

15 May 2020: UPSC Exam Comprehensive News Analysis

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Category: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. India reminds China of claims over Gilgit-Baltistan

Context:

- Official spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs **reminded China about India's claims over the territory of Gilgit-Baltistan under Pakistan's control.**
 - **China has teamed up with Pakistan to build the Diamer-Bhasha dam.**
- It was asserted that India's position is clear and the **entire territory of Jammu and Kashmir is part of India.**
- In the past too, **India has opposed projects jointly taken up by Pakistan and China in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir** as part of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

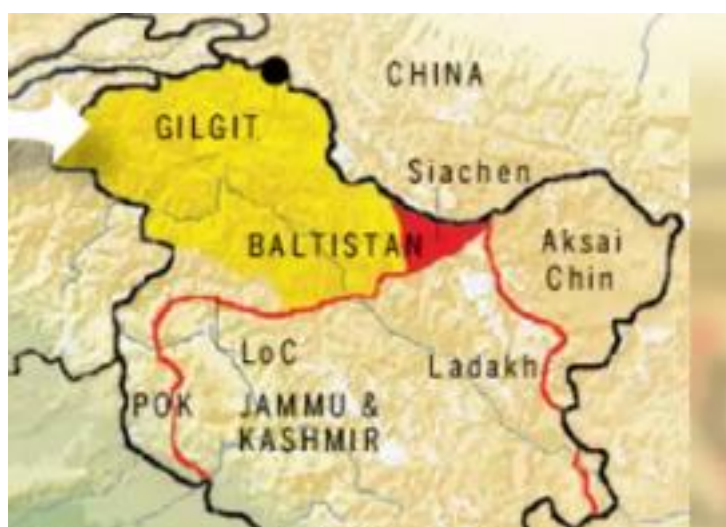
Significance:

- The assertion is important as it was made a day after Power China, one of the biggest Chinese power companies, received a contract to build the Diamer-Bhasha dam.
- Chinese state-run firm Power China holds 70% and the Frontier Works Organisation (FWO), a commercial arm of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, 30% share in the consortium.

Diamer-Bhasha Dam:

- The project is **designed to serve as the main storage dam of the country**, besides Mangla and Tarbela dams.
- The dam, once completed, will allow Pakistan to **use the waters of the Indus for irrigation**.
- Islamabad claims that the dam will help **reduce downstream flood by the Indus**.
- The project is estimated to **help alleviate acute irrigation shortage in the Indus basin irrigation system** caused by progressive siltation of the existing reservoirs.

Gilgit-Baltistan:



- Gilgit-Baltistan **borders China in the North, Afghanistan in the west, Tajikistan in the northwest and Kashmir and Ladakh to the southeast**.
- It shares a **geographical boundary with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir**, and **India considers it as part of the undivided Jammu and Kashmir**, while Pakistan sees it as separate from PoK.

For more details, read [5th May 2020 Comprehensive News analysis](#).

Note:

- The recent incidents of face-off between the troops of India and China in Eastern Ladakh and North Sikkim (near Pangong Lake) were neither correlated nor have any connection with other global or local activities, the Army Chief General said in a statement.
- Aggressive behaviour by both sides during the two incidents resulted in minor injuries to troops, after which both sides disengaged after dialogue at the local level.
- It was said that the temporary and short duration face-offs between border guarding troops do occur **along the Line of Actual Control** due to the differing perceptions of the alignment of boundaries which are not resolved.

This issue has been covered in 13th May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

2. 'Talks with Nepal after pandemic'

Context:

India hopes to take up the necessary **negotiation on the Kalapani dispute with Nepal** after the current global pandemic is tackled successfully.

Background:

- Recently, the road link from **Dharchula (Uttarakhand) to Lipulekh (China Border)** was inaugurated by the Raksha Mantri.
- Nepal has objected to the road as Lipulekh, through which the link passes, **is considered by Nepal as part of its own territory.**
- Nepal disputes India's claims over the Kalapani region located in the state of Uttarakhand and maintains that the region is part of its sovereign territory.

This Issue has been covered in 8th May 2020 PIB Summary and Analysis. [Click here](#) to read.

3. China rebuts Taiwan on WHO participation

Context:

China opposed any **move by Taiwan to use the COVID-19 pandemic as a pretext to seek independence**, its Embassy in New Delhi said.

Details:

- **Taiwan is not a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO).**
- **China has opposed its inclusion in the World Health Assembly (WHA), the organisation's decision-making body, citing the 'One China principle', although Taiwan participated in the WHA as an observer from 2009 to 2016.**
- Taiwan wants to share its experience with the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) where it is not a member, but wants participation.
- The Foreign Minister of Taiwan believes that if Taiwan could participate fully in the WHO and if it could interact with other countries on an equal basis under the WHO framework, more nations would receive Taiwan's early warning.

China's reaction:

- The Chinese Embassy in New Delhi said in a statement that Taiwan was looking to hype up its participation in the World Health Organization (WHO), while its real intention is to solicit foreign support and seek independence under the pretext of the pandemic.

Note:

- **India is among the 179 of the 193 member states of the UN that do not maintain any diplomatic ties with Taiwan.**

- While the U.S. has been pushing for Taiwan's inclusion in the WHA, the **move will require a simple majority from member states**.
- India is yet to make a final decision on whether to support the U.S. move to include Taiwan or to accept China's objections to it.

C. GS 3 Related

Category: ECONOMY

1. Migrant workers to get free foodgrains

Context:

Second tranche of the economic stimulus package has been announced by the Finance Minister.

Background:

- The first tranche of measures include **₹3 lakh crore collateral free 4-year tenure loan for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** with moratorium on payment for first 12 months. A **loan provision of ₹20,000 crore for stressed MSMEs** was also made and a **₹30,000 crore special liquidity scheme** for investment in debt papers of NBFCs were announced, among other schemes.
- Also, a **relief package of ₹1.7 lakh crore** was announced earlier by the government.

For detailed analysis of the first tranche of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan stimulus package, read [14th May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Details:

Free foodgrains:

- A major focus of the second tranche of the economic stimulus package announced is to provide **free foodgrains for the next two months to migrant workers who do not have ration cards**.
- The move to provide free foodgrains for migrant workers is an **extension of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana**, which provided an additional monthly free rice or wheat allocation to 80 crore people with ration cards covered by **the National Food Security Act (NFSA)**.
 - Over the past few months, migrant workers and others without ration cards have struggled without access to this free food.
- The Centre will spend **₹3,500 crore** for this purpose.

Extension of credit facilities:

- It also includes an **extension of credit facilities** for urban housing, street vendors and farmers.
- Street vendors who have been hit hard by the lockdown will be given access **to easy credit through a ₹5,000 crore scheme**, which will offer **₹10,000 loans for initial working capital**.
- The Centre plans a drive to enrol 2.5 crore farmers who are not yet part of the Kisan Credit Cards scheme, along with fish workers and livestock farmers, and provide them with **₹2 lakh crore worth of concessional credit**. **NABARD** (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development) will also extend **additional refinance support worth ₹30,000 crore to rural banks for crop loans**.

Subvention relief:

- **An interest subvention scheme** for small businesses has been announced.
- Small businesses who have taken loans under the **MUDRA-Shishu scheme, meant for loans worth ₹50,000 or less, will receive a 2% interest subvention relief** for the next year.
- This would cost the government ₹1,500 crore.

Creation of affordable rental housing:

- The Centre will help create **affordable rental housing for the urban poor** and **provide relief worth ₹1,500 crore to small businesses through an interest subvention scheme.**
 - Noting that migrant workers and other urban poor face difficulties in finding affordable housing, the Finance Minister said a scheme to build rental housing complexes through public private partnership mode would be launched under the existing [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana \(PMAY\)](#) scheme.
 - Both public and private agencies will be incentivised to build rental housing on government and private land, while existing government housing will be converted into rental units.
- The credit linked subsidy scheme for lower middle class housing under PMAY will also be extended by one year to March 2021.
 - It is hoped that this would also create jobs and stimulate demand for the steel, cement and construction industries.

One Nation-One Ration Card:

- It is announced that, by August 2020, the ration card portability scheme will allow 67 crore NFSA beneficiaries in 23 connected States to **use their cards at any ration shop anywhere in the country.**
- This would allow migrant workers to **access subsidised food away from their home villages.** The scheme would cover all beneficiaries by March 2021.

Enrolment under MGNREGA:

- States have been directed to **enrol returning workers without livelihood** in their villages, under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).**

Criticisms:

- An economist pointed out that the only fiscal outlay in the announcements are the ₹3,500 crore for food grains to migrants and ₹1,500 crore for the MUDRA loanes. So **only ₹5,000 crore is actually coming from government coffers, while the rest are credit-based measures.**
 - Terming the government's approach as stingy and half-hearted, it was noted that **at a time when demand is down, any move to provide liquidity are not going to help.**
 - It is believed that **putting cash in people's pockets would have been a better approach.**
- IIM-Ahmedabad professor and economist who had calculated that 10 crore people have been excluded from NFSA coverage due to growth since census 2011, said the new intervention of providing free foodgrains would not even cover that shortfall.

2. U.K. HC rejects Vijay Mallya's plea

Context:

The **U.K. High Court** has rejected a plea of businessman **Vijay Mallya** for permission to move the **Supreme Court** against the dismissal of his appeal challenging the lower court's approval of his **extradition to India in the IDBI Bank fraud case.**

- The High Court concluded that a prima facie case was made out against the businessman for **fraud, misrepresentation to the bank in securing credit facilities, conspiracy and money laundering**, as adjudged by the lower court.

Details:

- The **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** and the **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** have alleged that between September 2009 and January 2017, **Mallya conspired with others to commit cheating**.
- The accused fraudulently got loans sanctioned from the bank to the now-defunct Kingfisher Airlines (KFA) in the order of (a) ₹1,500 million on October 7, 2009, (b) ₹2,000 million on November 4, 2009, and (c) ₹7,500 million on November 27, 2009, with the intention not to repay them.
- The **businessman was allegedly involved in false representation to the bank on KFA's financial condition and the value and/or availability of securities**.
- The **funds** raised through loans were **diverted and laundered**.

Note:

- A special court in Mumbai had declared absconding liquor baron Vijay Mallya a **fugitive economic offender (FEO)** on a plea of the **Enforcement Directorate**.
- **Mallya became the first businessman to be declared FEO** under the provisions of the new Fugitive Economic Offenders Act which came into existence in August 2018.

Category: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Virus diagnostic test may be delayed

Context:

A promising technology developed by a laboratory funded by the Department of Science and Technology to accelerate COVID-19 testing in India may be delayed for several more weeks.

- The Chitra GeneLAMP-N, developed by the Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMST), Thiruvananthapuram, needs more confirmatory testing and changes in its configuration.

Chitra GeneLAMP-N:

- Chitra GeneLAMP-N is a **diagnostic test kit** that can confirm COVID-19 in **2 hours at low cost**.
- The results can be read from the machine from the **change in fluorescence**.
 - Fluorescence is the **emission of light by a substance that has absorbed light** or other electromagnetic radiation.

How does RT-LAMP work?

- The confirmatory diagnostic test detects the **N Gene of SARS- COV2** using **reverse transcriptase loop-mediated amplification of viral nucleic acid (RT-LAMP)**.
- The test kit is highly **specific for SARS-CoV-2 N-gene** and can detect two regions of the gene.
- It is a technique for the amplification of RNA. It is used in the detection of **viruses**.
- In this method, a **DNA copy of the viral RNA is generated by reverse transcriptase**, and then **isothermal amplification is carried out** to increase the amount of total DNA.

What is RT-PCR?

- **Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR)** is a laboratory technique combining **reverse transcription of RNA into DNA** (in this context called complementary DNA or cDNA) and **amplification of specific DNA targets using polymerase chain reaction (PCR)**.
 - **Reverse Transcription** is the process in cells by which an **enzyme makes a copy of DNA from RNA**.
 - The enzyme that makes the DNA copy is called reverse transcriptase and is found in retroviruses, such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- RT-PCR is primarily **used to measure the amount of a specific RNA**.

Issue:

- The objective of LAMP, like that of RT-PCR tests, is the same: to **detect the presence of viral RNA**.
- Both achieve this via a **series of chemical transformations**.
- The **LAMP method is said to be faster but is a relatively newer technology**, more complicated in its design and has not been tested extensively for COVID-19 detection.
- Most **RT-PCR kits focus on two different genes, the E (envelope) gene and the RdRP (RNA dependent RNA polymerase) gene**.
- The World Health Organization recommends an E and RdRP test, while the U.S.'s Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) requires an N gene test.
 - The **N gene test is a confirmatory test and widely employed in Germany and China**, among other countries. However, **the design of it is complicated and can be expensive**.
 - The CDC protocol says three regions of the N gene must be analysed but the **Chitra-model tests two to confirm the identity of the virus**.
- Though the Chitra test passed an initial assessment by the National Institute of Virology in Alappuzha, a subsequent assessment showed that it was not performing as accurately as desired.

D. GS 4 Related

Nothing here for today!!!

E. Editorials

Category: ECONOMY

1. Stop the return to laissez-faire

The editorial argues that **labour laws are civilizational goals** and cannot be trumped on the excuse of a pandemic.

Issues:

- Through the public health crisis created by the COVID-19 pandemic, workers are being abandoned by their employers and, above all, by the state.
- The **workers' right to go home was curbed using the Disaster Management Act, 2005**.
- Adequate provisions were not made available for their food, shelter or medical relief.
- **Wage payments were not ensured**, and the state's cash and food relief **did not cover most workers**.

- When the centre issued orders permitting their return to their home States, state governments responded by delaying travel facilities for the workers to ensure uninterrupted supply of labour for employers.
- Employers now want labour laws to be relaxed.
- The **Uttar Pradesh government has issued an ordinance** keeping in abeyance almost all labour statutes including laws on **maternity benefits and gratuity**; the **Factories Act, 1948**; the **Minimum Wages Act, 1948**; the **Industrial Establishments (Standing Orders) Act, 1946**; and the **Trade Unions Act, 1926**.
- Several States have exempted industries from complying with various provisions of laws.
- The **Confederation of Indian Industry has suggested 12-hour work shifts** and that governments issue directions to make workers join duty failing which the **workers would face penal actions**.

Thus, after an organised abandonment of the unorganised workforce, the employers want the state to **reintroduce laissez-faire and a system of indenture for the organised workforce too**. This **will take away the protection conferred on organised labour by Parliament**.

This issue has been covered in [9th May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#) and [14th May 2020 Comprehensive News Analysis](#).

Colonial exploitation:

- What India is witnessing today bears a horrifying resemblance to what happened over 150 years ago in British India.
- The move is reminiscent of the **barbaric system of indentured labour** introduced through the Bengal Regulations VII, 1819 for the British planters in Assam tea estates.
 - Workers had to work under a five-year contract and desertion was made punishable.
- Later, the Transport of Native Labourers' Act, 1863 was passed in Bengal.
 - It strengthened control of the employers and even enabled them to detain labourers in the district of employment and imprison them for six months.
- Bengal Act VI of 1865 was later passed.
 - It deployed Special Emigration Police to prevent labourers from leaving, and return them to the plantation after detention.
- Factory workers too faced severe exploitation and were made to work 16-hour days for a pittance. Their protests led to the Factories Act of 1911 which introduced 12-hour work shifts. Yet, the low wages, arbitrary wage cuts and other harsh conditions forced workers into debt slavery.

Evolution of Labour Laws in India:

- The **labour laws in India have emerged out of workers' struggles, which were very much part of the freedom movement against oppressive colonial industrialists**.
- Since the 1920s there were a series of strikes and agitations for better working conditions. Several trade unionists were arrested under the Defence of India Rules.
- The workers' demands were supported by our political leaders.
- Britain was forced to appoint the Royal Commission on Labour, which gave a report in 1935.
- The **Government of India Act, 1935 enabled greater representation of Indians in law-making**.
- This **resulted in reforms**, which are forerunners to the present labour enactments.
- The indentured plantation labour saw relief in the form of the Plantations Labour Act, 1951.
- By a democratic legislative process, the Parliament stepped in to protect labour.

Dignity through democracy

- The **Factories Act lays down eight-hour work shifts**, with overtime wages, weekly offs, leave with wages and measures for health, hygiene and safety.

- The **Industrial Disputes Act** provides for workers' participation to resolve wage and other disputes through negotiations so that strikes/lockouts, unjust retrenchments and dismissals are avoided.
- The **Minimum Wages Act** ensures wages below which it is not possible to subsist.
- These enactments further the **Directive Principles of State Policy** and protect the right to life and the right against exploitation under Articles 21 and 23.
- Trade unions have played critical roles in transforming the life of a worker from that of servitude to one of dignity. Any move to undo these laws will push the workers a century backwards.
- Considering the underlying constitutional goals of these laws, Parliament did not delegate to the executive any blanket powers of exemption.
- Section 5 of the Factories Act empowers the State governments to exempt **only in case of a “public emergency”**, which is explained as a **“grave emergency whereby the security of India or any part of the territory thereof is threatened, whether by war or external aggression or internal disturbance”**.
 - There is no such threat to the security of India now.
 - Hours of work or holidays cannot be exempted even for public institutions.
- Section 36B of the Industrial Disputes Act enables **exemption for a government industry only if provisions exist for investigations and settlements**.

No statutory support:

- The **orders of the State governments lack statutory support**.
- **Labour is a concurrent subject in the Constitution** and most pieces of labour legislation are **Central enactments**.
- The **Constitution does not envisage approval by the President of a State Ordinance which makes a whole slew of laws enacted by Parliament inoperable in the absence of corresponding legislations on the same subject**.
- Almost all labour contracts are now governed by statutes, settlements or adjudicated awards arrived through democratic processes in which labour has been accorded at least procedural equality. Such procedures ensure progress of a nation.
- In the **Life Insurance Corporation v. D. J. Bahadur & Ors (1980)** case, the Supreme Court highlighted that **any changes in the conditions of service can be only through a democratic process of negotiations or legislation**.

Conclusion:

- The orders and ordinances issued by the State governments are undemocratic and unconstitutional. The existing conditions of labour will have to be continued.
- Global corporations had their **origins in instruments of colonialism** and their legacy was inherited by Indian capital post-Independence. The **resurgence of such a colonial mindset is a danger to society and the well-being of millions** and puts at risk the health and safety of not only the workforce but their families too.
- In the unequal bargaining power between capital and labour, **regulatory laws provide a countervailing balance and ensure the dignity of labour**.
- Governments have a constitutional duty to ensure just, humane conditions of work and maternity benefits.
- The health and strength of the workers cannot be abused by force of economic necessity.

Category: ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

1. Keeping Asia-Pacific afloat

The editorial sheds light upon how, in less than a century, climate change and unsustainable resource management have degraded ecosystems and diminished [biodiversity](#) in the seas of the Asia-Pacific region.

Issue:

Degraded Ecosystems:

- **Escalating strains on the marine environment** are threatening to drown progress and way of life in the Asia-Pacific region.
 - For generations, the **region has thrived on the seas for food, livelihoods and a sense of identity.**

Lack of data:

- Due to limitations in methodology and national statistical systems, information gaps have persisted at uneven levels across countries.
- Insights from **‘Changing Sails: Accelerating Regional Actions for Sustainable Oceans in Asia and the Pacific’** (*the theme study of this year’s Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific - ESCAP*) reveal that without data, there is lack of clarity about the state of water bodies in the region.
 - Data are available for only two out of ten targets for the Sustainable Development Goal 14, ‘Life Below Water’.

Plastic pollution:

- **Marine plastic pollution** in the region’s rivers has contributed to most of the **debris flooding the ocean.**
- **Asia and the Pacific produces nearly half of global plastic by volume**, of which it **consumes 38%.**
- Plastics represent a **double burden** for the ocean:
 - Their production generates CO₂ absorbed by the ocean.
 - Also, the final product enters the ocean as pollution.
- Beating this challenge will hinge upon effective national policies and re-thinking production cycles.

Impact on fishing stocks:

- **Levels of overfishing have exponentially increased**, leaving fish stocks and food systems vulnerable.
- **Environmental decline is also affecting fish stocks.**
- The region’s position as the **world’s largest producer of fish** has come at the cost of **over-exploitation.**
- The percentage of stocks fished at unsustainable levels has increased threefold from 10% in 1974 to 33% in 2015.
- Generating complete data on fish stocks, fighting illicit fishing activity and conserving marine areas must remain a priority.

Way forward:

- **Closing the maritime connectivity gap** must be placed at the centre of regional transport cooperation efforts. While the **most connected shipping economies are in Asia**, the small island developing States of the Pacific experience much lower levels of connectivity, leaving them relatively isolated from the global economy.
- Efforts must be taken to navigate toward **green shipping**. Enforcing **sustainable shipping policies** is essential.

- **Trans-boundary ocean management** and **linking ocean data** call for close cooperation among countries in the region.
- **Harnessing ocean statistics through strong national statistical systems** will serve as a compass guiding countries to monitor trends, devise timely responses and clear blind spots.
 - Through the Ocean Accounts Partnership, ESCAP is working with countries to harmonise ocean data and provide a space for regular dialogue.
- **Translating international agreements and standards into national action** is also key.
- Countries and all ocean custodians must be fully equipped to **localise global agreements into tangible results**.
 - ESCAP is working with member states to implement [International Maritime Organization \(IMO\)](#) requirements.
- **Keeping the ocean plastic-free** will depend on policies that promote a circular economy approach. This minimises resource use and will require economic incentives and disincentives.

Conclusion:

While the COVID-19 pandemic has temporarily reduced pollution in the seas, this should not be a moment of reprieve. Rather, recovery efforts need to build a new reality, embedded in sustainability. Efforts are needed to steer our collective fleets toward sustainable oceans.

F. Prelims Facts

Nothing here for today!!!

G. Tidbits

1. India non-committal on talks with Taliban

What's in News?

The Government of India has asserted that the country **will continue to be guided by its friendship with the Afghan people, remaining non-committal on renewed questions of whether it would open direct talks with the [Taliban](#)**.

- “We have our own perspectives on Afghanistan, and **our traditional and neighbourly ties with the people of Afghanistan will continue to guide our Afghanistan policy**,” a government source said.
- Recently, the U.S. Special envoy for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad had **suggested that India should speak directly to the Taliban**. It is the first time a U.S. official had openly made that suggestion.
- This has led to a renewal of interest in whether India will shift its stand.
- External Affairs Ministry officials declined to comment on whether India would change its **long-held position of dealing only with the elected government in Kabul, while considering the Taliban a terrorist organisation backed by Pakistan**.
- “There is no doubt more pressure to engage with the Taliban, but **India has always dealt only with the authority in power**, and talks with the Taliban would be premature at this point,” said a former diplomat.

H. UPSC Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. "Shishu", "Kishor", "Tarun" categories are associated with which of the following schemes?

- a. Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY)
- b. Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)
- c. Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)
- d. Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI)

Answer: a

Explanation:

- The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) aims to enable Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), Non-Banking financial institutions/Companies (NBFCs), Small Finance Banks, RBRs, Commercial Banks, Cooperative Banks, etc. to provide Low Rate Loans to eligible entities.
- The Mudra Yojana (PMMY) has three products as per the funding requirements of the Beneficiary or the Entrepreneur, i.e, Shishu, Kishor, Tarun.
 - Shishu: covering loans upto 50,000.
 - Kishor: covering loans above 50,000/- and upto 5 lakh.
 - Tarun: covering loans above 5 lakh and upto 10 lakh.

Q2. Consider the following statements:

1. DNA and RNA are both nucleic acids.
2. While DNA is a double-stranded molecule consisting of a long chain of nucleotides, RNA is a single-strand helix having shorter chains of nucleotides.
3. Both DNA and RNA contain Adenine, Guanine and Cytosine.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 3 only
- c. 2 and 3 only
- d. None of the above

Answer: d

Explanation:

- The particles in nucleus of the cell, responsible for heredity, are called chromosomes which are made up of proteins and another type of biomolecules called nucleic acids.
- Nucleic acids are responsible for the transfer of characters from parents to off springs. There are two types of nucleic acids — DNA and RNA.
- While DNA is a double-stranded molecule consisting of a long chain of nucleotides, RNA is a single-strand helix having shorter chains of nucleotides.
- The purines adenine (A) and guanine (G) and the pyrimidine cytosine (C) are present in both DNA and RNA.
- The pyrimidine thymine (T) present in DNA is replaced by the pyrimidine uracil (U) in RNA.

Q3. Consider the following statements:

1. Pangong Tso is a salt water lake in the Himalayas.

2. It is the first trans-boundary wetland in South Asia, identified as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention.

Which of the given statement/s is/are incorrect?

- a. 1 only
- b. 2 only
- c. Both 1 and 2
- d. Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Explanation:

Pangong Tso is an endorheic lake in the Himalayas. It is a salt water lake. The lake is in the process of being identified as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. It will then be the first trans-boundary wetland in South Asia under the convention.

Q4. Consider the following statements:

1. Reverse Transcription is the process in cells by which an enzyme makes a copy of DNA from RNA.
2. Reverse Transcriptase is found in HIV retrovirus.
3. Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) is a laboratory technique used to make many copies of specific genetic sequence for analysis.

Which of the given statement/s is/are correct?

- a. 1 and 3 only
- b. 1 only
- c. 1, 2 and 3
- d. 2 and 3 only

Answer: c

Explanation:

- Reverse Transcription is the process in cells by which an enzyme makes a copy of DNA from RNA.
- The enzyme that makes the DNA copy is called reverse transcriptase and is found in retroviruses, such as the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).
- Reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) is a laboratory technique used to make many copies of specific genetic sequence for analysis.
- It is primarily used to measure the amount of a specific RNA.

I. UPSC Mains Practice Questions

1. What is “One Nation, One Ration Card” scheme? Discuss the benefits emanating from the scheme and associated challenges. (15 Marks, 250 Words).
2. Discuss the role of UN-ESCAP and cooperation among the countries in the Asia-Pacific region in mitigating the risks posed by unsustainable resource management and diminished biodiversity in the seas of the region. (15 Marks, 250 Words)

