

LARGEST CAVE FISH FOUND IN MEGHALAYA

International study with city scientist finds mention in *Mann ki Baat*

ANJALIMARAR

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AHEAD OF National Science Day, observed every year on February 28, the latest edition of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *Mann ki Baat* was dominated by latest discoveries in science, biodiversity and India's diversity offering home to scores of migratory

birds, among other topics.

Referring to the recently-concluded COP13 Convention on Migratory Species held in Gandhinagar, the Prime Minister announced that India will chair the convention for the next three years.

The PM's speech highlighted the biodiversity in the country that offers varying landscapes from deep oceans,

dense forests and vast arid deserts, and also mentioned the recent discovery involving the world's largest cave fish from Meghalaya. Three Indians, including city scientist Neelesh Dahanukar from the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Rajeev Raghavan from the Kerala University of Fisheries and Ocean Studies, and Duwaki



Rangad from St Edmund's College, Shillong, were part of the international collaborative study.

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is home to a rare species. It lends a new facet to India's bio-diversity. We are surrounded by many such mysteries, which are still undiscovered. To discover such a phenomenal enigma calls for fierce... passion," said PM Modi.

The discovery's mention by the Prime Minister came as a big surprise for Raghavan. He said, "It is not very common to find mention of science related to fresh-

water fish in the mainstream."

The team plans to take up further studies on the newly-discovered fish species and some members had even visited the caves located in Jaintia Hills in Meghalaya recently. "PM's mention of our discovery will be encouraging for our future studies," said Dahanukar.

Lauding efforts of scientists from the Council of Scientific and

Industrial Research (CSIR)-Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun, for developing a mixture of 10 per cent Indian bio-jet fuel, the PM mentioned the Indian Air Force AN-32 flight, which took off from Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Airport in Leh last month. He termed the successful flight as India's first steps towards reducing the country's dependence on import of crude oil.