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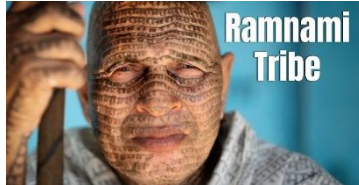
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## Current Affairs - 03 November 2025

### KEY FACTS ABOUT RAMNAMI TRIBE



- The Ramnamis are a unique sect from Chhattisgarh, India, who tattoo the name "Ram" on their bodies and faces.
- The Ramnami Samaj is a movement that came up in what is now central and northern Chhattisgarh in the 19th century as an act of peaceful resistance against the caste system in India that denied many of them entry to temples.
- According to a popular legend, it was started by Parsuram Bhardwaj, the son of a low-caste sharecropper.
- More than 100 years ago, the sect decided to tattoo their bodies and faces with the name of nirgun (unmanifest) Ram to show that Ram, or God, was omnipresent and everywhere.
- In 1910, the Ramnami Samaj was taken to court by upper-caste Hindu groups over this unique practice, but they won the case and the right to inscribe Ram's name on their bodies, clothing, and living spaces.
- Ramnamis emphasize worshipping Ram in any form, whether in saffron robes or with a shaved head.
- They prioritize gender equality and adorn themselves with 'ghungroos' and a crown crafted from peacock feathers.
- In Chhattisgarh, 'ghungroos' play a vital role in their dances and Bhajan performances.
- Their white attires were also decorated with the name of Ram, while the peacock feathers on their headgear held a rich mythological significance.
- At one time, their population stood anywhere near 6 lakh, but it has come down to 100,000, with some estimates suggesting only 20,000 Ramnami remain.



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### EXERCISE POORVI PRACHAND PRAHAR



- It is a **tri-service military exercise** conceived as a forward-looking exercise, which will validate multi-domain integration across land, air, and maritime fronts.
- It will be held in **Mechuka, Arunachal Pradesh**.
- **Aim:** It is aimed at enhancing warfighting capabilities, technological adaptation, and **operational synergy among the Army, Navy, and Air**.
- It refines **interoperability, improves situational awareness**, and validates command-and-control structures for joint missions.
- **Focus:** The exercise focuses **on multi-domain integration**, across land, air and maritime domains, to enhance operational synergy, technological adaptation, and readiness for future conflicts.
- The exercise involves **coordinated employment of special forces**, unmanned platforms, **precision systems** and networked operations centres operating in unison under realistic **high-altitude conditions**.
- **Previous Exercises:** 'Poorvi Prachand Prahar' follows previous tri-service drills, '**Bhala Prahar**' (2023) and '**Poorvi Prahar**' (2024).

### NATIONAL BEEKEEPING AND HONEY MISSION



- It is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched by the Government of India.
- It focuses on **overall promotion and development of scientific beekeeping** and the production of quality honey and other beehive products.
- It is **implemented through the National Bee Board (NBB)**.



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- **Funding:** ₹500 crore for three years (2020–21 to 2022–23) and has been extended for another **three years** (2023–24 to 2025–26).
- It is being **implemented through 3 Mini Missions(MMs)**
  - **Mini Mission-I:** Under this Mission, thrust will be given on **production & productivity improvement of various crops** through pollination assisted by adoption of scientific beekeeping;
  - **Mini Mission-II:** This Mission will concentrate **on post-harvest management of beekeeping/behive products** including collection, processing, storage, marketing, value addition, etc.
  - **Mini Mission-III:** This Mission will concentrate on **research & technology generation** for different regions/states/agro-climatic and socio-economic conditions.
- **Objectives of National Beekeeping and Honey Mission**
  - **Income & employment generation:** Promoting holistic growth of beekeeping industry for providing livelihood support to farm and non-farm households.
  - **Infrastructure Development:** Developing additional infrastructural facilities for developing quality **nucleus stock of honeybees**, multiplication of stock by bee breeders and post-harvest and marketing infrastructures.
  - **Quality Control:** Setting up of **state-of-the-art Labs for testing of honey & other beehive products** at regional levels and Mini/Satellite Labs at district levels.
  - **Traceability:** To develop **blockchain/ traceability system** for of source of honey & other beehive products and using IT tools in beekeeping, including online registration, etc.;
  - **Skill Development:** To promote, develop and disseminate latest technologies and skill development in beekeeping industry for production of honey & other high value beehive products;
  - **Institutional Framework:** Strengthening beekeepers through collective approaches like SHGs, FPOs, and cooperatives.



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### EIGHTH PAY COMMISSION TERMS OF REFERENCE APPROVED

- The Pay Commission is set up by the **central government roughly every 10 years** to revise salaries and pensions of its employees.
- Since Independence, seven such commissions have been formed, with the Eighth Central Pay Commission announced in January this year.
- After consultations with ministries, state governments, and staff representatives, the terms of reference have been finalised.
- The Commission is expected to submit its recommendations within 18 months.
- The Eighth CPC has been tasked with reviewing pay, allowances, and pensions while ensuring fiscal prudence and adequate funds for development and welfare schemes.
- It will also assess the financial impact on state governments, which often adopt central recommendations, and compare salary structures and benefits in the public and private sectors.

### **Timeline for the Eighth Central Pay Commission**

- The Eighth Central Pay Commission's recommendations are expected to be announced in April 2027 but will be **effective retrospectively from January 1, 2026**.
- This means pay and pension hikes will apply from that date, with arrears paid upon implementation, while allowances will be revised prospectively.

### **Key Factors That Will Decide the Pay and Pension Hike**

- The extent of salary and pension increases under the Eighth Central Pay Commission (CPC) will mainly depend on the **fitment factor**.
  - The fitment factor is a multiplier used when pay scales are revised.
  - In the Seventh Pay Commission, this factor was 2.57, meaning basic pay was raised to 2.57 times the previous level.
  - The new factor will be finalised after Cabinet approval of the Commission's recommendations.



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- According to experts, pensioners also want long-pending concerns addressed — such as reducing the pension commutation period from 15 years to 12 years, and improving medical benefits under the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS).

### Fiscal Impact of the Eighth Pay Commission

- The Eighth CPC is expected to significantly affect the government's fiscal balance, as salaries, pensions, and allowances form a major part of revenue expenditure.
  - In 2025–26, the Centre's spending on these components is projected at over ₹7 lakh crore, nearly 18% of total revenue expenditure.
  - The Seventh Pay Commission had earlier recommended a 23.55% hike, adding ₹1.02 lakh crore to the annual outgo.
  - It also replaced the pay band and grade pay system with a pay matrix for different employee categories.
  - The minimum monthly pay was raised from ₹7,000 to ₹18,000 for new recruits, and ₹56,100 for Class I officers.
  - Based on past trends, the minimum pay under the Eighth CPC could exceed ₹46,000 per month.
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### THE VISION OF MODEL YOUTH GRAM SABHAS

- **True essence of participatory democracy** lies not in national chambers, but in the **Gram Sabha**, the village assembly that enables citizens to **directly deliberate on community development and governance**.
  - Enshrined through **Article 243A in the 73rd Constitutional Amendment**, the Gram Sabha represents every registered voter in a village and grants them the authority to shape local priorities.
  - Yet, despite its foundational role, **the Gram Sabha remains under-recognised and under-utilised**.
  - To realise the vision of a people-led Viksit Bharat, **it is essential to transform grassroots governance into an aspirational democratic experience** for young citizens.
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### The Model Youth Gram Sabha (MYGS): A Transformative Initiative

- To bridge this gap, the Government of India launched the Model Youth Gram Sabha in 2025 through a collaboration between the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, and the Aspirational Bharat Collaborative.
- MYGS simulates real Gram Sabha proceedings in academic institutions, allowing students to assume roles such as Sarpanch, ward members, engineers, and health workers.
- They debate budgets, discuss development challenges, and pass resolutions, learning governance by doing.
- Supported by teacher training and recognition-based incentives, the initiative transforms textbook civics into a dynamic, participatory learning experience.

### Impact on Civic Behaviour and Nation-Building

- MYGS cultivates more than administrative understanding, it develops citizenship.
- Students learn public speaking, negotiation, budgeting, problem-solving, and consensus-building.
- Early exposure to grassroots governance increases the likelihood that future citizens, bureaucrats, and leaders will value decentralised decision-making.
- When young minds learn that their village assembly is as powerful as Parliament, civic participation becomes habitual rather than symbolic.
- This cultural shift can strengthen local accountability, deepen democratic values, and expand opportunities for inclusive leadership.

### Conclusion

- The Gram Sabha is not merely an administrative unit; it is the heartbeat of Indian democracy. Reviving its importance in national imagination requires deliberate civic education and lived participation.
  - The Model Youth Gram Sabha does exactly that by transforming classrooms into micro-democracies and shaping future citizens who value grassroots self-governance.
  - If nurtured and scaled thoughtfully, this initiative can convert democratic rights into democratic habits.
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### ENGAGE THE TALIBAN, DON'T RECOGNISE THEM

- India's Afghanistan policy is shaped by three long-standing objectives.
  - **First, New Delhi seeks to protect its substantial investments and goodwill** accumulated between 2001 and 2021, when India was one of Afghanistan's largest regional donors.
  - **Second, it aims to prevent Afghan territory from becoming a sanctuary for anti-India militant networks**, a scenario that resembles the Taliban's first regime.
  - **Third, preventing Afghanistan from serving as a strategic extension of Pakistan's security establishment remains a priority**, given India-Pakistan rivalry and Islamabad's historical influence over the Taliban.

### The Temptation and Risks of Recognition

- Although growing diplomatic contact may suggest that **formal recognition of the Taliban is on the table**, there are profound risks associated with such a step.
- Recognition could accelerate cooperation with Kabul, counterbalance Pakistan's influence, and capitalise on emerging rifts between Islamabad and the Taliban.
- Yet it would also **grant legitimacy to a regime whose governance remains deeply repressive and exclusionary**.
- The **Taliban's unchanged ideological foundations raise questions** about the durability of their rule and the ethics of normalisation.
- Their **unprecedented restrictions on women's education, public participation, and employment** create severe socio-economic consequences and undermine Afghanistan's long-term stability.
- With an economy contracted by one-third and **nearly half the population in need of humanitarian assistance**, the regime's internal fragility remains a serious concern.
- Thus, **immediate recognition may be strategically shortsighted**, risking India's leverage and implicating it in the Taliban's governance failures.



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### The Way Forward: Toward a Balanced and Long-Term Approach

- India's policy trajectory suggests **neither wholesale acceptance nor isolation of the Taliban regime.**
  - Instead, it pursues a **gradual, conditional engagement**, maintaining diplomatic channels to influence Taliban behaviour, safeguard security interests, and support Afghan civilians, while retaining leverage through international and regional forums.
  - **Crucially, India recognizes that sustainable stability in Afghanistan cannot be achieved solely through coercive religious rule but requires economic recovery, political inclusion, and regional integration.**
  - In this view, **Afghanistan's need for assistance exceeds India's need for Taliban cooperation.**
  - Rather than yielding to short-term geopolitical temptation, **New Delhi seeks to shape a future where Afghanistan remains neither a security threat nor a satellite in Pakistan's strategic orbit.**
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### REASSESSING INDIA'S NUCLEAR RESTRAINT IN A CHANGING GLOBAL ORDER

#### India's Nuclear Policy - Restraint and Responsibility:

- **Legacy of 1998 and strategic maturity:**
  - Since **Pokhran-II (1998)**, India's voluntary moratorium symbolized **strategic restraint and credible minimum deterrence (CMD)**.
  - This stance facilitated **international legitimacy**, civil nuclear cooperation, and the lifting of sanctions.
- **Foundations of India's doctrine:** Based on **CMD and No First Use (NFU)**, facilitating balanced moral restraint with operational readiness, enhancing India's image as a responsible nuclear power.

#### Emerging Challenges to Credibility:

- **Technological obsolescence:**
  - India's warhead designs are validated only on 1998 data.



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- New platforms like **Agni-V** intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and potential multiple independently targetable re-entry vehicles (MIRV) demand greater assurance of yield, miniaturisation, and reliability.
- **Limitations of simulation and subcritical tests:**
  - **Computer modelling** extends knowledge but **cannot replace empirical testing**.
  - Even advanced powers like the U.S. express doubts about relying solely on simulations, raising **greater uncertainty for India** with fewer test data points.
- **Evolving strategic environment:**
  - **China's** expanding arsenal and **Pakistan's** tactical diversification shift regional deterrence dynamics.
  - Unilateral restraint could **isolate India** from future arms-control frameworks.

### Way Forward:

- **Strategic review:** Conduct a comprehensive reassessment of the nuclear doctrine, testing policy, and technological needs in light of new global realities.
- **Technological modernisation:** Invest in advanced simulation, materials research, and subcritical testing infrastructure to maintain readiness.
- **Diplomatic engagement:** Reinforce India's stance as a responsible nuclear state while asserting the right to ensure deterrence credibility.
- **Public and parliamentary debate:** Foster informed national discussion on deterrence, technology, and moral responsibility.
- **Conditional flexibility:** Keep the option of testing open under controlled, ethical, and strategic parameters if compelled by external shifts.

### Conclusion:

- India's nuclear restraint since 1998 has exemplified maturity, responsibility, and confidence. However, in a world where major powers are reconsidering self-restraint, **strategic flexibility within moral bounds** becomes essential.
  - **Strategic maturity** now lies not in denial of change, but in preparedness for it.
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