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## Ratapani Tiger Reserve Named After Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar | Madhya Pradesh | 15 Jan 2026

### Why in News?

The **Chief Minister Mohan Yadav**, announced that the **Ratapani Tiger Reserve** will be named in honour of **renowned archaeologist and Padma Shri awardee Vishnu Shridhar Wakankar**.

### Key Points

- **V. S. Wakankar:** He was a **renowned archaeologist** best known for the **discovery of Bhimbetka Rock Shelters**, which are a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.
  - **Major Contribution:** Established India's importance in **prehistoric human history** through rock art research.
  - **Award: Padma Shri (1975).**
- **Ratapani Tiger Reserve:** Madhya Pradesh's **eighth** tiger reserve.
  - India's **57th** tiger reserve.
  - Rich in biodiversity including **tigers, leopards, sloth bears and diverse flora**.
- **Notified Under: Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**, Government of India.
  - Enhancing habitat protection and wildlife corridors in central India.
- **Location:** It is located in **Raisen and Sehore districts of Madhya Pradesh**, near Bhopal.
- **Eco-Tourism Impact:** Renaming the reserve is expected to promote **eco-tourism**, increase **public awareness**, and provide **international recognition** to both the reserve and India's archaeological legacy.

**Read More:** [Ratapani Tiger Reserve](#), [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#), [UNESCO](#), [Bhimbetka Rock Shelters](#)

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## Indian Lighthouse Festival Inaugurated in Visakhapatnam | National Current Affairs | 15 Jan 2026

### Why in News?

The **3rd Indian Lighthouse Festival** was inaugurated in **Visakhapatnam** on **January 9, 2026**, by Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

### Key Points:

- **Tourism Push:** The festival aims to transform historical lighthouses into vibrant **tourist hubs** to boost local economies.
- **New Projects:** Plans were unveiled for Andhra Pradesh's **first Lighthouse Museum** in **Vizag** and four new lighthouses in the riverine areas of Assam.

- **MGM Park:** The event featured cultural showcases, highlighting the maritime heritage of the "City of Destiny".
- **Maritime India Vision 2030:** The festival aligns with Maritime India Vision 2030 and the government's strategy for tourism-led coastal development.
- **Sagarmala Programme:** The transformation of lighthouses is a sub-component of port-led development and coastal community empowerment.
- **Significance:** It reinforces the concept of **lighthouse tourism as a unique niche**, enhancing local livelihoods, cultural exchange, and **sustainable tourism** around India's extensive shoreline.

Read More: [Sagarmala Programme](#), [Maritime India Vision 2030](#), [Lighthouse Museum](#)

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## Aquatic Biodiversity Initiatives Launched under Namami Gange | National Current Affairs | 15 Jan 2026

### Why in News?

On 14 January 2026, Union Jal Shakti Minister **Shri C. R. Paatil** inaugurated a suite of **aquatic biodiversity conservation projects** under **Namami Gange** at the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII)** in Dehradun.

### Key Points:

- **New Center:** A dedicated national hub, **Aqua Life Conservation Monitoring Centre for Ganga and Other Rivers**, established to support scientific monitoring, research, and policy guidance for freshwater biodiversity.
  - **New Facilities:** The centre houses labs for ecotoxicology, aquatic ecology, spatial ecology, and microplastics analysis.
- **Dolphin Rescue Ambulance:** A specially equipped Dolphin Rescue Ambulance (operated by TSAFI) was launched to provide rapid, scientific emergency response for distressed Ganga dolphins.
- **Indian Skimmer Conservation Project:** Formally launched in collaboration with the **Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS)** to provide a structured conservation plan for this rare bird species along the Ganga basin.
- **Species Protection:** New conservation plans were launched for the **Gangetic Dolphin** and the **Hilsa fish**, focusing on habitat restoration.
  - **Biodiversity:** The Ganga basin is home to over 2,500 species of flora and fauna.
- **Namami Gange Phase II:** Shifts focus from just "Aviral" (continuous flow) and "Nirmal" (unpolluted flow) to include **Gyan Ganga** (research) and **Arth Ganga** (economic sustainability).
- **Significance:** It will serve as a scientific hub for long-term monitoring of aquatic species, research on freshwater ecology and policy support and evidence-based decision-making.

Read More: [Namami Gange](#), [Bombay Natural History Society](#), [Gangetic Dolphin](#), [Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#)