

**Cabinet approves ongoing Centrally Sponsored Scheme (State Plans) – Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR) for three years i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20**

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The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the continuation of Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) as Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana- Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied sector Rejuvenation (RKVY-RAFTAAR) for three years i.e. 2017-18 to 2019-20. The financial allocation of the scheme will be Rs. 15,722 crore with the objective of making farming as a remunerative economic activity through strengthening the farmer's effort, risk mitigation and promoting agri-business entrepreneurship.

RKVY-RAFTAAR funds would be provided to the States as 60:40 grants between Centre and States (90:10 for North Eastern States and Himalayan States) through the following streams:

- (a) Regular RKVY-RAFTAAR (Infrastructure & Assets and Production Growth) with 70% of annual outlay to be allocated to states as grants based for the following activities:
  - i. Infrastructure and assets with 50% of regular RKVY-RAFTAAR outlay.
  - ii. Value addition linked production projects with 30% of regular RKVY-RAFTAAR outlay.
  - iii. Flexi-funds with 20% of regular RKVY-RAFTAAR outlay. States can use this for supporting any projects as per the local needs.
- (b) RKVY-RAFTAAR special sub-schemes of National priorities - 20% of annual outlay; and
- (c) Innovation and agri-entrepreneur development through creating end-to-end solution, skill development and financial support for setting up the agri-enterprise -10% of annual outlay including 2% of administrative costs.

The scheme will incentivize States in enhancing more allocation to Agriculture and Allied Sectors. This will also strengthen farmer's efforts through creation of agriculture infrastructure that help in supply of quality inputs, market facilities etc. This will further promote agri-entrepreneurship and support business models that maximize returns to farmers.

#### **Background:**

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) is a continuing scheme under implementation from XI Five Year Plan. The scheme provides considerable flexibility and autonomy to states in planning and executing programmes for incentivizing investment in agriculture and allied sectors.

States initiate the process of decentralized planning for agriculture and allied sectors through preparation of District Agriculture Plans (DAPs) and State Agriculture Plan (SAP) based on agro-climatic conditions, availability of appropriate technology and natural resources to ensure accommodation of local needs, cropping pattern, priorities etc. RKVY has also enabled adoption of national priorities without affecting the autonomy and flexibility of States through sub-schemes. National priorities like Bringing Green Revolution to Eastern India (BGREI), Crop Diversification Program (CDP), Reclamation of Problem Soil (RPS), Foot & Mouth Disease - Control Program (FMD-CP), Saffron Mission, Accelerated Fodder Development Programme, etc. are being implemented through the window of RKVY.

During XI Plan and XII Plan, States have taken over 13,000 projects in agriculture and allied sector through State Agriculture Department as Nodal Implementing Agency. The interim report of RKVY evaluation done by Institute of Economic Growth summarizes that the income emanating from agriculture measured as the agricultural state domestic product (AGSDP) is higher in the post-RKVY period than in the pre-RKVY period. Further, almost all the states registered higher value of output from agriculture and allied activities in the post-RKVY period. Continuation of RKVY-RAFTAAR will therefore keep the momentum of agriculture and allied sector growth.

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## The Swachh marathon

The momentum and scale of the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) is unprecedented. Since the launch of the programme by the prime minister in October 2014, there has been an astonishing acceleration in the construction of toilets, with five crore built in three years. The scale and complexity facing the SBM-G make it, we believe, more challenging than any other rural development programme in the world. Driven forward with impressive leadership and dynamism, shortcomings are inevitable and rapid learning and adjustments vital and imperative for sustainable success.

With this in mind, a day-long meeting on October 10 in Delhi of representatives of government, international agencies, NGOs, consultants and researchers shared findings and lessons from methods for rapid learning relevant for the SBM-G. This led to ideas about how to tackle concerns that had come to light. Three burning issues stood out: Technical realities and what people know; their beliefs and behaviour; and unfinished business, especially concerning those who are poorer, marginalised and left behind.

The preference for septic tanks remains deeply rooted and widespread. People believe they are better than the recommended more sustainable and economic twin pits because they are big and will take longer to fill, and, used sparingly, may even never have to be emptied. Due to widespread ignorance of technical details, many septic tanks are not built according to the guidelines, and end up contaminating the environment and damaging public health.

Twin leach pits have much in their favour. For a few years, human waste flows to the first pit. Once full, it is left to become manure while new waste is diverted into a second pit. The first pit is emptied and the cycle starts again. This technology allows time for the waste to compost and become harmless, odourless and valuable fertiliser. However, rapid investigations found many people who had had twin pits constructed for them without any explanation of how they work. They lacked a sense of ownership and believed the pits would fill up fast. In consequence, they were using them only some of the time, continuing open defecation (OD) even in villages with 100 per cent toilet coverage.

This problem is acutely urgent. A recent rapid survey covering over a thousand households found that the proportion of twin pits being built in SBM is declining, and more and more unsustainable single leach pits are being built, especially among Scheduled Castes and Tribes.

The solution is to empower people through knowledge. Few rural people are aware of technical details or convinced by the advantages of twin pits. Mason training can help, but the major thrust needed is a massive communication campaign to inform all villagers of the technical options and details, what they are entitled to demand in quality and quantity of materials, and how to ensure masons do a full job, so that they are never be short-changed with single pits or substandard construction.

Partial usage of toilets, when some household members continue to defecate in the open, was confirmed to be widespread. In addition to fear of pits filling up, water availability was a major factor, both in drier areas and elsewhere. Gender plays a part too: Women are the main fetchers of water and cleaners of toilets. One flush of a toilet takes many times more water than does the lota for cleansing when defecating in the open.

Men are the main open defecators. There can be a macho element, a preference for the open air, and an element of chivalry. This is reinforced by conventional campaigns which stress women's dignity and needs: Men are considerate if they leave the toilets to women, so also minimising

water use and the rate at which the pit will fill.

One rapid study discovered effective ways of changing men's behaviour — groups of older women influencing men to adopt toilets when they go for OD. The study suggests that similar gentle and positive approaches should be promoted.

One rapid review confirmed that for health and nutrition benefits the proportion of coverage and use remain important. SBM-G verifications and several studies indicate that in practice 70-90 per cent coverage is often taken as acceptable for a declaration of open defecation free (ODF). There is no definite evidence on thresholds for coverage and use, but health benefits and nutrition indicators might rise more steeply as usage approaches 100 per cent. Furthermore, there are many benefits of total toilet use beyond health.

Moreover, those in the remaining 10-30 per cent without toilets are predominantly the marginalised and disadvantaged — OBC, SC, ST, the very poor, sick, disabled, aged and weak, or living in difficult or remote areas. For them, additional efforts and special policies and provisions are needed.

Declaration and verification of ODF is a milestone. Beyond ODF lie many challenges — children's poo, handwashing, rural faecal sludge management, solid and liquid waste management, and toilets that need upgrading, to name but a few. Rapid learning, sharing and adapting will be vital not just in the next two years but far beyond 2019. There is no last mile. The scale of the achievements and milestones passed over the past three years far surpass anything we believed conceivably possible. The rapid learning and reviews in the October 11 meeting confirmed that achieving a fully Swachh Bharat is not a sprint but a marathon, and that rapid learning, if acted on effectively, should speed progress and enhance sustainability.

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**Various schemes and programs initiated by the Government to achieve the target of Doubling of Farmers' Income: Shri Radha Mohan Singh**

**Various schemes and programs initiated by the Government to achieve the target of Doubling of Farmers' Income: Shri Radha Mohan Singh**

**Prime Minister has set a target before us to double the farmers' income by 2022: Union Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister**

**Shri Radha Mohan Singh chairs the Inter-Session meeting of the Consultative Committee meeting of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare**

Union Agriculture Minister, Shri Radha Mohan Singh today said that the Prime Minister has set a target before us to double the farmers' income by 2022. The Ministry is working towards achieving the goal. And to achieve this target, the Prime Minister has advocated a seven-point strategy:

- i. Special focus on irrigation with sufficient budget, with the aim of "Per Drop More Crop".
- ii. Provision of quality seeds and nutrients based on soil health of each field.
- iii. Large investments in Warehousing and Cold Chains to prevent post-harvest crop losses.
- iv. Promotion of value addition through food processing.
- v. Creation of a National Farm Market, removing distortions and e-platform across 585 Stations.
- vi. Introduction of a New Crop Insurance Scheme to mitigate risks at an affordable cost.
- vii. Promotion of ancillary activities like poultry, beekeeping, and fisheries.

Shri Radha Mohan Singh stated above mentioned seven-point strategy while chairing the Inter-Session meeting of the Consultative Committee meeting of the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare said that the Government has launched a number of schemes and programs to Double Farmers' Income. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Soil Health Card, Neem-Coated Urea and e-NAM Schemes are few of our flagship programs that aim to improve the productivity and earnings of our farmers.

Shri Singh said that the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation, and Farmers Welfare has also constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of CEO, NRAA with members from all related departments and NITI Aayog to examine issues relating to doubling of farmers' income by the year 2022. As of now, six meetings of the Committee have been held.

Agriculture Minister said that RKVY guidelines are being changed to include entrepreneur development. DAC&FW has prepared a roadmap for production of pulses to the tune of 24 million tonnes by 2017-18. A dedicated micro-irrigation fund with an initial corpus of Rs.5000 crore has been set up by NABARD to achieve "Per Dop More Crop".

The Members of Parliament, Shri Chintaman Navsha Wanaga(Lok Sabha), Shri Rodmal Nagar (Lok Sabha), Shri Manshankar Ninama (Lok Sabha), Shri M.B. Rajesh (Lok Sabha), Shri Sanjay Shamrao Dhotre (Lok Sabha), Shri Sanjay Haribhau Jadhav(Lok Sabha), Shri Kunwar Pushpendra Singh Chandel (Lok Sabha) and Shri K. R. Arjunan (Rajya Sabha) & Shri Kiranmay Nanda (Rajya Sabha) were present in the meeting.

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**Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana launched to promote philately-Manoj Sinha****Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana launched to promote philately-Manoj Sinha**

Minister of Communications Shri Manoj Sinha today launched a Pan India scholarship program for school children called **Deen Dayal SPARSH** Yojana to increase the reach of Philately. Under the scheme of **SPARSH (Scholarship for Promotion of Aptitude & Research in Stamps as a Hobby)**, it is proposed to award annual scholarships to children of Standard VI to IX having good academic record and also pursuing Philately as a hobby through a competitive selection process in all postal circles. Briefing the media after the launch of the scheme, Shri Sinha said that under the scheme, it is proposed to award 920 scholarships to students pursuing Philately as a hobby. Every Postal Circle will select a maximum of 40 scholarships representing 10 students each from Standard VI, VII, VIII & IX. The amount of Scholarship will be Rs. 6000/- per annum @ Rs. 500/- per month.

The Minister said that to avail this scholarship, a child must be a student of a recognized school within India and the concerned school should have a Philately Club and the candidate should be a member of the Club. In case the school Philately Club hasn't been established a student having his own Philately Deposit Account will also be considered. Every prospective school, which participates in the competition, would be assigned a Philately mentor to be chosen from amongst the renowned Philatelists. The Philately mentor would help in formation of the School level Philately Club, providing guidance to young and aspiring Philatelists on how to pursue the hobby and also helping the aspiring Philatelists on their Philately Projects etc.

Shri Sinha said that selections under the Deen Dayal SPARSH scheme would be made based on the evaluation of Project work on Philately & performance in Philately Quiz conducted by the Circles. The details of the Scheme will be available on the website at [www.postagestamps.gov.in](http://www.postagestamps.gov.in) and [www.indiapost.gov.in](http://www.indiapost.gov.in)

Philately is the hobby of collection and study of Postage stamps. It also entails the collection, appreciation and research activities on stamps and other related philatelic products. The hobby of collecting Stamps includes seeking, locating, acquiring, organizing, cataloguing, displaying, storing, and maintaining the stamps or related products on thematic areas. Philately is called the king of hobbies because Stamp collection as a hobby has lot of educational benefits - it teaches a lot about the socio economic political reality of the period in which the stamp is issued or the theme on which it is issued.



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**Cabinet approves continuation and Restructuring of National Rural Drinking Water Programme****Cabinet approves continuation and Restructuring of National Rural Drinking Water Programme**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has accorded its approval for continuation and restructuring of National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) to make it outcome-based, competitive and better monitored with increased focus on sustainability (functionality) of schemes to ensure good quality service delivery to the rural population.

A sum of Rs. 23,050 crore has been approved for the programme for the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) period 2017-18 to 2019-20. The programme will cover all the Rural Population across the country. The restructuring will make the programme flexible, result-oriented, competitive, and will enable the Ministry towards to reach the goal of increasing coverage of sustainable Piped Water Supply.

The details of the decision are as follows:

1. National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) is to be continued co-terminus with the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission cycle till March 2020.
2. With the restructuring of the NRDWP, there will be 2% earmarking of funds for Japanese Encephalitis (JE) /Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) affected areas.
3. A new Sub-programme under NRDWP viz. National Water Quality Sub-Mission (NWQSM) which has been started by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in February 2017 will address the urgent need for providing clean drinking water in about 28000 Arsenic & Fluoride affected habitations (already identified). As per estimates, about Rs. 12,500 crore as Central share will be required over 4 years i.e. up to March, 2021. This is being funded from the allocation under NRDWP.
4. Pre-financing for the agreed schemes, to the extent of half of the second instalment amount, will be made by the State Governments, which will be reimbursed later on from the central funding. If the State(s) fails to claim this amount before 30<sup>th</sup> November in the financial year, then, these funds will become a part of the common pool, which will be released to the high performing States, which have already pre-financed the requisite Government of India share on a first come first serve basis.
5. Other half of second instalment of funds will be released to the States based on functionality

status of completed piped water supply schemes, which will be evaluated through a third party.

6. The Cabinet has approved Rs. 23,050 crore for the programme for the FFC period 2017-18 to 2019-20.

The NWQSM aims to cover all rural population in Arsenic/Fluoride affected habitations with clean drinking water on a sustainable basis by March 2021. States have been given more flexibility in utilization of NRDWP funds by reducing the number of components under the programme.

As per the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) of the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, about 77% of rural habitations in India have achieved a fully covered (FC) status (40 litres per capita per day) and 56% of the rural population have access to tap water through public stand posts within which 16.7% have household connections.

#### **Background:**

The NRDWP was started in 2009, with a major emphasis on ensuring sustainability (source) of water availability in terms of potability, adequacy, convenience, affordability and equity. NRDWP is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with 50:50 fund sharing between the Centre and the States. Over the years, learning from the success achieved and the deficiencies felt during the implementation of NRDWP, certain modifications are needed in existing guidelines and procedure of release of funds to the States for making the programme more outcome-oriented and competitive.

Keeping in view the need to make the NRDWP more result-oriented, incentivize competition amongst States and focused on sustainability, a series of discussions were held with States, various stakeholders / domain experts / international institutions and NITI Aayog, some amendments in the guidelines of the programme have been introduced. These are giving more flexibility to the states in utilization of NRDWP funds by reducing the number of components under the programme. Focus on piped water supply, increase level of service delivery, thrust on coverage of water quality affected habitations (National Water Quality Sub-Mission to tackle Arsenic & Fluoride affected habitations, JE / AES areas), coverage of Open Defecation Free (ODF) declared villages, SAGY GPs, Ganga GPs, Integrated Action Plan (IAP) districts, Border Out Posts (BOP) with piped water supply and Institutional set up for proper O&M of water supply assets etc. have been introduced.

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## Cabinet approves utilisation of pulses from the buffer stock through Central Government Schemes having nutrition component

### **Cabinet approves utilisation of pulses from the buffer stock through Central Government Schemes having nutrition component**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved to utilize part of stock of pulses in the buffer maintained by the Department of Consumer Affairs, for meeting the protein component under various schemes of Central Government providing nutrition to various target groups/beneficiaries. To give effect to the decision, the CCEA has empowered the concerned Departments/Ministries to carry out suitable amendments in their schemes/guidelines to enable them to take/provide pulses from the buffer in kind under their respective Schemes.

The disposal through the Central Government Schemes is in addition to the disposal of pulses from the buffer through open market sale and supply to States.

All the concerned Ministries/Departments will make necessary changes in their schemes and assess requirement of pulses within next three months of the approval. Supply of pulses from the Central buffer would commence based on such requirement indicated by these Ministries/Departments.

The objective of the approval is to enable the concerned administrative Ministries/Departments to ensure that pulses from the buffer are utilized as in 'kind' component of the Centre's contribution in such schemes, in lieu of its financial contribution of equivalent amount. The concerned Departments may revert to the current system of making nutrition available only in case of non-availability of pulses in the buffer. Ministries/Departments or their agencies providing food/catering/hospitality services have also been enabled to make suitable provision in their Commercial arrangement(tenders/contracts) to ensure that the requirements of pulses for such operations are met through the central buffer.

The approval will also help ensure adequate supply of nutrients/pulses under the various schemes/programmes of Government including Mid DayMeal(MDM) scheme, hospitals, etc. as well as Ministries/Departments or their agencies providing food/catering/hospitality services.

For a sustainable buffer operation, availability of regular and assured channels of disposal wherein a committed quantity is taken/lifted from the buffer at regular periodicity may be of critical importance. This would facilitate optimal utilization and efficient management of pulses in buffer through regular/planned rotation of pulses and replacement of stock through fresh crop on continual basis.

The cost of pulses supplied to States would, in no case, be higher than the market price, protecting their interest as well.

## Background:

The buffer of up to 20 Lakh MT has been created to enable effective market intervention by government, discourage market manipulation and provide cushion against price rise to consumers. It may incentivize farmers and encourage production of pulses as well.

As the buffer of pulses serves the interests of both consumers and farmers, ensuring its attainability and efficient operation is important for the welfare of these stakeholders. For a sustainable buffer operation, availability of regular and assured channels of disposal wherein a committed quantity is taken/lifted from the buffer at regular periodicity may be of critical importance. This would facilitate effective management of the buffer. Such assured channel for disposal of pulses may be provided by the Central Government Ministries/Departments and their agencies that are operating Schemes under which food and nutrition is being provided to the beneficiaries e.g. Mid Day Meals. This would also facilitate nutritional security.

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## Labelling versus outcomes: on Swachh Bharat Mission

On October 2, 2017, the [Swachh Bharat Mission \(SBM\) completed its third year](#). Over 60,000 crore has been spent on the programme, but despite its scope and importance, there is very little objective evidence about its performance

So far the numbers that have been widely cited by the government are from its own administrative data and the Swachh Survekshan Gramin 2017, conducted by the Quality Council of India (QCI), a body set up jointly by the Government of India and industry. Both the sources, i.e. QCI's survey and the SBM website, portray a similar picture. At the time when the survey was conducted between May and June 2017, Swachh Survekshan claimed 62.45% India-wide latrine coverage, which was similar to the SBM's figure of 63.73%. Moreover, the QCI survey also claimed that 91.29% of those with access to a toilet use it.

If true, these numbers would mean better public health outcomes in India — a very desirable outcome. However, one can debate their accuracy. Researchers who study sanitation agree that the questionnaire is structured to show the appearance of latrine use. In fact, research shows that surveys which pose a balanced question about open defecation or latrine use for each person in a household are able to document more open defecation than survey questions that group household members by demographic categories.

### Off the mark

Inaccurate estimate of latrine use is not the only problem the SBM faces; a variety of implementation challenges exist as well. The pressure of an approaching deadline of making India open defecation free (ODF) is one.

### Swachh Survekshan: The cleanliness quotient of Indian cities

During my recent visit to a few villages in Uttar Pradesh to study the programme, a village pradhan described the pressure of building latrines: "Last year I was given the target of building 27 latrines, which I have got constructed, and now the target for this year is to build 104. After these are constructed, my village will be declared open defecation free." He did not mention that being declared ODF would depend on anyone using the constructed latrines. Moreover, he said that the criterion would include decrepit and unused structures constructed under Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, the United Progressive Alliance government's latrine building programme. SBM counts these as functional latrines, as the baseline data in 2012 did. In fact, pictures of such defunct latrines can be seen on the SBM website categorised as "uploaded", "approved" and "counted".

The pradhan's experience is in line with findings by sanitation researchers in independent studies. In a report called "Quality and Sustainability of Toilets" (WaterAid, 2017), the authors report that in the eight States where the study was conducted, less than a quarter of households said that it was their own initiative to build the toilet. This is contrary to the government's claim that SBM is a people's movement.

In another study, "Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) Immersive Research," conducted by Praxis, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), and WaterAid, researchers lived with families in each of the eight ODF villages selected. They aimed to explore behavioural change best practices in rural districts that have been declared ODF in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

Will Swachh Bharat Abhiyan be a success?

Although each of these villages had been declared ODF and the authorities verified them to be ODF, the 'Immersive' study found that of the eight verified ODF villages, only one was actually ODF, one was close to being ODF, and the rest had remarks such as "some OD observed," "OD areas identified," and "OD prevalent." The two "ODF verified villages" in Uttar Pradesh had 37% and 74%, respectively, of households without a toilet in their house. An "ODF verified" village in Rajasthan had a toilet coverage of just 16%.

False ODF claims were not the only disconcerting observations that the researchers made. In all the villages, the study found coercive measures having been used to promote the SBM. The authors say: "Panchayats have been making threats, though seldom imposed, with a variety of sanctions and punishments, ranging from denial of all State welfare schemes (for instance withdrawal of ration cards) to imposing of fines... and arrest and prosecution under various sections of [the] Indian Penal Code."

Unfortunately, we do not have credible, representative country-wide estimates of latrine use in India. On one hand, government data and the Swachh Survekshan show the programme to be achieving what it is meant to achieve. But, independent, rapid studies by sanitation researchers and anecdotal stories present a less rosy picture. The programme seems to be running on a check mark-based approach, and between all this, widespread open defecation in India continues to kill babies, and stunts those who survive.

*Nikhil Srivastav is a researcher at r.i.c.e, a research institute for compassionate economics*

The definition of harassment needs to be constantly updated, and the process for justice made more robust

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Cabinet approves the increase in the carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme for the Middle Income Group under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana

### **Cabinet approves the increase in the carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme for the Middle Income Group under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the increase in the carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for the Middle Income Group (MIG) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban).

To further enhance the scope, coverage and outreach of the Scheme, the Cabinet has approved the following:

- i. increasing the carpet area in the MIG I category of CLSS from the existing 90 square metre to **"up to 120 square metre"** and increasing the carpet area in respect of MIG II category of CLSS from the existing 110 square metre to **"up to 150 square metre"**; and
- ii. making the above change effective from 01.01.2017 i.e. the date the CLSS for MIG had become effective.

The CLSS for MIG is a pro-active step in meeting the challenges of urban housing shortage. It also is a pioneering step to enable the Middle Income Group to access the benefits of an interest subsidy scheme.

The CLSS for MIG covers two income segments in the MIG viz. Rs.6,00,001 to Rs.12,00,000 (MIG-I) and Rs.12,00,001 to Rs.18,00,000 (MIG-II) per annum. In

the MIG-1, an interest subsidy of 4% has been provided for loan amounts up to Rs.9 lakh while in MIG-2, an interest subsidy of 3% has been provided for loan amount of Rs.12 lakh. The interest subsidy will be calculated at 9% NPV over a maximum loan tenure of 20 years or the actual tenure, whichever is lesser. Housing loans above 9 lakh and 12 lakh will be at non-subsidized rates.

The CLSS for MIG is currently effective up to 31.03.2019.

#### **Impact**

- The limit of 120 sq m. and 150 sq m. is seen as a reasonable enhancement and would cater to the market generally scouted by the MIG belonging to the two income categories specified in the scheme.

- The increase in carpet area will enable the MI category of individuals to have a wider choice in Developers' projects.
- The increased carpet area will also give a boost to the sale of ready built flats in the affordable housing segment.

### **Background:**

Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is implementing the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme for Middle Income Group (CLSS for MIG) under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) since 1.01.2017 pursuant to Hon'ble Prime Minister's address to the Nation on 31.12.2016 announcing increased benefits for poor people availing housing loans, and a new interest subsidy scheme for housing loans for the Middle Income Group (MIG).

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## Boost to infrastructure facilities for judiciary

### Boost to infrastructure facilities for judiciary

#### **Cabinet approves continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme to improve judiciary infrastructure**

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for Development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary beyond 12th Five Year Plan i.e. from 01.04.2017 to 31.03.2020 to be implemented in a Mission Mode through National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms with an estimated outlay of Rs.3,320 crore.

The Cabinet also approved setting up of an on-line monitoring system with geo-tagging by the Department of Justice enabling data collection on progress, completion of court halls and residential units under construction, including for future projects as well as better asset management and formulation of norms and specification of court halls and residential units to be constructed under Scheme for implementation throughout the country for future.

#### **Benefits from the Scheme:**

The Scheme will increase the availability of suitable number of Court Halls and Residential Accommodations for Judges / Judicial Officers of District and Subordinate Courts all over the country including at District, Sub-District, Taluka, Tehsil and Gram Panchayat and Village levels. This will help in improving the functioning and performance of the Judiciary across the country in reaching out to every citizen.

#### **Financial assistance:**

The central assistance is provided to the State Governments / UT Administrations under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for development of Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary for construction of court halls and residential units for Judicial Officers / Judges of District and Subordinate Courts. The funds sharing pattern for Centre and State is 60:40 in respect of States other than North Eastern and Himalayan States. The funds sharing pattern is 90:10 in respect of North Eastern and Himalayan States; and 100% in respect of Union Territories. This will help for completion of on-going projects for construction of 3,000 court halls and 1,800 residential units for judicial officers of District and Subordinate Courts.

#### **Monitoring of the Scheme**

An on-line monitoring system will be set up by the Department of Justice enabling data collection on progress, completion of court halls and residential units under construction as well as better asset management.

Regular meetings of the Monitoring Committee may be organised in various States with State Chief Secretaries and PWD officials to enable speedy and good construction. It may also be monitored if the funds released by the Centre are released without delay onward to PWD by the State Governments.

### **Background:**

Central Government augments the resources of the States in this regard through the Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for development of infrastructure facilities for Judiciary which is being implemented since 1993-94. The central assistance is provided to the State Governments / UT Administrations under the Scheme for construction of court halls and residential units for Judicial Officers / Judges of District and Subordinate Courts.

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## Cabinet approves Continuation of sub-schemes under Umbrella Scheme “Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)” for the period till November, 2018

### **Cabinet approves Continuation of sub-schemes under Umbrella Scheme “Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)” for the period till November, 2018**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for continuation of Anganwadi Services, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, Child Protection Services and National Crèche Scheme from 1.4.2017 to 30.11.2018 with an outlay of over Rs.41,000 crore. These are the sub-schemes under Umbrella Scheme “Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)”

#### **Features:**

- The approved Schemes include:
  - i. Anganwadi Services
  - ii. Scheme for Adolescent Girls
  - iii. Child Protection Services
  - iv. National Crèche Scheme
- The Cabinet has also approved:
  - i. implementation of Scheme for Adolescent Girls for out of school girls in the age group of 11-14 years, its phased expansion
  - ii. phasing out of the on-going Kishori Shakti Yojana for out of school girls in the age group of 11-14 years.
- The decision also provides for conversion of National Crèche Scheme from Central Sector to Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the revised cost sharing between Centre and States as 60:40 for all States and UTs with legislature, 90:10 for NER and Himalayan States and 100% for UTs without legislature and implementation of the Scheme through States/UTs instead of existing implementation agencies.

#### **Impact:**

The sub-schemes listed above are not new schemes but are continuing from the XII Five Year Plan. The programme through targeted interventions will strive to reduce the level of malnutrition, anaemia and low birth weight babies, ensure empowerment of adolescent girls, provide protection to the children who are in conflict with law, provide safe place for day-care to the children of working mothers, create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue negative alerts for timely action, encourage States/UTs to perform, guide and supervise the line Ministries and States/UTs to achieve the targeted goals and bring more transparency.

#### **Beneficiaries:**

More than 11 crore children, pregnant women & Lactating Mothers and the Adolescent Girls will be benefited through this scheme.

## Financial Outlay:

The details of expenditure for the period from 01.04.2017 to 30.11.2018 for various sub-schemes are as follows:

(Rupees in crore)

Name of the sub-scheme	Amount approved
Anganwadi Services	34441.34
National Nutrition Mission (proposed) Scheme for Adolescent Girls	4241.33
Child Protection Services	1238.37
National Crèche Scheme	1083.33
	349.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>41353.70</b>

## Implementation Strategy and Targets:

Anganwadi Services (ICDS) and Child Protection Services are already in operation in the entire country. The Scheme for Adolescent Girls will be expanded in a phased manner. National Creche Scheme will continue to be implemented in 23,555 creches. Approval for National Nutrition Mission shall be obtained separately.

## States/districts covered:

Anganwadi Services (ICDS) and Child Protection Services are already in operation in the entire country. National Nutrition Mission will be rolled out in a phased manner. Similarly, Scheme for Adolescent Girls will be expanded in a phased manner.

## Background:

The ongoing schemes have been rationalized by the Government in financial year 2016-17 and have been brought under Umbrella ICDS as its sub-schemes. These sub-schemes need to be continued for delivering the child related services to the intended beneficiaries. The aims of these schemes are as under:

- a. **Anganwadi Services (ICDS)** aims at holistic development of children under the age of six years and its beneficiaries are children of this age group and Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers.
- b. The objective of the **Scheme for Adolescent Girls** is to facilitate, educate and empower Adolescent Girls so as to enable them to become self-reliant and aware citizens through improved nutrition and health status, promoting awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition, mainstreaming out of school AGs into formal/non formal

education and providing information/guidance about existing public services.

- c. The objectives of **Child Protection Services** are to provide safe and secure environment for children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection, reduce vulnerabilities through a wide range of social protection measures, prevent actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children from families etc., bring focus on non-institutional care, develop a platform for partnership between Government & Civil Society and establish convergence of child related social protection services.
- d. **National Creche Scheme** aims at providing a safe place for mothers to leave their children while they are at work, and thus, is a measure for empowering women as it enables them to take up employment. At the same time, it is also an intervention towards protection and development of children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years.

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## The power of shame

The better way: A social worker explains the importance of toilets to residents of Kabale, in Uganda, with posters. Special Arrangement

Twinomujni Enock's wife is 'more pleasant' with him, he says, and that makes him happy. The 45-year-old farmer grows Irish potatoes and pineapples in his one-acre farm in Kabale, in western Uganda. He sells his produce in the neighbouring sub-county, or if he's lucky, to tourists wandering by on their way to Lake Bunyonyi or to Bwindi Impenetrable National Park to spot mountain gorillas. He makes around 100,000 shillings (around Rs. 1,800; UGX 1 = around INR 0.02) a month. Nothing much has changed in his life or fortunes in the past few years to affect his spouse's equanimity. Except for one thing: "I built a latrine at home."

In Kabale, most residents didn't have modern toilets in their properties. The men would use the fields, while their families used the areas around their homes. To get rid of the smell, women traditionally burnt banana leaves and then cleaned up the area.

After Mr. Enock built the latrine — a tiny hole in the ground in a thin-walled cabin behind the house, which cost him UGX 1,50,000 — his wife doesn't have to do that any more. But, Mr. Enock confesses, love for his family wasn't his only motivation: he feared arrest or an UGX40,000 fine and worse, public shaming.

"Many other farmers were being shamed," he says. "I didn't want to be humiliated. In a way, I was left with no other choice."

He admits, though, that he now takes much less time off work, as his seven children fall sick much less often.

Uganda has a population of 42 million, almost as many as Odisha. The country loses 33 children every day to diarrhoea (similar all-India figures are 328). Kabale is mostly a rural district, over 400 kilometres away from the country's capital, Kampala.

Incomes aren't high — the average Ugandan rural household earns around UGX 3,03,000, less than half an urban household's UGX 7,03,000 (as per Uganda Bureau of Statistics figures for 2016–17).

But this little district, with a population of around 5,00,000 (less than that of the Mumbai suburb of Andheri East) in 1,18,878 households, has succeeded in getting 97% of them to build toilets, becoming the first in the country to declare itself open-defecation-free. Seven other districts now follow the same programme.

"The credit goes to the harsh measures we took," says Namanya Oliver, district health officer of Kabale. First, a field survey identified households which did not have latrines. Next, offending households were sensitised to the dangers of poor sanitation, then given around three months to build a toilet. If they didn't, the man of the house was arrested, and faced a choice between a fine, two weeks in jail, or community service. "We also put out their names in a 'list of shame,'" Mr. Oliver says. "We even go on radio shows to announce names of people found defecating in the open or who fail to have a latrine at home."

In the last two years, 64 households have been fined, and hundreds featured on the list.

**Not everyone uses them**

The battle hasn't been won yet, though. Ensuring that everyone uses their latrine is the next challenge: actual usage is just 54%.

Allen Saturday, 41 and a mother of six, is happy the family has had a toilet since 2016. "Who likes cleaning all that up," she asks. "I did it for so many years, then my daughters helped me." But she isn't sure about her husband; he's out in their fields all day, so he must be doing his business out there.

"We are now focussing on behavioural change," says Munduni Samuel, a government health assistant.

"We insist on making it a habit to defecate only twice, morning and night time. Our message emphasises that those who defecate more than twice are ill. We tell them to follow this for three days and the body will get used to it."

Officials are spreading awareness about diarrhoeal deaths among children, worm infestations, and other results of poor sanitation. They are also promoting simple hand-washing techniques, like a soap bottle and water can hanging from a wooden frame; the can tips over slightly when a stick, connected to it with string, is stepped on.

They teach school children to use this *jugaad* hands-free handwasher, and through them, the adults.

Mr. Oliver says the district aims to achieve 100% latrine usage in a couple of years.

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## Government set to achieve Rural Housing Targets

### Government set to achieve Rural Housing Targets

Hon'ble Prime Minister launched Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin) exactly one year ago on 20th November, 2016 from Agra. A target of completing one crore new houses after beneficiary registration, geo-tagging and account verification by 31st March, 2019 was set. Of these, 51 lakh houses had to be completed by 31st March, 2018.

After the launch, it took few months to complete the process of beneficiary registration, geo-tagging, account verification etc. 55.85 lakh houses have already been sanctioned and work is under progress. Nearly 30 lakh of these houses have reached roof level of construction and 15 lakh of these houses are at finalization level. As on 20th November, 2017, 9.03 lakh houses have already been completed. It is expected that 10 lakh PMAY(G) homes will be completed by 30th November, 2017, 15 lakh houses by 31st December 2017, 25 lakh houses by 31st January, 2018, 35 lakh houses by 28th February, 2018 and 51 lakh houses by 31st March, 2018. States like Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and West Bengal have completed a large number of houses.

New designs, local construction material, use of technology through rural mason training, geo-tagging of assets and payment directly into the account of beneficiary through IT-DBT platform have ensured transparent, hassle-free and quality programme implementation. All States and UTs are trying very hard to facilitate beneficiaries to complete their homes on time. The use of Socio Economic Census (SECC 2011), validation by Gram Sabha and use of Space Technology for geo-tagging has ensured that there are least inclusion errors and it is only the homeless and those living in one kuccha room with kuccha roof or two kuccha rooms with kuccha roof are the beneficiaries of this pro-poor programme. Technology has been used to empower the poor. The homes are designed by the best of institutions after studying the existing local design typologies and are constructed by beneficiaries as per their need. These homes are not only changing the rural landscape but also bringing about a social transformation in villages across the country. The poor are getting safe homes and can live with dignity with facilities like toilet, LPG connection, electricity connection, drinking water facility etc. The governance reforms under PMAY(G) and the impact of higher demand of steel and cement on growth is being studied by the National Institute of Public Finance & Policy, New Delhi. The Central Building Research Institute, Roorkee will undertake a study on

actual use of new designs, impact of rural mason training, local materials and new technologies under PMAY(G). A study on social transformation is being commissioned separately to understand the impact of a good housing programme. The progress of PMAY(G) can be seen by any person on Awaassoft.nic.in platform with geo-tagged photographs and complete details of beneficiaries and payments made to them.

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**Cabinet approves Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao for a Pan India coverage in all the 640 districts (as per census 2011) of the Country**

**Cabinet approves Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao for a Pan India coverage in all the 640 districts (as per census 2011) of the Country**

**Proposed outlay of Rs.1132.5 Crore on Beti Bachao Beti Padhao expansion approved for the duration 2017-18 to 2019-20**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao for a Pan India reach covering all the 640 districts (as per census 2011) of the Country to have a deeper positive impact on Child Sex Ratio. Expansion under BBBP has been approved based on the successful implementation in 161 districts.

The Scheme was launched by the Prime Minister on 22nd January, 2015 at Panipat, Haryana as a comprehensive programme to address the declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of women over a life-cycle continuum. The CSR, defined as number of girls per 1000 boys in the age group of 0-6 years, declined sharply from 976 in 1961 to 918 in Census 2011. However there was no systematic response or comprehensive advocacy strategy to arrest and curb this disturbing trend. The Government recognized the challenge of declining Child Sex Ratio (CSR), as a telling indicator of gender discrimination towards girl child, requiring immediate attention and action and launched BBBP scheme in 2015.

Currently the scheme is being implemented as a tri-ministerial, convergent effort of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development with focus on awareness and advocacy campaign, multi-sectoral action in select 161 districts, enabling girls' education and effective enforcement of Pre-Conception & Pre Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PC&PNDT) Act. The specific objectives of the scheme include preventing gender biased sex selective elimination; ensuring survival and protection of the girl child and ensuring education and participation of the girl child. At the Central level, Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal ministry for the programme. At the State level, Chief Secretaries heads the State Task Force (STF) with representation of Department of WCD, Health and Education to monitor the implementation of the scheme. The District Collectors/Deputy Commissioners (DCs) lead and coordinate action of all departments for implementation of BBBP at the District level.

The programme will be completing 3 years shortly and in this short duration, BBBP has been well-received and favourable trends are visible in many of the districts. The latest reports as per HMIS data of MoHFW for 161 BBBP districts indicate that for the time period between April-March, 2015-16 & 2016-17, an improving trend in Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) is visible in 104 districts, 119 districts have reported progress in first trimester registration against the reported Anti Natal Care registrations and 146 districts have reported improvement in institutional deliveries.

Looking at the encouraging results of implementation in 161 districts and magnitude/criticality of the problem and its spread across the country, it has been realized that no district can be left out of BBBP ambit if a real dent is to be made on overall CSR. Accordingly, the Cabinet has approved the expansion for Pan India Coverage with a proposed outlay of Rs. 1132.5 Crore from 2017-18 to 2019-20, to be funded 100% by the Central Government. Out of 640 districts, BBBP is currently getting implemented in 161 districts. The expansion would include Multi sectoral intervention in 244 districts in addition to existing 161 districts. 235 districts are to be covered through Alert District Media, Advocacy and Outreach, thus covering all the 640 districts of the Country.

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**Cabinet approves expansion of umbrella scheme "Mission For Protection And Empowerment For Women" and introducing a new scheme ' Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra'**

**Cabinet approves expansion of umbrella scheme "Mission For Protection And Empowerment For Women" and introducing a new scheme ' Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra'**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for expansion of the schemes of Ministry of Women and Child Development under Umbrella Scheme "Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women" for a period 2017-18 to 2019-20. CCEA has also given approval to the new scheme called 'Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra', which will empower rural women through community participation to create an environment in which they realize their full potential. Expansion under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao has also been approved based on the successful implementation in 161 districts.

The financial outlay during 2017-18 to 2019-20 will be Rs.3,636.85 crore with a Central Share of approximately Rs.3,084.96 crore.

**Benefits of the Scheme:**

The approved sub-schemes are social sector welfare schemes especially for care, protection and development of women. It will also aim at improvement in declining Child Sex Ratio; ensuring survival. & protection of the girl child; ensuring her education, and empowering her to fulfil her potential. It will provide an interface for rural women to approach the government for availing their entitlements and for empowering them through training and capacity building. Student volunteers will encourage the spirit of voluntary community service and gender equality. These students will serve "agents of change" and have a lasting impact on their communities and the nation.

**Major activities of the Umbrella Scheme:**

The new scheme "Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra (PMMSK)" is envisaged to work at various levels. While, National level (domain based knowledge support) and State level (State Resource Centre for Women) structures will provide technical support to the respective government on issues related to women, the District and Block level Centres will provide support to PMMSK and also give a foothold to BBBP in 640 districts to be covered in a phased manner.

Community engagement through Student Volunteers is envisioned in 115 most backward districts as part of the PMMSK Block level initiatives. Student volunteers will play an instrumental role in awareness generation regarding various important government schemes/ programmes as well as social issues. More than 3 lakh student volunteers from local colleges will be engaged in this process, while association with NSS/NCC cadre students will also be an option for contributing to nation building as responsible citizens. This will provide an opportunity to Student Volunteers to participate in the development process by bringing change in their own communities and ensuring that women are not left behind and are equal partners in India's progress.

The outcome based activities of student volunteers will be monitored through web based system. On completion, certificates for community service, will be displayed on national portal for verification and can also be used as resource /asset for the participating students in future.

Expansion and intensification of efforts have also been approved for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) through sustained nation-wide Advocacy and Media Campaign in 640 districts and focused multi-sectoral action .in selected 405 districts. All low CSR districts shall be taken up in the first year itself under BBBP. To provide support to working women 190 more Working Women Hostels to accommodate approximately 19,000 additional working women will be set up. Additional Swadhar Grehs have been approved to provide relief and rehabilitation of approximately 26,000 beneficiaries.

To provide comprehensive support to women affected by violence, One Stop Centres (OSCs) will be established in 150 additional districts during the period. These one stop Centres will be linked with women helpline and will provide 24 hour emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence both in public and private space across the country. A unique initiative involving engagement of Manila Police Volunteers (MPVs) on a voluntary basis in States/UTs will. also be done to create public-police interface, which will be expanded to 65 districts covering all States /UTs.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation of the Scheme:**

One common Task Force shall be created at National, State and district level for planning, reviewing and monitoring all the sub-schemes in this Umbrella, with the objective of ensuring convergence of action and cost efficiency. Every scheme shall have a set of clear, focussed target set forth in the guidelines, aligned with SDGs. Mechanism

for monitoring of outcome based indicators for all the sub-schemes as suggested by NITI Aayog will be put in place. The schemes will be implemented through the States/UTs and Implementing Agencies. All the sub-schemes have inbuilt monitoring structure at the Central Level, State, District and Block level.

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**Exclusive 'Rural Livelihood' scheme for Northeast: Dr Jitendra Singh****Exclusive 'Rural Livelihood' scheme for Northeast: Dr Jitendra Singh**

The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh spoke here today about an exclusive "Rural Livelihood" scheme for the Northeast. The unique scheme under the title "North East Rural Livelihood Project" is being supported by the World Bank and will primarily benefit the tribals and the lower socioeconomic groups, including women, in the North-Eastern Region (NER).

To begin with, four states, - Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura, will be taken up for helping the tribal and even the non-tribal lower groups living in remote areas. The project is aimed at assisting over 10,000 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and benefit about three lakh poor households.

Besides, Dr Jitendra Singh said, the North-Eastern Regional Agricultural Marketing Corporation (NERAMAC) Ltd, a PSU under the Ministry of Development of North-Eastern Region, is also assisting the farmers and agriculturists to obtain remunerative price for their produce.

Dr Jitendra Singh said, while the development and empowerment of the NER is high on the priority of the Government led by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the special focus is on Women, particularly tribal women, woman-headed households and single woman households. The more vulnerable tribal groups like Reang in Tripura and Lepsha and Bhutias in Sikkim are also going to benefit from it, he said.

Meanwhile, a delegation of the "Forum of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Legislators and Parliamentarians" led by its National President, Shri Inder Iqbal Singh Atwal today met Dr Jitendra Singh and presented a memorandum focusing on the issues of empowerment of tribal communities in Northeast.

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**Transforming 115 backward districts across the country****Transforming 115 backward districts across the country****First Meeting of Prabhari Officers on 24th November**

In keeping with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of a New India by 2022, Government has embarked upon a major policy initiative for the rapid transformation of 115 backward districts across the country. Senior Government officials in the rank of the rank of Additional Secretary and Joint Secretary have been designated as Prabhari Officers or the in-charge to coordinate the efforts of the Centre and the states in addressing the specific developmental needs of the districts.

The First meeting of the Prabhari Officers entrusted with the responsibility to co-ordinate the efforts of the Centre and the States towards rapid transformation of 115 backward districts across the country will be held tomorrow on Friday, the 24th November. Cabinet Secretary, PKSinha will chair the meeting with the CEO of the NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant. Secretaries of key Ministries would also attend this session. Home Secretary will also brief the Prabhari Officers. Among the 115 backward districts, 35 are affected by Left Wing Violence. Shortly after this event, meeting of representatives of the State Governments and Prabhari officers is being organised to ensure that transformation of backward district in India is carried out by a dedicated team of Central and State governments.

**Background:**

The Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given a Vision for a new and vibrant India by 2022, the year when India celebrates its 75th year of Independence. Inclusive development and improving the liveability of all are integral part of this vision. One of the initiatives in this regard is to make a dramatic improvement in overall socio-economic development of backward districts. The strategy envisaged is to adopt a focussed approach, ensure convergence of efforts of the Central, State and local Government and establish a real time monitoring mechanism to focus on outcomes that matter to common people in these districts beside giving rise to a virtuous cycle of economic development.

A total of 115 districts have been identified for this purpose on the basis of objective criteria. Such criteria include education, health, nutrition basic infrastructure like rural road connectivity, rural household electrification, access to potable water and individual

toilets etc. These districts include 35 districts which are affected by violence by Left Wing Extremists. Besides, while selecting these districts, it has been ensured that Ministries of Government of India, implementing social sector Scheme would select at least one most backward districts in every State for extending the reach of the programme in different part of the country. Improvement in one district is likely to spur similar growth in neighbouring districts through demonstration effect.

Under this initiative, for all these 115 districts, senior level Government officers (Additional Secretary/Joint Secretary) have been nominated as Prabhari officers. It has been envisaged that using their experience, these officers would form a team with representatives of the State Governments and would also act as a bridge between Centre and the State. States have been accordingly requested to nominate senior level functionary for each district. States are the main drivers of this program.

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