

Lab set up at butterfly park for rearing different species

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Ashok Kumar, a lab assistant at the BRC, said: "In a bid to attract devotees and tourists, the Gaya Forest Division has also established a laboratory at the park for the rearing of different species."

"The park has a well-managed habitat for adult and early-stage butterflies. An open-air interpretation centre, spreading awareness about them, is also functional at the park. Interactive information boards containing content on butterfly diversity in Bodh Gaya and the ecological importance of the creatures are on display in the park to create awareness among tourists," he said.

Another lab assistant, Jitendra Kumar, said, "As many as 92 species of butterflies have been identified at the centre. Rearing of at least 35

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Over 92 species of butterflies have been identified at the centre

species is being done at the lab, which includes Striped Albatross, Lemon Pansy, Plain Tiger, Yellow Pansy, Large Dark Oakblue, and others."

Earlier, birds were released in the 'life release' ritual, but this has been replaced by the sustainable practice of freeing the winged insects.

"An adult butterfly is given to the devotees who can't bring these delicate creatures from abroad for the 'life release' ritual. This has minimised the illegal practice of releasing caged birds,

which were captured again by the poachers," he said, adding that Lord Buddha too had recognised the 'Common Crow,' a species of butterfly that completes its life cycle on the Bodhi tree, feeding on its seeds.

A traveller from the Netherlands, Egor, who was found releasing a butterfly at the park on Wednesday, said: "Butterflies are a very beautiful creation of nature. I have released a butterfly for happiness and peace."

Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee member and Buddhist scholar Kiran Lama said, "The practice of 'life release' is an expression of compassion, reminding us of our shared responsibility to protect all forms of life. This involves saving animals that are destined for slaughter or captivity and releasing them into their natural habitat."

