

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 1713
ANSWERED ON 10/02/2026**

CONVENTIONS AND PROTESTS AGAINST VBG RAM G

1713. Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government is aware that MGNREGA workers and unions in Punjab, particularly in Ludhiana district, have announced a series of conventions and protests against changes to the VB G-RAM-G earlier Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA);**
- (b) whether it is a fact that workers' organisations have opposed proposals to alter the existing 90:10 Centre-State funding ratio, reduce the role of gram panchayats in selecting and planning work rather than a legal guarantee of 100 days of work per household, and if so, details thereof; and**
- (c) whether VB G-RAM-G/MGNREGA workers in Punjab currently receive wages around Rs 346 per day, have reported an actual average of only about 36 days of work annually and are demanding increased wages (around Rs 700 per day), full 100 days of employment and timely payments ?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI KAMLESH PASWAN)**

(a)&(b): The primary objective of the Viksit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar and Aajeevika Mission (Gramin): VB-G RAM G Act, 2025, is to align the rural development framework with the national vision of Viksit Bharat @2047 by providing an enhanced statutory wage employment guarantee of one hundred and twenty-five days in each financial year to such rural households whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual work, thereby enabling them to participate more effectively in the expanded livelihood security framework.

Certain expressions of views by stakeholders in Punjab in relation to the implementation of VB-G RAM-G have been reported in sections of the media.

With regards to role of Panchayat in implementation of VB-G RAM-G it is stated that in section 16 of the Act, role of the Panchayat Raj Institutions in planning and implementation of VB-G RAM G Schemes has been clearly defined, which are as follows: -

(1) The Panchayats at the district, intermediate and village levels shall be the principal authorities for planning, implementation and monitoring of the Scheme made under the Act.

(2) The Panchayat at the district level, shall oversee and coordinate implementation of the Scheme in the district, including finalisation and approval of the aggregate district level plan, supervision and monitoring of works, ensuring convergence, and perform such other functions as may be assigned to it by the State Government.

(3) The Panchayat at the intermediate level, shall prepare and finalise the aggregate Block level plan, support Gram Panchayats in planning and implementation, supervise works at Gram Panchayat and Block levels, and facilitate convergence with line departments.

(4) The Gram Panchayat shall register households, receive and process applications for work, prepare the Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans, execute the works assigned to it, maintain such records as may be specified by the State Government, and discharge such other responsibilities as may be entrusted to it under the Scheme.

Additionally, the Gram Panchayat is the primary village-level authority for planning, implementation, and execution of works under the Scheme. It is responsible for registering rural households and issuing GraminRozgar Guarantee Cards, receiving and processing applications for work, and maintaining all related records.

The Gram Panchayat prepares the Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan through a participatory process based on recommendations of the Gram Sabha and Ward Sabhas, ensuring saturation-based and convergence-oriented planning.

It executes works allotted by the Programme Officer and may take up any sanctioned work from the approved Viksit Gram Panchayat Plan within its jurisdiction, with at least fifty percent of the total works (in cost terms) to be implemented through Gram Panchayats.

Gram Panchayat is required to maintain muster rolls and other prescribed records, ensure that works meet required technical standards and measurements, and follow digital and transparency requirements. It must place all relevant documents, including muster rolls, bills, vouchers, measurement books, sanction orders, and geo-tagged and digital records before the Gram Sabha to enable regular social audits and public scrutiny, thereby supporting transparency, accountability, and grievance redressal in implementation.

Overall, the Act positions the Gram Panchayat as the principal grassroot institution responsible for demand registration, participatory planning, decentralised execution, worker engagement, and public accountability under the Scheme framework. The experience gained through implementation of Mahatma Gandhi NREGS has also been taken into account while framing the new Act.

With regards to altering of existing funding pattern, it is stated that a 60:40 Centre–State financial sharing pattern would not affect the implementation of the scheme and guarantee given therein. Here it is also stated that, all major rural employment schemes in the country have operated on shared funding models between the Centre and the States. For example:

- The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) followed a 75:25 sharing pattern.**
- The Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) adopted a 50:50 model.**
- The JawaharRozgarYojana (JRY) operated on an 80:20 basis.**
- Schemes such as SGRY(SampoornGrameenRozgarYojana), EAS(Employment Assurance Scheme) were also implemented on a Centre–State sharing pattern, generally in the ratio of 75:25.**

Further, almost all Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) across sectors are being implemented on 60:40 sharing model. The 60:40 pattern adopted under this Act is therefore consistent with the broader framework of Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

This model promotes cooperative federalism by making States active partners in rural development. The journey from Viksit Gram Panchayats to a Viksit Bharat requires strong State ownership and accountability, and the shared funding framework reinforces this partnership approach.

In addition, special protective provisions have been made for North-Eastern and Himalayan States and Union Territory (Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir), where a 90:10 Centre–State sharing pattern applies, ensuring that financially constrained States are not placed under undue stress.

Moreover, the Act clearly provides that in the event of natural disasters, pandemics, or other extraordinary circumstances, State Governments may recommend special operational relaxations to the Centre. The framework is thus not rigid, but responsive, flexible, and sensitive to emerging needs. Overall, the funding pattern is designed to balance fiscal responsibility, State participation, and national rural development priorities.

(c): With regard to fixation of wage payment under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS it is stated that as per Section 6 (1) of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (Mahatma Gandhi NREGA), 2005, the Central Government may, by notification, specify the wage rate for unskilled work for its beneficiaries. Accordingly, the Ministry of Rural Development notifies Mahatma Gandhi NREGA wage rate for every financial year for States/UTs. To compensate the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA workers against inflation, the Ministry of Rural Development revises the Wage rate every year based on change in Consumer Price Index for Agricultural Labour (CPI-AL).

The wage rate is made applicable from 1st April of each financial year.

In case of Punjab, the notified wage rate for the State of Punjab for unskilled workers under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS for the financial year 2024-25 was Rs. 322, which has been revised to Rs. 346 for the financial year 2025-26. This reflects an increase of approximately 6.94% in the wage rate.

Further, it is also submitted that State Governments can provide wages over and above the wage rate notified by the Central Government from their own resources.

With regard to timely payment of wages, it is stated that as per the provisions of the Act, beneficiaries are entitled to receive wage payments within 15 days of work completion. In order to ensure timely payment, the Government of India has issued a comprehensive Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to all States/UTs, which defines fixed timelines for each stage of the wage payment process from muster roll uploading to FTO approval. The Ministry along with the States/UTs has been making concerted efforts for improving the timely payment of wages. States/UTs have been advised to generate pay orders in time.

The Ministry has taken various steps to ensure timely payment of wages to workers under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (Mahatma Gandhi NREGS). These include:

- Improvement of National Electronic Fund Management System (Ne-FMS)**
- Intensive consultation with State Governments and other stakeholders for ensuring timely payment of wages, verification of pending and delay compensation claims etc.**
- Formulation of Standard Operating Procedure for monitoring of timely payment and payment of delay compensation.**
- Reviewing the status of timely payment and payment of delay compensation with the States/ UTs during periodic meetings, Performance Review Committee meetings, Mid-term Reviews etc.**

Further, continued efforts have been undertaken by the Ministry through various technological interventions for ensuring timely payments of wages. Some of the key interventions include:

- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT):** Wages are transferred directly from the central account to workers' bank accounts, minimizing the role of intermediaries and reducing fund misappropriation. This has proven to be effective in enhancing transparency and preventing leakages. Almost 100% of the funds are managed electronically with the wage payment made entirely through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) protocol.
- **Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS):** APBS conversion is a major reform process where benefits are credited directly into the bank accounts based on the Aadhaar of the workers under Mahatma Gandhi NREGS, preferably Aadhaar Based Payments, cutting several layers in the delivery process. APBS helps in better targeting, increasing the efficiency of the system and reducing the delays in payments, ensuring greater inclusion by curbing leakages thereby promoting greater accountability and transparency.
- **National Mobile Monitoring System (NMMS):** Real-time attendance capture through geo-tagged photographs at the worksite ensures accurate and timely recording of attendance, which helps in timely payment of wages.

Here it is also stated that Mahatma Gandhi NREGS is a fall-back option when no better employment opportunities are available. Further, States are regularly sensitized by this Department to ensure that no demand for work goes unmet.
