

# KAISER-I-HIND IS ARUNACHAL'S STATE BUTTERFLY

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Winged beauty: *Teinopalpus imperialis* .Special ArrangementSpecial Arrangement

An elusive swallowtail butterfly carrying 'India' in its name and found in next-door China will become the State butterfly of Arunachal Pradesh.

The State Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Saturday approved the large, brightly coloured Kaiser-i-Hind as the State butterfly. The Cabinet meeting was for the first time held outside State capital Itanagar at an unusual location — Pakke Tiger Reserve.

The Cabinet also adopted the Pakke Tiger Reserve 2047 declaration on climate change-resilient and responsive Arunachal Pradesh aimed at lowering emissions and sustainable development.

Kaiser-i-Hind ( *Teinopalpus imperialis* ) literally means Emperor of India. This butterfly with a 90-120 mm wingspan is found in six States along the eastern Himalayas at elevations from 6,000-10,000 feet in well-wooded terrain.

The butterfly also flutters in Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and southern China.

The State Wildlife Board had in January 2020 accepted the proposal from Koj Rinya, the divisional forest officer of Hapoli Forest Division in the Lower Subansiri district to accept the Kaiser-i-Hind as the State butterfly. The proposal was made with a view to boosting butterfly tourism and saving the species from extinction in the State.

Protected areas under the Hapoli Forest Division are popular with butterfly enthusiasts.

Although the Kaiser-i-Hind is protected under Schedule II of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, it is hunted for supply to butterfly collectors.

## Habitat conservation

According to Assam-based butterfly expert Monsoon Jyoti Gogoi, the species is confined to very few pockets of Arunachal Pradesh and could become extinct if not conserved.

"The State butterfly tag can translate into its habitat conservation," she said.

The first dead specimen of Kaiser-i-Hind was recorded in Sikkim by Usha Lachugpa, a senior forest official of the State, in 2012. It was captured live on camera by a few participants during a butterfly watching meet in Arunachal Pradesh's Talle Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in 2014.

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