

## Andaman & Nicobar Islands to be developed as a hub of India's Blue Economy: Dr Jitendra Singh

Dr Jitendra Singh visits ACOSTI (Sri Vijaya Puram), launches pilot projects to boost Blue Economy in Andaman & Nicobar Islands

Integration of ocean science and biotechnology to strengthen India's economy, environment, and employment: Dr Jitendra Singh

Deep Ocean Mission announcements from the Red Fort by the Prime Minister underscore national priority accorded to marine resources: Dr Jitendra Singh

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Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh said this today while on a visit to the Atal Centre for Ocean Science and Technology for Islands (ACOSTI) to launch and review key marine technology initiatives aimed at strengthening the Blue Economy and livelihoods in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands.



Addressing scientists, officials and stakeholders on the occasion, the Minister said India's future economic value addition will increasingly come from untapped marine resources as the country moves rapidly towards becoming one of the world's top economies. He highlighted that Government's strong focus on the Blue Economy reflects Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision that India cannot develop in isolation by focusing only on the mainland while leaving behind island territories and coastal regions.

The event was held at Atal Centre for Ocean Science and Technology for Islands, a unit of National Institute of Ocean Technology, under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, at Dollygunj, Sri Vijaya Puram (Port Blair). The programme was attended by Shri Bishnu Pada Ray, Hon'ble Member of Parliament from Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dr. M. Ravichandran, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences, senior officials of the Andaman & Nicobar Administration, scientists from NIOT and other research institutions, and representatives from local departments and Self-Help Groups.

Praising the consistent and energetic representation of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands in Parliament, the Minister said that sustained advocacy has ensured that national attention and resources are directed towards island development. He recalled that since 2014, the Prime Minister has given the highest priority to the North Eastern region and island territories, a shift that is now clearly visible in the scale of scientific, administrative, and ministerial engagement in the region.

Referring to the Deep Ocean Mission, Dr. Jitendra Singh said it was a matter of pride that the Prime Minister announced the mission not once but twice from the ramparts of the Red Fort, underscoring India's commitment to the Blue Economy. He highlighted that marine resources, long under-explored, will play a decisive role in sustaining India's growth trajectory as conventional resources get exhausted. The Blue Economy, he said, will significantly contribute to employment generation, exports, environmental sustainability, and overall economic resilience.

The Minister highlighted key initiatives launched and demonstrated during the programme, including the pilot-scale open sea cage culture of marine fish and large-scale seaweed cultivation. He expressed satisfaction that technology transfer has already taken place, reflecting a "whole-of-government, whole-of-society" approach towards building a developed India. Emphasising the importance of local suitability, the Minister said certain marine species and coastal properties unique to the Andaman & Nicobar region make it the most appropriate location for such projects.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also spoke at length on the integration of biotechnology with ocean sciences. He pointed out that India is among the few countries with a dedicated biotechnology policy, BioE3 (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment), and said marine bio-resources can provide biodegradable alternatives to plastic, new medicinal compounds, and high-value bio-products. Such initiatives, he added, will generate employment, protect the environment, and strengthen the bioeconomy simultaneously.

The Minister further highlighted emerging areas such as non-animal food products, alternative marine-based nutrition, waste-to-wealth technologies, and export-oriented marine produce, noting that there is a growing international market, particularly in Europe. He stressed that Self-Help Groups and women's participation must be enhanced so that these initiatives supplement household incomes and strengthen the "Vocal for Local" and "Local for Global" vision.

Concluding his address, Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed appreciation for the enthusiasm and dedication of scientists and local stakeholders, and said that with institutional collaboration, including potential involvement of CSIR and biotechnology research centres, the Andaman & Nicobar Islands can emerge as a major hub of India's Blue Economy initiatives. He reaffirmed the Government's commitment to sustained engagement with the region and conveyed confidence that these efforts will yield long-term scientific, environmental, and socio-economic benefits for the islands.



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