



# **Union Environment Minister visits Great Indian Bustard Habitat in Kachchh, Gujarat; Inaugurates GIB Soft Release Centre, Sayara Van Kavach and reviews Mangrove Plantation Efforts**

## **Shri Bhupender Yadav flags off Patrolling Vehicles at Naliya; Undertakes Plantation at Sayara and Jakhau and interacts with MISHTI Beneficiaries**

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**Kachchh/New Delhi, 14th September, 2026**

Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Bhupender Yadav, today visited the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) habitat at Naliya in Kachchh district of Gujarat. He reviewed the ongoing efforts for providing maximum protection to the GIB, with special focus on comprehensive conservation and habitat-management measures being undertaken across the GIB landscape of Kachchh.

The Minister was accompanied by Shri Arjun Modhwadia, Cabinet Minister for Forest and Environment, Climate Change and Science & Technology (Gujarat). Senior officials of the MoEFCC, the Gujarat Forest Department, Wildlife Institute of India (WII) and the Border Security Force (BSF), along with local community members and beneficiaries of afforestation, plantation and coastal livelihood initiatives across Kachchh were also present.

Visited the Great Indian Bustard Habitat in Naliya, Kutch today. Reviewed the ongoing efforts for providing maximum protection to the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) with special focus on comprehensive conservation and habitat-management measures in the GIB landscape of Kutch. Apart from playing an indispensable role in maintaining a healthy ecosystem, GIB serves as a unique cultural symbol of India's arid heritage. To ensure GIB is protected, India is laying great emphasis on its conservation. Towards that end, today inaugurated the Soft Release Centre for GIB in the facility. The Soft Release Centre is equipped with infrastructure designed to support the conservation, monitoring and gradual adaptation of GIBs to the natural environment.

— Bhupender Yadav (@byadavbjp) September 14, 2026

As part of the visit, Shri Yadav inaugurated the Soft Release Centre for the Great Indian Bustard at the facility, and interacted with officials of the Wildlife Institute of India, the Gujarat Forest Department and other stakeholders engaged in the species' conservation. He subsequently held a detailed interaction with

public representatives at a 'Khatala Sabha', seeking their continued support in taking the species' conservation initiatives forward.

The Minister was briefed on the significant on-ground progress achieved in the GIB landscape. It included restoration of around 11 sq. km. of grassland infested with the invasive *Prosopis juliflora*; Raising of 30 km. of predator-proof fencing covering 15 sq. km.; The pioneering 'jump-start' intervention in which infertile eggs laid by wild GIB females were replaced with viable eggs from the conservation breeding programme. Shri Yadav was informed that the resulting chick from the second such attempt has survived beyond the critical first three months in the wild – a landmark result for the species' recovery in Gujarat.

During my visit to the Great Indian Bustard Habitat in Naliya, Kutch, interacted with representatives of the Jat Sumra and Darbar communities in 'Khatala Sabha' to garner their support in the conservation efforts of the Great Indian Bustard.

Under the leadership of PM Shri @narendramodi ji, India has been laying emphasis on community-led stewardship for environmental protection and species conservation. The local pastoralist and agricultural groups in Kutch are key to ensuring the success of GIB conservation. Later, flagged off 33 new patrolling and rescue vehicles for forest and wildlife conservation efforts which will be used in various divisions under the Kutch Forest Circle for forest protection, forest development, wildlife protection, field patrolling, monitoring, and quick response activities.

— Bhupender Yadav (@byadavbjp) September 14, 2026

Shri Yadav appreciated the coordinated efforts of the Gujarat Forest Department and the Wildlife Institute of India in advancing this achievement. He also flagged off 33 new patrolling and rescue vehicles for forest and wildlife conservation efforts. These vehicles would be utilised across various divisions under the Kachchh Forest Circle for forest protection, forest development, wildlife protection, field patrolling, monitoring and quick-response activities.

The Minister subsequently visited the Hariyalu Gram plantation in Sayara and was briefed on the Sayara Van Kavach initiative and an associated bee-keeping unit. He undertook tree plantation at the site, inaugurated the Sayara Van Kavach, and witnessed the exchange of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Deendayal Port Authority for plantation activities. The Minister also released the Van Kavach Photobook and interacted with local residents, distributing plant saplings among them.

Inaugurated the Van Kavach at Modpir Dada Temple in Sanyara, Kutch today and planted a bargad sapling along with Shri @arjunmodhwadia and other public representatives. I commend Gujarat for adopting the 'Van Kavach' model to develop dense, green, and biodiversity-rich forest areas within limited spaces in both urban and rural areas. 'Van Kavach' is not merely tree plantation; it is a natural green protective shield developed around human settlements. It brings together tree plantation, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration, environmental education, and public participation.

— Bhupender Yadav (@byadavbjp) September 14, 2026

The Sayara Van Kavach, developed over 9.46 sq. km. site following the Miyawaki method of dense, multi-layered afforestation, comprises over 10,000 saplings across 47 native species suited to the saline, low-water conditions of Kachchh. Shri Yadav was informed that the model is expected to lower local temperatures by 1.5–2°C, aid groundwater recharge, prevent soil erosion, and provide a natural habitat for birds, insects and small wildlife, besides serving as a site for eco-tourism, environmental education and local employment.

At Jakhau, the Minister visited the Mangrove Nursery and undertook mangrove plantation alongside about 50 personnel of the Border Security Force and over 50 local residents at an adjoining site. He viewed a photo exhibition on mangrove plantation efforts in the Kori Creek and Sir Creek areas, visited the seaweed seed bank and interacted with experts, and met seaweed cultivators and beneficiaries of the MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes) programme.

Planted *Avicennia marina*, a species of Mangrove, in the Jakhau Mangrove Nursery in Kutch, Gujarat. Under the MISHTI (Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes) programme initiated by PM Shri @narendramodi ji,

Kutch is undertaking large-scale mangrove restoration, scientific nursery development and livelihood initiatives. Against a cumulative plantation target of 29,250 hectares for 2023–24 to 2026–27, mangrove plantation has been completed over 27,652 hectares, including 12,450 hectares in the Kori Creek area. Approximately 3.49 lakh mangrove seedlings have been raised at the Jakhau Mangrove Nursery. Interacted with subject experts to understand the challenges and technological and nature-based solutions to address the same.

Kutch is developing a comprehensive model of mangrove conservation by combining large-scale plantation, nurseries, biodiversity conservation, innovative tidal technology, renewable energy, community participation and sustainable livelihoods. Jakhau Mangrove Nursery is a significant example of technology-driven and community-oriented mangrove restoration in Gujarat.

— Bhupender Yadav (@byadavbjp) September 14, 2026

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