

1. Great Indian Bustards

Why in News?

- Recently, The Central Electricity Authority (CEA) has issued Draft Central Electricity Authority (Construction of Electric Lines in Great Indian Bustard Area) Regulations, 2023, making mandatory for electric lines to be underground or overhead through the ‘Great Indian Bustard (GIB) Area’.

Highlights

- The Great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*), the State bird of Rajasthan, is considered India’s most critically endangered bird.
- It is considered the flagship grassland species, representing the health of the grassland ecology.
- Its population is confined mostly to Rajasthan and Gujarat. Small populations occur in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh.
- The bird is under constant threats due to collision/electrocution with power transmission lines, hunting (still prevalent in Pakistan), habitat loss and alteration as a result of widespread agricultural expansion, etc.
- Its conservation status are IUCN red List: Critically Endangered, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES): Appendix 1, Convention on Migratory Species (CMS): Appendix I and Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972: Schedule I
- The regulations came in light of a case in the Supreme Court (SC) on the issue of threat to the endangered Great Indian Bustards.
- As per the regulations, all electric lines of 33 kV and below passing through the ‘Great Indian Bustard Area’ will be underground, while those above 33KV will be overhead lines installed with bird flight diverters.
- These diverters are aimed at improving power line visibility for birds and reducing the risk of collision.