

# THE SWARM: THE HINDU EDITORIAL ON LOCUST ATTACK

Relevant for: Environment | Topic: Disaster and disaster management

Just last week, [eastern India was battered](#) by one of the most powerful cyclones in decades and now, even as hundreds of lives are lost every day to the [coronavirus](#), another danger lurks on the nation's west. A burgeoning [locust swarm](#) in Rajasthan, Gujarat and even parts of Madhya Pradesh threatens to amplify into an agrarian disaster. The desert locust, as a species, is the bane of agriculture. Monitoring and tackling periodic outbreaks of the marauding insects are among the objectives of the [Locust Warning Organization](#) (LWO) in Jodhpur. There were 13 locust upsurges from 1964 to 1997, and after 2010 there was "no large scale breeding" reported. Once a significant outbreak starts, it lasts for about two years, and then there is a quietus for about eight years. LWO officials say that the swarm building up is potentially the "worst in decades".

It is a testimony to its devastating potential that an arcane piece of legislation, The East Punjab Agricultural Pests, Diseases and Noxious Weeds Act, 1949, has a provision whereby a District Collector can "...call upon any male person not below the age of 14 years resident in the district to render all possible assistance ..." and there is potential imprisonment for failure to abide by the law. Antiquated as it may sound, it is a reminder that humanity's oldest blights — plague, pestilence — will never truly be eliminated. The breeding locusts which threaten farming are an indirect fallout of the warming Indian Ocean, as some meteorologists suggest. Last year, there were fears that the monsoon may fall short because of an El Niño, or warming of the Equatorial Pacific. However there was an extreme flip. By July it was evident that a positive Indian Ocean Dipole, or relatively higher temperature in the western Indian Ocean, was in the works. This led to record-breaking rainfall in India — then a cause for cheer — as well as in eastern Africa. But moist African deserts precipitated locust breeding and favourable rain-bearing winds aided their transport towards India. On the other hand, coronavirus quarantines meant that routine coordination activities involving India, Pakistan and Afghanistan regarding spraying pesticides were halted. While it is some comfort that there is now limited standing crop in India, forecasts are for good rains in Rajasthan, and, paradoxically, conducive conditions for locust breeding during the sowing season. A less highlighted aspect of global warming is that it may link disparate disasters — floods, pandemics and pestilence — amplifying the potency of each. Improved science and technology is only making it clearer that man's follies transcend borders. This makes it necessary to abandon any territorial blame game and focus on policies that will ensure an equitable, sustainable future.

You have reached your limit for free articles this month.

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Start your 14 days trial now. [Sign Up](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

\*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

Dear reader,

We have been keeping you up-to-date with information on the developments in India and the world that have a bearing on our health and wellbeing, our lives and livelihoods, during these difficult times. To enable wide dissemination of news that is in public interest, we have increased the number of articles that can be read free, and extended free trial periods. However, we have a request for those who can afford to subscribe: please do. As we fight disinformation and misinformation, and keep apace with the happenings, we need to commit greater resources to news gathering operations. We promise to deliver quality journalism that stays away from vested interest and political propaganda.

Please enter a valid email address.

From the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, to the landmark Ayodhya verdict, 2019 proved to be an eventful year.

Subscribe to The Hindu now and get unlimited access.

Already have an account? [Sign In](#)

Start your 14 days trial now [Sign Up](#)

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or Subscribe to The Hindu.

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

**END**

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com