Great Indian Bustard (GIB)

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Conservation*

Why in news?

Justice P.S. Narasimha has criticized the anthropocentric bias of imported environmental principles like 'inter-generational equity', arguing - inadequate for protecting the Great Indian Bustard.

- **Scientific Name –** Ardeotis nigriceps.
- **Family –** Otididae.
- It is a ***flagship species*** for the health of grassland ecosystems.
- It is among the ***heaviest flying birds*** in the world.
- **Population –** There are currently 200 individuals worldwide.
- **Habitat –** It inhabit ***arid and semi-arid grasslands***, open country with thorn scrub, and tall grass interspersed with cultivation, generally avoiding irrigated areas.
- **Distribution range –** Fewer than 150 Bustards are found in the ***Rajasthan*** alone.
- Small and scattered populations exists in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh.
- **Appearance –** Distinctive black crown on forehead, pale neck and head, brownish body with wings marked in black, brown, and grey.
- **Size –** Males are generally larger than females, weighing between 8 to 18 kg, while females are considerably smaller.

- **Diet – *Omnivorous*** with seasonal diet variation; feeds on insects, small rodents, seeds, and grasses.
- **Behavior –** They are primarily ***terrestrial birds***, spending most of their time on the ground.
- **Threats –** Habitat loss from agriculture, mining, infrastructure, along with collisions with power lines (leading cause of adult mortality).
- **Conservation Status**
  - **IUCN –** Critically endangered.
  - **CITES –** Appendix I.
  - **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972** – Schedule I

To know about Great Indian Bustards' Recovery Program, click here

References

1. The Hindu | Petition on the conservation of Great Indian Bustard
2. WWF | Great Indian Bustard

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