



PRECURE COMPILATION FOR 2020

3rd week of May
(18th May to 23rd May)

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Table of Contents

GEOGRAPHY

<https://youtu.be/QRsB0a8jttU>

1. *Locust Attacks*
2. *Mission Sagar*
3. *Goal*
4. *Cyclone Amphan*
5. *DMP*
6. *GFRA*
7. *Geographical Indication*

POLITY

<https://youtu.be/SGI4trwpMtc>

1. *SCRA*
2. *Goal Programme*
3. *Project Arth Ganga*
4. *Education Initiatives*
5. *National Test Abhyaas App*
6. *One Nation. One Ration Card System*

ECONOMY

<https://youtu.be/V7w4w2GGegl>

1. *Liquidity Measures*
2. *Fiscal Measures*
3. *Structural Reforms*

ENVIRONMENT

<https://youtu.be/P6jv9wdgdq4>

1. *IDBD*
2. *GCE*
3. *TATR*
4. *ESA*

IR

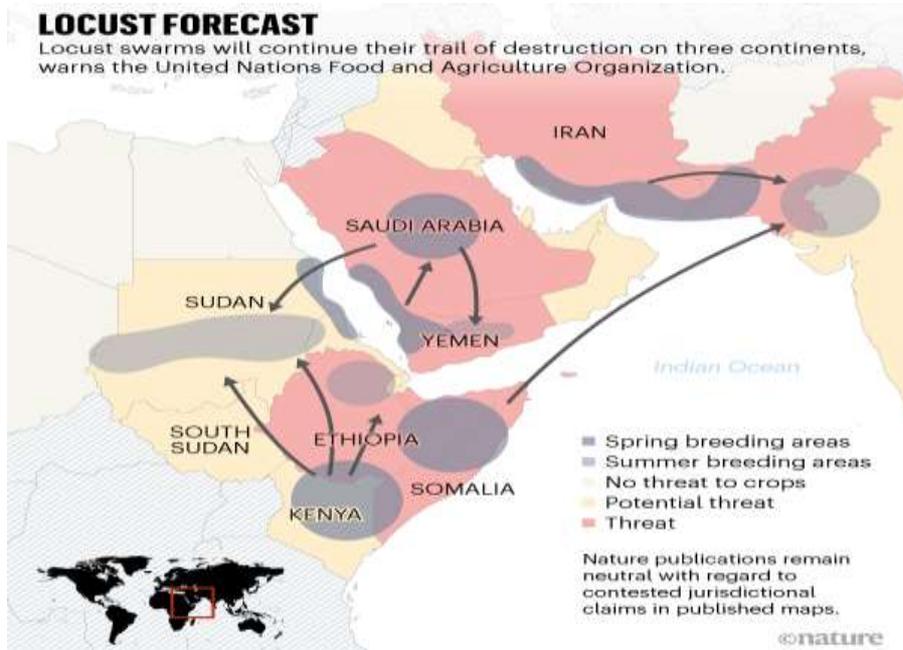
<https://youtu.be/9JfKUoF6Qf0>

1. *Open Skies Treaty*
2. *CTL*
3. *Cerberus*
4. *One in a Million Super Earth*

1. Locust Attacks

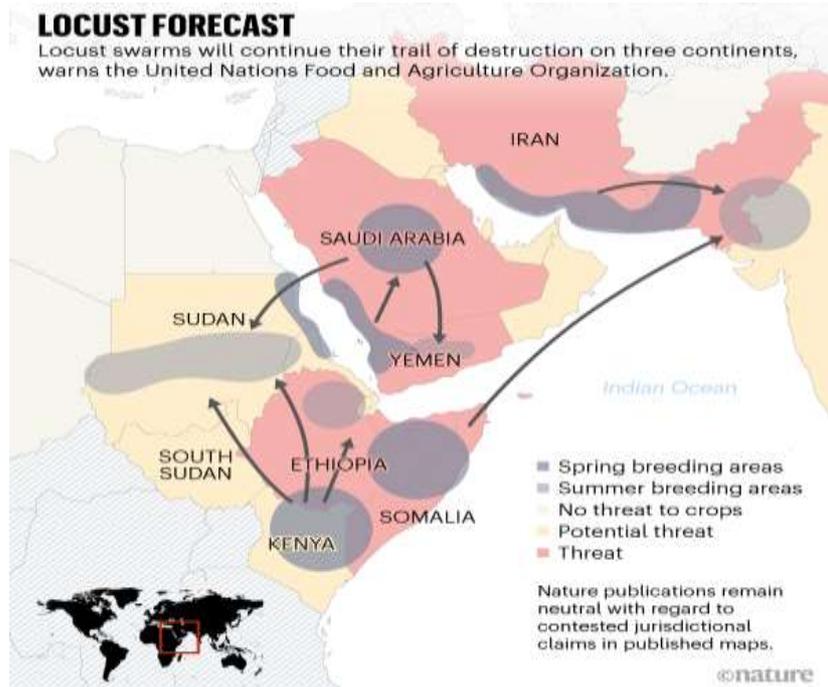


- Locusts are **the oldest migratory pest in the world**.
- Locusts **can eat a large variety of plants**. Adult locust swarms **can fly up to 150 km a day with the wind**.
- They **differ from ordinary grasshoppers** in their ability to **change behaviour (gregarize)** and form swarms that **can migrate over large distances**.
- The **most devastating of all locust species is the Desert Locust (Schistocerca gregaria)**.
- When **desert locusts meet**, their nervous systems release serotonin, which causes them to become **mutually attracted**, a prerequisite for swarming.
- The locust breeds in high temperatures and high humidity, which is prevalent in areas around the **Red Sea**.



Why In News?

- The 2019-20 locust infestation in Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and South Asia is an outbreak of **desert locusts** which is threatening the food supply across the region.
- The outbreak is the **worst in 70 years in Kenya** and the **worst in 25 years in Ethiopia, Somalia and India**.



- The current attack in India, which started in 2019, has its origin in Yemen, where there was internal conflict and civil war.
- When the locust was breeding in heavy numbers there in 2018-19, the country could not take care due to its attention towards the civil war and lack of resources to control it.
- The insect went out of control, took the route of Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, Somalia, Ethiopia and other countries located on both sides of the Red Sea where they multiplied rapidly.

Who Handles This In India?

- **Locust Warning Organisation (LWO)**, established in 1939 and amalgamated in 1946 with the **Directorate of Plant Protection Quarantine and Storage (PPQS)** of the **Ministry of Agriculture**.
- The main objective of LWO is **protection of standing crops and other green vegetation from the ravages of Desert locust** which is one of the most dangerous pests occurring in desert areas throughout the world.

Species Diversity:

Indian locusts

- Desert locust (*Schistocerca gregaria*)
- Migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria*)
- Bombay Locust (*Nomadacris succincta*)
- Tree locust (*Anacridium* sp.)

2. Mission Sagar

- India has sent Indian Naval Ship (INS) **Kesari**, carrying food items and medical assistance teams, to countries **[Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar and Comoros]** in the southern Indian Ocean to deal with **Covid-19** pandemic.
- The deployment is in consonance with the **PMs vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region 'SAGAR'**.

SAGAR Programme (Security and Growth for All in the Region)

- SAGAR is a term coined by PM Modi in 2015 during his Mauritius visit with a focus on blue economy.
- It is a maritime initiative which gives priority to Indian Ocean region for ensuring peace, stability and prosperity of India in Indian Ocean region.

3. GOAL (Going Online As Leaders)" Programme:

- It was launched in March 2019.

- It is a **digitally-enabled mentorship initiative of Facebook**.
- The initiative connects **underprivileged young women from tribal areas** with senior expert mentors in the areas of **business, fashion and arts** to learn digital and life skills.

4. Cyclone Amphan:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has declared a cyclone alert for the Indian coastline across the Bay of Bengal as a low-pressure area has formed over southeast Bay of Bengal and adjoining south Andaman sea.

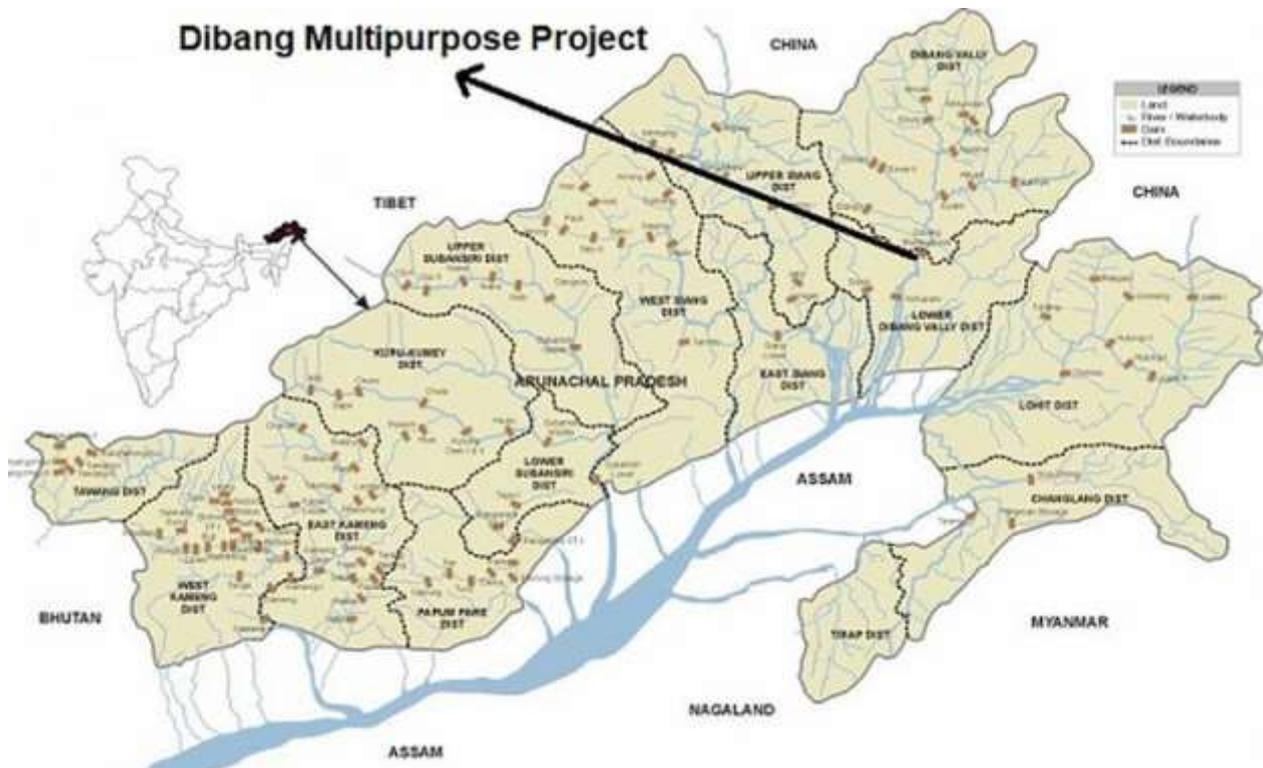
Scales of Cyclone:

The Indian Meteorological Department classifies Cyclones based on their wind speeds

- Cyclonic Storm: 63-88 km/hr
- Severe Cyclonic Storm: 89-117 km/hr
- Very Severe Cyclonic Storm: 118-165 km
- Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm: 166-220 km/hr
- Super cyclonic Storm: greater than 220 km/hr

5. Dibang Multipurpose Project

- The Project is located on river **Dibang, in Lower Dibang Valley District of Arunachal Pradesh**.
- The project shall generate 2880MW (12x240MW) power to produce 11223MU of energy in a 90% dependable year. This is the **largest ever Hydro Electric Project to be constructed in India**.
- The dam is 278 metres high and **will be the highest dam in India once completed**.
- The construction of Dibang MPP shall prevent the sizeable downstream area from floods. After implementation of master plan of Brahmaputra Board for flood moderation of all rivers contributing to river Brahmaputra, of which Dibang MPP is one of the components, sizable area will be protected from flooding and **help in mitigating the perennial damage due to floods in Assam**.





Dibang River

- It is the left-bank tributary of the Brahmaputra River.
- It flows through the states of Arunachal Pradesh and Assam.
- It enters the plain area in Lower Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh.

6. Global Forest Resources Assessment 2020

- The Global Forest Resources Assessment (FRA) reports on the status and trends of the world's forest resources.
- It is led by the Forestry Department of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.
- Global Forest Resource Assessment (FRA) done by FAO once in five years provides information about the forest resources of almost all the countries in the world.
- According to the report, around 178 million hectares of forests is lost in the last 30 years. However, the rate at which the forests are being destroyed has reduced.
- The rate of forest loss in 2015-2020 declined to an estimated 10 million hectares (mha), down from 12 million hectares (mha) in 2010-2015, according to the FRA 2020.
- However, the rate of net forest loss decreased substantially during 1990–2020 due to a reduction in deforestation in some countries, plus increases in the forest area in others through afforestation.
- The largest proportion of the forest that currently contributes on the earth is the tropical forest standing at 45%. The tropical forests were followed by boreal forest, temperate forests and subtropical forests.
- The report says that currently 5 major countries in the world contribute to the forest resources of the world. They are Brazil, USA, Canada, China and Russia.

7. Geographical Indication (GI) TAG

Sohrai Khovar painting



- Sohrai Khovar painting is a traditional and ritualistic mural art being practised by **local tribal women during local harvest and marriage seasons** using local, naturally available soils of different colours in the area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand.

Telia Rumal cloth of Telangana



- Telia Rumal cloth of **Telangana** involves intricate handmade work with **cotton loom** displaying a variety of **designs and motifs in three particular colours — red, black and white.**

POLITY

1. Shetkar Committee recommendations accepted

- Government has accepted and implemented three important recommendations of Committee of Experts (CoE) under the Chairmanship of **Lt General D B Shekatkar (Retd)** relating to border Infrastructure. These were related to speeding up road construction, leading to socio economic development in the border areas.
- On the matter related to **creating border infrastructure**, the Government has implemented recommendation of CoE to outsource road construction work beyond optimal capacity of Border Roads Organisation (BRO). It has been made mandatory to adopt Engineering Procurement Contract (EPC) mode for execution of all works costing more than Rs 100 crore.
- The other recommendation relating to introduction of **modern construction plants, equipment and machinery has been implemented** by delegating enhanced procurement powers from Rs 7.5 crore to Rs 100 crore to BRO, for domestic and foreign procurements. Border Roads has recently inducted Hot-Mix Plant 20/30 TPH for speedier laying of roads, remote operated hydraulic Rock Drills DC-400 R for hard rock cutting, a range of F-90 series of self-propelled snow-cutters/blowers for speedier snow clearance.
- **New Technology like blasting technology** for precision blasting, use of Geo-Textiles for soil stabilisation, cementitious base for pavements, plastic coated aggregates for surfacing, is also being used to enhance the pace of construction. With the empowerment of field officers through enhanced delegation of financial and administrative powers, there has been significant improvement in faster financial closure of works.
- The land acquisition and all statutory clearances like forest and environmental clearance are also made part of approval of Detailed Project Report (DPR). Further, with the adoption of EPC mode of execution, it is mandatory to award work only when 90 per cent of the statutory clearances have been obtained, implementing the recommendation of CoE regarding obtaining prior clearances before the commencement of the project.

EPC Model

Engineering Procurement Model:

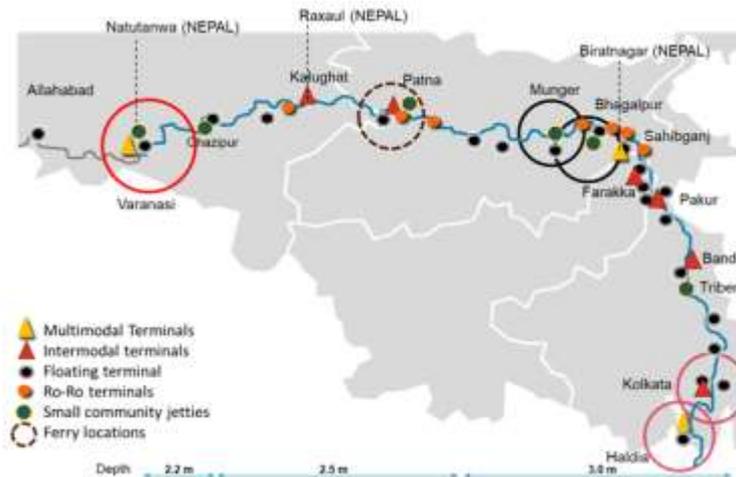
- Under this system the entire project is funded by the government.
- The EPC entails the contractor build the project by designing, installing and procuring necessary labour and land to construct the infrastructure, either directly or by subcontracting.
- Under EPC model the contractor is legally responsible to complete the project under some fixed predetermined timeline and may also involve scope for penalty in case of time overrun.
- In EPC as all the clearances, land acquisition and regulatory norms have to be completed by the government itself and the private players do not have to get itself involved in these time taking procedures.

2. GOAL Programme

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched the “GOAL (Going Online As Leaders)” programme. The GOAL programme is designed to **provide mentorship to tribal youth through digital mode**. The digitally enabled program envisages to act as a catalyst to explore hidden talents of the tribal youth, which will help in their personal development as well as contribute to all-round upliftment of their society.
- The program intends to up skill and empower 5,000 tribal youths in the current phase to harness the full potential of digital platforms and tools to learn new ways of doing business, explore and connect with domestic and international markets as is the vision of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.
- In this program, 5000 scheduled tribe youth (to be called as ‘Mentees’) will get an excellent opportunity to get training by experts from different disciplines and fields (to be called as ‘Mentors’). There will be 1 mentor for 2 mentees. The program aims to enable Scheduled Tribe (ST) youth in remote areas to use digital platforms for sharing their aspirations, dreams and talent with their mentors.
- The program will focus on three core areas – **Digital Literacy, Life Skills and Leadership and Entrepreneurship, and on sectors such as Agriculture, Art & Culture, Handicrafts & Textiles**, Health, Nutrition, among others. At least 250 Fellows who are getting scholarship from Ministry of Tribal Affairs under National Scholarship and Fellowship Scheme and are part of Tribal Talent Pool will also be mentored through the program.

3. Project Arth Ganga

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during the first meeting of the National Ganga Council in Kanpur on December 14, 2019, had conceptualised 'Arth Ganga' to energise the economic activity along the Ganga river bank. The Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) aimed to develop river Ganges as a safe mode of navigation and is being implemented with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank. 'Project Arth Ganga' envisages re-engineering the JMVP by involving the local community with a focus on economic activities in and around the Ganga River.



- Small jetties along the Ganga to boost the economic activities at the community level would be set up as part of the "Project Arth Ganga" to energise economic activity along river banks in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. About 40 floating jetties and 10 pairs of Ro-Ro terminals are being planned on River Ganga in the four states in the Gangetic belt, which will bring down the logistics cost for farmers in the movement of local produce.
- Apart from providing benefits in terms of trade and access to markets, **local community's economic enhancement and passenger facilitation**, the 'Arth Ganga' project will also ensure large scale skills enhancement and public/private sector capability development. "Project Arth Ganga" would catalyse economic development in the Ganga basin to generate economic benefit of more than Rs 1000 crores over the next 5 years.

4. One Nation, One Channel- Education Initiatives

- A comprehensive initiative called **PM e-VIDYA** will be launched which unifies all efforts related to digital/online/on-air education. This will enable **multi-mode access to education**, and includes: DIKSHA (one nation-one digital platform) which will now become the nation's digital infrastructure for providing quality e-content in school education for all the states/UTs; TV (one class-one channel) where one dedicated channel per grade for each of the classes 1 to 12 will provide access to quality educational material: SWAYAM online courses in MOOCS format for school and higher education; IITPAL for IITJEE/NEET preparation; Air through Community radio and CBSE Shiksha Vani podcast; and study material for the differently abled developed on Digitally Accessible Information System (DAISY) and in sign language on NIOS website/ YouTube. This will benefit nearly 25 crore school going children across the country.
- In this time of global pandemic, it is vital that we provide psychosocial support to students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional wellbeing. The **Manodarpan initiative** is being launched to provide such support through a website, a toll-free helpline, national directory of counselors, interactive chat platform, etc. This initiative will benefit all school going children in the country, along with their parents, teachers and the community of stakeholders in school education.
- A **National Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission** will be launched, for ensuring that every child in the country necessarily attains foundational literacy and numeracy in Grade 3 by 202 For this, teacher capacity building, a robust curricular framework, engaging learning material – both online and offline, learning outcomes and their measurement indices, assessment techniques, tracking of learning progress, etc. will be

designed to take it forward in a systematic fashion. This mission will cover the learning needs of nearly 4 crore children in the age group of 3 to 11 years.

5. National Test Abhyaas App

- Following multiple requests from students regarding the preparations for competitive exams- Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), the **National Testing Agency (NTA)** has come up with 'National Test Abhyaas' app for the students preparing for the engineering, medical admission tests.
- The App has been developed by NTA to enable candidates to take mock tests for upcoming exams such as JEE Main, NEET under the NTA's purview. Students from across the country can "take full mock tests free of cost, in a bid to be fully prepared for the upcoming JEE, NEET, and other competitive exams. The tests can be easily downloaded. The app will contain a three-hour-long question paper for both JEE Main, NEET aspirants. The students will get immediate scores with explanations of the answers.

6. Nationwide rollout of 'One Nation, One Ration Card' System

- On May 15th, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the national rollout of a 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system in all states and Union Territories by March 2021. As of now, about 20 states have come on board to implement the inter-state ration card portability.
- According to the Finance Minister, this system will enable migrant workers and their family members to access PDS benefits from any Fair Price Shop in the country. Under the **National Food Security Act, 2013**, about 81 crore persons are entitled to buy subsidized food grain — rice at Rs 3/kg, wheat at Rs 2/kg, and coarse grains at Re 1/kg — from their designated Fair Price Shops (FPS) of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- In the present system, a ration cardholder can buy food grains only from an FPS that has been assigned to her in the locality in which she lives. However, this will change once the 'One Nation, One Ration Card' system becomes operational nationally. The new system, based on a technological solution, will identify a beneficiary through biometric authentication on electronic Point of Sale (ePoS) devices installed at the FPSs, and enable that person to purchase the quantity of food grains to which she is entitled under the NFSA.
- Ration card portability is aimed at providing intra-state as well as inter-state portability of ration cards.
- While the **Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS) portal** provides the technological platform for the inter-state portability of ration cards, enabling a migrant worker to buy food grains from any FPS across the country, the other portal (annavitran.nic.in) hosts the data of distribution of food grains through E-PoS devices within a state.
- The **Annavitran portal** enables a migrant worker or his family to avail the benefits of PDS outside their district but within their state. While a person can buy her share of food grains as per her entitlement under the NFSA, wherever she is based, the rest of her family members can purchase subsidised food grains from their ration dealer back home.

ECONOMY

Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan (Completely Discussed)

Let's get a broader idea first.

#AatmanirbharBharat Overall Stimulus Package		In ₹ crore	
Part-1	5,94,550	Part-3	1,50,000
Emergency W/C Facility for Businesses, Including MSMEs	3,00,000	Food Micro enterprises	10,000
Subordinate Debt for Stressed MSMEs	20,000	Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana	20,000
Fund of Funds for MSME	50,000	TOP to TOTAL: Operation Greens	500
EPF Support for Business & Workers	2,800	Agri Infrastructure Fund	100,000
Reduction in EPF rates	6,750	Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund	15,000
Special liquidity Scheme for NBFC/HFC/MFIs	30,000	Promotion of Herbal Cultivation	4,000
Partial credit guarantee Scheme 2.0 for Liabilities of NBFCs/MFIs	45,000	Beekeeping Initiative	500
Liquidity Injection for DISCOMs	90,000	Parts-4 & 5	48,100
Reduction in TDS/TCS rates	50,000	Viability Gap Funding	8,100
Part-2	3,10,000	Additional MGNREGS allocation	40,000
Free Food grain Supply to Migrant Workers for 2 months	3,500	Total	11,02,650
Interest Subvention for MUDRA Shishu Loans	1,500	(Parts 1+2+3+4+5)	
Special Credit Facility to Street Vendors	5,000	Earlier Measures	1,92,800
Housing CLSS-MIG	70,000	Including PMGKP	
Additional Emergency Working Capital through NABARD	30,000	RBI Measures	8,01,603
Additional credit through KCC	200,000	(Actual)	
		Grand Total	20,97,053

- Prime Minister announced a Special economic and comprehensive package of Rs 20 lakh crore.
- It is said to be equivalent to 10% of India's GDP.
- It attempts to make India *Atmanirbhar* or Self-Reliant.
- *Atmanirbhar Bharat* or Self-Reliant India Movement to be based on five pillars of-
 - Economy
 - Infrastructure
 - System
 - Vibrant Demography
 - Demand

1. Liquidity Oriented Measures

By RBI

- **TLTRO** (Targeted Long-Term Repo Operations): Rs 1,00,000 crore
- **CRR** (Cash Reserve Ratio) cut of 1%: Rs 1,37,000 crore
- **MSF** (Marginal Standing Facility) Accommodation under hiked from 2% of Statutory Liquidity Ratio to 3%: Rs 1,37,000 crore
- **Refinance** of Financial Institutions (SIDBI, NABARD and NHB): Rs 50,000 crore
- **SLF-MF** (Special liquidity facility for Mutual Funds): Rs 50,000 crore.

Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)

- Availability of bank credit without the hassles of collaterals / third party guarantees would be a major source of support to the first generation entrepreneurs to realise their dream of setting up a unit of their own Micro and Small Enterprise (MSE).

- Keeping this objective in view, **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)**, Government of India launched Credit Guarantee Scheme (CGS) so as to strengthen credit delivery system and facilitate flow of credit to the MSE sector.
- To operationalise the scheme, **Government of India** and **SIDBI** set up the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE)

By Government of India

MSMEs:

- **Collateral free automatic loans**- Govt giving 100% credit guarantee cover to banks and NBFCs on principal and interest: Rs 3,00,000 Crore.
- **Subordinate Debt** to provide equity support to stressed MSMEs- Govt. will support CGTMSE (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises) limited: Rs 20,000 crore.
- **Equity infusion** for MSMEs- Gol will set up Fund of Funds with a corpus of Rs 10,000 crores. It will operate through a mother fund and few daughter funds. Fund structure will help leverage Rs 50,000 crore of funds at daughter funds level. It will also encourage MSMEs to get listed on the main board of Stock Exchanges.
 - Fund of Funds
 - Mother Fund
 - Daughter Funds

Other Reforms for MSMEs

Changed Definitions



- **Global tenders to be disallowed:** To help Indian businesses scale, government disallowed global tenders in government procurement up to Rs 200 crores.
- **e-market linkage** for MSMEs:

- Government to provide e-market, which will be promoted as a replacement for trade fairs and exhibitions.
- Fintech will be used to enhance transaction-based lending using the data generated by the e-marketplace.

- **MSME receivables:** From government and CPSEs to be released within 45 days.

EPF:

- **EPF support for business and workers** for 3 months: Rs 2,500 crore
 - It is Under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP).
 - Payment of 12 percent each of employer and employee contributions was made into EPF accounts of eligible establishments.
 - This payment, which was made for March, April and May, is extended till August providing liquidity relief of Rs 2500cr.
- **EPF contribution reduced to 10%**
 - Statutory PF contribution of both employer and employee will be reduced to 10 percent from the existing 12 percent for all establishments covered by EPFO for the next 3 months.
- **Special liquidity scheme for NBFCs/ HFCs/ MFIs:**
 - Securities issued by them fully guaranteed by govt: Rs 30,000 crore.
 - The investment will be made in both primary and secondary market transactions in investment-grade debt paper of NBFCs/HFCs/MFIs.
 - Securities will be fully guaranteed by the central government.
- **Partial Credit Guarantee Scheme 2.0 for NBFCs:**
 - Existing PCGS scheme will be extended to cover borrowings such as primary issuance of Bonds/CPs (liability side of balance sheets) of NBFCs, HFCs and MFIs with low credit rating.
 - First 20 percent of losses will be borne by the Centre.
- **Liquidity injection by REC and PFC for Power Distribution Companies (Discoms):**
 - Power Finance Corp/REC to infuse liquidity of Rs 90,000 crore to DISCOMs against receivables.
 - Loans to be given against state guarantees for the exclusive purpose of discharging liabilities of DISCOMs to Gencos.
 - Central Public Sector Generation Companies shall give a rebate to DISCOMs, which shall be passed on to the final consumers (industries).
- **Note: REC Limited** (formerly Rural Electrification Corporation Limited) is a Navratna company under the administrative control of the Ministry of Power.
- **25% reduction in TDS/ TCS rate:** Rs 50,000 crore:
 - The rates of Tax Deduction at Source (TDS) for non-salaried specified payments made to residents and rates of Tax Collection at Source (TCS) for the specified receipts shall be reduced by 25 percent of the existing rates.
 - The reduction shall be applicable for the remaining part of the FY2020-21.

2. Fiscal Support Oriented Measures

By Government of India:

- **Free food grain supply to migrants** for two months: Rs 3,500 crore
- **Interest subvention** of 2% for prompt-payees of **Mudra-Shishu** loans: Rs 1,500 crore
 - MUDRA bank classifies its clients into three categories:
 - **Shishu:** Allowed loans up to ₹50,000
 - **Kishor:** Allowed loans up to ₹5 lakh
 - **Tarun:** Allowed loans up to ₹10 lakh
- Special liquidity scheme to provide Rs 10,000 working capital to 50 lakh **street vendors:** Rs 5,000 crore
- **Credit-linked subsidy scheme** for **middle income families** (Rs 6-18 lakh a year), with expectations it will lead to Rs 70,000 crore investment in housing industry.

By Government of India: To Agriculture

- **KCC** (Kisan Credit Cards) Concessional credit: Rs 2 lakh crore.

- Additional **emergency working capital funding for farmers** through NABARD: Rs 30,000 crore.
- **Agri Infrastructure project Financing:** Rs 1,00,000 crore- Making infrastructure for:
 - Farm-gate and aggregation points like
 - Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies
 - Farmers Producer Organisations Agriculture entrepreneurs
 - Startups, etc.
- Scheme for **formalisation of Micro Food Enterprises:** Rs 10,000 crore-
 - It help two lakh Micro Food Enterprises (MFEs) **attain FSSAI food standards**, build brands and marketing.
- **PM Matsya Sampada Yojana:** Rs 20,000 crore
 - PMMSY will be for marine fisheries, inland fisheries and Aquaculture.
- **Animal Husbandry Infrastructure** Development Fund to be set up: Rs 15,000 crore
 - Incentives will be given for establishing plants for the export of niche products.
- Promotion of **Herbal Cultivation:** Rs 4,000 crore
- **Beekeeping** initiatives: Rs 500 crore
- **Operation Green** to be extended to all vegetables: Rs 500 crore
 - It will be extended from Tomatoes, Onion and Potatoes (TOP) to all fruits and vegetables.
 - The scheme will provide subsidy on transportation, storage.

Demand Support Oriented Measures:

By Government of India:

- Increased allocation for **MGNREGS**.

By Government of India: To States

- **CAMPA funds** to be used by states for afforestation and plantation works: Rs 6,000 crore.
- **Limit of state borrowings increased** to 5% of GSDP from 3% of GSDP:
 - The Centre increased the borrowing limits of States.
 - But states can borrow **only 0.5 per cent of it unconditionally**.
 - The Centre has linked 1 per cent – to be released in tranches of 0.25 per cent each – to:
 - Reforms in urban local body revenues
 - One-nation one ration card
 - Power distribution
 - Ease of doing business.
 - The balance 0.5 per cent would be released once states implement at least **three of the four milestones**.

3. Structural Reform Oriented Measures

- **Agriculture: ECA** (Essential Commodities Act) & **APMC** Act to be amended.
- **Viability Gap Funding** Scheme: The quantum of Viability Gap Funding will be enhanced up to 30 percent each of Total Project Cost as VGF by Centre and State/Statutory Bodies.
- **Health Sector:**
 - Setting up of Infectious Diseases Hospital Blocks in all districts.
 - Strengthening of lab network and surveillance by Integrated Public Health Labs.
 - National Institutional Platform for One health by ICMR to encourage research.
 - Implementation of National Digital Health Blueprint under the National Digital Health Mission (do read up National Digital Health Blueprint).

Education Sector:

- **PM eVIDYA:** Multi-mode access to digital/online education.
- **Manodarpan:** Initiative for psycho-social support for students, teachers and families for mental health and emotional well-being.
- **New National Curriculum and Pedagogical framework** for school, early childhood and teachers.
- **National Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Mission:** For ensuring that every child attains Learning levels

and outcomes in grade 5 by 2025.

Insolvency:

- Minimum threshold to initiate insolvency proceedings has been raised to Rs. 1 crore from Rs. 1 lakh.
- It will insulates MSMEs from insolvency proceedings.
- Special insolvency resolution framework for MSMEs under Section 240A of the Code will be notified soon.
- Suspension of fresh initiation of insolvency proceedings up to one year.
- Empowering Central Government to exclude COVID 19 related debt from the definition of “default” under the Code for the purpose of triggering insolvency proceedings.

For Corporates

- **Decriminalisation** of Companies Act violations involving minor technical and procedural defaults.
- **Direct listing** of securities by Indian public companies in permissible foreign jurisdictions.
- Private companies which list **NCDs** on stock exchanges **not to be regarded as listed** companies.
- **Power to create additional/ specialized benches for NCLAT.**
- **Lower penalties** for all defaults for Small Companies, One-person Companies, Producer Companies & Start Ups.

For PSUs

- Government will announce a new policy whereby:
 - List of **strategic sectors requiring presence** of PSEs in public interest will be notified.
 - In **strategic sectors, at least one enterprise** will remain in the **public** sector but private sector will also be allowed.
 - **Number of enterprises in strategic sectors** will ordinarily be **only one to four; others** will be **privatised/ merged/** brought under holding companies.
 - In **other sectors, PSEs** will be **privatized.**

ENVIRONMENT

1. International Day for Biological Diversity

- The **United Nations** has proclaimed **May 22** The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase **understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues**.
- When first created by the Second Committee of the UN General Assembly in late 1993, **29 December (the date of entry into force of the Convention of Biological Diversity)**, was designated The International Day for Biological Diversity.
- In December 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted 22 May as IDB, to commemorate the adoption of the text of the Convention on 22 May 1992 by the Nairobi Final Act of the Conference for the Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- This was partly done because it was difficult for many countries to plan and carry out suitable celebrations for the date of 29 December, given the number of holidays that coincide around that time of year.
- The theme for the year 2020 is “Our solutions are in nature”.
- **The year will witness** – The final period for the **2011-2020 Strategic Plan on Biodiversity** and its **20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets**.
- The end of the 2011-2020 United Nations Decade on Biodiversity, and start of other new pivotal biodiversity related decades for the period 2021-2030: **the UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development and the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration**.

2. Global Carbon Emissions

- **Center for International Climate and Environmental Research (CICERO)** has evaluated Covid-19's effect on carbon emissions.
- It has predicted that **emissions will fall between 4.2 and 7.5% on last year, as against a rise of 1%** which was earlier predicted for 2020 before the pandemic outbreak.
- In **India**, the nationwide lockdown led to minimal air pollution and improved the air quality.
- In the first quarter of 2020, because the most carbon-intensive fuels saw the biggest fall in demand, the decline in CO2 emissions was more than the fall in global energy demand.
- Carbon emissions were five per cent lower than during the same time in 2019. This year saw an 8 per cent decline in coal emissions, 4.5 per cent from oil and 2.3 per cent from natural gas.
- Emissions declined the most in regions which were **impacted the highest by the disease**.
- For instance, there was an 8 per cent decline in emissions in China and Europe, and a 9 per cent decline in the US.
- As per the report, **countries in full lockdown are seeing an average decline of 25 per cent in energy demand per week**, while in those with a partial lockdown, the fall in energy demand is about 18 per cent per week.
- This may **not be a reason to celebrate** as it is expected that emissions will soar once economies restart, unless governments take a conscious decision to change the sources of energy.
- Earlier, the International Energy Agency (IEA) released Global Energy Review: 2020 with details on the effects of the pandemic on global energy demand and carbon emissions.
- The CO2 emissions were hit by what it has called a “once-in-a-century crisis”.

3. Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve

- A new prey and predator estimation in Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve (TATR) in Chandrapur district has found the presence of 115 tigers and 151 leopards inside the 1,727 sq km of the core and buffer areas of the reserve in 2019.
- The estimation was done as part of the ‘Long-term monitoring of tigers, co-predators and prey species in TATR’.
- As many as 88 tigers have been individually captured in trap camera pictures, the report states.
- It also mentions that the leopard population in TATR was 151.
- The overall tiger count in Chandrapur district alone is more than 200, which is about two-third of the total number of tigers in the state.
- Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve is located in Chandrapur district of Maharashtra state in India.

- It is Maharashtra's oldest and largest national park.
- Created in 1995, the Reserve includes the Tadoba National Park and the Andhari Wildlife Sanctuary.



- It is one of India's 50 "Project Tiger" reserves.
- Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve was established as the second Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra in 1993-94.
- The first Tiger Reserve established in the State is Melghat Tiger Reserve (1973-74).

4. Ecologically Sensitive Area

- To conserve and protect the bio diversity of Western Ghats while allowing for sustainable and inclusive development of the region, Government of India had constituted a High Level Working Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. Kasturirangan.
- The Committee had recommended that identified geographical areas falling in the six States of Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Tamil Nadu may be declared as Ecologically Sensitive Areas.
- The Committee recommended bringing just 37% of the Western Ghats under the Ecologically Sensitive Area (ESA) zones — downing from the 64% suggested by the Gadgil Committee report.
- A draft notification was issued in October 2018 mentioning the areas to be notified in the ESA.
- States were of unanimous view that looking into the importance of Western Ghats, there is need to ensure protection of the western Ghats.
- However, the states expressed their views as regards activities and extent of area mentioned in the said notification.
- It was decided that state specific issues shall be further deliberated so as to arrive at a consensus on the issue.
- The states expressed their desire to expedite early notification while protecting interest of ecology and environment.

INTERNATIONAL RELATION

1. Open Skies Treaty

- It is an agreement that allows countries to monitor signatories' arms development by conducting surveillance flights over each other's territories.
- US has given notice that it will exit OST, alleging that Russia has continuously and flagrantly violated the treaty.
- OST was first proposed in the early years of the Cold War, but it came to fruition in the later decades. It was signed in 1992 after the Soviet Union collapsed.
- It came into effect in 2002 under the Bush administration, allowing the 34 signatories to conduct unarmed reconnaissance flights over the territory of treaty countries.
- US has earlier exited from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty. There is a likelihood that US might not renew the New Start Treaty which is due to expire in February 2021.

2. Chinese Transgression in Ladakh

- Construction of a new Indian road in the Galwan area, well inside Indian Territory, has elicited strong objections from the Chinese who have moved soldiers, heavy vehicles, and monitoring equipment in large numbers.
- Chinese transgression across the disputed India-China border has surged by 75 per cent in Ladakh in 2019.

Chinese Transgression

- Transgression is recorded across the border once the Indian border guarding forces (Army or ITBP) are reasonably certain that Chinese soldiers had crossed over to the Indian side of the LAC
- 80 per cent of Chinese transgressions across the LAC since 2015 have taken place in four locations, three of them in eastern Ladakh in the western sector
 - Pangong Tso, Trig Heights and Burtse have witnessed two-thirds of the total aggressions

The Issue

- The border is not fully demarcated and the LAC is neither clarified nor confirmed by the two countries.
- Except for the middle sector, even the mutual exchange of maps about their respective perceptions has not taken place between India and China.
- What Indians believe to be 'their side' is not the same as what the Chinese believe to be 'their side'.
- This is different from the LoC between India and Pakistan where everything was agreed upon by the two armies following the 1971 War.

Line of Actual Control

- India-China border is divided into three sectors, where
- LAC in the western sector falls in the union territory of Ladakh and is 1597 km long (highest transgression).
- The middle sector of 545 km length falls in Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh (Least disputed).
- 1346 km long eastern sector falls in the states of Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh.

3. Cerberus

- Central Bureau of Investigation has sent alerts to all the States, Union Territories and the Central agencies on a malicious software threat that uses an update related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- It is a Banking Trojan which is primarily used to steal financial data, such as credit card numbers.
- The Trojan can also use overlay attacks to trick victims into providing personal information and can capture two-factor authentication details.
- It takes advantage of the COVID-19 pandemic and **sends SMS** to lure a user to download the link containing the malicious software.
- It deploys its malicious application usually spread via phishing campaigns to trick users into installing it on their smartphones.

4. One in a Million Super Earth

- Astronomers at University of Canterbury (UC) have found a new "one in a million" Super-Earth planet towards the genre of the galaxy.

- The newly discovered planet is among only a handful of extra-solar planets that have been detected with both sizes and orbits close to that of Earth.
- The host star of the new planet is about 10 per cent the mass of our Sun, which in turn makes a 'year' on the planet of approximately 617 days.
- It would have a mass somewhere between the Earth and Neptune, and would orbit at a location between Venus and Earth from the parent star.

Microlensing Effect

- The planet was discovered using the gravitational microlensing technique.
- The combined gravity of the planet and its host star caused the light from a more distant background star to be magnified in a particular way.
- This type of observation does not repeat, and the probabilities of catching a planet at the same time are extremely low.
- It is a rare effect, with only about one in a million stars in the galaxy being affected at any given time.