Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)

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Why in News?

From July 1, 2026, the MGNREGA is being replaced by a modernized scheme, Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin), or VB-G RAM G.

What is the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin)?

- VB-G RAM G (Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission) is India's rural employment scheme that replaced MGNREGA.
- **Aim -** It guarantees ***125 days of wage employment*** per rural household annually and enhances worker earning potential.
- **Scheme Type -** Funded as a ***Centrally Sponsored Scheme.***
- **Aligning Goal -** It aligns rural development with the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision.
- **Similar Key Features with MGREGA**
  - **15-Day Unemployment Allowance -** If a person seeking work is not provided employment within 15 days, the ***state government*** must pay them an unemployment allowance.
  - **Implementation -** It constitutes the National Level Steering Committee which will provide high-level oversight, and recommend normative allocations.
  - It also constitutes a Steering Committee for each state.

What is the difference between VB-G RAM G & MGNREGA?

Feature	Legacy Framework (MGNREGA)	Modern Framework (VB-G RAM G)

Days Guaranteed	Up to 100 days per household per financial year.	Up to 125 days per household per financial year.
Operational Model	Purely demand-driven right to work; states owed an unemployment allowance if work wasn't provided.	Shift to a supply-driven, pre-planned framework directly integrated with localized village development maps.
Funding Pattern	The Central Government bore 100% of the unskilled wage costs.	Split cost-sharing model: ***60:40*** (Centre:State) for general states; ***90:10*** for NE and Himalayan states.
Agricultural Integration	Employment could be demanded year-round, occasionally causing local farm labor deficits during peak times.	States can introduce up to a 60-day aggregate "pause" period during peak sowing/harvesting to protect farm labor pools.
Asset Creation Scale	Primarily small-scale asset creation (minor water conservation, drought-proofing, basic land leveling).	Large-scale development under 4 priority verticals (water security, core infrastructure, livelihood storage, climate resilience).
Planning & Governance	Open assembly-based selections handled ad-hoc at individual Gram Sabha / Panchayat levels.	Formulated via Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans, linked directly with the national PM Gati Shakti Master Plan.

What is the significance of VB-G RAM G?

- **Durable Capital Asset Creation -** While MGNREGA focused on basic, localized land-leveling and minor water preservation, VB-G RAM G focuses on 4 high-yielding asset verticals,
  - **Water Security -** Large-scale watershed planning and comprehensive desilting.
  - **Core Rural Infrastructure-** All-weather road networks and public utilities.
  - **Livelihood Infrastructure -** Agri-storage facilities, cold chains, and grain silos.
  - **Climate Resilience -** Infrastructure built to withstand extreme weather anomalies.
- **Economic Formalization and Asset-Matching -** The Economic Survey highlighted that MGNREGA stabilized incomes for decades, changing

rural realities, demanded a design reset.
- Meanwhile, VB-G RAM G ensures public spending matches physical infrastructure growth, adding genuine net value to the rural economy.
- **Elimination of Institutional Leakages –** It uses
  - Biometric authentication for transactions,
  - Geospatial technology for planning and monitoring,
  - Mobile application-based dashboards for real-time tracking, and
  - Weekly public disclosure systems.
- It embeds the above-mentioned things into the Viksit Bharat National Rural Infrastructure Stack.
- Thus, it systematically addresses legacy systemic issues like fund siphoning, middleman interference, and artificial demand generation.

What are the challenges facing VB-G RAM G?

- **The Fiscal Strain of Cost-Sharing -** Under MGNREGA, the Central Government bore 100% of the unskilled wage liabilities.
- VB-G RAM G introduces a mandatory 60:40 fund-sharing ratio for general states (90:10 for Northeastern and Himalayan states).
- This shifts a large financial burden onto state exchequers, some of which are already facing tight fiscal deficits.
- **Dilution of the "Right to Work" Safety Net -** Civil society organizations, including the *MGNREGA Sangharsh Morcha*, warn that moving from a demand-driven right to an allocation-based model compromises worker safety net.
- If a state government delays releasing its 40% budgetary match, worksites cannot open, leaving distressed laborers without options.
- **The 60-Day "Pause" Provision -** States can now notify up to a 60-day aggregate pause period during peak sowing and harvesting seasons to ensure local farmers have access to agricultural labor.
- This dilutes the role of the scheme as an absolute fallback option, reducing the bargaining power of casual manual labourers by preventing them from using state wages to negotiate better farm pay.

What are the broader concerns for India’s rural economy?

- **The Risk of Financial Centralization -** Several state administrations express concern that integrating local plans into the centralized PM Gati Shakti model reduces the autonomy of the Gram Sabha.
- **Cooperative Federalism Under Stress -** The transition has sparked a complex political and legal debate.

- The states have ultimately made matching budgetary provisions, highlighting the tense intersection of state rights and central mandates over shared safety nets.

What are the countermeasures and transition strategy of the government?

- **Pre-emptive Fiscal Cushioning -** To mitigate initial fund-flow blockages, the Central Government released an interim allocation of Rs. 95,692 crores to the states to maintain financial liquidity during the rollout.
- **Broad-Based Policy Onboarding -** To counter charges of unilateral centralization, the Centre has worked closely with states to ensure that over 20 provinces have officially notified the new guidelines, stabilizing the transition.
- **Ground-Level Handholding -** Deploying over 100 specialized administrative officials to districts and talukas ensures that active manual labourers do not face administrative hardships, pending payments, or systemic lockouts due to the new digital stack.

What are the ethical dimensions?

- ***Eradicating Institutional Leakages -*** *From an accountability standpoint, deploying the National Rural Infrastructure Stack (biometrics, AI fraud risk management, GPS tracking) is highly ethical.*
- *It targets legacy corruption, such as forged muster rolls and phantom workers, ensuring public money reaches intended beneficiaries.*
- ***The Risk of Digital Exclusion -*** *Over-relying on technocratic check-ins can create severe ethical friction.*
- *If a poor laborer is denied work or payment due to biometric failures or poor connectivity, technology ceases to be an enabler and becomes an instrument of structural exclusion.*
- ***Fiduciary & Techno-Ethics -*** *Treat social security as a sacred public trust rather than a financial liability, ensuring technocratic updates include compassionate manual fallbacks to prevent systemic exclusion.*
- ***Subsidiarity & Federalism-*** *Protect the democratic autonomy of local Gram Sabhas against centralized planning, while deploying flexible funding mechanisms to prevent state fiscal bottlenecks from harming citizens.*

What is the way forward?

- **Automate Fiscal Escalation -** Enable the Centre to automatically advance funds from the National Infrastructure Stack if a state delays its 40% share during eco-climatic crises, later recovering it through central tax devolutions.
- **Calibrate "Pause" Windows Dynamically -** Delegate the 60-day agricultural pause to block-level planning committees to match local crop calendars, automatically suspending it during droughts to provide immediate relief work.
- **Maintain Bottom-Up Integration-** Keep project selection firmly rooted in the Gram Sabha, utilizing PM Gati Shakti digital dashboards strictly for transparency and viability vetting rather than overriding community needs.

Reference

Business Standard | VB G RAM G