

Oran lands

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In news— Residents from around 40 villages of Jaisalmer, Rajasthan have walked 225 kilometres to protect community-conserved sacred spaces known as 'orans'.

What are 'orans'?

- The orans are among the **last natural habitats of the great Indian bustard**.
- The open stretch of land, which receives long hours of sunlight and brisk winds, has become a hub of green energy with windmills and solar photovoltaic dotting it.
- They are **listed as 'wastelands' in the revenue records**. Some of the names of Orans are Degrai, Mokla, Salkha, Kemde, which also spread across several hectares but are listed as wastelands.
- These orans are **hotspots of biodiversity with trees and flowers like rohida, bordi, kumbhat**, and desi babool in large numbers.
- There are **different varieties of grasses like sevan and murath as well**, making these grasslands home to more than 250 species of birds and animals, including the great Indian bustard, McQueen bustard, chinkara, Indian desert cat, desert fox, etc.
- The Supreme Court in 2018 had ordered the orans be recorded as 'deemed forests' in the revenue records in the TN Godavarman vs. Union of India case, but not even one oran has been recorded as a deemed forest so far.
- In these, the herdsman of the area have been grazing cows, sheep and goats for centuries, but for the last few years, there has been a crisis on the pastures due to allotment of these ancient traditional pastures to various energy companies.
- There is a demand to recategorise the area as 'oran

land'. The current categorisation is causing a loss of biodiversity and is affecting the livelihood of the locals in the area, as huge chunks of land are being allotted for setting up solar plants.