

A repository of information on biodiversity

Biodiversity museum to be opened in the capital on World Environment Day on June 5

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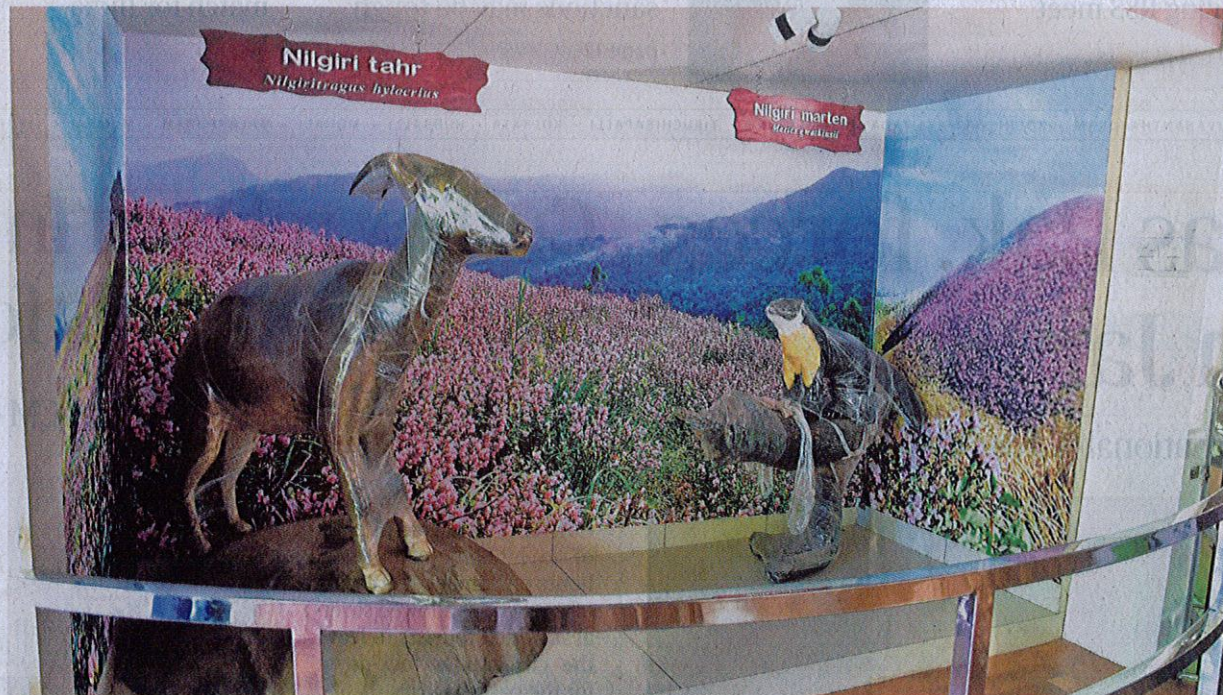
The biodiversity museum, established by the Kerala State Biodiversity Board (KSBB), at the boathouse at Vallakkadavu in the city is all set to be opened. Quite aptly, the museum will be formally inaugurated by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on June 5 to coincide with the World Environment Day.

While the preliminary works for the project were set in motion in 2013, it progressed at a snail's pace, raising concerns about its prospects.

After several revisions to the initial project plan, the work finally gained momentum during the last six months.

The century-old heritage structure, which stood at the end of the Parvathy Puthanar and was once a commercial hub in erstwhile Travancore, has been transformed into a repository of exhaustive information on biodiversity and its various aspects.

Terming the museum a 'complete package,' KSBB chairman S.C. Joshi said that it sought to inform visitors on the importance of biodiversity conservation and the



Exhibits at the biodiversity museum at Vallakkadavu in Thiruvananthapuram.

role each person could play in such efforts.

A major highlight of the museum will be the Science on a Sphere (SOS) spherical projection system, the first-of-its-kind in the State, which has been procured at a cost of ₹1.20 crore. Developed by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in

the U.S.A., the room-sized, global display system displays extensive planetary data on a six-foot diameter animated globe. Even while providing real-time data of climatic parameters, it will act as an educational tool that projects their correlation with biodiversity, Dr. Joshi said.

Interactive electronic kiosks, among the other features of the museum, have been designed in a manner that they provide relevant information with respect to the user.

The kiosks will prompt the user to state their profession before explaining the kind of relationship they

shared with the biodiversity and taking them into the whole domain of interconnection of the particular ecosystem with the others.

There will also be numerous dioramas on various ecosystems including the coastal and underwater ecosystems. Extensive details regarding various biodiversity

hotspots, particularly those in the State, will also be displayed.

In yet another component, which will be the first-of-its-kind in the State, a 3D theatre that exhibits biodiversity-related films will also be in place.

The premises of the museum have also been 'aqua-escaped' and included a well-developed pond, fountains, waterfall, aquariums and vertical gardens, all of which could be viewed up-close from a walkway that has been constructed for visitors. In fact, the pond has been isolated from the heavily-polluted Parvathy Puthanar and has been filled with freshwater. Various plant varieties will adorn the area.

The Kerala State Science and Technology Museum had been roped in as the consultancy firm for the project, which was realised at a cost of around ₹5 crore.

Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran, Education Minister C. Ravindranath, V.S. Sivakumar, MLA, and Thiruvananthapuram Mayor V.K. Prasanth will be among those who will take part in the inaugural function.