



Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

Why in News

Recently, the Centre has approached the [Supreme Court](#) seeking **modification of its order directing** that all transmission cables in the habitat of the [Great Indian Bustard \(GIB\)](#) be laid underground.

Key Points

▪ Background:

- Earlier this year (2021), in a **bid to check the dwindling numbers** of the **endangered Great Indian Bustard and Lesser Florican**, a Supreme Court bench directed that **overhead power lines be laid underground**, wherever feasible, passing along the habitat of the birds in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

▪ Concerns Raised:

◦ Implications for the Power Sector in India:

- The area falling in Rajasthan and Gujarat **contains a large proportion of the country's total solar and wind energy potential**.
- Laying power lines underground will **escalate the cost of renewable energy production** and **hurt [India's renewable energy cause](#)**.
- **Energy transition is essential for reducing emission** and controlling climate change and India has made international commitments including under the agreement signed in Paris in 2015 under the [United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change \(UNFCCC\)](#) for transition to non-fossil fuels and for emission reduction.
- India has set a **target to achieve installed [renewable energy capacity](#)** (excluding large Hydro) of 175 GW by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030.

◦ Chances of Renewable Energy to Remain Untapped:

- So far, **only a miniscule 3%** of the estimated potential of around 263 GW renewable energy in this area has been tapped.
- If the remaining potential stays untapped, an additional **93,000 MW of coal fired capacity** will be **needed to replace the unutilised renewable energy in the future** which would cause an adverse direct impact on the environment.

Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

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▪ About:

- It is the **State bird of Rajasthan** and 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.

▪ Protection Status:

- [International Union for Conservation of Nature 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
- [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#): Schedule 1

▪ Measures taken to protect GIB:

◦ Species Recovery Programme:

- It is kept under the **species recovery programme** under the [Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats](#) of the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).

◦ National Bustard Recovery Plans:

- It is currently being implemented by conservation agencies.

◦ Conservation Breeding Facility:

- MoEF&CC, Rajasthan government and Wildlife Institute of India (WII) have also established a **conservation breeding facility** in **Desert National Park** at Jaisalmer in June 2019.
- The objective of the programme is to build up a captive population of Great Indian Bustards and to release the chicks in the wild for increasing the population.

◦ Project Great Indian Bustard:

- It has been launched by the Rajasthan government with an **aim of constructing breeding enclosures** for the species and developing infrastructure to reduce human pressure on its habitats.

◦ Eco-Friendly Measures:

- **Task Force for suggesting eco-friendly measures** to mitigate impacts of power transmission lines and **other power transmission infrastructures** on wildlife

including the Great Indian Bustard.

Source: IE

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