

India made 'remarkable progress' in reducing poverty, says World Bank

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

India has over the last decade made "remarkable progress" in reducing poverty across both monetary and non-monetary dimensions, the World Bank said in a new report, adding that the country saw one of the fastest reductions in poverty in the world.

"Between 2011 and 2023, the share of the population living below the Lower Middle-Income Country line (\$4.2/day) fell from 57.7% to 16.1%, lifting an estimated 496 million people out of poverty, while extreme poverty (\$3.00/day) declined from 27.1% to 2.6%," the World Bank said in its October 2026 Poverty and



Extreme poverty declined from 27.1% to 2.6%, the report said.

Equity Brief for India released on Friday.

Further, it stated that it projected poverty to continue declining, "albeit more gradually". "On the non-monetary dimensions, as measured by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative's (OPHI) Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), poverty fell sharply from 53.8% in

2005-06 to 16.4% in 2019-21, with the World Bank MPI measure at 15.5% in 2022-23," it stated.

"Wage disparities, however, remain pronounced, as median earnings among the top 10% of workers were about 13 times those of the bottom 10% in 2023," the report said. "Poverty has also become increasingly concentrated geographically," it added. "While living standards improved across most States, households in a contiguous belt stretching from Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal account for 57% of India's poor population."

It also noted that, between 2017 and 2023, employment increased by about 134 million people,

nearly twice the growth of the working-age population, with much of the gain driven by rural women entering paid work and raising the number of earners per household. "However, youth unemployment rose from 14.6% to 15.9% between the two quarters [Q1 FY2026 and Q1 FY2027], particularly among rural young women," the World Bank report highlighted.

FM hails findings

"The World Bank identifies strong consumption growth, rising employment – especially among women – and expanded social transfers, including food subsidies, as major drivers," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

Amit Shah promises UCC in Uttar Pradesh if BJP retains power in 2027

Union Home Minister exudes confidence that party will get a 'massive majority' in the upcoming Assembly election in the State; challenges Rahul Gandhi and Akhilesh Yadav to a debate on SIR

Mayank Kumar
LUCKNOW

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) will be implemented in Uttar Pradesh if the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) wins the 2027 Assembly election.

Urging party workers to work towards winning the poll, he said, "The Uniform Civil Code has been implemented in several States. Uttar Pradesh will be next. Make a BJP government and we will implement the UCC here."

Mr. Shah, who was addressing the BJP's State executive meeting, said the BJP will get a "massive majority". "The BJP government in Uttar Pradesh is firmly rooted; no one can dislodge it. Our party is once again going to form the government in U.P. with a massive majority."

Mr. Shah challenged Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi and Samaj-



Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressing a BJP working committee meeting in Lucknow on Friday. ANI

wadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav to a debate on the special intensive revision (SIR), but said they just want to "create a ruckus".

"I challenge both you [Mr. Gandhi] and Akhilesh Yadav right here and now. The BJP is fully prepared to discuss this [SIR] in Parliament. We have nothing to hide. Let us convene a spe-

cial session of Parliament, but they have no intention of speaking there. They refuse to let Parliament function. Instead, they just create a ruckus," he said.

Hailing Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Mr. Shah said, "I want to praise the Chief Minister. Under his leadership, the government has provided strict gover-

nance and freed Uttar Pradesh from the mafia."

Hitting out at the SP, the Union Home Minister said, "Today is October 30. On this day in 1990, then U.P. Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav ordered firing on Ram devotees. How can you [SP] talk about forming a government after opening fire on Ram devotees?"

6 dead in Uttarakhand chopper crash

Five pilgrims from Karnataka and a pilot from Delhi killed as helicopter from Badrinath crashes; Congress alleges government negligence and poor safety measures; govt. grounds entire chopper fleet operated by Trans Bharat Aviation; DGCA, AAIB officials to reach Dehradun as part of the probe

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

A helicopter carrying six persons crashed near Joshimath in Uttarakhand on Friday, killing all occupants, including the pilot. Preliminary reports suggest that bad weather may have caused the accident. Five of the victims were pilgrims from Karnataka.

Chamoli District Magistrate Gaurav Kumar said the helicopter, operated by private firm Trans Bharat Aviation, was flying from Badrinath to the Sahasradhara helipad in Dehradun when it crashed around 1.45 p.m.

"The wreckage was located near an Army camp above Chai village. An Army team reached the spot



Tragic loss: Wreckage of a private helicopter operated by Trans Bharat Aviation after it crashed into a hillside near Chai village in the Joshimath area of Chamoli district, Uttarakhand on Friday. PTI

and confirmed the fatalities," Mr. Kumar said.

Those killed were Captain Himanshu Sabharwal from Delhi, and five pilgrims - Prathapa Bachihally, V.B. Shankar Gowda, Sudhir K., S.S. Nataraja,

and Arun Salunke.

Prateek Jain, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA), said the entire fleet of helicopters operated by Trans Bharat Aviation

had been grounded as a precautionary measure. He added that the region had been experiencing snowfall and rain over the preceding few days, but helicopter operations were permitted only when

weather conditions were favourable.

"Officials from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) are likely to reach Dehradun to assess the incident. A comprehensive probe will be undertaken to establish the circumstances that led to the accident. The findings will subsequently guide authorities in deciding whether shuttle and charter services can resume or continue operations for the rest of the season," he said.

CM orders probe

Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami expressed deep sorrow over the loss of lives in the accident. Mr. Dhami has also directed

the officials concerned to conduct a detailed investigation. He also instructed the district administration to provide every possible assistance to the affected families.

Uttarakhand Congress senior vice-president Suryakant Dhasmana blamed alleged government negligence and questioned the aviation safety measures, particularly on the Char Dham pilgrimage routes. In a statement, he said 13 people died in five helicopter-related incidents in Uttarakhand over a 45-day period in 2025.

Mr. Dhasmana also cited accident data indicating that four of the eight helicopter accidents recorded in the Char Dham sector between 2015 and 2025 occurred in 2025.

GSLV places next-generation navigation satellite into orbit

The NVS-03, with a mission life of 12 years, is expected to restore the functioning of the NavIC constellation; satellite carries an indigenous atomic clock, along with procured atomic clocks

Hemanth C.S.
BENGALURU

The Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F18) late on Friday successfully launched the NVS-03 satellite from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, according to the ISRO.

The GSLV-F18 with the NVS-03 satellite lifted off from the second launch pad of the spaceport and 18 minutes later placed the satellite into the intended geosynchronous transfer orbit.

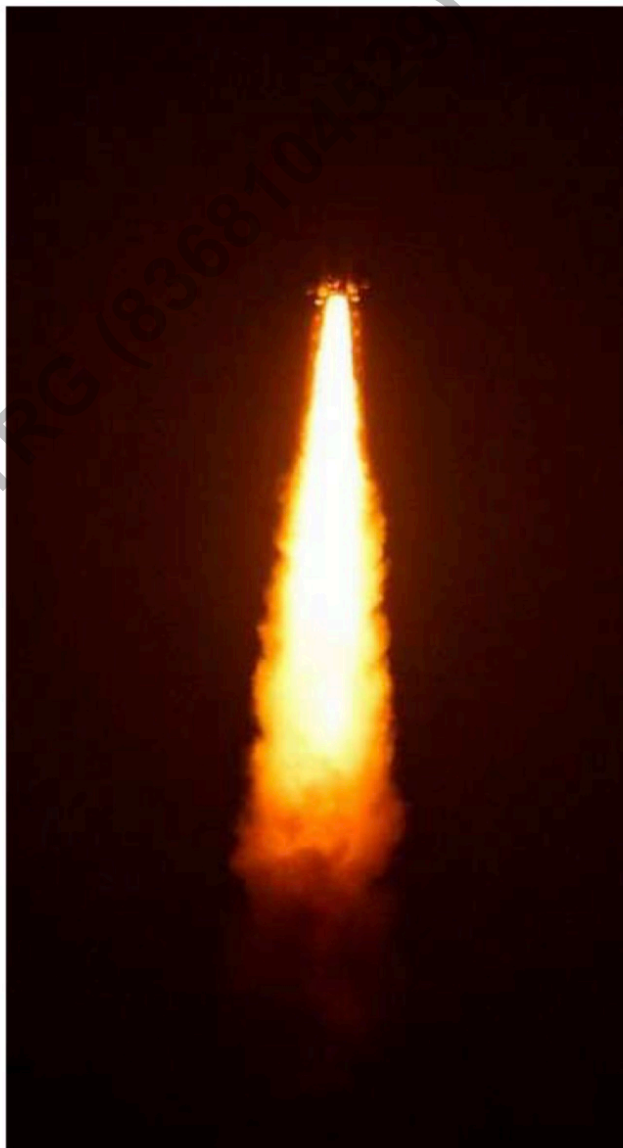
The 2,250 kg, NVS-03 is the third satellite in the next generation navigation satellite system envisaged for providing continuity of navigation services for the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) series or the Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC). According to the ISRO, the satellite carries an indigenous atomic clock, along with procured atomic clocks.

"It also includes L1 signal in addition to existing L5/S signals with coverage over India land mass and a region extending 1,500 km around Indian geopolitical boundary," the ISRO said.

NavIC is India's independent regional navigation satellite system designed to provide accurate Position, Navigation and Timing (PNT) service to users in India as well as the region extending about 1,500 km beyond the Indian landmass, which is its primary service area.

The successful launch of the NVS-03, which will have a mission life of 12 years, is expected to restore the functioning of the NavIC constellation which has been weakened due to repeated failures of atomic clocks and the ISRO's inability to place its previous replacement satellite, NVS-02, in its intended orbit. It may be recalled that earlier this year on March 13, the last functioning atomic clock aboard IRNSS-1F had stopped working.

Friday night's launch is only the third mission to be launched by the ISRO in 2026 after the PSLV-C62 mission carrying the EOS-N1 earth observation satellite on January 12, 2026 and the EOS-05 aboard the GSLV-F17 on September 4. While the PSLV-C62 mission was a failure, the GSLV-F17 mission was a success.



The GSLV-F18 rocket carrying the NVS-03 lifts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota on Friday night. PTI

India slashed oil imports from U.S. and Russia in Sept.

Government data showed India's oil sourcing remains highly concentrated, with just Russia and the UAE accounting for 60% of oil imports, coinciding with the 'Russia Sanctions Act'

TCA Sharad Raghavan

NEW DELHI

In what looks like a direct response to the 'Russia Sanctions Act' being signed into law that month, India in September 2026 slashed its oil imports from the U.S. to zero, and drastically cut down its imports of Russian oil, the latest official data shows.

Instead, India turned to the UAE for its oil requirement, with that country's share rising to more than one-fourth of India's oil imports. As a result, India's crude oil sourcing remains highly concentrated, with just two countries – Russia and the UAE – accounting for 60% of all oil imports.

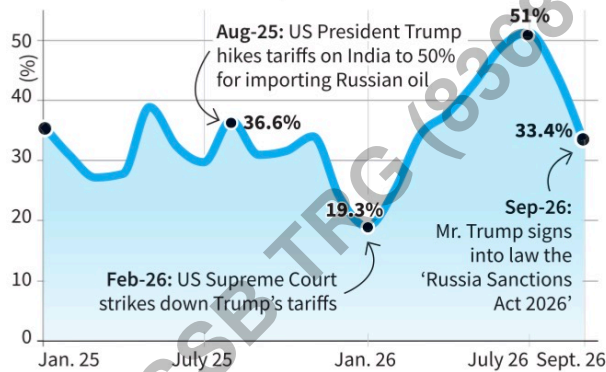
The U.S. House of Representatives on September 16 passed the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026, which was then signed into law by President Donald Trump on September 18.

The law empowered the U.S. to levy tariffs of up to 100% on countries such as India and China that imported large quantities of

Pressure tactics

From a high in July, Russia's share in Indian oil imports has again started falling

Russia's share in India's oil import bill



SOURCE: MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY

Russian oil and gas.

The tariffs are currently in abeyance, with Mr. Trump on October 16 signing an executive order temporarily waiving the tariffs and submitting a certification to the U.S. Congress saying that the pause was in the U.S.'s national interest. The Indian government data on October oil imports will be released next month.

India imported 209.4 lakh tonnes of crude oil in September 2026, which was 9.5% higher than in August, and 4.1% higher

than in September last year. However, as has been the case in the last six months or so, elevated crude oil prices have meant that India's oil import bill has swelled far faster than the growth in the actual quantity of oil being imported.

The data showed that India's oil import bill of nearly \$14.3 billion in September 2026 was 16.4% higher than the bill in August, and a much more significant 33% higher than in September 2025 when oil prices were relatively

more benign. Russia's share in India's oil imports has recently been broadly following the U.S.' actions regarding such imports.

Most recently, Russia's share climbed to an all-time high of around 51% in July 2026, capping off a steady climb since February when the U.S. scrapped its Russian oil-linked penal tariffs on India. This also coincided with the closure of the Strait of Hormuz due to the war in West Asia and the resultant supply constraints from that route.

However, Russia's share has fallen since then – to 44% in August, and further to 33% in September, when the 'Russia Sanctions Act' was signed into law.

In volume terms, while India increased its overall oil imports in September, it cut Russian imports by nearly 18% as compared with August.

A previous analysis by *The Hindu* shows before the penal tariffs were removed in February, India had been slashing oil imports from Russia in line with U.S. pressure.

China expels 33 officials as Xi's 'anti-graft drive' widens

Agence France-Presse

BEIJING

China has eradicated “serious hidden dangers” in its Communist Party and military under President Xi Jinping’s leadership, a senior official said on Friday, a day after authorities confirmed the expulsion of a record 33 figures.

In more than a decade in charge, Mr. Xi has cracked down hard on graft, ensnaring thousands of officials and purging dozens of members of the powerful Central Committee and a string of the top military brass.

As a four-day plenum of the Central Committee wrapped up on Thursday, state media confirmed 33 more dignitaries had been ejected, including former Politburo member Zhang Youxia, once China’s highest-ranking general.



Xi Jinping

The plenum adopted a decision on “advancing full and rigorous governance of the party”, which includes reducing corruption among cadres, state news agency Xinhua said.

Proponents say China’s corruption purge promotes clean governance, but analysts have said the moves were aimed at paving the way for Mr. Xi to extend his rule at a Party Congress due in the second half of 2027.

The Central Committee, “with Comrade Xi Jinping

at its core”, has “eliminated serious hidden dangers within the Party, the state and the military,” Zhang Fuhai, deputy secretary of the Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI), said on Friday.

The party, he told reporters, had been guided by the sense of mission that “we would rather offend thousands than let down 1.4 billion people”.

The CCDI’s Mr. Zhang said on Friday discipline inspection and supervisory organs in the country have punished 7.9 million people since 2012. Efforts to weed out corruption will be “deepened”, he vowed.

The plenum also saw Zhang Shengmin, who has spearheaded the anti-graft drive and serves as Mr. Xi’s number two in the Central Military Commission, promoted to the Politburo, the top decision-making body.

PRESIDENT RESTORES PREVIOUSLY CANCELLED IOWA, KANSAS RALLIES, ADDS 20 VIRTUAL APPEARANCES

Ahead of midterms, Trump steps up legal action against key states

Justice Dept - files election lawsuit, subpoenas officials over 'illegal' voting

Reuters
Washington, October 30

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump stepped up legal efforts that could help his fellow Republicans challenge results in next week's midterm congressional election, and scrambled his schedule for the campaign's final days on Friday, restoring planned rallies he had scrapped a day earlier.

Early voting outpaced 2022 totals for the November 3 contest in which nonpartisan analysts believe Trump's Republicans are likely to lose their current majority in the US House of Representatives, with control of the Senate expected to be hard fought.

The Trump administration pushed forward in legal cases in Alaska, home to a Senate contest that may play a pivotal role in determining the majority, and California, which histori-



President Donald Trump at a campaign rally at the Shoemaker Center in Ohio University Chillicothe on Thursday. **REUTERS**

cally takes more time than most other states in counting ballots.

The Justice Department filed an amended lawsuit in Alaska on Thursday seeking to block the certification of results in the event of a narrow Republican loss, citing a *New York Times* report that Democratic operatives recruited a spoiler candidate with a nearly identical name to the Republican incumbent.

In California, meanwhile, the Justice Department is escalating its pressure campaign against state election officials, issuing

subpoenas as part of a criminal probe into alleged voting by non-citizens, according to copies of documents seen by *Reuters*.

Taken together, the moves are an extraordinary federal intervention in state-run elections, which are administered locally under the US Constitution. Election officials around the country have told *Reuters* they are bracing for further legal challenges from Washington.

The dispute in Alaska, home to one of about 10 highly competitive Senate races, could leave

control of the chamber unclear for weeks. Democrats need a net gain of four seats to win back the majority from Republicans.

If Democrats take one or both chambers of Congress, they could launch investigations into Trump's administration and increase pressure on the president to end the war against Iran.

On Friday, Trump will campaign in Florida, hoping to galvanize his supporters in a state he won handily in 2024 but where early voting has tilted toward Democrats. It will be his latest stop in a state Republicans usually expect to win, following campaign events earlier this week in Mississippi and South Carolina.

Less than 24 hours after cancelling, the president plans to hold weekend rallies in Kansas and Iowa after all, with "nearly 20" virtual campaign appearances before Tuesday, according to a White House official.

Former Vice President Kamala Harris, whom Trump defeated in the 2024 election, will rally for Democrats in Atlanta on Friday. "The last year and a half, it's been difficult," she told the crowd on Thursday at an event in Macon, Georgia.

Pope Leo makes history as first pontiff to vote in US election

Vatican City: Pope Leo XIV has become the first pope to vote in a US general election, casting a mail-in ballot in a contest that will decide America's future as the Trump era slowly comes to an end.

The Vatican confirmed Friday the Chicago-born pontiff had submitted a mail-in ballot in Chicago ahead of the Nov. 3 midterm elections, citing his long-standing belief in civic participation.

Leo, formerly Robert Prevost, "has exercised his right to vote as a United States citizen" and has done so "whenever he was eligible to do so," the Holy See press office said.

The statement said he had also voted while living in Peru whenever he was eligible. Leo lived in Peru as a missionary priest and bishop for over 20 years. "The Holy Father expresses his belief in the right and the duty of citizens to participate in democratic processes," it added. **AP**