



60 Steps To Prelims (2021) (Date : 29-04-2021)

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Question 1:

With reference to reservation in promotion, which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. 'Creamy layer' principle is to be applied in reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in promotions.
2. This policy was held to be constitutionally valid by the Supreme Court in Indra Sawhney vs. Union of India 1992 case.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

Reservation in Promotion:

- Since the 1950s, the Central and the State Government since the 1950s have been following a **policy of reserving seats in promotions in favours of SC and ST communities on the ground that they are not adequately represented** at the decision making level of public services.
- This policy was held to be **unconstitutional and void by the Supreme Court in Indra Sawhney vs. Union Of India 1992** case on the ground that under Article 16(4) the State is provided with the power to make reservations in favour of backward classes of citizens only at the entry level that is at the time of recruitment into public services but not subsequently. **Hence, Statement 2 is not correct.**

- The Supreme Court in **M. Nagaraj v. Union Of India 2006 case** while upholding the constitutional validity of Art 16(4A) held that any such reservation policy in order to be constitutionally valid shall satisfy the following three constitutional requirements:
 - The SC and ST community should be socially and educationally backward.
 - The SC and ST communities are not adequately represented in Public employment.
 - Such a reservation policy shall not affect the overall efficiency in the administration.
 - Five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court has **upheld the application of ‘creamy layer’ principle** relating to reservations for Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) in promotions. **Hence, Statement 1 is correct.**
 - The creamy layer is a concept that puts an income ceiling on people availing of caste-wise reservations in government jobs and education. Till now, this was only applicable for reservations under the Other Backward Classes quota. SCs and STs were excluded since it was argued that their backwardness was based purely on untouchability for which economic improvement was not a remedy.
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Question 2:

With reference to the World Trade Organisation’s Special and differential treatment, consider the following statements:

1. It provides a longer time period for implementing agreements and commitments.
2. It provides support to help developing countries build infrastructure to undertake WTO work, handle disputes and implement technical standards.
3. It does not require WTO members to safeguard the trade interests of developing countries.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

1. 1 and 2 only
2. 2 and 3 only
3. 1 and 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

- The WTO agreements contain special provisions which give developing countries special rights and allow other members to treat them more favourably.

- These are “special and differential treatment provisions” (abbreviated as S&D or SDT). The special provisions include:
 - Longer time periods for implementing agreements and commitments. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - Measures to increase trading opportunities for these countries.
 - Provisions requiring all WTO members to safeguard the trade interests of developing countries. **Hence, statement 3 is NOT correct.**
 - Support to help developing countries build the infrastructure to undertake WTO work, handle disputes, and implement technical standards. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - Provisions related to least-developed country (LDC) members.
 - In the Doha Declaration, (ministers agreed that all special and differential treatment provisions should be reviewed, in order to strengthen them and make them more precise, effective and operational).
 - Numerous proposals were made by developing and least- developed countries. Most proposals came from the African Group and the group of least-developed countries.
 - They usually identify parts of an agreement and suggest new wording to introduce new S&D provisions for developing countries or to strengthen existing ones.
 - They relate to most WTO agreements, including the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), the GATT and the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
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Question 3:

With reference to the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific report, consider the following statements:

1. It is the oldest World Bank report on the region’s progress.
2. The study of the report focuses on a significant aspect or challenge relevant to the economies of the Asia-Pacific region.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer : 2

Explanation

- A report 'Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2021: Towards post-Covid-19 resilient economies' has recently been released by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).

According to the report, India is estimated to record an economic growth of 7% in 2021-22, over a contraction of 7.7% witnessed in the previous fiscal on account of the pandemic's impact on normal business activity

- The **Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific report** is annually produced since 1947.

It is the **oldest United Nations** report on the region's progress. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**

- The Survey monitors regional progress, provides cutting-edge analyses and guides policy discussion on the current and emerging socio-economic issues and policy challenges to support inclusive and sustainable development in the region.
- Since 1957, the **Survey has also contained a study or studies focusing on a significant aspect or challenge relevant to the economies** of the Asia-Pacific region. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
- The Survey of 2021 studies the impact of Covid-19 pandemic and provides insights for post-Covid-19 resilient economies.

Question 4:

With reference to the Global Gender Gap Report 2021, consider the following statements:

1. The report is released by the World Economic Forum (WEF).
2. India is one of the top performers in the South Asia region.
3. India has declined on the political empowerment index.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 1 and 3 only
3. 2 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 2

Explanation

- India has fallen 28 places in the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2021. **Hence, statement 1 is correct**

- The Global Gender Gap Report was first published in 2006 by the WEF.
 - It benchmarks 156 countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions:
 - Economic Participation and Opportunity, Educational Attainment, Health and Survival and Political Empowerment.
 - Over the Index, the highest possible score is 1 (equality) and the lowest possible score is 0 (inequality).
- India is now **one of the worst performers in South Asia**, it is now ranked 140 among 156 countries. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - In South Asia, Bangladesh ranked 65, Nepal 106, Pakistan 153, Afghanistan 156, Bhutan 130 and Sri Lanka 116.
 - India was ranked 112th among 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020.
- **Political Empowerment:**
 - India has declined on the political empowerment index as well by 13.5 percentage points, and a decline in the number of women ministers, from 23.1% in 2019 to 9.1% in 2021. Hence, statement 3 is correct
 - However, it has still performed relatively well compared to other countries, ranking at 51 in women's participation in politics.
- **Education Attainment:**

In the index of education attainment, India has been ranked at 114.
- **Economic Participation:**
 - The report notes that the economic participation gender gap actually widened in India by 3% this year.
 - The share of women in professional and technical roles declined further to 29.2%.
 - The share of women in senior and managerial positions also is at 14.6% and only 8.9% firms in the country have top female managers.
 - The estimated earned income of women in India is only one-fifth of men's, which puts the country among the bottom 10 globally on this indicator.
 - In Pakistan and Afghanistan, the income of an average woman is below 16% of that of an average man, while in India it is 20.7%.
- **Health and Survival index:**
 - On this India has fared the worst, ranking at 155.
 - The only country to have fared worse is China.
 - The report points to a skewed sex ratio as the major factor.
 - It says the ratio can be attributed to norms of son preference and gender-biased prenatal sex-selective practices.
 - China and India together account for about 90 to 95% of the estimated 1.2 to 1.5 million missing female births annually worldwide due to gender-biased prenatal sex selective practices

Question 5:

With reference to the 'International Labour Organization (ILO)', consider the following statements:

1. It is a specialised agency of the United Nations (UN).
2. It is the only tripartite agency bringing together governments, employers and workers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer : 3

Explanation

- The International Labour Organization (ILO) became the first affiliated specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - It is the only tripartite U.N. agency. It brings together governments, employers and workers of 187 member States, to set labour standards, develop policies and devise programmes promoting decent work for all women and men. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
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Question 6:

With reference to Employees' State Insurance Act, consider the following statements:

1. The ESI Act is administered by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC).
2. Benefits provided under the ESI Act are funded by the contributions made by the employers and the employees.
3. The Government of India through Ministry of Labour and Employment decides the rate of contribution under the ESI Act.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

1. 1 and 2 only
2. 2 and 3 only
3. 1 and 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 4

Explanation

- Recently, the Government of India has reduced the rate of contribution under the ESI Act from 6.5% to 4%(employers' contribution being reduced from 4.75% to 3.25% and employees' contribution being reduced from 1.75% to 0.75%).
 - The Employees' State Insurance Act 1948 (the ESI Act) provides for medical, cash, maternity, disability and dependent benefits to the Insured Persons under the Act.
 - The ESI Act is administered by the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC).
Hence, statement 1 is correct.
 - Benefits provided under the ESI Act are funded by the contributions made by the employers and the employees. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - The Government of India through the Ministry of Labour and Employment decides the rate of contribution under the ESI Act. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
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Question 7:

With reference to International Criminal Police Organization(interpol), consider the following statements:

1. It is an intergovernmental organization that helps coordinate the police force of member countries.
2. A National Central Bureau (NCB) in member countries connects their national law enforcement with other countries and with the General Secretariat.
3. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) is designated as the National Central Bureau of India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 1 and 2 only
3. 2 and 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 2

Explanation

- Interpol is an intergovernmental organization that helps coordinate the police force of 194 member countries. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- Each of the member countries hosts an interpol National Central Bureau (NCB). This connects their national law enforcement with other countries and with the General Secretariat. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is designated as the National Central Bureau of India. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
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Question 8:

Which of the following statements is/are correct?

Proper design and effective implementation of UN REDD+ Programme can significantly contribute to:

1. protection of biodiversity
2. resilience of forest ecosystems
3. poverty reduction

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1. 1 and 2 only
2. 3 only
3. 2 and 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 4

Explanation

- In 2010, as set out in the Cancun Agreements at COP?16, REDD became REDD+ which stands for countries' efforts to reduce emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and foster conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks.
 - REDD+ has the potential to contribute for following:
 - Climate change mitigation and poverty alleviation. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
 - Conserving biodiversity and sustaining vital ecosystem services. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - Resilience of forest ecosystems. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
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Question 9:

Consider the following:

1. Cartagena Protocol
2. Montreal Protocol
3. The Nagoya Protocol

Which of the above protocols are related to the Convention on Biological Diversity?

1. 1 and 3 only
2. 1 and 2 only
3. 2 and 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) was one of the key agreements adopted at **the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.**

- The Convention on Biological Diversity is the **international legal instrument for “the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources”** that has been ratified by 196 nations.
- Convention Under CBD
 - **Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety 1993:**
The **Cartagena Protocol** on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity is an international agreement which aims to ensure the safe handling, transport and use of living modified organisms (LMOs) resulting from modern biotechnology that may have adverse effects on biological diversity.
 - **The Nagoya Protocol 2010**
The Nagoya Protocol deals with access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- The Montreal Protocol 1987 deals with substances that **deplete the Ozone Layer** is an international treaty designed to protect the ozone layer by phasing out the production of numerous substances that are responsible for ozone depletion.
- **Hence, option A is correct.**

Question 10:

Global Hunger Index was initially published by:

1. Food and Agriculture Organization
2. International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas
3. The International Food Policy Research Institute
4. World Bank

Correct Answer : 3

Explanation

- The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at the global, regional, and country levels.
 - The **International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) published GHI in 2006 with German NGO, Welthungerhilfe. In 2007, Irish NGO ‘concern worldwide’** also became a co-publisher. In 2018, IFPRI stepped aside from the GHI project.
 - The GHI is designed to raise awareness and understanding of the struggle against hunger.
 - All 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)— including Goal 2, ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture—are to be achieved by 2030.
 - Other global initiatives, like **Compact 2025**, have set the goal of ending hunger worldwide by 2025.
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Question 11:

Consider the following statements:

1. The doctrine of ‘Basic Structure’ was laid down by the Supreme Court in the Kesavananda Bharati case, 1973.
2. Preamble is not a part of the Constitution of India.
3. Fundamental Rights cannot be amended by the Parliament.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 1 and 2 only
3. 2 and 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

- In the **Kesavananda Bharati case (1973)**, the Supreme Court laid down a new doctrine of the 'basic structure' (or 'basic features') of the Constitution. According to it, the constituent power of Parliament under Article 368 does not enable it to alter the 'basic structure' of the Constitution. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - The apex court in the same case also held that Preamble is a part of the Constitution. It observed that the Preamble is of extreme importance and the Constitution should be read and interpreted in the light of the grand and noble vision expressed in the Preamble. **Hence, statement 2 is NOT correct.**
 - However, two things should be noted:
 1. The Preamble is neither a source of power to legislature nor a prohibition upon the powers of legislature.
 2. It is non-justiciable, that is, its provisions are not enforceable in courts of law.
 - The Supreme Court also upheld the validity of the 24th Amendment Act (1971) and stated that Parliament is empowered to abridge or take away any of the Fundamental Rights. However, Parliament cannot abridge or take away a Fundamental Right that forms a part of the 'basic structure' of the Constitution. **Hence, statement 3 is NOT correct.**
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Question 12:

Which of the following organizations releases the Global Economy Watch report?

1. World Economic Forum
2. International Monetary Fund
3. World Bank
4. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)

Correct Answer : 4

Explanation

- **Global Economy Watch report** is released by London based multinational professional services network- PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC). **Hence, option (d) is correct.**
 - PwC's Global Economy Watch is a short publication that looks at the trends and issues affecting the global economy and details its latest projections for the world's leading economies.
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Question 13:

What is/are the importance/importances of the 'United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification'?

1. It aims to promote effective action through innovative national programmes and supportive international partnerships.
2. It has a special/particular focus on South Asia and North Africa regions, and its Secretariat facilitates the allocation of major portion of financial resources to these regions.
3. It is committed to bottom-up approach, encouraging the participation of local people in combating the desertification.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

1. 1 only
2. 2 and 3 only
3. 1 and 3 only
4. 1, 2 and 3 only

Correct Answer : 3

Explanation

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, established in 1994, is the sole legally binding international agreement linking the environment and development to sustainable land management.

- It specifically addresses the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the dry-lands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and people can be found.
- The focus of the Convention is to get community support to combat desertification and follow the decentralized approach.
- It aims to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought in countries experiencing serious drought and/or desertification, particularly in Africa. **Hence, 2 is not correct.**
- It seeks to take effective action at all levels, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements in the framework of an integrated approach which is consistent with Agenda 21, with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in affected areas. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**

- Parties should ensure that decisions on the design and implementation of programmes to combat desertification and/or mitigate the effects of drought are taken with the participation of the populations and local communities and that an enabling environment is created at higher levels to facilitate action at national and local levels. **Hence, 3 is correct.**
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Question 14:

With reference to 'Agenda 21', sometimes seen in the news, consider the following statements:

1. It is a global action plan for sustainable development.
2. It originated in the World Summit on Sustainable Development held in Johannesburg in 2002.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

- 'Agenda 21', the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, and the Statement of principles for the Sustainable Management of Forests was adopted by more than 178 Governments at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, 1992. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - It is a comprehensive plan of action to be taken globally, nationally and locally by organizations of the United Nations System, governments, and major groups in every area in which human impacts the environment and sustainable development. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - The full implementation of 'Agenda 21', the programme for further implementation of 'Agenda 21' and the commitments to the Rio principles were strongly reaffirmed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD), held in Johannesburg, South Africa in 2002.
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Question 15:

With reference to Corporate Social Responsibility(CSR), consider the following statements:

1. It is governed by the Companies Act, 2013.
2. India is the first country to legally mandate CSR spending.
3. The CSR provisions are applicable to companies with an annual turnover of Rs. 500 crore and more.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 and 2
2. 2 only
3. 2 and 3
4. 3 only

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

- In India, the concept of CSR is governed by clause 135 of the Companies Act, 2013. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - India is the first country in the world to legally mandate CSR spending along with a framework to identify potential CSR activities. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - The CSR provisions within the Act is applicable to companies with an annual turnover of 1,000 crore and more, or a net worth of Rs. 500 crore and more, or a net profit of Rs. 5 crore and more. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
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Question 16:

With reference to National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), consider the following statements:

1. It aims to coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency.
2. It is chaired by the Home Minister.
3. It is a constitutional body.

Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 and 3 only
3. 2 only

4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

- NDMA's primary purpose is to coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - The NDMA is chaired by the Prime Minister. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - It is a statutory body constituted in accordance with the Disaster Management Act, 2005. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
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Question 17:

With reference to the 'Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD)', consider the following statements:

1. It tells how much direct sunlight is prevented from reaching the ground by the aerosol particles in the atmosphere.
2. The greater the value, the cleaner the air.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer : 1

Explanation

- Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD) is a measure of extinction of the solar beam by the aerosol particles in the atmosphere. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - An optical depth of 1 or above indicates very hazy conditions whereas value of less than 0.1 corresponds to a clean atmosphere. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
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Question 18:

Consider the following studies:

1. The office of the Chief Justice of India has been kept out of the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.
2. Third-parties, or those not party to a case, can obtain court documents such as copies of judgments and pleadings after the court's permission.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 2 only
3. Both 1 and 2
4. Neither 1 nor 2

Correct Answer : 2

Explanation

- In 2019, a **five-judge bench of the Supreme Court of India ruled** that the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) would come under the ambit of the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005 as **CJI is a public authority under the RTI Act. Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
 - A bench of Supreme Court judges ruled that court documents such as copies of judgments and pleadings can be obtained by third-parties or those not party to a case. Court's registrar allows access to the documents after being satisfied about the reasonable cause for seeking the information/certified copies of the documents. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
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Question 19:

With reference to the 'National Human Rights Commission', consider the following statements:

1. It is a statutory body for the promotion of human rights in the country.
2. It is empowered to act against human rights violations by government or private parties.
3. The retired members of the Commission are not eligible for further employment under the Central or a state government.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. 1 only
2. 1 and 2 only

3. 1 and 3 only

4. 1, 2 and 3

Correct Answer : 3

Explanation

- The National Human Rights Commission was established under the Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993 as amended by the Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Act, 2006. It is an embodiment of India's concern for the promotion and protection of human rights. **Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
 - It is not empowered to act when human rights violations through private parties take place. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
 - The chairman and members hold office for a term of five years or until they attain the age of 70 years, whichever is earlier. After their tenure, the chairman and members are not eligible for further employment under the Central or a state government. **Hence, statement 3 is correct.**
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Question 20:

With reference to the the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020, consider the following statements:

1. It substitutes the existing clause of 'domicile' by the 'permanent resident of the Union Territory'.
2. It enables non-domiciles to apply for the gazetted and non-gazetted posts in Jammu and Kashmir.
3. People registered as migrants under Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) will not be considered domiciles.

Which of the statements given above is/are NOT correct?

1. 1 and 2 only

2. 2 and 3 only

3. 2 only

4. 1 and 3 only

Correct Answer : 4

Explanation

- The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation (Adaptation of State Laws) Order, 2020 substitute the clause for 'permanent resident of the State' under the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services (Decentralisation and Recruitment) Act, 2010, by 'Domicile' of the Union Territory. **Hence, statement 1 is not correct.**
 - Before these orders, only permanent residents of J&K were eligible to apply for the gazetted and non-gazetted posts but now non-domiciles can also apply for these posts. **Hence, statement 2 is correct.**
 - Someone who is registered as a migrant by the Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (Migrants) will fall into the criteria for being a domicile. **Hence, statement 3 is not correct.**
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