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CMFRI inks pact with varsity to boost marine life research

OUR BUREAU

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The Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) is keen on boosting its research activities in marine biodiversity, with a special focus on the Gulf of Mannar.

Towards this, CMFRI has signed an MoU with Manonmaniam Sundaranar University (MSU), Tirunelveli, to

carry out collaborative research programmes and develop adequate manpower to explore marine biodiversity prospects in the region.

A Gopalakrishnan, CMFRI Director, and K Bhaskar, MSU Vice-Chancellor, signed the MoU, which is expected to pave the way for a fine blend of academic learning and hands-on experience in research in mar-

ine biodiversity. The Tuticorin Research Centre of CMFRI will play a leading role in the collaborative research programmes.

Gulf of Mannar riches

The Gulf of Mannar is known to harbour rich marine biodiversity of global significance and is the one of the world's richest region from the marine

biodiversity perspective. The region comprises of a 560 sq km core area of coral islands, shallow marine habitats and 21 uninhabited islands.

The Gulf's estimated 3,600 plants and animal species make it one of the richest coastal regions in India.

There are 17 different mangrove species living within the reserve that act as an import-

ant nursery habitat. Similarly, the sandy shores of the islands of Gulf of Mannar provide nesting grounds for sea turtles.

Many fish species

Of the 2,200 species of fish in Indian waters, 450 are found in the Gulf of Mannar, thus making it the single richest coastal area in the Indian subcontinent.