

India's Remarkable Strides in Social Protection: A Global Benchmark

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India's journey in expanding its social protection safety net stands as a testament to its commitment to inclusive growth and welfare. From covering just 24.4% of its population in 2019, India has rapidly escalated its social security reach to an impressive 64.3% by 2025. This makes it one of the fastest global expansions in social protection, a monumental achievement now duly recognized and reflected in the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) ILOSTAT database. This expanded coverage now benefits over 940 million people, a result of strategic central schemes and innovative, targeted state-level programs, particularly those focused on women and pensioners.

The ILO's World Social Protection Report (WSPR) 2024-26 provides further insights into India's success. The Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) is highlighted as one of the world's largest in-kind social assistance programs, legally guaranteeing food security for nearly 800 million individuals. This underscores TPDS's central role in India's broader social protection framework, ensuring essential food supplies reach a vast segment of the population.

Beyond mere food distribution, the report also acknowledges the program's proactive efforts to combat micro-nutrient deficiencies through initiatives like the distribution of fortified rice and the integration of millets into the public food system. A notable finding from the WSPR 2024-26 is that young employed women under 30, including those in self-employment, benefit from higher levels of social security coverage compared to their male counterparts in India. Furthermore, India stands out as one of the few nations providing universal, tax-financed maternity benefits, a significant stride in maternity protection.

India's robust social protection system is a culmination of various impactful welfare programs designed to provide financial security, healthcare, and food assistance. These initiatives have been instrumental in enhancing livelihoods and alleviating poverty nationwide. Some of the cornerstone schemes include:

Ayushman Bharat: As of March 26, 2025, the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) has issued nearly 400 million Ayushman Cards, offering free health coverage of up to 0.5 million per family across 24,810 empaneled hospitals.

Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY): This vital scheme, launched during the COVID-19 pandemic, provides free food grains to vulnerable populations. By December 2024, it reached over 806 million beneficiaries, nearing its ambitious target.

eShram Portal: Launched on August 26, 2021, this portal has created a National Database of Unorganised Workers (NDUW), providing a Universal Account Number (UAN) for enhanced social security. By March 3, 2025, over 306 million unorganised workers had registered, with women constituting 53.68% of them.

Atal Pension Yojana (APY): Launched in 2015, APY aims for universal social security, especially for the poor and unorganised sector workers. Alongside PMJJBY and PMSBY, it has significantly strengthened the pension system, with 72.5 million beneficiaries enrolled by December 31, 2024, accumulating a corpus of over 433 billion.

Poverty Reduction: The past decade has seen a remarkable achievement: 248 million people have escaped multi-dimensional poverty, underscoring the profound impact of these comprehensive social security measures.

To further refine its understanding of social security coverage, the Ministry of Labour & Employment launched Phase 01 of India's Social Protection Data Pooling Exercise on March 19, 2025. This ambitious initiative seeks to consolidate data from various schemes, offering a holistic view of India's welfare landscape. The initial phase includes ten key states: Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, and Gujarat.

Building on these efforts, India has already processed over 2 billion records using encrypted Aadhaar as a unique identifier across 34 major central schemes, including Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC), Atal Pension Yojana (APY), and Pradhan Mantri Poshan Shakti Nirman (PM POSHAN).

The Indian government's proactive engagement with the ILO, including recent bilateral discussions in Geneva, aims to ensure these extensive welfare measures are accurately reflected in future global assessments. The ILO has acknowledged housing and food security as part of the broader United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and has agreed to consider such schemes in its evaluations.

With continued strong collaboration between the Centre, State Governments, and the ILO, India is poised to further refine its social protection framework and present an even more accurate picture of its welfare reach to the world. As a nation, India also shares strong bilateral ties with Bahrain, and these achievements will undoubtedly open more avenues for cooperation between our two countries.

(The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Daily Tribune)

Trump says will 'take a look' at deporting Musk

DOGE may train its sights on the Tesla and SpaceX's subsidies

● Musk was Trump's biggest donor in the 2024 election

● They had an acrimonious public falling out this month

● Musk has also renewed his calls for a new political party

AFP | Washington, United States

US President Donald Trump said Tuesday he could consider deporting Elon Musk, after the South African-born billionaire slammed his flagship spending bill.

Trump also said the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) -- which Musk headed before stepping down late May -- may train its sights on the Tesla and SpaceX founder's government subsidies.

"I don't know. We'll have to take a look," Trump told reporters at the White House when asked if he would consider deporting Musk.

"We might have to put DOGE on Elon. You know what DOGE is? DOGE is the monster that might have to go back and eat Elon."

Trump doubled down on the threat when he said he be-



A big puppet depicting US billionaire Elon Musk is seen prior to a protest march

lieved Musk was his so-called "One Big Beautiful Bill" because he was a n - noyed that it had



dropped measures to support electric vehicles (EV).

"He's losing his EV mandate. He's very upset about things, but you know, he could lose a lot more than that, I can tell you right now. Elon can lose a lot more than that."

Trump made similar comments on his Truth Social network late Monday, saying that "without subsidies, Elon would probably have to close up shop and head back home to South Africa."

Musk, the world's richest person, was Trump's biggest donor in the 2024 election and initially maintained a near constant presence at the newly elected president's side.

They had an acrimonious public falling out this month over the bill and the tycoon has reprised his criticisms in recent days, accusing Republicans of abandoning efforts to place the United States at the front of the EV and clean energy revolution.

Musk has also renewed his calls for the formation of a new political party called the "America Party" if the bill passed.

BTS announces comeback for spring 2026

Seoul, South Korea

K-pop supergroup BTS on Tuesday announced their comeback in the spring of 2026 with an album and world tour, prompting a fan frenzy as millions eagerly await their return.

South Korea's most lucrative musical act has been on a self-described hiatus since 2022 as its members undertook the mandatory service required of all South Korean men under 30 due to tensions with the nuclear-armed North.

With five members discharged from military service in June, many in the industry have been anticipating their comeback.

"Starting in July... we're planning to make something massive, so from then (this month), we'll probably gather together and stay focused on making music," band leader RM said on their superfan platform Weverse.

"Our group album is officially set to be released next spring," RM said during a live chat.

Palestinians say Israel army killed two in West Bank, including teen

AFP | Ramallah, Palestinian Territories

The Palestinian health ministry said Israeli fire killed two people in the occupied West Bank yesterday, one of them a 15-year-old boy.

"At dawn today, Tuesday, 15-year-old child Amjad Nassar Abu Awad was martyred by Israeli gunfire in the city of Ramallah," the ministry said in a statement.

The Israeli military told AFP that during an overnight operation in the area, "several terrorists hurled rocks towards (Israeli) soldiers", prompting them to fire "warning shots".

"The incident is under review," it said.

Around 20 people, most of them boys, gathered at a Ramallah hospital to mourn Abu Awad, an AFP journalist reported.

In tears, the boys touched Abu Awad's face in the white light of the hospital morgue.

Elsewhere in the West Bank, the ministry said "24-year-old Samer Bassam Zagharneh was martyred by Israeli gunfire near the town of Dhahiriya" at dawn on Tuesday.

The army told AFP that soldiers operating in the area overnight



Mourners carry the body of 16-year-old Amjad Hoshiyeh, who was reportedly killed during a raid by the Israeli army early this morning in Ramallah

saw a man attempting to cross the border between Israel and the West Bank "in the area of al-Ramadin".

"The soldiers opened fire according to standard operating procedures, and a hit was identified."

Two Palestinian teenagers, aged 13 and 15, were killed last week in the West Bank towns of Al-Yamoun and Kafr Malik respectively.

Israel has occupied the West

Bank since 1967.

Violence in the territory has soared since the Hamas attack of October 2023 triggered the Gaza war.

Since then, Israeli troops or settlers have killed at least 947 Palestinians, including many militants, according to the health ministry.

Over the same period, at least 35 Israelis have been killed in Palestinian attacks or during Israeli military operations, according to Israeli figures.