



Union Environment Minister honours India's Environmental Champions at 4th Eco Warrior Awards 2026, calls Conservation a National Responsibility

Senior IFS Officer Shri B. K. Singh receives Lifetime Achievement Award; 15 Forest Officers honoured for exemplary contribution to Environmental Conservation

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Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Shri Bhupender Yadav today presided over the 4th Eco Warrior Awards and Eco Warrior Conclave, organised by the Indian Forest Service Association (IFSA) and Indian Masterminds, in New Delhi. The event brought together senior forest officers, conservationists, policymakers, scientists, civil society representatives and industry representatives to recognise outstanding contributions to forest, wildlife and environmental conservation.

Honoured India's environmental champions at the 4th Eco Warrior Awards 2026 in New Delhi today.

From beat guards and rangers to frontline forest personnel, they protect our forests, respond to fires and safeguard wildlife habitats—turning conservation policy into action on the... pic.twitter.com/3V1WLhltlg

— Bhupender Yadav (@byadavbjp) September 29, 2026

Addressing the event, Shri Yadav said India's forests are vital ecological infrastructure supporting water, climate, soil, biodiversity and livelihoods. He also recognised frontline forest personnel and stressed the role of tribal and forest-dependent communities as conservation partners. The Minister said conservation has become more complex, with forest officers required to manage entire ecological landscapes while balancing development, livelihoods, human aspirations and the needs of wildlife. He said the emerging challenges include climate change, increasingly frequent and unpredictable extreme weather events, forest fires, water stress, habitat fragmentation and invasive species, alongside growing pressure on land and natural resources. He called for a landscape approach that brings together forests, wildlife, agriculture, water, livelihoods and human settlements.

Shri Yadav said conservation is not merely a government responsibility but a national responsibility. He described the Forest Service as a service entrusted with the stewardship of India's natural capital and acknowledged the contribution of frontline forest personnel, including beat guards, rangers and other staff who patrol forests, respond to forest fires and protect wildlife habitats. He said their contribution must never be forgotten and that they are the people who convert conservation policy into conservation on the ground. The Minister said the Eco Warrior Awards celebrate courage without publicity, service without applause and commitment without immediate rewards, and called for the awards to inspire many more people to work for India's forests, wildlife and environment. He concluded by saying that India's conservation journey under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi continues to demonstrate to the world that development and environmental stewardship can advance together.



During the awards ceremony, Shri Yadav presented the Lifetime Achievement Award to Shri Brij Kishore Singh, a 1976-batch IFS officer of the Karnataka cadre, in recognition of his decades-long contribution to forest and wildlife conservation. During his career, Singh played an important role in efforts to combat sandalwood smuggling and the activities of notorious brigand Veerappan, besides contributing to forest protection and wildlife conservation in Karnataka.

Eco Warrior Award Winners

The awards recognised forest officers and conservation professionals across several categories:

Protected Area Management

- Dr. Prakash Chand Gogineni, Conservator of Forests and In-charge Field Director, Similipal Tiger Reserve, Odisha
- Shri Manish Singh, DFO, Pilibhit Tiger Reserve, Uttar Pradesh

Recognised for strengthening tiger and wildlife conservation through technology, protection measures and community participation.

Wildlife Protection and Conservation

- Ms. Selvi S. Senbagapriya, DCF (Genetics), Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

- Dr. Sanjeev Sharma, DCF, Palampur Forest Division, Himachal Pradesh

Recognised for community-based conservation, scientific monitoring, wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, and anti-poaching operations.

Environment Conservation

- Shri Dharm Singh Meena, Conservator of Forests, Bhagirathi Circle, Uttarakhand
- Shri Suman Shivashankar Sivachar W.M., DFO, Wokha, Nagaland

Recognised for scientific water conservation and restoration of springs and streams, and for Amur falcon protection, community engagement and conservation of the Doyang Reservoir.

Community Connect

- Shri Dhawan Kumar Rawat, DFO, Pakke Tiger Reserve, Arunachal Pradesh
- Shri Gurharsh Singh, DCF, Rampur, Himachal Pradesh

Recognised for linking conservation with community livelihoods and for constructing a timber bridge within six hours following the Samej cloudburst to facilitate rescue operations.

Best Use of Technology

- Shri N. Jayaraj, Wildlife Warden, Hosur, Tamil Nadu
- Shri Ramsundar M., Director, Rajgir Zoo Safari, Bihar

Recognised for the use of AI-based surveillance and early-warning systems for elephant protection near a vulnerable railway stretch, as well as digital booking, CCTV surveillance and GPS tracking.

Special Jury Award

- Ms. Savita Dahiya, DCF, Barmer, Rajasthan
- Ms. K. Karthikeyani, DFO, Thanjavur, Tamil Nadu

Recognised for restoration of Tal Chhapar grassland and improvement of habitat for blackbucks and chinkaras, and for a campaign that removed 239 illegal guns from the landscape while strengthening elephant protection.

Special Projects Recognition

The Special Projects Award recognised Project Elephant and the Great Indian Bustard conservation project in Rajasthan for their significant contributions to species and habitat conservation.

The **Eco Warrior Conclave** featured three panel discussions focusing on emerging and critical issues in environmental governance and conservation:

- AI & Technology for Conservation and Natural Resources Management;
- Role of Corporates in Forest Management;
- Sustainable Development & Environmental Ethics.

The discussions brought together experts and stakeholders to deliberate on the opportunities and challenges involved in using technology, corporate participation and sustainable development approaches to strengthen conservation outcomes. A photography exhibition showcasing nature photographs captured by civil servants from across India was also organised as part of the event.



The event was attended by eminent personalities from the forestry and conservation sector, including Shri Sushil Kumar Awasthi, DG (Forests) and Special Secretary (MoEFCC); Shri Bharat Lal, Former Secretary General NHRC; Ms. Anita Karn, President, IFSA; Ms. Monalisa Dash, General Secretary, IFSA; and representatives of Indian Masterminds, among other distinguished guests.

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