

Orans

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Orans Latest News

Rajasthan has initiated the process for classifying the community-protected 'Oran' lands as forests in compliance with the Supreme Court's direction.

About Orans

- Orans are **traditional sacred groves** found in **Rajasthan**.
- They are **patches of forests dedicated by villagers to different deities** as a socio-religious tradition and **managed by the rural communities**.
- Orans serve as **centers of socio-religious activity** for local communities. Festivals and fairs are held annually, often on specific dates, to honor these sacred places.
- **Rajasthan** is home to about **25,000 'Oran' lands** covering an area of 6 lakh hectares.
- 'Oran' land is **used by local communities for grazing, forest products, natural water filtration, and for livelihood opportunities** to promote the livestock economy.

- **Water bodies within the orans**, such as **Talab (pond)**, **Nadi (small pond)**, **open wells**, and streams, are **crucial water resources for livestock and wildlife**.
- **In the Thar Desert, some orans have ancient** goverdhan/shilalekh (**petrograph**) **near water bodies**.
- The area covered by an oran can range from a **few hectares to several hundred hectares**. For example, the **Bhadariya Mata Oran in Jaisalmer** district spans 17,821 hectares.
- Orans also form the **natural habitat for India's most critically endangered bird, the Great Indian Bustard (GIB)**, a protected species under the Wildlife Protection Act, which is also the State bird of Rajasthan.
- The State's forest policy of 2023 gave the status of general community land to 'Orans', which was considered insufficient for their conservation as well as protection against encroachment and degradation.
- The **Supreme Court recognised 'Oran' lands as forests under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980**, in a landmark judgment delivered on December 18, 2024.

Orans FAQs

Q1. What are Orans?

Ans. Orans are traditional sacred groves found in Rajasthan.

Q2. Which critically endangered bird species is naturally protected in the Orans?

Ans. Great Indian Bustard

Q3. Approximately how many Oran lands exist in Rajasthan?

Ans. 25,000

Source: TH

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