

VAJIRAM & RAVI Institute for IAS Examination

The Analyst

CURRENT AFFAIRS Handout

1st May 2025

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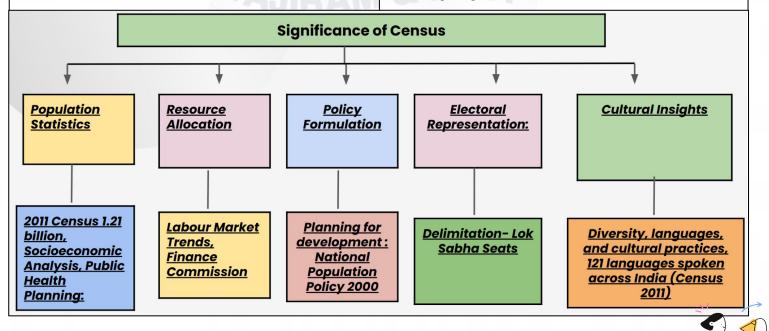
<u>CONTEXT</u>: The caste census will be held with national census.

The Next Census

- First non-synchronously census-1872.
- First synchronous census-1881-W.C. Plowden, Census Commissioner of India.
- Responsibility Office/o Census Commissioner of India, MHA
- Legal/Constitutional basis of Census in India:
 - Union List (entry 69) of Seventh Schedule in Indian Constitution.
 - Provisions of the Census Act, 1948.
- Features of upcoming census:
- 16th in series and 8th after independence.
- Digital
- Self-enumeration facility- first time

National Population Register (NPR)

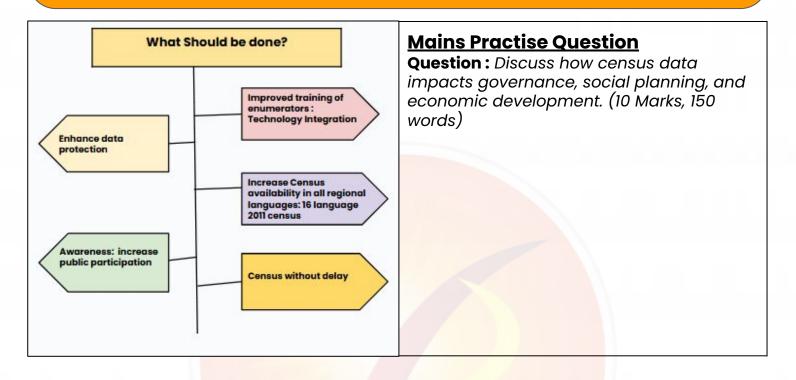
- Usual residents of the country.
- Mandatory for every usual resident of India to register in the NPR.
- Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003, a usual resident is:
 - a person who has resided in a local area for the past 6 months or more; or
 - a person who intends to reside in that area for the next 6 months or more.
- Includes both Indian citizens as well as a foreign citizen.
- **Objective :** Create a comprehensive identity database of every usual resident in the country.
- First NPR 2010, updation- 2015 by conducting door to door survey.
- Next NPR Census 2021.
- NPR- O/o: Registrar General of India (RGI)



The Next Census



CONTEXT: The caste census will be held with national census.





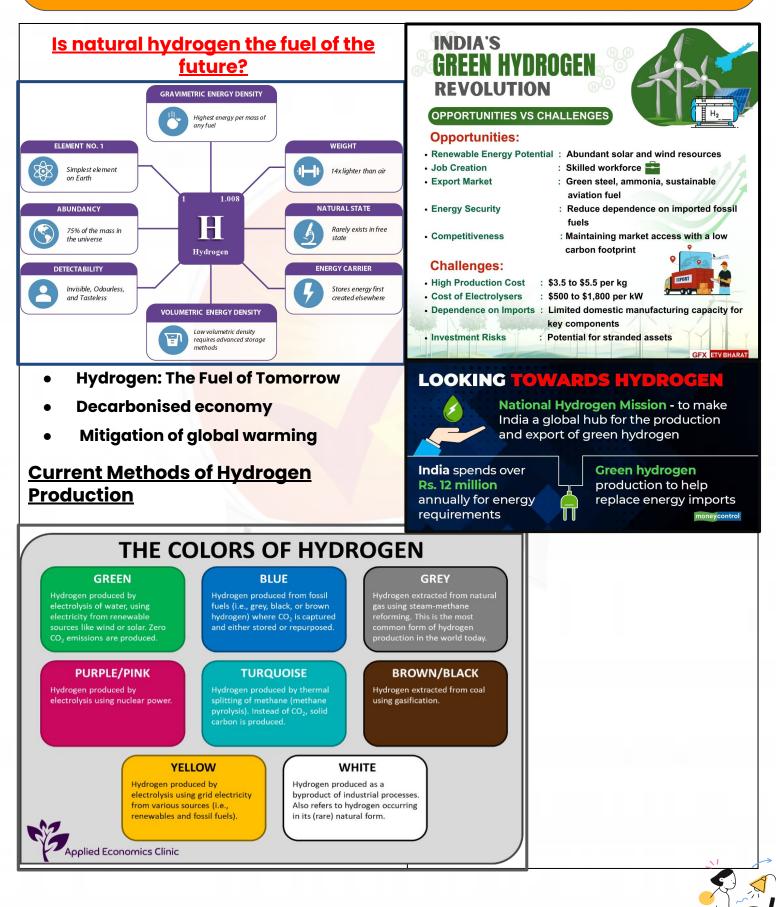


Is natural hydrogen the fuel of the future?



1st May, 2025

CONTEXT: A write up has appeared emphasizing on the various aspects of natural hydrogen.

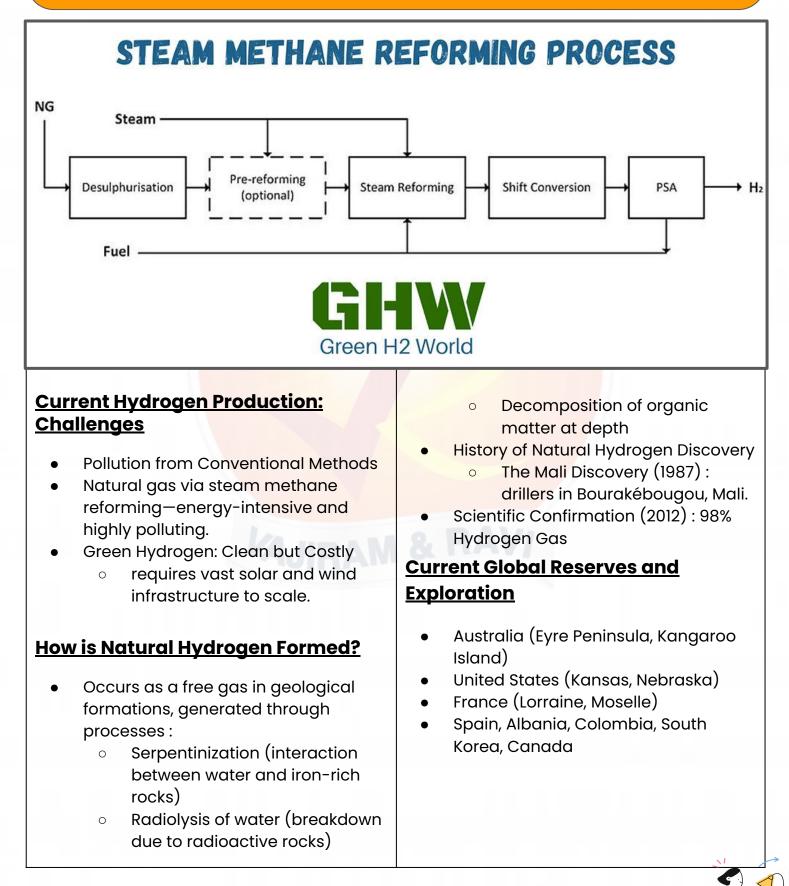


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India's Hydrogen Potential

• Favorable geological conditions :

- Hard rock formations (ultramafic/mafic, basaltic)
- Ophiolite complexes
 (Andaman, Himalayas)
- Sedimentary basins (Vindhyan, Cuddapah, Gondwana)
- Hydrothermal systems (hot springs, fracture zones)

Challenges and Future Outlook

 Economic and Logistical Barriers : Scattered deposits,economically unviable.

- Cost of Fuel
- Lack of dedicated exploration frameworks - traditional hydrocarbons.
- Lack of investment and research
- Sustainable exploitation

Mains Practise Question

Question : What are the different types of hydrogen, and what are the key challenges in producing green hydrogen in India? (10 Marks, 150 words)

India's Shame – the Trap of **Bonded Labour**



1st May, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Issues related to Vulnerable Sections Newspaper: The Hindu: Page Number: 06

Bonded labour emerges from a web of interconnected factors. Immediate triggers, such as medical emergencies, religious ceremonies, dowries, food shortages, or the sudden loss of a job or a breadwinner, may force an impoverished worker to seek a loan or advance from an employer or labour agent. However, deeper systemic issues amplify this vulnerability: discrimination and social exclusion based on religion, ethnicity, or caste; widespread illiteracy and a lack of access to information; employer monopolies over local financial and labour markets; and the dominance of social elites. These elements transform a simple economic transaction between lender and borrower into a mechanism of social control and exploitation.

Policy and plan

India had abolished bonded labour in 1975. In 2016, the then Union Labour Minister, Bandaru Dattatreya, informed Parliament about the government's plan to release and rehabilitate 1.84 crore bonded labourers across the country as part of a 15-year vision extending until 2030.

Interestingly, in December 2021, when parliamentarian Mohammed Jawed inquired about this target in Parliament, the government stated that 12,760 bonded labourers had been rescued and rehabilitated between 2016 and 2021.

The Minister of State for Labour and Employment revealed a harsh truth: of India's estimated 1.84 crore bonded labourers, only 12,760 have been rescued and rehabilitated, leaving approximately 1.71 crore still trapped. To meet the 2030 target of eradicating bonded labour, around 11 lakh individuals would need to have been rescued annually since 2021. Given that only 12,000 bonded labourers were rescued between 2016 and 2021, expecting lakhs to be freed annually is overly optimistic.

In addition to bonded labour, crores of unorganised Indian workers, particularly migrants, endure forced labour in India, which

closely resembles bonded labour. According to a National Sample Survey Organization of India report, the country's total employment across the organised and unorganised sectors was approximately 47 crore. Of this, only 8 crore workers were in the organised sector, while the remaining 39 crore were in the unorganised sector.

The International Labour Organisation's India Employment Report 2024 also states that low-quality jobs in the informal sector and informal employment are the dominant forms of work in India.

The ground reality

Unfortunately, unorganised workers, predominantly migrants in India's informal sector, lack unionisation, depriving them of collective bargaining power. Without unionisation, unorganised workers face exploitative conditions, lack formal contracts, and risk arbitrary dismissal. In the 1940s, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar championed labour rights, mandating trade union recognition and collective bargaining, including the right to strike. However, the Labour Codes of 2019-20 have undermined Ambedkar's legacy, eroding workers' rights and prioritising profit over people, leaving them vulnerable to exploitation.

> Since early 2022, investigations by this writer into forced labour across Indian industries have exposed a shameful reality: Indian industries thrive on the exploitation of forced labour, a blatant betrayal of India's workers. Interviews with hundreds of workers - mostly migrants forced from their villages by climate change, crippling poverty, and a lack of job opportunities lay bare a system rigged against them. These workers lack stable wages, facing meagre pay, precarious conditions, and the constant threat of dismissal. This exploitation, a deliberate assault on their dignity, is perpetuated by a system prioritising profit over people, ignoring modern-day slavery. India's economy shamefully thrives on bonded and forced labour, profiting from its most vulnerable.



India's Shame – the Trap of **Bonded Labour**



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Issues related to Vulnerable Sections Newspaper: The Hindu: Page Number: 06

LABOUR CODES

Social Security Code

The SS Code has subsumed 9 labour law Acts which provides various social security schemes like the employee provident fund, employee state insurance and employee pension scheme

The Code on Wages subsumes 4 labour laws. the Code ensures uniform applicability of the provisions of wages and minimum wages to all employees.

Wages Code

Industrial Relation Code This code amalgametes 13 This covers the three labour laws. This code requires the employer to make sure that the workspace is free from hazards that can cause injury or occupational timely payment of hazards to the employees, provide free health checkup, free of costs to certain classes of employees.

OSH Code

main laws related to the settlement of labour disputes. These laws mainly include the Industrial Disputes Act, Trade Union Act and the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act.

LABOUR CODES - BENEFITS FOR WORKERS

Universalization of right of minimum wages and timely payment of wages to all workers including unorganized workers — presently minimum wages applicable to only 30% of workers.

Statutory concept of National Floor Wage introduced: will reduce regional disparity in minimum wages.

Fixation of minimum wages simplified, leading to less number of rates of minimum wages and better compliance.

Appointment letter for all workers- this will promote formalization.

Annual Health Check-up for employees.

Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) Code also applicable to establishments engaged in work of hazardous nature even with



threshold of less than 10 workers.

Definition of inter-state migrant worker modified to include migrant workers employed directly by the employer, workers directly coming to destination State of their own besides the migrant workers employed through a contractor.



Portability of welfare benefits for migrant workers.

Extension of ESIC coverage pan-India to all districts and all establishments employing 10 or more employees as against those in notified districts/areas only.

Extension of ESIC coverage to employees working in

establishments with less than 10 employees on voluntary basis.

Mandatory ESIC coverage through notification by the Central Government for employees in hazardous industries with less than 10 employees.

Social Security Scheme for Gig workers and Platform workers

Re-skilling fund introduced for retrenched employees.

All occupations opened for women and permitted to work at night with safeguards.

Provision for Social Security Fund for unorganised workers.

Gratuity for Fixed Tem **Employment - Provision of** gratuity on convertion of one year service as against 5 years.

Source: Government of India

Digital Access a Part of Fundamental Rights



SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Fundamental Rights **Newspaper**: The Hindu: **Page Number:** 01

Inclusive and meaningful digital access to e-governance and welfare delivery systems is a part of the fundamental right to life and liberty, the Supreme Court held in a judgment on Wednesday.

A Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R. Mahadevan, hearing a petition on how people with disability find it nearly impossible to complete the digital Know Your Customer (KYC) process, said that the state has an obligation to provide an inclusive digital ecosystem to the marginalised, underprivileged, vulnerable, disabled, and historically excluded sections of society. Amidst the "wave of digital progress" in India a crucial systems should be inclusive to all sections of society

aspect often overlooked is whether this technology is truly inclusive, the court said.

"The right to digital access emerges as an instinctive component of the right to life and liberty, necessitating the state to proactively design and implement inclusive digital ecosystems to serve not only the privileged, but also the marginalised," said Justice Mahadevan, who authored the judgment.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 10

| Fundamental Rights Under Article 21 | Description | |
|---|---|--|
| Right to Life | Includes the right to live with dignity, free from exploitation. | |
| Right to Personal Liberty | Protection against unlawful detention (strengthened by Article 22). | |
| Right to Privacy | Recognized in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017). | |
| Right to Health | Access to medical care (Paschim Banga Khet Mazdoor Samity v. State of West Bengal, 1996). | |
| Right to Education | Free & compulsory education for children (via Article 21A). | |
| Right to Shelter | Basic necessity for dignified living (U.P. Avas Evam Vikas Parishad v. Friends Coop. Housing Society, 1995). | |



Digital Access a Part of Fundamental Rights



<u>SYLLABUS</u>: GS Paper 2: Fundamental Rights Newspaper: The Hindu: Page Number: 01

| Right to Clean Environment | Pollution-free environment (M.C. Mehta v. Union of India, 1987). | PRELIMS PYQ 2019 |
|---|--|--|
| Right to Fair Trial | Includes speedy trial & legal aid (Hussainara Khatoon v. State of Bihar, 1979). | 56. Which Article of the Constitution of India safeguards one's right to marry the person of one's choice? |
| Right Against Torture & Custodial Violence | Prohibition of inhuman treatment (<i>D.K. Basu v. State of W.B., 1997</i>). | (a) Article 19 (b) Article 21 |
| Right to Die with Dignity (Passive Euthanasia) | Allowed under strict guidelines (Common Cause v. Union of India, 2018). | (c) Article 25 (d) Article 29 |
| Right to Livelihood | Part of right to life (Olga Tellis v. Bombay Municipal Corp., 1985). | PRELIMS PYQ 2023 |
| Right to Reputation | Protection against defamation (Subramanian Swamy v. Union of India, 2016). | 79. 'Right to Privacy' is protected under which Article of the Constitution of India? |
| Right to Marry & Choose Partner | Recognized in Lata Singh v. State of U.P. (2006). | (a) Article 15 (b) Article 19 (c) Article 21 |
| Right to Travel Abroad | Upheld in Maneka Gandhi v. Union of India (1978). | (d) Article 29 |
| Right to Information | Derived from freedom of speech & right to life (<i>PUCL v. Union of</i> <i>India, 2003</i>). | |



National Security Advisory

Board



1st May, 2025

<u>SYLLABUS</u>: GS Paper 3: Internal Security Newspaper: The Hindu; Page Number: 10

he government has reorganised the National Security Advisory Board (NSAB) with Alok Joshi, former Chief of the Research and Analysis Wing, India's external intelligence agency, appointed its Chairman and the induction of seven new members.

The move undertaken in the past few days comes amid the ongoing tensions with Pakistan following the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22.

PM chairs CCS meeting In another development, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi met on Wednesday, a day after Mr. Modi chaired a meeting with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Anil Chauhan and the three service chiefs.

Expressing complete

 Primary Role: Provides long-term analysis on national security issues.

 Advisory Function: Offers strategic perspectives to the National Security Council (NSC).

- Recommendations: Suggests measures, solutions, and policy options
- Scope: Addresses issues referred by the NSC.

National Security Council (NSC)

- Established: 1998 by PM Atal Bihari
 Vajpayee after India-Pakistan nuclear tests.
- **Role:** Apex body for national security management in India.
- Head PM
- NSA- Secretary of NSC

faith and confidence in the professional abilities of the armed forces, Mr. Modi, in that meeting, gave "complete operational freedom" to the forces to decide on the mode, targets, and timing of the Indian response.

The new members of the Board include former Ambassador to Russia D. B. Venkatesh Varma, a nonproliferation expert; former Southern Army Commander Lt. Gen. A.K. Singh; former Western Air Commander Air Marshal P. M. Sinha; Rear Admiral Monty Khanna; and former IPS officers Rajiv Ranjan Verma, Manmohan Singh and A.B. Mathur. This effectively sees half of the 16member Board re constituted.

Mr. Joshi was an IPS officer of the Haryana cadre of the 1976 batch and had served in the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and was appointed RAW chief in 2012. Mr. Mathur had also served in the RAW while Mr. Singh had served in the IB.

"The reconstitution is a standard practice of bring-

Cabinet Committees



1st May, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Executive Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 09

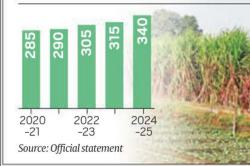
(Rs/quintal)

AMID A drop in sugar production during the current season October 2024 to September 2025), the Centre on Wednesday increased the fair and remunerative price (FRP) of sugarcane by ₹15 (or 4.41%) to ₹355 per quintal for the sugar season 2025-26.

The new FRP - it is the minimum price mandated by the Government that sugar mills are obligated to pay farmers for their produce – will come into effect October 1, 2025.

"Keeping in view interest of sugarcane farmers, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved FRP of sugarcane for sugar season 2025-26 (October-September) at ₹355/qtl for a ba-

FAIR PRICE OF SUGARCANE



FEATURES

- Cabinet committees are extra-constitutional and not mentioned in the Constitution.
- They are of two types: standing (permanent) and ad hoc (temporary, for special problems).
- Set up by the Prime Minister as needed; their number, nomenclature, and composition vary.
- They sort out issues, formulate proposals, and make decisions, which the Cabinet can review.
- These committees reduce the Cabinet's workload, facilitate in-depth policy examination, and ensure effective coordination based on division of labour and delegation principles.



EIGHT CABINET COMMITTEES

- Appointments Committee of the Cabinet
- Cabinet Committee on Accommodation
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
- Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs
- **Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs**
- Cabinet Committee on Security
- Cabinet Committee on Investment and Growth
- Cabinet Committee on Employment & Skill Development



Cabinet Committees



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<u>SYLLABUS</u>: GS Paper 2: Executive Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 09

COMPOSITION

- Cabinet committees in India typically have 3-8 members, mainly Cabinet Ministers.
- Non-cabinet ministers and senior ministers not in charge of discussed subjects may also be included.
- The Prime Minister usually chairs the committee, but sometimes the Home or Finance Minister may do so.
- If the Prime Minister is a member, he will head the committee.
- Currently, all committees except the Cabinet Committee on Accommodation and the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs are headed by the Prime Minister.
- The Home Minister heads the Cabinet Committee on Accommodation, and the Defence Minister heads the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs.





Food Safety and Standards Authority of India



1st May, 2025

SYLLABUS: GS Paper 2: Indian Constitution Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 11

PEOPLE WILL now be able to complain about any misleading claims made by food products directly to the country's apex food safety regulator.

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FS-SAI) has created a link on its website and a section on its app allowing people to file complaints. To register a complaint against misleading claims, one just needs to upload photographs of the front-of-pack and the back label that shows the composition and the nutritional information of the food.

The complainant will also have to mention the name of the brand, the name of the product, the license or registration number - usually displayed on the packs along with an FSSAI logo, and the misleading claim made.

The complainants are also asked whether the product is available online.

All complaints are sent to the appropriate licensing authority the state licensing authority if the manufacturer holds a state license or the Central Licensing Officer of the state where the product is manufactured if the company holds a central license, which most bigger brands do.

"They will give the company an improvement notice. The company either has to comply and change their packaging or they have to provide scientific evidence for making any claim. Take for example, if a company says that their baby formula strengthens bones, they will have to provide research in support of the claim," the official said.

These documents are then forwarded to the scientific committee for examination. If they are not satisfied, the companies are given some time to change packaging. If they don't comply, legal proceedings can be initiated and their license may be cancelled or suspended.

- Autonomous body under- MoH&FW •
- established **under the Food Safety** . and Standards Act, 2006, which is a consolidating statute related to food safety and regulation in India.
- Vision: Build a new India by enabling citizens to have safe and nutritious food, prevent diseases, and lead a healthy and happy life.
- Mission:

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- Set globally benchmarked 0 standards for food,
- encourage and ensure that 0 food businesses adhere to these standards.
- adopt good manufacturing 0 and hygiene practices,
- and ultimately enable 0 citizens to access safe and right food.

FSSAI has been mandated by the FSS Act, 2006 for performing the following functions:

- 1. Laying down the Standards and guidelines in relation to articles of food and specify appropriate system for enforcement.
- 2. Specifying limits for additives, contaminants, pesticides, veterinary drug residues, heavy metals, processing aids, mycotoxins, antibiotics & pharmacological active substances & irradiated foods.
- 3. Laying down food labelling standards including claims on health, nutrition, specify dietary uses & food category system for foods.
- 4. Laying down procedures & guidelines for accreditation of certification bodies & laboratories.
- 5. Prescribing the procedure, & the enforcement of quality control in relation to any imported article of food into India.

Food Safety and Standards Authority of India



<u>SYLLABUS</u>: GS Paper 2: Statutory bodies Newspaper: The Indian Express; Page Number: 11

| Initiative by FSSAI | | |
|--|--|--|
| Initiative | Description | |
| Eat Right India | A comprehensive initiative to promote safe, healthy and wholesome food | |
| RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) | Initiative to collect and convert used cooking oil into biodiesel | |
| FoSTaC (Food Safety Training and Certification) | A program to train food handlers and improve hygiene practices | |
| Diet4Life | Awareness campaign about metabolic disorders and healthy eating | |





Daily Quiz



1st May, 2025

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the implications of conducting a caste census in India:

- It could impact fiscal federalism. 1.
- It may necessitate altering existing 2. reservation quotas.
- No caste data has ever been collected in 3. any post-independence census.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 2 only
- 1 and 2 only b)
- 1, 2, and 3 c)
- d) None

Answer: b

Q2. Regarding the natural hydrogen, consider the following statements:

- Serpentinization involves the interaction 1. between water and silicate-rich rocks.
- Natural hydrogen is commonly found as 2. a bonded compound.

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

- a) 1 Only
- b) 2 Only
- Both 1 and 2 c)
- d) Neither 1 nor 2

Answer: b

Q3. Regarding Article 21 of the Constitution of India, consider the following statements:

- Right to privacy is explicitly mentioned in 1. Article 21 after the 44th Amendment of the Constitution.
- Article 21 guarantees protection only 2. against executive action, not legislative action.
- Right to education for children arises 3. directly under Article 21, not through any other provision.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b)
- Only Two All Three
- c)
- d) None

Answer: d

Q4. Regarding the National Security Advisory Board, consider the following statements:

- It is a statutory body under the National 1. Security Council Secretariat.
- 2. It comprises strategic, foreign policy, defence, and economic experts.
- 3. Its recommendations are binding on the National Security Council.
- 4. The board was first constituted during the Karail War in 1999.

How many of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) Only One
- b) **Only Two**
- c) **Only Three**
- d) All Four

Answer: a

Q5. Regarding the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, consider the following statements:

- 1 It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- 2. It was established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, of 2006.
- 3. One of its missions includes direct distribution of food under the NFSA, 2013.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 1 only
- c) 2 only
- d) 2 and 3 only

Answer: a





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