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SWAMI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMHANSA

WHY IN THE NEWS?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently paid tribute to Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa on his birth anniversary, acknowledging the profound influence the mystic and spiritual leader had on both his life and the nation. In a heartfelt message on social media, PM Modi expressed his reverence for the saint, emphasizing his deep spiritual connection with Maa Kali and the powerful impact of his teachings on figures like Swami Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishna, born in 1836 into a humble background, remains a key figure in India's spiritual history, with his teachings on the unity of religions and devotion continuing to inspire millions globally.



SWAMI RAMAKRISHNA PARAMHANSA:

- 1. Birth and Family:** Swami Ramakrishna was born Gadadhar Chattopadhyay on February 18, 1836, in Kamarpukur, Bengal, to a poor Brahmin family with strong religious values.
- 2. Early Spiritual Experiences:** From a young age, he showed deep spirituality, having mystical visions, especially of Maa Kali, which guided his devotion.

3. Limited Education: Despite little formal education, Ramakrishna focused on spiritual practices, meditation, and religious rituals rather than academics.

4. Marriage: At 23, he married Saradamani Devi, whom he regarded as a divine companion, continuing his spiritual quest without interruption.

5. Spiritual Path: Ramakrishna explored various spiritual paths, believing that all religions lead to the same divine truth, which became a central teaching in his life.

PARAMHANSA'S AND RAMAKRISHNA MISSION:

1. Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa: A mystic and spiritual leader, he emphasized the unity of all religions and the importance of direct spiritual experience, particularly devotion to Maa Kali.

2. Influence on Swami Vivekananda: His teachings deeply inspired Swami Vivekananda, who later founded the Ramakrishna Mission.

3. Ramakrishna Mission: Established in 1897 by Vivekananda, it focuses on spreading Ramakrishna's teachings of religious harmony, selfless service, and spiritual growth. The mission also engages in social welfare, education, and healthcare.

4. Global Impact: The Ramakrishna Mission has centres worldwide, continuing its work of promoting spirituality, service, and religious unity.

PARAMHANSA'S SOCIAL REFORM:

1. Paramahansa's Social Reform: Ramakrishna Paramahansa challenged caste barriers, promoted women's rights, and advocated for social service.

2. Paramahansa Mandali: Organized gatherings where people of different castes could eat together, breaking down caste divisions.

3. Ramakrishna Movement: Based on Ramakrishna's belief in the unity of all religions, it spread Vedanta and emphasized spiritual unity, charitable work, and service to humanity.

4. Ramakrishna Mission: Founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1897, it focused on social service, including disaster relief, hospitals, and educational institutions.

5. Teachings of Ramakrishna: Emphasized religious unity, the idea that serving humanity is serving God and that there are many paths to the Divine.

PARAMHANSA'S IDEAS AND PHILOSOPHY:

1. Unity of Religions: Ramakrishna believed all religions lead to the same truth. He often said, "As many faiths, so many paths," emphasizing that all forms of worship are valid expressions of the Divine.

2. Divinity of Humanity: He saw every person as a manifestation of God and believed that realizing the Divine in others is key to spiritual growth. This encouraged an attitude of respect, love, and equality toward all people.

3. Selfless Service: Service to humanity was considered the highest form of devotion. For Ramakrishna, helping others was synonymous with serving God, and this formed a core element of his spiritual practice.

4. Personal Spiritual Experience: Ramakrishna encouraged a personal, experiential approach to spirituality. He practised and recommended deep devotion (bhakti), meditation (dhyana), and other practices to experience God's presence directly.

5. Multiple Paths to God: He believed there are many legitimate paths to spiritual enlightenment, whether through love (bhakti), knowledge (jnana), or meditation (dhyana), advocating that everyone should find their personal path to the Divine.

6. Transcendence of Ego: Ramakrishna emphasized the importance of renouncing the ego. He believed that self-realization could only occur when a person transcends their individual self-centeredness and surrenders to the Divine will.

7. Mystical Vision: He had profound mystical experiences and encouraged others to seek direct communion with God through intense spiritual practice, making mysticism a central feature of his teachings.

8. Embrace of Simplicity: Ramakrishna led a life of simplicity and austerity, focusing on the essential spiritual truths. He believed true happiness comes not from material wealth but from inner peace and spiritual realization.

PARAMHANSA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE EARLY FREEDOM MOVEMENT:

1. Spiritual Inspiration: Ramakrishna's teachings helped foster a sense of national pride and spiritual awakening, encouraging Indians to reconnect with their cultural and religious roots, which was crucial in resisting British colonialism.

2. Promoting Unity: By emphasizing the unity of all religions, Ramakrishna helped reduce religious divisions and encouraged national unity, which became vital for the collective struggle for independence.

3. Influence on Swami Vivekananda: Ramakrishna's teachings profoundly shaped Swami Vivekananda, who combined spirituality with nationalism, motivating and inspiring many leaders and freedom fighters.

4. Empowering Marginalized Groups: Ramakrishna advocated for equality and social justice, challenging caste divisions and supporting the upliftment of women and the oppressed, aligning with the social reform movements that were part of the freedom struggle.

5. Emphasis on Self-Reliance: His philosophy of self-reliance and inner strength inspired many to work toward the betterment of India, laying the groundwork for a self-sufficient, free nation.

PARAMAHANSA AND SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:

1. Guru-Disciple Bond: Ramakrishna was the spiritual mentor of Vivekananda, profoundly shaping his philosophy and mission.

2. Philosophical Influence: Ramakrishna's belief in the unity of all religions influenced Vivekananda's vision of religious tolerance and spiritual inclusivity.

3. Global Representation: Vivekananda took Ramakrishna's teachings worldwide, especially at the 1893 Chicago Parliament of Religions, promoting Vedanta and India's spiritual heritage.

4. Social Reform: While Ramakrishna focused on spiritual awakening, Vivekananda combined it with social reform, advocating for women's rights, education, and the removal of caste discrimination.

5. Legacy of Strength: Ramakrishna taught Vivekananda that true strength comes from within. Vivekananda emphasized self-reliance and inner strength in both personal and national development.

6. Nation-Building: Vivekananda expanded Ramakrishna's idea of the divine in all people into a call for India's spiritual and national revival.

CONCLUSION

Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa's teachings on religious unity, devotion, and selfless service have left a lasting impact on India's spiritual and national identity. His influence on Swami Vivekananda helped combine spirituality with nationalism, inspiring the freedom movement. The Ramakrishna Mission, founded by Vivekananda, continues to promote service, education, and religious harmony worldwide. Ramakrishna's advocacy for social reform, including caste equality and women's rights, contributed to India's social awakening. His emphasis on self-reliance and the divine nature of all people laid the groundwork for a unified and independent India.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. With reference to Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa, consider the following statements:

1. Sri Ramakrishna was born in Bengal in 1836.
2. He believed in the equality of all religions.
3. He advocated for women's education and widow remarriage.

How many of the above-given statements are correct?

- A. Only one
- B. Only two
- C. All three
- D. None

Answer: C

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. Discuss the philosophical teachings of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa and their influence on India's spiritual and social movements. (250 words, 15 marks)

POROUS BORDERS : THREAT TO INTERNAL SECURITY

WHY IN THE NEWS?

The 55th BSF-BGB Director General Level Border Coordination Conference is in the news as it is being held in New Delhi . The talks, led by DG BSF Daljit Singh Chawdhary and DG BGB Major General Mohammad Ashrafuzzaman Siddiqui, focus on border security, crime prevention, and trade infrastructure. The MEA stressed the importance of honouring MoUs and agreements for better coordination.



BRIEF ABOUT INDIA & ITS BORDER

India shares its land borders with seven countries, spanning approximately 15,106 kilometres, and has a maritime boundary of 7,516 kilometres along the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the Bay of Bengal.

While some land borders are secured with fencing and checkpoints, others remain porous due to geographical and diplomatic complexities, leading to infiltration and smuggling. Maritime security faces challenges like piracy, illegal migration, and unregulated fishing. Initiatives like the Sagar Mala Programme and Coastal Surveillance Network (CSN) are strengthening India's border security, ensuring both land and sea frontiers are well-guarded.

GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR BORDER MANAGEMENT

- 1. Border Infrastructure Development:** Projects like the construction of border roads and fencing aim to enhance mobility for security forces and deter unauthorized crossings. Example: The Bharatmala Project aims to construct highways along border areas for improved military and logistical movement.
- 2. Deployment of Specialized Forces:** The BSF, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) are strategically positioned along various borders, each trained to handle specific regional challenges. Example: The Rashtriya Rifles is a counter-insurgency force deployed in Jammu and Kashmir to neutralise threats from cross-border terrorism.
- 3. International Collaborations:** Regular dialogues and joint exercises with neighbouring countries, exemplified by the BSF-BGB conferences, aim to address cross-border issues like smuggling, human trafficking, and infiltration. Example: The India-Myanmar Border Agreement facilitates coordinated patrolling and intelligence-sharing to curb insurgent activities.
- 4. Legal and Policy Measures:** Enactment of laws such as the Passport (Entry into India) Act and the Foreigners Act empowers authorities to regulate entry and manage the stay of foreigners.
- 5. Community Engagement:** Initiatives like the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) focus on improving infrastructure and economic conditions in border regions, thereby fostering cooperation between local communities and security agencies. Example: The Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP) promotes the development of villages along the Indo-China border to strengthen security through community participation.

POROUS BORDERS: A THREAT TO INTERNAL SECURITY

- 1. Infiltration by Militants:** Unmonitored borders can be exploited by insurgents and terrorists to enter the country. Example: The Samadhan Doctrine, a counter-Maoist strategy, focuses on blocking infiltration routes from Nepal and Myanmar.
- 2. Smuggling of Arms and Narcotics:** Illicit trade in weapons and drugs thrives in areas where border control is weak, funding criminal activities and insurgencies. Example: The Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) targets drug trafficking along the India-Pakistan and India-Myanmar borders.
- 3. Human Trafficking:** Porous borders facilitate the trafficking of persons for forced labour, prostitution, and other exploitative purposes, leading to severe human rights violations. Example: The Ujjwala Scheme provides support for victims of human trafficking by offering rehabilitation and reintegration services.
- 4. Economic Threats:** Smuggling of goods undermines the local economy and results in significant revenue losses for the government. Example: The Operation Thunderstorm initiative cracked down on cross-border smuggling networks in Northeast India.
- 5. Spread of Diseases:** Unregulated cross-border movement can lead to the spread of infectious diseases, posing public health challenges. Example: The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) monitors and responds to disease outbreaks in border regions.
- 6. Demographic Changes:** Illegal immigration can alter the demographic composition of border areas, leading to social and political tensions. Example: The National Register of Citizens (NRC) was implemented in Assam to identify and curb illegal immigration.

CHALLENGES IN BORDER MANAGEMENT

- 1. Diverse and Difficult Terrains:** The varied geography, from the Himalayas to dense forests and riverine landscapes, hampers the establishment of physical barriers and consistent patrolling. Example: The Border Outposts Strengthening Programme focuses on securing vulnerable border stretches.
- 2. Lengthy Borders:** The sheer expanse of India's borders makes comprehensive monitoring a daunting task. Example: CIBMS is being deployed along the Indo-Pak and Indo-Bangladesh borders for round-the-clock surveillance.
- 3. Cross-Border Cultural Ties:** Ethnic and cultural affiliations often span borders, complicating enforcement actions. Example: The Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship allows free movement but poses security risks.
- 4. Resource Constraints:** Ensuring adequate manpower, advanced technology, and infrastructure across all border areas requires substantial investment. Example: Modernization of Police Forces (MPF) Scheme provides funding to improve law enforcement in border states.
- 5. Political and Diplomatic Sensitivities:** Border disputes necessitate careful handling to prevent escalation.
- 6. Local Opposition:** Infrastructure projects like fencing can face resistance from local populations due to concerns over livelihood and restricted movement.

RECOMMENDATION FOR BETTER BORDER MANAGEMENT

- 1. Technological Integration:** Adopt advanced surveillance systems, including drones, motion sensors, and satellite imagery, to monitor remote and sensitive areas effectively. Example: Drone-Based Border Surveillance Project enhances real-time threat detection.
- 2. Enhanced Training and Resources:** Provide specialized training for border security personnel and equip them with modern tools to detect and prevent illegal activities. Example: The Police Modernization Scheme ensures the latest equipment for border forces.
- 3. Strengthened International Cooperation:** Engage in regular dialogues, intelligence sharing, and joint operations with neighbouring countries to address cross-border challenges collaboratively. Example: BIMSTEC Border Security Cooperation enhances regional counter-terrorism efforts.
- 4. Community Participation:** Involve local communities in security efforts by addressing their socio-economic needs and encouraging them to report suspicious activities.
- 5. Policy Reforms:** Regularly update and enforce laws to address emerging threats and ensure stringent penalties for violations related to border security.

CONCLUSION

Securing India's borders is a multifaceted challenge that requires a balanced approach, integrating technological advancements, robust policy frameworks, international cooperation, and community engagement. The 55th Director General-level Border Coordination Conference between the BSF and BGB exemplifies the ongoing efforts to address these challenges through dialogue and collaboration. By implementing comprehensive and adaptive strategies, India can enhance its border security and safeguard national integrity.

PRELIMS QUESTIONS:

Q. Consider the following statements regarding the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB):

1. The BSF operates under the Ministry of Defense, whereas the BGB is under the Ministry of Home Affairs of Bangladesh.

2. The primary focus of BSF-BGB coordination meetings is to enhance trade relations between India and Bangladesh.

3. The Indo-Bangladesh border is India's longest land border with any neighboring country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

Answer: C

MAINS QUESTIONS:

Q. India's porous borders pose a significant challenge to national security. Analyze the threats emanating from land and maritime borders, citing recent examples.? (250 words, 15 marks)

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