

Andaman, Nicobar Islands' biodiversity crucial for environmental and economic security: Dr Jitendra Singh

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh Calls Andaman & Nicobar a 'Living Laboratory of Biodiversity', During Visit to Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) at Sri Vijaya Puram

Island Biodiversity Critical for Climate Resilience; ZSI's Five Decades of Research Strengthen India's Biodiversity Knowledge Base: Dr Jitendra Singh

Strengthening Scientific Institutions Like ZSI Key to India's Blue Economy Vision and Environmental Goals: 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 has said that Andaman & Nicobar Islands' biodiversity is crucial for environmental and economic security.

The Minister was highlighting the strategic importance of island biodiversity, during his visit to the Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre of the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) at Sri Vijaya Puram.

Addressing scientists and officials, Dr Jitendra Singh said the Andaman & Nicobar Islands represent a "living laboratory of biodiversity", where cutting-edge science must go hand in hand with conservation and sustainable livelihoods. He noted that institutions like ZSI play a critical role in generating authentic scientific data that guides national policies on biodiversity conservation, climate resilience, and ocean-based economic growth.

During the visit, the Minister was received by Dr C. Sivaperuman, Scientist-F and Officer-in-Charge, who briefed him on the mandate of the Regional Centre, its ongoing research programmes, and its pivotal contribution to documenting, conserving, and monitoring the unique faunal diversity of the islands. The briefing highlighted ZSI's work in taxonomy, molecular systematics, DNA barcoding, biodiversity assessment, and capacity building.

Established in 1977, the Andaman & Nicobar Regional Centre of ZSI has completed five decades of sustained scientific service. It has emerged as a nodal institution for tropical island biodiversity research, having completed nearly 90 research programmes across multiple faunal groups. Scientists of the Centre have published 85 books and over 850 research papers in reputed national and international journals, significantly enriching India's biodiversity knowledge base.

Dr Jitendra Singh also visited the ZSI Museum, one of the prominent tourist and educational destinations in the islands, which houses around 3,500 specimens representing 22 faunal groups. He was apprised of the museum's role in public outreach, awareness generation and education, with annual footfall ranging between 75,000 and 1,00,000 visitors, including students, researchers and tourists. The Minister showed keen interest in the curated reference collections, type specimens and exhibits showcasing endemic, endangered and threatened fauna of the archipelago.

The Minister was informed that scientists of the Centre have reported more than 20 species new to science, including the Narcondam Tree Shrew, and documented nearly 900 new faunal records from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India, and Southeast Asia, underscoring the global significance of the region's biodiversity.

Dr Jitendra Singh was also briefed on the role of ZSI, Port Blair as the nodal centre for India's first National Coral Reef Research Institute (NCRRI), aimed at strengthening coral reef research and monitoring in Indian waters. He noted that such focused institutions are vital for safeguarding fragile marine ecosystems and supporting evidence-based marine governance.

Interacting with scientists and staff, the Minister emphasized the need for greater integration of scientific research with public policy, conservation planning and community awareness. He said robust scientific institutions are central to achieving India's environmental goals and realizing the full potential of the Blue Economy in a sustainable manner.

Expressing his appreciation for the work being carried out at the Centre, Dr Jitendra Singh thanked Dr Sivaperuman and the ZSI team for the detailed briefing and museum walkthrough, describing the visit as "an extremely informative and educative experience." He remarked that well-curated zoological collections not only advance scientific understanding but also inspire public consciousness about India's rich and irreplaceable biodiversity.





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