

Nagaland Deputy Chief Minister Yanthungo Patton calls on Dr Jitendra Singh; Discusses Development and Connectivity in Northeast

Sustained focus under Prime Minister Modi has brought Northeast closer to the national growth mainstream, Says Dr. Jitendra Singh

प्रविष्टि तिथि: 20 AUG 2026 3:15PM by PIB Delhi

Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the transformation of the North-East over the last twelve years has been one of the significant outcomes of the development-oriented approach of the Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Minister expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister for placing the North-East high on the national development agenda and said that the region today is witnessing a new phase of connectivity, infrastructure development and economic opportunity. From roads and railways to airports, waterways and digital connectivity, the region has seen a visible acceleration in development, bringing its people closer to the rest of the country and opening new avenues for growth.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said this when Shri Yanthungo Patton, Deputy Chief Minister of Nagaland in-charge of Home and Border Affairs, called on him along with public representatives from Wokha district. The delegation included Shri Mhathung Yanthan, MLA from 39 Sanis Assembly Constituency and Advisor, Agriculture; Shri Y. MhonbemoHumtsoe, MLA representing 38 Wokha Assembly Constituency; and Shri Achumbemo Kikon, MLA and Chairman, SPDB Bhandari, representing 40 Bhandari Assembly Constituency. The interaction covered a range of developmental issues relating to connectivity, infrastructure, livelihoods and human-wildlife conflict, while also providing an opportunity to discuss the broader development trajectory of Nagaland and the North-Eastern Region.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the development of the North-East is no longer being viewed in isolation from the country's overall growth journey. Improved connectivity and infrastructure are creating the conditions for the region to emerge as an important contributor to India's economic growth and as a natural gateway to the country's Act East policy. He said that the progress achieved in the region over the last twelve years reflects a sustained policy focus on overcoming geographical challenges and ensuring that distance does not become a barrier to development.

The Union Minister said that connectivity has been at the heart of this transformation. Roads and highways have expanded access to markets and essential services, railway connectivity has steadily moved towards the State capitals and remote areas, while air connectivity has opened new possibilities for

tourism, trade, healthcare and emergency response. Inland waterways are also gaining importance as an alternative and sustainable mode of transport, further strengthening the region's links with the rest of India and neighbouring countries.

The expansion of air connectivity in the North-East provides a particularly visible example of this change. The number of operational airports in the region has increased from 9 in 2014 to 17 in 2026, a rise of 78 per cent. The development of new airports and the strengthening of existing aviation infrastructure have substantially improved accessibility in a region characterised by difficult terrain and dispersed settlements.

The UDAN regional connectivity scheme has further expanded access to aviation in the North-East. Around 90 regional routes have been operationalised, connecting smaller towns with regional hubs and major cities. New and strengthened aviation facilities, including airports such as Pakyong and Hollongi and upgraded facilities at places including Tezu and Rupsi, have contributed to a broader regional aviation network.

The Minister said that the impact of improved connectivity extends far beyond transportation. Faster and easier movement improves access to education and healthcare, strengthens tourism and local businesses, facilitates movement of agricultural and other products and creates new opportunities for employment and investment. In difficult terrain such as the North-East, he said, connectivity is directly linked to the quality of life and economic empowerment of communities.

He also referred to the wider expansion of infrastructure in the region, including highways, railways, waterways and digital connectivity. The number of National Waterways in the North-East, for instance, increased from one in 2014 to 20 in 2024, while digital infrastructure has expanded substantially, with thousands of Gram Panchayats being brought into high-speed internet connectivity.

Dr. Jitendra Singh said that this development momentum is helping the North-East move from a perception of being geographically distant to becoming a region of strategic, economic and technological importance. He said that the region's young population, natural resources, biodiversity and strategic location provide a strong foundation for the next phase of growth, provided infrastructure development is accompanied by opportunities for entrepreneurship, innovation, tourism, agriculture and skill development.

Against this larger development backdrop, the delegation raised a number of specific issues concerning Wokha and adjoining areas. These included the proposal for declaration of the Wokha–Merapani road up to Golaghat as a National Highway, up-gradation of the Wokha–Bokajan road, and infrastructure requirements at Wokha district headquarters, including a District Office Complex, Multipurpose Market Complex, Stadium and approach roads. The representatives also drew attention to the difficult road conditions arising from erosion and landslides and the consequent impact on movement and economic activity.

The issue of human-elephant conflict in Wokha district also came up for discussion. The representatives spoke about crop destruction, damage to property and concerns regarding the safety and livelihoods of local communities and sought a comprehensive policy response and special package for affected areas. Dr. Singh said that such challenges require an approach that protects both local livelihoods and the region's rich wildlife, with suitable coordination among the concerned agencies.

The Minister said that the developmental concerns raised during the meeting would be considered in the context of the larger effort to strengthen connectivity and infrastructure across the North-East. He said that the objective is not merely to create physical infrastructure but to ensure that improved connectivity translates into better opportunities, stronger livelihoods and greater participation of the region in India's growth story.

The Union Minister said that the transformation visible across the North-East over the past twelve years has created a strong foundation for the next phase of development. He said that the Government's approach under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been to bring the region closer to the national mainstream while preserving its distinctive cultural, ecological and social strengths.

Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed confidence that the continuing partnership between the Centre and the States of the North-East would further accelerate the region's development. He said that with improved connectivity, expanding infrastructure and growing economic opportunities, the North-East is well placed to emerge as an important engine of Viksit Bharat, contributing its full potential to India's growth and development.



NKR/AK

(रिलीज़ आईडी: 2301510) आगंतुक पटल : 388

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