



PRECURE COMPILATION FOR 2020

**3rd week of April
(20th April to 25th April)**

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HISTORY

<https://youtu.be/yGxYbWvZfTw>

1. Civil Services Day

When?

- The Civil Services Day is celebrated on **April 21**

What?

- The day **celebrates all the civil servants** who dedicate their lives to the cause of citizen. The day aims at **renewing their commitments to public service** and excellence in work.
- To mark the Civil Services Day, the country rewards the **Prime Minister's Awards for Excellence in Public Administration** to various officers to celebrate their work, for implementation of Priority programme and innovation categories.

Why?

- Its origin is related to the year **1947** when on **21st April Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel**, first Home Minister of independent India **inaugurated the All India Services**.
- While addressing the probationary officers at the All India Administrative Service Training School at **Metcalfe House, Delhi** (it currently houses offices of many divisions of DRDO) he delivered a powerful speech and empowered the Civil Servants to adopt the true role of national service leaving behind the past experience. In his speech he referred to civil servants as the '**steel frame of India**'.

2. Indian Civil Services

Cornwallis' Role (Governor-General, 1786-93)

Cornwallis was the first to bring into existence and organise the civil services. He tried to check corruption through—

- raising the civil servants' **salary**
- strict enforcement of **rules against private trade**
- Debarring civil servants from taking **presents, bribes** etc.
- enforcing promotions through **seniority**

Wellesley's Role (Governor-General, 1798-1805)

- In 1800, Wellesley set up the **Fort William College** for training of new recruits.
- In 1806 Wellesley's college was disapproved by the Court of Directors and instead the **East India College** was set up at **Haileybury** in England to impart two years' training to the recruits.
- The **Charter Act of 1793** had reserved all posts worth 500 pounds per annum for the **covenanted servants of the Company**.
- The Indians, however, were barred from high posts from the very beginning.

The reasons for exclusion of Indians were—

- the belief that only the English could establish administrative services serving British interests;
- the belief that the Indians were incapable, untrustworthy and insensitive to the British interests;
- The fact there was high competition among the Europeans themselves for lucrative posts, so why offer them to the Indians.

The **Charter Act of 1833** theoretically threw open the services to the Indians, the relevant provisions were never really implemented.

Charter Act of 1853

- The 1853 Charter Act **ended the Company's patronage**, enjoining **recruitment to be through an open competition** henceforth.
- After 1857, when the Indians claimed a share in higher services, the **Proclamation of 1858** declared the British **intention of including the Indians, freely and impartially, in offices under the civil service**.

Indian Civil Service Act, 1861

- This Act **reserved certain offices for covenanted civil servants but the examination was held in England in English language, based on classical learning of Greek and Latin.**
- The maximum permissible age was gradually reduced from 23 (in 1859) to 22 (in 1860) to 21 (in 1866) and to 19 (1878).
- In 1863, **Satyendra Nath Tagore** became the first Indian to qualify for the Indian Civil Service.

Statutory Civil Service

- In **1878-79**, **Lytton** introduced the Statutory Civil Service consisting of **one-sixth of covenanted posts to be filled by Indians of high families through nominations** by local governments subject to approval by the secretary of State and the viceroy. But the **system failed** and was **abolished**

Lee Commission (1924) Recommendations

- the secretary of state should continue to recruit the ICS, the Irrigation branch of the Service of Engineers, the Indian Forest Service, etc.;
- the recruitments for the transferred fields like education and civil medical service be made by provincial governments;
- direct recruitment to ICS on basis of **50:50 parity between the Europeans and the Indians be reached in 15 years**;
- a **Public Service Commission** be immediately established (as laid down in the Government of India Act, 1919)

Government of India Act, 1935

- The 1935 Act recommended the establishment of a **Federal Public Service Commission** and **Provincial Public Service Commission** under their spheres.

Evaluation of Civil Services under British Rule

- Although Indians had begun to enter the coveted ranks of the Indian Civil Services (ICS) ever since 1863, entering the civil services was still extremely difficult for the Indians. The entrance examination for the ICS was held in London in English medium only, and the subjects included classical Greek and Latin learning. Moreover, the maximum age for appearing at the examination was reduced from twenty-three in 1859 to nineteen in 1878 under Lytton.
- All **key positions of power and authority** and those which were well-paid **were occupied by the Europeans.** Though a slow process of Indianisation occurred after 1918 under nationalist pressure, important and senior positions continued to be occupied by Europeans. But gradually, the Indians came to realise that Indianisation of civil service had not, in any way, transferred effective power into Indian hands. The Indian members of the civil service continued to serve the imperialist interests of their British masters.

POLITY

<https://youtu.be/JHTlrf7nIRk>

1. Immunity Passports

- As countries around the world are struggling to lift lockdowns due to the novel coronavirus pandemic, policymakers are deliberating how to deal with future outbreaks as and when they emerge. Among the ideas being considered is an **“immunity certificate” or “immunity passport”, whose holders would be able to get back to work.**
- Under increasing pressure to reopen their economies, parts of Europe and the US have been considering issuing immunity certificates to people who have recovered from COVID-19 and have its antibodies— thus presumed to be immune to the disease.
- People who are issued these certificates would be allowed to go back to work and move about freely. The idea has also become popular in Italy, where the lockdown exit strategy includes compulsory antibody tests as the country seeks to set up the certificate system. In some areas of the country’s most-affected northern region, the plan has already been implemented.
- Experts have cautioned governments against acting in haste, since much still remains to be understood about the spread of the virus, as well as immunity to it. Lack of necessary information would make categorising between immune and non-immune persons a challenging as well as potentially dangerous task, they insist. At the same time, experts have said that issuing such certificates would create resentment among members of the community, and raise the possibility of stigmatisation.

2. Containment Zones in India

- **A containment zone has been defined based on the index case / cluster, which will be the designated epicentre**, the listing and mapping of contacts, geographical distribution of cases and contacts around the epicentre and the administrative boundaries within urban cities /town/ rural area.
- The RRT (Rapid Response Team) has been advised to do a listing of cases, contacts and their mapping. This is to help in deciding the perimeter for action. The decision of the geographic limit and extent of perimeter control is to be the prerogative of the state government.
- Active surveillance in containment zones is being conducted with contact tracing within and outside the containment zone as well. Laboratory capacity for testing all suspect samples is being expanded and surge capacities for isolating all suspect / confirmed cases for medical care is being established. Intensive risk communication via door to door surveys by Asha workers has been implemented across country.
- **Cluster containment strategy** refers to contain the disease within a defined geographic area after early detection, breaking the chain of transmission and preventing its spread to new areas. This would include geographic quarantine, social distancing measures, enhanced active surveillance, testing all suspected cases, isolation of cases, home quarantine of contacts, and social mobilisation to follow preventive public health measures.
- **A buffer zone is an area around the containment zone, where new cases are most likely to appear.** There will not be any perimeter control for the buffer zone. Surveillance activities to be followed in the buffer zone will include review of cases of severe respiratory illness reported since cases began to come out in containment zone epicentre by the District Health Officials to identify any missed case of COVID-19. Enhanced passive surveillance for such cases in the buffer zone through the existing Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme will also begin. All health facilities in the buffer zone will be listed as a part of mapping exercise. Measures such as personal hygiene, hand hygiene, social distancing will be enhanced through enhanced IEC activities in the buffer zone.
- In case of a small cluster in closed environment such as in schools, military barracks, hostels or a hospital-the containment zone will be the building itself. A buffer zone of additional 5 Km radius will be identified. In case of a single cluster in a residential colony, the containment zone would be the administrative boundary of the residential colony and a buffer zone of additional 5 Km radius.
- When multiple clusters in communities (residential colony, schools, offices, hospitals etc) within an administrative jurisdiction are identified, the containment zone would be administrative boundary of the urban

district and a buffer zone of neighbouring urban districts as has been done for Jawaharpur in Mohali-Punjab.

- If multiple clusters spatially separated in different parts administrative districts of a city originate, the containment zone will be the administrative boundary of city/ town and congruent population in the peri-urban areas as the buffer zone. When a cluster originates in a rural setting, there must be a 3 Km radius of containment zone and an additional 7 Kms radius of buffer zone.

3. UAPA Amendment Act 2019

Delhi Police has booked Jamia students Meeran Haider and Safoora Zargar under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The UAPA Act of 1967 was amended in 2019. The Act provides special procedures to deal with terrorist activities, among other things. It got Parliamentary approval in August 2019.

Under the original Act, the central government may designate an organisation as a terrorist organisation if it:

- commits or participates in acts of terrorism,
- prepares for terrorism,
- promotes terrorism, or
- is otherwise involved in terrorism.

The 2019 Amendment additionally empowers the government to designate individuals as terrorists on the same grounds.

ECONOMY

<https://youtu.be/IGEFcCOVtyY>

1. Helicopter Money

Meaning

- Coined by American economist **Milton Friedman**.
- An **unconventional** monetary policy tool.
- It attempts to bring a flagging economy back on track.
- It involves **printing large sums of money and distributing it to the public**.
- It basically denotes a **helicopter dropping money** from the sky.
- Under such a policy, central banks directly increase the money supply and, via the government, distribute **the new cash to the population** with the aim of boosting demand and inflation.
- This **money** remains in their hands, and **is never pulled away**.
- It basically means **non-repayable money transfer** from the central bank to the government.

Modern Monetary Theory

- Helicopter Money is similar to MMT.
- It argues that **countries that issue their own currencies can never “run out of money”** the way people or businesses can.
- It is supported by economists such as Stephanie Kelton, L Randall Wray, Bill Mitchell and Warren Mosler.
- It states that countries that have the sovereign right to print their own currency can never run out of money and default.
- A default would have to mean that they do not have any more money to pay their creditors.
- But this can never be the case as long as countries are free to print as much money as they want.

Are they put to use normally

- MMT and Helicopter money are seldom put in use.
- Instead of this Quantitative Easing is often used to infuse liquidity.

In QE

Central banks purchase government or other securities from the secondary market and attempt to infuse liquidity in an environment where the rates are already touching zero.

Mechanism of HM or MMT

- Since the central bank is an arm of the government, when the balance sheets of the government and the central bank are consolidated, the bonds held by the central bank on the asset side will be cancelled by the same bonds held on the liability side of the government.
- There is also this hope that the future cash flows to the government through higher tax revenue, with demand getting stimulated, will enable it to repay the debt.

Any alternative to this

Yes,

Centre can also get money transferred from the RBI's existing reserves or equity.

Any country using HM or MMT

- The US Federal Reserve is not directly using helicopter money in the original sense.
- Because most of their liquidity infusion is through secondary market.
- Fed is printing money to buy securities from market.
- Bank of Japan is also accused of using Helicopter Money to stimulate a sleeping economy.

Concerns

Inflation:

It may not arise in the current scenario, because:

- Demand is very low and there are deflationary trends coming in.
- Individuals are postponing their discretionary purchases.
- Capex plans are postponed for unknown duration.
- Government is likely to use reserved money for capital expenditure on healthcare spends.
- Weak credit growth.

Impact on currency value:

- Indian currency is not a hard currency like that of US, Canada or EU.
- India uses hard currencies to settle international transactions.
- Excess of INR can cause its serious devaluation, significantly pushing up import bill.
- It will dissuade foreign portfolio investors as well.

What could be done

Government can continue with conventional tools such as:

- Cash handouts to poor families
- Cutting government expenditure under various heads
- Using unclaimed balances under various heads
- Borrowing more from the markets.

2. RBI's Monetary Policy & TLTRO

What is the News

RBI has reduced the reverse repo rate further by 25 basis points to 3.75 per cent.

What is Reverse Repo Rate

- It is the rate at which the banks earn for parking funds with the RBI.
- It is followed by a 90-basis point cut in the reverse repo rate as recently as March 27.

RBI and TLTRO

In the wake of the COVID-19 crisis and as a tool to enhance liquidity in the system, RBI introduced the Targeted Long Term Repo Operations (TLTROs), particularly the corporate bond market.

What are LTROs

- LTRO are repo operations but only Long Term in nature.
- Liquidity provided in Repos or through tools such as liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) and marginal standing facility (MSF) are usually for short durations (up to 28 days).
- LTRO is a tool that lets banks borrow one to three-year funds from the central bank at the repo rate.
- Banks provide government securities with similar or higher tenure as collateral.
- When LTROs are Targeted, they become TLTROs.
- Here, the RBI wants banks opting for funds under this option to be specifically invested in investment-grade corporate debt such as in investment grade bonds, commercial paper, and non-convertible debentures of NBFCs.

Why have them

- Because of the pandemic, there are large sell-offs in the domestic equity, bond and forex markets.
- It is leading to a rise in the demand for liquidity premium on instruments such as corporate bonds, commercial paper and debentures.
- It was making it difficult for these instruments to access working capital through bank credit.

Other important Benefits of LTROs or TLTROs

- LTROs provide banks with access to cheaper capital from the RBI.
- It encourages them to lend more and spur economic activity.
- Banks can also invest these long-term funds in assets that yield better returns to improve profitability.

- Since banks provide government securities as collateral, the demand for such government bonds increases and helps in lowering yield.

Concerns

- Whether institutions servicing the needs of tiny businesses will benefit from bank funding.
- TLTRO funds are likely to reach only the high-rated NBFCs, which in turn lend to the better-off.
- Further, RBI has excluded HFCs/NBFCs/MFIs from the loan repayment moratorium and these institutions will be under pressure to pursue loan repayments from small businesses which are in crisis today.

Way Ahead

- The RBI should extend the three-month moratorium on working capital payments to all institutions.
- Relaxing the NPA norm for accounts availing of the moratorium will help banks and customers.
- SBI has suggested that it is worth considering whether the 90-day rule itself should be extended to 180 days.
- Fiscal stimulus has to be put in to spur the appetite to consume and invest, which has drastically collapsed.

Where else has LTRO been used

- LTRO were introduced by the European Central Bank during its sovereign debt crisis that began in 2008.
- LTRO in ECBs language stood for Long-Term Refinancing Operations.

3. COVID-19, China & FDI

News

- There were concerns that Chinese organisations could mount takeovers of Indian companies during the Covid-triggered market rout.
- Central government took a decision to regulate Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from neighbouring countries, including China.

What was the order

That all inbound FDI, even into non-strategic sectors would henceforth be subject to Central approvals for entities from countries that share land borders with India.

What was the concern

There are worries about hostile entities gaining a back-door entry into sectors with strategic or national security implications at a vulnerable time like this when the market valuation of various big corporations is at an all time low.

Some Immediate Concerns

- Indian businesses are in dire need of capital
- The note makes no distinctions between existing and new investments
- It treats greenfield and brownfield investments alike.
- It could also lead to re-opening of past deals.

Some Long Term Concerns

- It could also lead to re-opening of past deals.
- India's start-up ecosystem, which offers one of the few bright spots in the economy, is heavily dependent on Chinese risk capital, with 18 of India's 30 tech unicorns said to feature China-linked investments.
- It can impact economic activity and job creation.

Important to Note

- Allowing Chinese FDI that facilitates some local value-addition appears to be vastly preferable to allowing a flood of finished goods imports that worsen the trade balance.
- A large proportion of FDI flowing into India tends to be routed through multi-layered structures housed in low-tax jurisdictions such as Singapore, Hong Kong and Mauritius.

After the Crisis

It is important to note that:

- Because of low oil prices, remittances economy will be under siege

- Domestic corporates will be debilitated by the lockdown
- Portfolio investors are already in flight mode

India will rely heavily on FDI flows to re-fire its investment engine.

4. Draft National Renewable Energy Policy

Proposed by

- Ministry of Power.

Proposed in

- Draft Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2020.

Primary Ideas

- To promote generation of electricity from renewable sources of energy
- To prescribe a minimum percentage of purchase of electricity from renewable and hydro sources of energy.

Other important proposals in Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020

- The National Load Despatch Centre shall be responsible for optimum scheduling and despatch of electricity across different regions.
- Cross-border trade of electricity to be taken up.

5. Oil Futures

Extensively Covered in Today's 2 Minute Video.

ENVIRONMENT

<https://youtu.be/g5AmNbhySz4>

1. Earth Day

- Google marked the 50th anniversary of the Earth Day with a special interactive doodle dedicated to one of the smallest and most critical organisms - the bees.
- Every year, April 22 is celebrated as Earth Day to raise public awareness about the environment and inspire people to save and protect it.



- The year 2020 marks 50 years since the start of this modern environmental movement in 1970.
- The theme of Earth Day 2020 is "Climate Action".
- As people have to stay inside their homes amid Covid-19 lockdown, World Earth Day 2020 was celebrated digitally.
- People could join '24 hours of action'.
- One could also take 22 challenges that include measuring your carbon footprint, doing a plastic audit, skype a scientist, work for the earth, zero waste for one day and consume 1 meal per day this week on a plant-based diet.
- It was first celebrated in 1970, and is now coordinated globally by the Earth Day Network and celebrated in more than 193 countries each year.
- The idea of commemorating such a day was propounded by Gaylord Nelson, an American environmentalist and politician.
- The Earth Day also recognizes a collective responsibility, as called for in the 1992 Rio Declaration (Earth Summit), to promote harmony with nature and the Earth to achieve a just balance among the economic, social and environmental needs of present and future generations of humanity.
- The Paris Agreement was also opened for signature on 22 April 2016 – Earth Day – at UN Headquarters in New York.
- World Earth Day encourages people to take more steps for the protection of nature and to thank mother earth for the rich environment.

2. Yamuna Water Quality Improves During Lockdown

- The quality of water in the Yamuna has improved along the Delhi stretch during the nationwide lockdown, compared to April last year, according to a report by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).
- DPCC, along with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) carried out the study after being asked by a National Green Tribunal (NGT) appointed monitoring committee.

- An increased flow of water in the river has also contributed to less pollution, the report said.
 - But the report noted that the Yamuna has still not met the “water quality criteria”.
 - DPCC collected water samples from nine locations along the Yamuna and twenty locations of drains and compared the different parameters with values from April 2019.
 - According to the report, the pollution has reduced between 18% to 21% at various places.
 - Five locations have shown 18%-33% reduction in Biochemical Oxygen Demand (BOD) levels.
 - The rest of the locations have shown slight to considerable increase in BOD levels.
- Four of the nine locations where dissolved oxygen (DO) was nil in 2019 showed DO levels of 2.3-4.8 mg/l in 2020.

3. Devanahalli Pomelo

- Devanahalli pomelo or *chakota*, a citrus variety almost on the brink of extinction, is now set to receive a new lease of life.
- Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) which owns and operates Kempegowda International Airport (BLR-Airport), as part of the 50th anniversary of World Earth Day, hopes to conserve the endangered fruit by cultivating it within the airport campus.



- The Devanahalli pomelo, which comes with a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, has a unique, sweet taste, unlike other varieties.
- Hectares of pomelo plantation, which once dotted Devanahalli region, have now all but vanished.
- Devanahalli is cool and has moderate humidity, producing agro-climatic weather conditions which are conducive to the growth of the Devanahalli pomelo.
- The soil is generally red soil consisting of gravel, loam, and clay with high drainage conditions, favourable for the growth of this tree.
- Rainfall in the area varies from 300–807 millimetres (11.8–31.8 inches) per year.

1. Reverse Vaccinology

- The process of antigen discovery starting from genome information
- It uses informatics and computer modelling to study the novel coronavirus and to identify all its proteins
- Since the genome sequencing of the virus is already known, the work is made easier and the computer with the special software reveals the nature of all its proteins. Once the nature of the proteins are known, then the molecules that can block them can be developed after a series of experiments
- Earlier, researchers had to do a viral culture in the laboratory to develop a vaccine
 - This was time consuming (to find the protein in the virus)
- In reverse vaccinology, we now have the facility to unwrap the entire genome sequence
- Using 'reverse vaccinology', vaccinations were developed for meningococcal and staphylococcal infections all through the world
- The researchers have identified a synthetic polypeptide which can bind the viral genome

2. Types of Coronavirus Treatments

- Antivirals: Attempt to stop the virus from reproducing by attacking the machinery that hijacks cells and forces them to replicate the virus' genome
- Antibodies/vaccines: Vaccines currently in development are targeting a protein on the virus' surface called 'spike', which helps it break into cells. Vaccine would train the body to recognise and destroy the specific protein in the spike
- Anti-inflammatories: New coronavirus doesn't destroy cells but overstimulates the immune system's inflammatory response. Anti-inflammatories target molecules that cause inflammation

3. OIC and Islamophobia

- Organisation of Islamic Countries has criticised the Indian government, calling it to take steps to tackle the growing Islamophobia in India
- Earlier in April 2020, US Commission on International Religious Freedom criticised India, Pakistan and Cambodia for failure to protect vulnerable religious communities and increased stigmatisation

OIC

- It is a 57-member organisation whose mission statement says "collective voice of the Muslim world"
- It was established in 1969 and first met at Morocco
- It is the second largest intergovernmental organisation in the world after the UN, with population reaching over 1.8 billion
- It has non-Arab members like Turkey, Iran and Pakistan and five observers including Russia and Thailand

4. Noor Satellite

- Iran claimed it has put its first military "Noor" (Light) in a 425 km high orbit
- Iran launched its first civilian satellite in 2009
- It was launched by a three-stage rocket powered by a combination of solid and liquid fuels
- Earlier in Feb 2020, Iran's satellite named 'Zafar' (Victory) failed to reach orbit

UN Resolution 2231 (2015)

- Iran is called upon not to undertake any activity related to ballistic missiles designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons, including launches using such ballistic missile technologies