the Chairman.



Areas of Focus

Key aspects of the Commission's terms of reference include:

- Tax devolution framework between Center and States
- Grants-in-aid disbursal norms
- Enhancing funds to rural and urban local bodies
- Reviewing 2005 Disaster Management Act financing
- The panel will suggest the 2026-2031 fiscal distribution and grants architecture.

Recommendations are due by October 2025.

Significance

- The Commission shapes vital financial contours stirring economic growth across India's federal structure. An eminent economist helming policy strategy for enabling responsible, equitable resource allocation underscores the priority on cooperative fiscal federalism.