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First Villages, Not Last: PM Interacts with Viksit Vibrant Village Programme 2026 Participants

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with participants of the Viksit Vibrant Village Programme 2026 through video conferencing on July 26, 2026. The programme, run through MY Bharat, sent over 400 selected youth into 74 border villages in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand across two phases in June 2026.

THE YOUTH IMMERSION PROGRAMME

The Viksit Vibrant Village Programme 2026 is a youth engagement initiative implemented through **MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat)**, the autonomous body set up under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports to serve as a national platform for youth volunteering and community participation.

ELEMENT	DETAIL
Implementing platform	MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat)
Phases	Two phases, June 4 to June 30, 2026
Villages covered	74 vibrant villages
Regions	Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand
Participants	Over 400 youth, drawn from every State and Union Territory
Selection route	Nationwide online quiz, with over 3 lakh participants
PM interaction	July 26, 2026, by video conferencing

The selection design is worth noting for governance questions: a national online quiz drawing three lakh entrants, narrowed to roughly 400 participants, gives a selection ratio of under 0.15 per cent, and the requirement of representation from every State and Union Territory makes the cohort deliberately national rather than regionally concentrated.

The Conceptual Shift

The organising idea is the inversion of a long-standing administrative habit. Border settlements were historically treated as the **last villages of India**, the terminal points of administrative reach, and were funded accordingly. The current framing treats them as the **first villages of the nation**, the point at which the country begins.

This is not merely rhetorical. It reorders budgeting priority, changes which departments are held accountable for connectivity and services in these settlements, and reframes out-migration from a **demographic footnote** into a strategic problem.

THE UNDERLYING SCHEME ARCHITECTURE

The youth programme sits on top of the **Vibrant Villages Programme (VVP)**, a Central Sector Scheme administered by the Ministry of Home Affairs. It now runs in two phases with distinct geographies.

FEATURE	VVP-I	VVP-II
Approved	February 2023	April 2, 2025
Outlay	Rs 4,800 crore	Rs 6,839 crore
Period	FY 2022-23 to 2025-26	FY 2024-25 to 2028-29
Villages	662 villages across 46 blocks	1,954 villages
Geography	Northern border: Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Ladakh	All other international land borders, 15 States and 2 UTs
Notable allocation	Rs 2,500 crore earmarked for road connectivity	Comprehensive development of identified border villages

VVP-II was formally launched in February 2026 by Union Home Minister Amit Shah from Nathanpur village in Cachar district, Assam. Its coverage spans Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

The division is clean: VVP-I covers the northern border, VVP-II covers every other international land border not already covered.

Stated Objectives of VVP-II

- Improve living conditions in identified border villages
- Create local livelihood opportunities to reduce distress out-migration
- Ensure prosperous and secure borders

- Control trans-border crime
- Integrate border populations with the national mainstream

WHY BORDER VILLAGES ARE A SECURITY QUESTION

The reasoning connecting rural development to national security runs through population presence.

Depopulated borders are harder to hold. Villages that empty out remove the most persistent form of surveillance a state has, which is residents who notice change. The Kargil experience of 1999, commemorated on the same day, is the standard illustration: local shepherds were among the earliest to report unusual activity on the heights.

Migration is driven by service deficits, not sentiment. Absence of all-weather roads, mobile connectivity, schools, health facilities and viable livelihoods pushes working-age populations towards the plains. Development spending in these settlements is therefore best read as a security instrument rather than as welfare alone.

Infrastructure is dual-use. Roads, bridges, power and telecom built for civilian border populations also support military logistics, which is why border-area connectivity attracts both civil and defence budgeting.

Convergence, and Its Limits

VVP is designed as a **convergence** scheme, layering existing central and state programmes onto identified villages rather than duplicating them, and adding gap-filling funds where convergence falls short. Convergence is administratively efficient but creates a familiar accountability problem: when many departments are jointly responsible for an outcome, none is singularly answerable for its absence. For Mains answers, this is the sharpest critical point to raise, alongside the question of absorptive capacity in remote districts with thin administrative staffing.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors; welfare schemes for vulnerable sections; mechanisms and institutions for development.

GS Paper 3: Security challenges and their management in border areas; linkages between development and the spread of security threats.

Prelims pointers:

- The Viksit Vibrant Village Programme 2026 is implemented through MY Bharat, under the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The 2026 edition ran in two phases from June 4 to June 30, 2026, covering 74 villages in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

- Over 400 youth were selected through a national online quiz that drew more than 3 lakh participants.
- The Vibrant Villages Programme is a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- VVP-I: approved February 2023, Rs 4,800 crore, 662 villages across 46 blocks on the northern border.
- VVP-II: approved April 2, 2025, Rs 6,839 crore, 1,954 villages, 15 States and 2 UTs, up to FY 2028-29.
- VVP-II was launched from Nathanpur village, Cachar district, Assam, in February 2026.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA**VIKSIT VIBRANT VILLAGE PROGRAMME 2026:**

PM interaction: July 26, 2026, by video conferencing

Implementing platform: MY Bharat (Mera Yuva Bharat)

Duration: two phases, June 4 to June 30, 2026

Coverage: 74 vibrant villages in Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand

Participants: over 400 youth from every State and Union Territory

Selection: nationwide online quiz with over 3 lakh participants

VIBRANT VILLAGES PROGRAMME-I:

Approved February 2023; Central Sector Scheme, Ministry of Home Affairs

Outlay Rs 4,800 crore for FY 2022-23 to 2025-26, of which Rs 2,500 crore for roads

662 villages across 46 blocks

States and UTs: Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Ladakh

VIBRANT VILLAGES PROGRAMME-II:

Approved April 2, 2025; outlay Rs 6,839 crore for FY 2024-25 to 2028-29

1,954 villages identified across 15 States and 2 Union Territories

Launched February 2026 from Nathampur, Cachar district, Assam, by Home Minister Amit Shah

Covers international land borders other than the northern border

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

MY Bharat was established as an autonomous body to serve as a technology-driven platform for youth development and volunteering.

The framing of border settlements as the “first villages of India” rather than the “last villages” is the organising idea of the programme.

VVP operates on a convergence model, layering existing schemes on identified villages and adding gap-filling funds.

Sources: PIB, Prime Minister of India, Ministry of Home Affairs

Source: First Villages, Not Last: PM Interacts with Viksit Vibrant Village Programme 2026 Participants —
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