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VB-G-RAM-G Replaces MGNREGA from July 1

2 July 2026

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VB-G-RAM-G Replaces MGNREGA from July 1

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WHY IN NEWS

With effect from July 1, 2026, the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, known as VB-G-RAM-G, replaced the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), raising the rural employment guarantee from 100 to 125 days per household per year.

FROM MGNREGA TO VB-G-RAM-G

For two decades, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), enacted in 2005, anchored India's rural social safety net. It was a demand-driven, rights-based programme: any rural household whose adult members volunteered for unskilled manual work was legally entitled to up to 100 days of wage employment in a financial year. The new Act, the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, restructures rather than dismantles this guarantee, retaining the [statutory](http://ujjyari.com/vocab/statutory/) ([rights-based](http://ujjyari.com/vocab/statutory/)) core while re-orienting the works menu toward durable, climate-resilient assets.

To ensure a seamless transition, existing e-KYC verified MGNREGA Job Cards remain valid until new Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Cards are issued.

WHAT CHANGES UNDER VB-G-RAM-G

A Higher Guarantee and a Revised Wage

The headline change is the increase in the guaranteed days of work from 100 to 125 days per household per year. The interim base wage is set at about Rs 300 per day, roughly a 10 per cent increase over the earlier average notified wage. Crucially, wages are now indexed annually, revised each April 1, to the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL), giving workers protection against rural inflation.

FEATURE	MGNREGA (2005)	VB-G-RAM-G (2025 ACT)
Guaranteed days	100 days per household per year	125 days per household per year
Base wage	Average notified wage	About Rs 300 per day (interim)
Wage indexation	Periodic revision	Annual, on April 1, to CPI-AL
Nature	Demand-driven, rights-based	Demand-driven, rights-based (retained)
Works menu	Broad permissible-works list	Four thematic heads (see below)
Employment timeline	Within 15 days of demand	Within 15 days of demand (retained)

Four Thematic Heads for Permissible Works

Unlike the broad works list under MGNREGA, VB-G-RAM-G narrows permissible works to four thematic heads, sharpening the focus on durable and climate-resilient rural assets:

- ❶ Water security
- ❷ Core rural infrastructure
- ❸ Livelihood infrastructure
- ❹ Extreme-weather mitigation (<https://ujivari.com/vocab/mitigation/>)

The Rights-Based Guarantee Continues

The Act preserves the two enforcement mechanisms that gave MGNREGA its “rights-based” character. Employment must be provided within 15 days of a valid demand for work; failing this, an unemployment allowance becomes payable. This is what distinguishes a legal guarantee from a discretionary scheme.

INCLUSION AND SPECIAL PROVISIONS

VB-G-RAM-G carries forward and strengthens targeted inclusion. Special provisions cover:

- Single women
- Persons with disabilities
- Senior citizens
- Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
- Released bonded labourers
- Transgender persons

This explicit enumeration signals an intent to reach the most marginalised rural workers who often struggle to access even a legally guaranteed programme.

ANALYSIS AND WAY FORWARD

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VB-G-RAM-G represents continuity with change. It keeps the rights-based, demand-driven architecture, the feature economists and social-policy scholars have long defended as MGNREGA's greatest strength, while addressing two persistent criticisms: inadequate wages and low asset durability. The move to annual CPI-AL indexation and a higher base wage responds to years of complaints about stagnant, inflation-eroded earnings. The four thematic heads, especially extreme-weather mitigation, reframe rural works as an instrument of climate adaptation, turning a wage-employment scheme into a builder of resilience (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/resilience/>).

The risks lie in the details. Narrowing the works menu could reduce local flexibility if genuinely needed works fall outside the four heads. The 125-day promise and timely wages will strain implementation capacity, and the credibility of the guarantee ultimately rests on the unemployment-allowance mechanism actually functioning. Success will depend on adequate budgetary provisioning, prompt wage payment and transparent grievance redress (<https://ujjyari.com/vocab/redress/>), so that the "guarantee" in the Act's name is felt on the ground and not just on paper.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors; welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; mechanisms, laws, institutions and bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these sections.

GS Paper 3: Inclusive growth; employment; issues relating to poverty and rural development; climate-resilient rural infrastructure.

Prelims pointers:

- VB-G-RAM-G stands for Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025; effective July 1, 2026.
- It raises the guarantee from 100 to 125 days per household per year.
- Wages are indexed annually (revised each April 1) to the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL).
- Permissible works fall under four thematic heads: water security, core rural infrastructure, livelihood infrastructure and extreme-weather mitigation.
- MGNREGA was enacted in 2005 as a demand-driven, rights-based wage-employment programme.

Mains question: "The Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025 marks continuity as well as a break from MGNREGA." Critically examine the design changes and their implications for rural employment and climate resilience. (15 marks, 250 words)

FACTS CORNER

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★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

VB-G-RAM-G: Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025; replaced MGNREGA with effect from July 1, 2026.

Guarantee raised: From 100 to 125 days of employment per household per year.

Interim base wage: About Rs 300 per day, roughly a 10 per cent increase over the earlier average notified wage.

Wage indexation: Annual, revised each April 1, to the Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL).

Four thematic heads: Water security; core rural infrastructure; livelihood infrastructure; extreme-weather mitigation.

Employment timeline: Within 15 days of demand, failing which an unemployment allowance is paid.

Special provisions: Single women, persons with disabilities, senior citizens, Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), released bonded labourers and transgender persons.

MGNREGA (2005): The predecessor; a demand-driven, rights-based wage-employment guarantee.

Sources: *Press Information Bureau* (<https://pib.gov.in/>), *Ministry of Rural Development* (<https://rural.nic.in/>), *National Portal of India* (<https://www.india.gov.in/>)

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