

Earth Sciences Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates "Sagar Bhavan" and "Polar Bhavan", two first-of its-kind facilities in India and among the very few in the world at Goa's "Polar and Ocean Research"

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Minister Stresses Urgency of Monitoring Polar Ice Melt to Protect India's Coastal Regions

Cites PM's Vision on Blue Economy, Positions Ocean Science as Key to National Growth

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State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh on Tuesday inaugurated "Sagar Bhavan" and "Polar Bhavan", two first-of-its-kind facilities in India and among the very few in the world at Goa's "National Centre of Polar and Ocean Research" (NCPOR).

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The newly inaugurated facility marks a significant step in India's growing focus on polar and ocean studies.

The Minister's visit coincided with the Silver Jubilee of NCPOR.



Dr Jitendra Singh also unveiled a documentary highlighting NCPOR's 25-year journey and took a virtual walkthrough of the upcoming museum, which is expected to offer immersive, science-based public engagement experiences. He also launched the "Science On Sphere (SOS)" initiative, a 3D visualization platform for displaying earth systems and climate-related data.

Polar Bhavan, now the largest building at the NCPOR campus, spans 11,378 square metres and was constructed at a cost of ₹55 crore. It includes laboratories for polar and ocean research, 55 rooms for scientific personnel, a conference room, seminar hall, library, and canteen. It houses the newly inaugurated SOS facility and will eventually serve as the home of India's first Polar and Ocean Museum.

Sagar Bhavan, covering 1,772 square metres, was built at a cost of ₹13 crore. It includes two -30°C ice core laboratories and +4°C storage units for archiving sediment and biological samples. The building also features 29 rooms, including a metal-free Class 1000 clean room for trace metal and isotope studies.

Dr. Jitendra Singh, clad in warm Antarctica clothing also visited the Minus 20 degree Centigrade lab section.

The Minister noted that the addition of these facilities positions NCPOR among a select group of institutions with integrated polar and ocean research capabilities. He highlighted that the institute's scientific efforts are not only regionally relevant but globally significant, given the transboundary nature of polar phenomena.

Citing expert assessments, the Minister said that nearly 70% of the world's freshwater is held in polar ice. If significant melting were to occur, it could lead to a sharp rise in sea levels, affecting low-lying coastal regions. With India's coastline now estimated at over 1,000 kilometres, such changes pose environmental and socio-economic challenges that demand sustained scientific monitoring and response.



He further acknowledged NCPOR's role in maintaining India's research presence in critical zones, including Antarctica (with stations Maitri and Bharati), the Arctic (Himadri), and the Himalayas (Himansh). The institute also leads India's Deep Ocean Mission, a key initiative under the country's Blue Economy roadmap.

Linking ocean science to national development goals, Dr. Jitendra Singh pointed to the increasing relevance of ocean geopolitics in global affairs. He said institutions like NCPOR will be central to India's scientific and strategic engagement, particularly in view of the government's vision of "Viksit Bharat by 2047." He recalled that the Prime Minister has, in two consecutive Independence Day speeches from the Red Fort, emphasized the importance of the Blue Economy and Deep Ocean Mission.

Dr. Jitendra Singh referred to India's Arctic Policy (2022) and the Indian Antarctic Act (2022) as guiding frameworks that enable science-led, environmentally responsible engagement in polar regions. He noted that the Indian Antarctic Act provides the legal foundation for India's activities in the continent, aligning with international commitments and standards.



India's polar research has extended its geographic and temporal reach in recent years, with missions now venturing into the Canadian Arctic, Greenland, and Central Arctic Ocean across seasons.

The Minister concluded by underlining the need for strategic, science-driven participation in global climate and ocean initiatives. He said the new infrastructure at NCPOR is expected to support India's continued contributions in this field and facilitate deeper international collaboration.

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