



BAJIRAO IAS ACADEMY

THE HINDU ANALYSIS

24 DECEMBER 2025

FIRST ANTI-TERROR POLICY
FOR INDIA SOON



Topics for Today

- **VB- G RAM G Act 2025 fixes structural gaps**
- **ISRO's heaviest launch LVM 3**
- **Decline in Maternal mortality in India.**
- **India's first anti-terror policy soon.**

VB- G RAM G Act 2025 fixs structural gaps

The VB-G RAM G Act 2025 fixes structural gaps

The President of India has assented to the Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, enhancing the statutory wage employment guarantee to 125 days and strengthening rural development through empowerment, convergence, state saturation-based delivery for a resilient, self-reliant rural Bharat.

A misreading by some
Yet, even as the VB-G RAM G Act comes into force, there are those who have advanced a set of assertions that do not stand up to careful scrutiny. It is being claimed that the employment guarantee and demand-based wages have been undermined, that the Act is not a reform, and that the reform represents fiscal withdrawal that is disguised as restructuring. Each of these assertions rests on a misreading of the Act's substance.

What has been introduced is a deeper conceptual error – the assumption that welfare and development are opposing choices. The new Act is a clear demonstration that this is not the case. The welfare and job-guarantee character of the employment guarantee while strengthening its enforceability. Far from being curtailed, the entitlement has been expanded from 100 to 125 days. Previous employment clauses that previously nullified unemployment allowance in practice have been removed, and time-bound grace period to reduce mechanisms have been removed. The Act also addresses the long-recognized gap between statutory promises and lived reality.

It also argues that demand-based employment has been abandoned in favour of top-down planning. This rests on a false binary: Demand for work continues to originate from workers. What changes is that demand is no longer addressed by a single mechanism. By anchoring execution in advance, participatory village-level planning, the reform ensures that what is needed, employment, is an easily available option rather than due to administrative unpreparedness. Planning, in this sense, does not suppress demand; it operationalises it.

The change in content also overrules the assertions of the foes. Gram panchayats retain the primary planning and implementing authorities, and gram sabhas retain approval powers over local plans. What has changed is that demand is no longer addressed by a single mechanism. By anchoring execution in advance, participatory village-level planning, the reform ensures that what is needed, employment, is an easily available option rather than due to administrative unpreparedness. Planning, in this sense, does not suppress demand; it operationalises it.

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centrally local priorities. What is centralised is the scheme's delivery mechanism, namely, centralised job cards. This converts fragmentation without undermining decentralisation.

Claims that the reform was pushed through without consultation are equally unfounded.

With the revised Bill, the government had

convened

consultative

meetings

with

the

reform

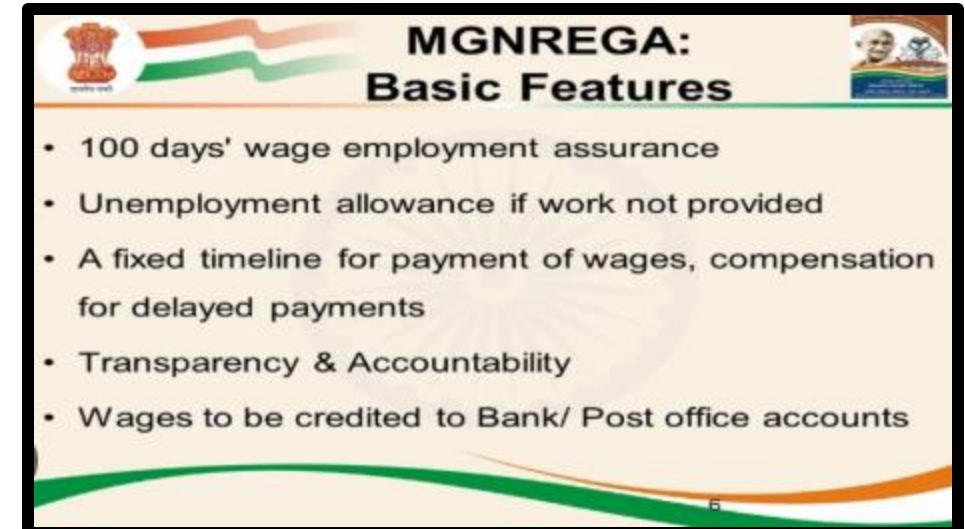
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Strengthening the Legal Right to Employment

- **Expansion of entitlement:** Statutory wage employment guarantee enhanced from **100 days to 125 days**, strengthening livelihood security.
- **Justiciable and enforceable right retained:** The legal character of the employment guarantee remains intact.
- **Procedural reforms:** Earlier procedural dis-entitlement clauses that nullified unemployment allowance in practice have been removed.
- **Improved grievance redressal:** Time-bound grievance redress mechanisms have been reinforced to bridge the gap between statutory promise and lived reality.

Example: Earlier, delayed work allocation often denied unemployment allowance. The new Act directly addresses this enforcement deficit.



The graphic is a rectangular box with a black border. At the top left is the Indian national emblem. To its right is a stylized graphic of the Indian flag's colors (saffron, white, and green) with wavy lines. To the right of that is the text "MGNREGA: Basic Features". To the right of the text is a small portrait of a man. The main content area contains a bulleted list of five features of the MGNREGA. The background of the box has a subtle wavy pattern in the colors of the Indian flag.

- 100 days' wage employment assurance
- Unemployment allowance if work not provided
- A fixed timeline for payment of wages, compensation for delayed payments
- Transparency & Accountability
- Wages to be credited to Bank/ Post office accounts

Demand-Based Employment with Advance Planning

- **Demand continues to originate from workers**, preserving the core rights-based nature of the scheme.
- **Shift from reactive to anticipatory governance**: Participatory village-level planning ensures availability of work when demanded.
- **Planning operationalises demand** rather than suppressing it by reducing administrative unpreparedness.

Example: Advance shelf of works prevents denial of employment during drought or migration spikes.

Points of difference

	MGNREGA	VB G Ram G
Number of work days	100	125
Funding	100% by Centre	60:40 share of costs between Centre & most states
Availability	Round the year	Stops during farming season
Managing body	Rural development ministry	Central Gramin Rozgar Guarantee Council



Decentralisation with Institutionalised Coherence

- **Gram Panchayats remain the primary planning and implementing authorities.**
- **Gram Sabhas retain approval powers** over local plans.
- **Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans** are aggregated at block, district, State, and national levels to ensure coordination and convergence—not centralisation.
- What is centralised is **coherence**, while **decision-making authority remains local**.

Fiscal Commitment and Cooperative Federalism

- **Increased allocations:** Central share rises from ₹86,000 crore to nearly ₹95,000 crore.
- **Established funding pattern retained:** 60:40 Centre–State ratio; **90:10 for Northeastern, Himalayan States and J&K.**
- **Rule-based normative allocation** ensures equity across States.
- **Flexibility for States:** Provision for special relaxations during disasters, including expansion of works and employment days.

Evidence of Improved Delivery and Equity

- Budget allocation increased from **₹33,000 crore (2013–14)** to **₹86,000 crore (2024–25)**.
- **Women's participation** increased from **48%** to **56.73%**.
- **99% Aadhaar-linked payments** and timely fund transfer orders indicate reduced leakages.

Addressing Structural Weaknesses of the Past

- Implementation experience revealed issues such as episodic employment, weak unemployment allowance enforcement, fragmented asset creation, and ghost entries—especially visible during droughts and COVID-19.
- The new Act directly corrects these shortcomings through convergence, digital governance, and saturation-based delivery.

VB-G RAM G REPLACES MGNREGA WHAT CHANGES?



MGNREGA	VB-G RAM G
◆ 100 wage employment days	◆ 125 wage employment days
◆ Work scattered across categories; no robust national strategy	◆ Localised planning; mandates Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans
◆ Centre bears unskilled wage costs; states bear unemployment allowance	◆ State cost-sharing for wages ; 60:40 for most states; 90:10 for certain special-category regions
◆ No explicit statutory "pause window"	◆ States can notify up to 60 days in a FY when work will not be executed
◆ Wage payment within a stipulated time window	◆ Weekly wage payments mandated ; fortnight at most
◆ Gram Panchayat planning is central	◆ Integrates institutionalised convergence and infrastructure planning

ISRO's heaviest launch LVM 3

ISRO's heaviest-ever launch today is test of capability, cost

Anonna Dutt
New Delhi, December 23

THE INDIAN Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is scheduled to launch the LVM-3 rocket carrying its heaviest-ever satellite—BlueBird Block-2, weighing nearly 6,100 kg—on Wednesday morning.

The LVM-3 rocket will also be used in the Gaganyaan mission, India's first crewed space mission, next year.

The satellite will be injected into an orbit of around 520 km just over 15 minutes after take-off. The BlueBird Block-2 satellite will be the largest-ever commercial communications satellite to be deployed in low Earth orbit (LEO). As the name suggests, LEO is an orbit that is relatively close to Earth's surface. It is normally at an altitude of less than 1,000 km.

The satellite, designed by the US company AST SpaceMobile, will be part of an LEO constellation that will provide direct-to-mobile connectivity. This means that unlike conventional communications satellites, which beam their signals to specialised ground stations before disseminating data further, this constellation will be able to directly communicate with the phones we use. This constellation will enable 4G and 5G voice and video calls, texts, streaming, and data for "everyone, everywhere, at all times," ISRO said.

Why the mission is significant

The current mission is the third commercial one involving ISRO's newest launch vehicle, after the launches of 36 sat-



ISRO's LVM3-M6 launch vehicle at Sriharikota on Tuesday, a day before the scheduled launch of the BlueBird Block-2 satellite. PN

The payload

- The BlueBird Block-2 satellite, weighing 6,100 kg, will be a part of a low Earth orbit constellation that will boost mobile connectivity.

- The constellation will enable 4G and 5G voice and video calls, texts, streaming, and data for "everyone, everywhere, at all times".

Behind ISRO's feat

The LVM-3 is hardly the only heavy launch vehicle on the market. Other options are SpaceX's Falcon-9 and the ESA's Ariane 6. But Wednesday's launch is ISRO's chance to demonstrate that it can carry out such heavy launches — at a lower cost.

This mission marks the third time the LVM-3 will be used to carry a satellite into LEO. The powerful cryogenic engine-based vehicle was initially designed to carry satellites to the distant geosynchronous orbits of around 36,000 km from the Earth's sur-

face. After several satellites were placed in different orbits during the 2022 OneWeb launch, the rocket, then called the Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle Mark 3 or GSLV-Mk3, was renamed.

Wednesday's launch also comes weeks after the LVM-3 rocket put the CMS-03 communication satellite in orbit on November 2. This will be the shortest gap between two LVM-3 launches. And it will be a test of the Indian space agency's capability to quickly assemble its heavier missions. After 2023, this will be the second time ISRO launches two LVM-3 missions in a single year.

At 6,100 kg, the BlueBird Block-3 is the heaviest payload ISRO will have placed into orbit. Until now, the heaviest payload carried by the space agency so far has been the sets of OneWeb satellites — cumulatively weighing more than 5,700 kg — to LEO. The space agency also broke its record for the heaviest satellite placed in the distant geosynchronous transfer orbit last month with the launch of CMS-03 using the same vehicle. The satellite weighed 4,410 kg.

The space agency is also working on "bootstrap reignition" for the cryogenic engines, which will make the launch vehicle more efficient for missions where satellites have to be placed in different orbits. While launches to a geosynchronous orbit usually carry a single, large payload, most LEO missions carry several satellites for different orbits. The bootstrap reignition would allow the upper stage cryogenic engine to restart on its own without an external gas, such as helium, to reignite the engine. A bootstrap mode would reduce the weight of fuel and increase payload capability.

BlueBird Block-2 Mission and LVM-3:

- **The launch of BlueBird Block-2, ISRO's heaviest-ever satellite weighing nearly 6,100 kg, aboard the LVM-3 rocket, marks a significant leap in India's space programme.**
- **Beyond being a record-setting payload, the mission demonstrates India's growing capability in heavy-lift launches, commercial satellite deployment, advanced propulsion technologies, and future human spaceflight preparedness.**

Key Technical Features of the Mission

1. Heaviest Payload and LEO Deployment

- The satellite was injected into a **Low Earth Orbit (LEO) of around 520 km**, just over **15 minutes** after lift-off.
- LEO typically lies below **1,000 km**, offering advantages such as **lower latency and stronger signal strength** compared to geosynchronous orbits.
- At **6,100 kg**, BlueBird Block-2 surpasses ISRO's earlier heaviest LEO payloads, such as the **OneWeb satellite clusters (~5,700 kg)**.

HEAVYLIFTERS



LVM3

INDIA'S HEAVIEST,
WILL ALSO BE USED
FOR GAGANYAAN

Liftoff Mass: 640
Payload Capacity:
LEO: 8
GTO: 4



PSLV

INDIA'S MOST
PROLIFIC

Liftoff Mass: 320*
Payload Capacity:
LEO: 1.75
GTO: 1.4



GSLV MK-II

MEANT FOR
HEAVIER
COMMUNICATION
SATELLITES

Liftoff Mass: 415
Payload Capacity:
LEO: 6
GTO: 2.25

2. Direct-to-Mobile Communication Technology

- Designed by **AST SpaceMobile (USA)**, the satellite is part of a constellation enabling **direct satellite-to-smartphone connectivity**.
- Unlike conventional satellites that rely on **ground relay stations**, this system communicates **directly with standard mobile phones**.
- It supports **4G and 5G voice calls, video calls, messaging, streaming, and data services**, enabling connectivity **“anytime, anywhere,”** especially in remote and disaster-prone areas.

ISRO Set To Launch Its Heaviest-Ever communication satellite, CMS-03

CMS-03 Is A Multi-Band Military communication satellite that will provide services over wide oceanic region.



Strategic and Commercial Significance

1. Strengthening India's Commercial Launch Market

- This is the **third commercial LVM-3 mission**, after the **OneWeb launches in 2022 and 2023**.
- India emerged as a preferred launch partner due to:
- Russia's withdrawal from commercial launches following the **Ukraine conflict**.
- The retirement of ESA's **Ariane-5 launcher**.
- LVM-3 competes with **SpaceX's Falcon-9** and **ESA's Ariane-6**, offering a **reliable and lower-cost alternative**.

2. Demonstration of Rapid Launch Capability

- The launch follows the **CMS-03 communication satellite mission on November 2**, marking the **shortest gap between two LVM-3 launches**.
- It is only the **second time after 2023** that ISRO has launched **two LVM-3 missions in a single year**, showcasing improved **manufacturing efficiency, mission integration, and readiness**.

Decline in Maternal mortality in India.

Maternal mortality dropped as institutional deliveries rose to 89%: Health Minister

Nadda lays foundation stone for two medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh; says health benefits provided to mothers and children through 1.81,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs across the country

The Hindu Bureau
Bhopal

Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said on Tuesday that the country's institutional delivery rate had gone up to 89%, leading to a significant reduction in the maternal mortality rate (MMR) during childbirth.

Mr. Nadda made the statement after laying the foundation stone for a medical college in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district. He laid foundation for another medical college in Betul district. The two colleges will be operated on a public-private partnership (PPP) model.

"The rate of institutional deliveries in the country has increased to 89%, which led to a significant reduction in the MMR. The Narendra Modi government is striving through its healthcare services to ensure that citizens remain healthy and do not fall ill in the first place," Mr. Nadda said.

He said the two medical colleges would also be the first of its kind in the coun-



Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda with Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yatav at an event in Dhar on Tuesday. *AAA*

ing provided to mothers and children through 1.81,000 Ayushman Arogya Mandirs [health and wellness centres]. Today, keeping in mind the health of everyone in the country, not only is the benefit of the Ayushman Yojana being provided, but 12 types of vaccines are also being administered to protect the life of every child through immunisation," he added.

The medical colleges in Dhar and Betul are going to be constructed at an estimated cost of ₹260 crore and ₹300 crore respectively, as per a State government statement.

Medical colleges
only one All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi. Former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpeyi opened six AIIMS during his tenure. Now there are 23. In 2014, there were 387 medical colleges. Today, there are 819 medical colleges. Including those in Dhar and Betul, the number of medical colleges has reached 821," the Health Minister said.

"Until the end of the 20th century, there was

"Health benefits are be-

Declining Maternal Mortality in India: Role of Institutional Deliveries

- India has made significant progress in reducing its **Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR)**, primarily driven by the sharp rise in **institutional deliveries**.
- According to the Union Health Minister, **institutional delivery rates have increased to 89%**, resulting in a substantial reduction in maternal deaths during childbirth.
- This reflects the success of systemic healthcare reforms and targeted maternal health interventions.

Key Factors Contributing to Increased Institutional Deliveries

1. Expansion of Healthcare Infrastructure

- Number of **medical colleges increased from 387 (2014) to 821 (2024)**.
- Establishment of medical colleges in **tribal and backward districts** such as **Dhar and Betul (Madhya Pradesh)**.
- Introduction of **Public–Private Partnership (PPP)** model to expand medical education and healthcare access.

2. Strengthening Primary Healthcare

- Operationalisation of **1.81 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (Health and Wellness Centres)**.
- These centres provide:
- Antenatal and postnatal care
- Referral services
- Early risk detection

BOTTOM TEN STATES

STATE	Delivery 20-21	Institutional delivery 21-22
1 Meghalaya	59.4	57.2
2 Nagaland	76.1	78.3
3 Manipur	80.0	80.6
4 Bihar	86.2	86.7
5 Uttarakhand	86.6	88.5
6 Mizoram	87.1	87.2
7 Assam	89.5	91.3
8 UP	89.9	91.2
9 Arunachal	91.2	90.6
10 Himachal	91.5	92.7
ALL INDIA	94.8	95.5

Institutional Delivery Rates – NFHS-5 Highlights



- **National Average:** Institutional deliveries rose to 88.6%, up from 40.8% in 2005–06 (NFHS-3).
- **Kerala & Goa:** Topped the charts with 99.8% and 99.7% institutional deliveries respectively.
- **Public Facilities:** Share of births in public health institutions increased across most states.
- **Low-Performing States:** Nagaland (45.7%) and Meghalaya (58%) reported the lowest rates.
- **Urban-Rural Divide:** Urban areas consistently showed higher institutional delivery rates; rural gaps persist, especially in northeastern states.

Source: Sample Registration System Report, Registrar General of India, 2023



3. Financial Protection and Service Delivery

- **Ayushman Bharat – PM Jan Arogya Yojana** reduces out-of-pocket expenditure.
- Encourages institutional care by making services affordable for vulnerable groups, especially women.

4. Focus on Maternal and Child Health

- Universal immunisation covering **12 vaccines** protects newborns and mothers.
- Integration of maternal care with child health services ensures continuity of care.

Impact on Maternal Mortality Rate

- Higher institutional delivery rate (**89%**) directly correlates with:
- Timely emergency obstetric care
- Reduced maternal deaths during delivery
- Demonstrates a **preventive and promotive health approach**, rather than curative alone.



India's first anti-terror policy soon

India's first anti-terror policy to be out soon

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union government is finalising India's first anti-terror policy to provide a template for all States to combat and respond to terror attacks and related incidents, a senior government official has told *The Hindu*. Digital radicalisation, the misuse of open borders, and conversion networks funded by foreign players are among the key issues being discussed in the run-up to the policy's release.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is also organising an anti-terror conference on December 26 and 27 in Delhi where the contours of the policy are likely to be shared.

"The Home Ministry is finalising the document and the NIA has also given its inputs," an NIA official told *The Hindu*.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had announced last November that a Na-

tional Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy would be introduced soon.

Pre-empting attacks
After the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack, the NIA had conducted meetings with anti-terror units of all States and apprised them of the measures to be put in place to prevent and pre-empt such attacks.

The use of the National Intelligence Grid, a secure platform for law enforcement agencies to access government and other databases, has also been discussed.

Over the past few months, NIA director general Sadanand Date and National Security Guard chief Brighu Srinivasan have briefed a few State police chiefs on issues such as foreign-funded conversion rackets, online radicalisation, and Aadhaar spoofing, among others.

CONTINUED ON
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India's first anti-terror policy to be out soon

A National Policy and Action Plan for Left Wing Extremism (LWE) had earlier been introduced in 2015. An Uttar Pradesh police official said that online radicalisation and the misuse of the open border with Nepal have been flagged as priority issues likely to find mention in the new anti-terror policy.

"There have been instances when members associated with the Khalistani terrorist network came to Nepal on foreign passports. They leave the passport in the neighbouring country, enter India through the open, and go to Punjab through the U.P.-Bihar-Nepal border," the U.P. police official said.

Digital radicalisation
The interrogation of the doctors arrested in relation to the November 10 car-borne suicide attack near Delhi's Red Fort also revealed that they were radicalised online, an NIA official said.

Another State police official said deliberations are on to get feedback from States on ways to address online radicalisation.

"An organised foreign-funded radicalisation has come to our notice. A religious centre in Canada which has links to the Pakistan's ISI has emerged as one of the prime suspects in radicalising the youth here through social media. While there are only a handful of police officials who are trained to notice these trends, what is required is concerted efforts to strengthen the mechanism at police station level. It will lead to early detection," said the second State police official.

In a post on X on September 9, the U.P. police said that senior officers of the NIA, NSG, Intelligence Bureau and the State police had deliberated on critical issues, including cross-border vulnerabilities, foreign-funded conversion networks, Aadhaar spoofing, the trafficking of arms and drugs, terror linkages, and digital radicalisation.

"This powerful convergence of NIA, NSG, IB, and UP Police reaffirms our commitment: sealing the gaps, fortifying our defences, and safeguarding the sovereignty of India's most populous state," the U.P. police said.

India's First National Counter Terrorism Policy: Need, Focus Areas and Way Forward

- The Union Government is finalising **India's first National Counter Terrorism Policy and Strategy**, aimed at providing a **uniform template for States** to prevent, combat and respond to terror attacks.
- Announced by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the policy reflects India's evolving threat landscape marked by **digital radicalisation, cross-border vulnerabilities and foreign-funded networks**.

Key Drivers Behind the Policy

- **Rising complexity of terror threats:** Shift from physical camps to **online radicalisation**.
- **Federal coordination gaps:** States have varied counter-terror capacities.
- **Recent incidents:**
- *April 22 Pahalgam terror attack* highlighted intelligence and response gaps.
- *November 10 car-borne suicide attack near Red Fort* showed the role of online radicalisation.

Major Focus Areas of the Policy

1. Digital Radicalisation

- Terror groups increasingly exploit **social media, encrypted platforms and online propaganda**.
- NIA interrogation revealed **doctors radicalised online**, underscoring educated youth vulnerability.
- Example: **Foreign-funded religious centre in Canada with alleged ISI links** radicalising Indian youth.
- Policy focus:
- Training police at **thana level** for early detection.
- Strengthening cyber surveillance and counter-narratives.

2. Misuse of Open Borders

- **India-Nepal open border** flagged as a major vulnerability.
- Example: **Khalistani operatives entering India via Nepal** after discarding foreign passports.
- Policy emphasis on:
- Enhanced border intelligence.
- Coordination among U.P., Bihar, Punjab and central agencies.

3. Foreign-Funded Conversion Networks

- Identified as a tool for **long-term ideological radicalisation**.
- Example: NIA and State police briefings flagged **conversion rackets funded by foreign entities**.
- Focus on financial tracking and intelligence-sharing.

4. Technology-Driven Threats

- **Aadhaar spoofing**, arms and drug trafficking linked to terror financing.
- Use of **National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID)** to integrate 21 databases for real-time intelligence access.



Thank you

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