



Daily News Analysis

The Hindu Important News Articles & Editorial For UPSC CSE

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Page 01 : GS 3 : Indian Economy / Prelims



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India's retail inflation, measured by the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, has dropped to a **historic low of 0.25% in October 2025**, marking the lowest level since the CPI series began in **January 2012**. The government attributes this to a combination of **GST rate cuts, favorable base effects, and a decline in prices of food items** such as vegetables, fruits, oils, and fats.

This development comes at a time when the RBI and policymakers are closely monitoring inflation trends to balance **growth revival** with **price stability**.

Key Highlights

- **Retail Inflation (CPI):** 0.25% (historic low).
- **Food & Beverages Inflation:** Contracted by **-3.7%** in October 2025 (-1.4% in September).
- **Major Drivers of Decline:**
 - Full-month impact of **GST rate cuts**.
 - **Favourable base effect** (comparison with high 9.7% inflation in Oct 2024).
 - Fall in prices of **vegetables, fruits, eggs, oils, cereals, footwear, transport, and communication**.
- **Housing Inflation:** Rose to **3%** (from 2.8% last year).
- **Miscellaneous Category:** Rose to **5.7%**, reflecting higher service costs.

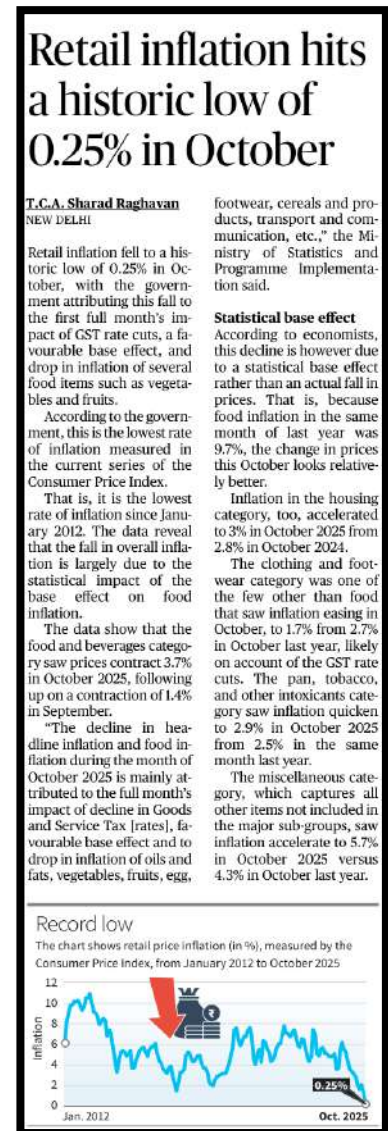
Static Background

What is Retail Inflation?

- Measured using the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, which tracks changes in prices of goods and services consumed by households.
- Released monthly by the **National Statistical Office (NSO)** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**.

Types of Inflation Indices in India:

1. **CPI (Combined)** – measures retail inflation for both rural and urban consumers.
2. **CPI for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW)**.
3. **CPI for Agricultural Labourers (CPI-AL)**.
4. **Wholesale Price Index (WPI)** – measures price changes at the wholesale level.





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Monetary Policy & Inflation Targeting:

- Under the **RBI Act, 1934 (amended 2016)**, the **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** is mandated to keep **CPI inflation at $4\% \pm 2\%$** .
- Persistent inflation below 2% may indicate **demand slowdown** and potential **deflationary pressures**.

Base Effect:

- A **statistical phenomenon** where a high (or low) inflation rate in the previous year affects the current inflation reading.
- A **favourable base effect** means inflation appears lower because last year's prices were already very high.

Economic Implications

Positive:

- **Consumers:** Benefit from cheaper food and essential commodities.
- **RBI Policy Space:** May allow **monetary easing** if low inflation sustains.
- **Fiscal Management:** Reduced subsidy burden on food and fertilizers.

Concerns:

- **Base Effect Distortion:** The low inflation is statistical, not necessarily real.
- **Rural Economy:** Prolonged food price deflation can **hurt farmers' income**.
- **Core Inflation (non-food, non-fuel):** Still above 5%, showing underlying price rigidity.
- **Growth Link:** Ultra-low inflation may reflect **weak demand** and **sluggish consumption**.

Broader Context

- India has witnessed **volatile inflation trends** post-pandemic due to supply disruptions, global conflicts, and commodity price swings.
- The RBI had paused rate hikes in 2024 after cumulative increases to contain food inflation.
- The current record low inflation may be **temporary**, with expectations of **moderate rebound** once the base effect fades.

Conclusion

The record low retail inflation of **0.25%** in October 2025 is a remarkable statistical occurrence but not necessarily a sign of deeper economic stability. While the fall in prices offers short-term relief to consumers, policymakers must



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ensure that **low inflation does not translate into rural distress or stagnating demand**. A balanced approach, combining **price stability** with **growth stimulation**, remains vital for sustaining India's economic momentum.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: With reference to Retail Inflation in India, consider the following statements:

1. It is measured using the Wholesale Price Index (WPI).
2. It includes both goods and services consumed by households.
3. It is released monthly by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Ans: b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: The recent record low retail inflation in India reflects more of a statistical phenomenon than an actual economic improvement. Examine. (150 Words)



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Page 02 : GS 3 : Environment / Prelims

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to identify and map all residents affected by heavy metal contamination—particularly chromium and mercury—in Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur Dehat, Fatehpur, and surrounding areas. This contamination stems from industrial waste dumping, especially by tanneries and factories, leading to groundwater pollution and public health emergencies in these regions.



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High levels of chromium, mercury in residents; NGT directs U.P. govt. to map affected people

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to map the total number of people affected by heavy metal contamination, particularly chromium and mercury, in Kanpur Nagar, Kanpur, Fatehpur, and nearby areas of the State.

The Principal Bench of the NGT, comprising chairperson Prakash Shrivastava and expert member Afroz Ahmad, gave the order in a matter related to factories dumping chromium in Rania, Kanpur Dehat, Rakhi Mandi, Kanpur Nagar, and nearby areas which has resulted in contamination of groundwater, depriving local people access to drinking water.

"The above chart re-



The NGT gave the order in a matter related to factories dumping chromium in some areas, resulting in contamination of groundwater. FILE PHOTO

flects that in high percentage of persons presence of Chromium above standard level has been detected and even persons with Mercury above standard level have been found

(sic)," stated the order dated November 7.

As per the chart mentioned in the order, 95.7% of the 514 people tested in Kanpur Nagar had chromium above the standard level in their blood samples, and the figure stood at 71.9% for Kanpur Dehat (214 people tested) and 85.96% for Fatehpur (171 people tested).

"The State authorities, especially the Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh, and Secretary, Health, Govt. of U.P. are directed to provide a timeline within two weeks in respect of the steps that will be taken by the State authorities to complete the process of mapping the entire area and find out the affected villages/ULBs [urban local bodies]/districts," the order said.

"They will also disclose the approximate number of the affected persons, the medical facilities available at the District/ULB/Village level including the health centers, doctors, paramedical staff available in those health centres, the facilities available in those health centres and the nearby labs and distance from that lab for carrying out the blood and other sample analysis," the order stated.

"The mapping will include food chain contamination, surface water and groundwater contamination, and air contamination analysis. The timeline will also be given for fully implementing the 22 recommendations which have been noted in the order dated 01.07.2025," the order said.

Key Facts

- Affected Regions: Rania (Kanpur Dehat), Rakhi Mandi (Kanpur Nagar), Fatehpur, and adjoining areas.
- Contaminants Identified: Hexavalent Chromium (Cr^{6+}) and Mercury (Hg) — both highly toxic heavy metals.
- Extent of Contamination:
 - Kanpur Nagar: 95.7% of 514 people tested had chromium levels above standards.
 - Kanpur Dehat: 71.9% (out of 214 tested).
 - Fatehpur: 85.9% (out of 171 tested).



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- NGT Bench: Justice Prakash Shrivastava (Chairperson) and Dr. Afroz Ahmad (Expert Member).
- Directions to the State:
 - Complete mapping of all affected areas and individuals.
 - Provide details on health infrastructure (doctors, labs, health centres).
 - Include food chain, surface water, and air contamination analysis.
 - Submit timeline for implementing 22 remedial recommendations (earlier order dated July 1, 2025).

Static Background

About NGT:

- Established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010.
- Objective: Ensure effective and expeditious disposal of cases related to environmental protection and conservation of forests and natural resources.
- Powers:
 - Enforces legal rights related to the environment.
 - Provides relief and compensation for victims of pollution and environmental damage.
 - Guided by principles of natural justice and sustainable development (Precautionary Principle & Polluter Pays Principle).

About Chromium and Mercury:

- Chromium (Hexavalent Cr^{6+}): Used in tanning industries, highly carcinogenic, causes lung cancer, liver and kidney damage, and skin ulcers.
- Mercury (Hg): Used in electronic and chemical industries, bioaccumulates in the food chain, causing neurological and developmental disorders.
- Sources: Tanneries, electroplating, textile dyeing, chemical plants.
- Environmental Impact: Contaminates groundwater and soil, enters food chain, affecting humans, livestock, and crops.

Issues and Implications

(a) Health Impact

- Long-term exposure leads to cancer, liver/kidney failure, neurological disorders, and developmental defects in children.
- Water contamination forces communities to rely on unsafe sources for drinking and irrigation.

(b) Environmental Impact



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- Heavy metals bioaccumulate in crops and aquatic organisms, leading to ecological imbalance.
- Surface and groundwater contamination spreads beyond industrial zones.

(c) Governance and Accountability

- The issue exposes weak enforcement of environmental laws like the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Reflects poor industrial waste management and failure of local pollution control boards.
- Need for strict implementation of Polluter Pays Principle.

Broader Context and Government Response

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) are responsible for monitoring industrial effluents, but coordination gaps persist.
- NGT's emphasis on mapping indicates a shift from ad-hoc pollution control to data-based public health response.
- The direction to include food chain contamination shows recognition of holistic environmental health linkages.

Conclusion

The NGT's order on mapping chromium and mercury contamination in Uttar Pradesh is a critical step toward environmental justice and public health protection. However, real change will depend on rigorous implementation, strict industrial regulation, and community awareness. The incident serves as a stark reminder that unchecked industrialization without environmental safeguards can jeopardize both human health and ecological security.

UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques : The National Green Tribunal (NGT), recently in news for directing mapping of chromium and mercury contamination in Uttar Pradesh, was established under which of the following Acts?

- (A) Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
- (B) National Green Tribunal Act, 2010
- (C) Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
- (D) Biological Diversity Act, 2002

Ans : b)



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UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : What are the major health and environmental impacts of heavy metal contamination in water? Suggest measures to mitigate such pollution. **(150 Words)**

Page : 03 : GS 3 : Indian Economy

Kerala has once again demonstrated its strong human capital base by ranking fourth in employability rate among Indian States in the India Skills Report (ISR) 2026, with an impressive 72.16% employability rate. Only Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka performed better. The report highlights Kerala's gender-inclusive workforce and sectoral skill readiness, especially in BFSI, healthcare, and education sectors.



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At 72.16%, Kerala stands fourth in employability rate

Sarath Babu George

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala has reaffirmed its strong position in the country's employability landscape by emerging fourth among the top-performing States in the India Skills Report 2026. The State recorded an employability rate of 72.16% – only Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka have better rates.

The State also figures among the top-10 preferred States for women professionals, with the report underlining Kerala's gender-inclusive labour ecosystem.

The report has been published by global education and talent solutions

organisation ETS in association with various agencies, including the All India Council for Technical Education, Confederation of Indian Industry, and the Association of Indian Universities.

Job readiness

Nationally, overall employability has risen to 56.35%, up from 54.81% last year, with more than half of India's graduates scoring above 60% in the Global Employability Test (GET) conducted to compile the report. Kerala figures prominently in both State and city-level rankings, reflecting a consistent rise in job readiness and sector-specific skill alignment.

Among the top performing cities, Kochi ranks fourth, ahead of major metros such as Delhi and Hyderabad, with an average employability score of 76.56%. The report identifies Tier-2 cities such as Kochi and Lucknow to be emerging as strong talent hubs, narrowing the urban-rural skill gap.

Women's employability in the country has seen a remarkable rise to 54%, surpassing men (51.5%) for the first time. Kerala, along with Uttar Pradesh and Telangana, leads this shift by reporting strong female participation in banking, financial services and insurance sector (BFSI), health care and education sectors.



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Key Findings

Indicator	Kerala Performance / National Data
Employability Rate	72.16% (4th among States)
National Employability (Overall)	56.35% (up from 54.81% last year)
Top States	U.P., Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala
Top Cities	Kochi ranked 4th nationally (76.56% employability)
Women's Employability	54% (higher than men's 51.5%) – first time ever
Sectors driving Kerala's employability	BFSI, Healthcare, Education
Preferred States for Women Professionals	Kerala among top 10

The India Skills Report 2026 was jointly prepared by ETS (Educational Testing Service), AICTE, CII, and the Association of Indian Universities (AIU). It is based on performance in the Global Employability Test (GET), which evaluates graduates' job readiness and core skills.

Static Background

What is Employability?

- Employability refers to the ability of an individual to gain and maintain employment, based on their skills, knowledge, and adaptability.
- It differs from employment rate — employability measures job readiness, not actual job availability.

About India Skills Report (ISR):

- An annual joint initiative by Wheebox, AICTE, CII, AIU, and UNDP India (and now ETS).
- Aims to map skill trends, employability levels, and industry demand across Indian States.
- Tests over 300,000 students nationwide through the Global Employability Test (GET).



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Government Frameworks on Skill Development:

- National Skill Development Mission (2015) – umbrella framework under MSDE.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) – short-term skill certification.
- Skill India Campaign – targets to train 400 million youth.
- Atmanirbhar Skilled Employee Employer Mapping (ASEEM) platform – bridges demand-supply mismatch in the labour market.

Analysis and Implications

(a) For Kerala

- Reflects robust education ecosystem, particularly in higher education and technical institutions.
- Gender inclusivity and social development indicators contribute to a balanced workforce.
- Emergence of Tier-2 cities like Kochi as new talent hubs reduces metro dependency.

(b) National Perspective

- The overall rise in employability (from 54.81% to 56.35%) indicates improved alignment between education and industry.
- However, a 56% rate also implies that nearly half of India's graduates remain under-skilled or unemployable, highlighting the skill gap challenge.

(c) Women Empowerment

- Women surpassing men in employability marks a turning point in India's labour dynamics.
- Sectors like BFSI, healthcare, and education are enabling safer, inclusive, and flexible opportunities for women professionals.

Challenges

- Skill-Industry Mismatch: Many graduates lack domain-specific and digital skills demanded by employers.



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- Regional Disparities: While Kerala and southern States lead, eastern and northeastern regions lag behind.
- Underemployment: High employability doesn't always translate to high-quality or adequately paid jobs.
- Brain Drain: Skilled youth migrating from States like Kerala to metros or abroad.

Conclusion

Kerala's 72.16% employability rate and growing female participation reaffirm its position as a model State in human resource development. The findings of the India Skills Report 2026 underscore that education quality, inclusivity, and skill alignment with industry demand are key to harnessing India's demographic dividend. However, bridging the urban-rural and skill gap, ensuring meaningful employment, and sustaining women's workforce participation remain crucial next steps toward achieving a truly skilled India.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques : The India Skills Report 2026 highlights both progress and persistent challenges in India's employability landscape. Discuss with reference to Kerala's performance. **(250 Words)**



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Page 06 : GS 3 : Environment

The Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2026, published by Germanwatch — a Bonn-based environmental and development organisation — ranks India as the ninth most affected country globally by extreme weather events between 1995 and 2024.

The report was released during COP30 in Belém, Brazil, highlighting the growing vulnerability of developing nations to climate-induced disasters.

Key Findings

Indicator	Data / Findings
Period Covered	1995–2024
Extreme Events Recorded	Over 9,700
Global Human Toll	8.32 lakh deaths
People Affected	5.7 billion
Economic Losses	Over \$4.5 trillion (inflation-adjusted)
India's Rank	9th most affected country
Top Affected Countries	Haiti, Philippines, India, Pakistan, Mozambique, etc.
Major Disasters in India	Floods, cyclones (Amphan, Fani, Tauktae), droughts, and severe heatwaves



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Indicator	Data / Findings
Report Released at	COP30, Belém (Brazil)
Published By	Germanwatch – advocates global equity and climate justice

Static Background

About the Climate Risk Index (CRI):

- An annual report by Germanwatch assessing the impacts of extreme weather on countries using historical data.
- Based on indicators such as:
 1. Number of deaths due to weather-related events.
 2. Deaths per 100,000 inhabitants.
 3. Economic losses (in USD).
 4. Losses as a percentage of GDP.
- The CRI reflects the real-world exposure and vulnerability to climate extremes.

About Germanwatch:

- Established in 1991, headquartered in Bonn, Germany.
- Focus areas: climate policy, sustainable development, and global equity.



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- Works closely with UNFCCC processes and civil society organizations advocating climate justice.

Analysis: Why India Is Highly Vulnerable

a. Geographical Exposure

- India's vast coastline (7,500 km) and Himalayan ecosystem make it prone to cyclones, floods, glacial melt, and landslides.
- Monsoon irregularities cause recurrent droughts and floods.

b. Socioeconomic Factors

- High population density and dependence on agriculture magnify vulnerability.
- Informal settlements in flood-prone areas and poor disaster resilience worsen impact.

c. Climate Trends

- Increasing frequency and intensity of heatwaves, with 2024–25 among the hottest years recorded.
- Shifting rainfall patterns affecting food security and water availability.
- Rise in urban flooding (Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru) due to unplanned urbanization.

d. Economic Consequences

- Disasters cause recurring infrastructure damage, loss of livelihoods, and health emergencies.
- India loses nearly 2% of its GDP annually due to climate-related disasters (NITI Aayog estimates).

India ninth worst affected by extreme weather: study

Purnima Sah
MUMBAI

A new report, Climate Risk Index (CRI) 2026, published by Germanwatch, released at COP30 in Belém on Tuesday evening, finds that more than 832,000 people died, nearly 5.7 billion were affected, and economic losses exceeded \$4.5 trillion (inflation-adjusted) from over 9,700 extreme weather events between 1995 and 2024.

Germanwatch is a Bonn-based environmental and development organisation that advocates for global equity and sustainability in climate policy.

India ranks ninth among the countries most affected during this period, facing recurring floods, cyclones, droughts, and increasingly severe heatwaves. "Countries such as Haiti, the Philippines, and India - all of which are among the ten most affected - face particular challenges. They are hit by floods, heatwaves, or storms so regularly that entire regions can hardly recover from the impacts until the next event strikes," said Vera Künzel, senior advisor on climate change adaptation and human rights at Germanwatch.

Policy and Institutional Framework

Framework / Initiative	Objective
National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC, 2008)	Eight national missions on solar energy, water, agriculture, etc.
State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs)	State-level adaptation and mitigation plans.



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Framework / Initiative	Objective
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	Institutional response to climate disasters.
Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)	India-led global initiative to enhance resilience in infrastructure.
Panchamrit Targets (COP26)	Net Zero by 2070; 50% renewable capacity by 2030.

Despite these, implementation gaps and inadequate adaptation finance persist at the state and local levels.

Global and Ethical Dimension

- The report underscores climate injustice — developing nations like India, which contribute little to global emissions, suffer disproportionately from climate impacts.
- Highlights the urgent need for Loss and Damage Fund operationalisation (agreed at COP28).
- Strengthens India's argument for climate finance and technology transfer under Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR).

Conclusion

The Climate Risk Index 2026 is a stark reminder that India's developmental gains remain vulnerable to climate shocks. Frequent floods, heatwaves, and cyclones underline the urgency of integrating climate resilience into national planning, urban design, and agricultural strategy. As India pushes for sustainable growth, climate adaptation, early warning systems, and global climate justice mechanisms must form the core of its environmental and economic agenda.

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques India's recurring exposure to extreme weather events reflects the deepening climate risk for developing economies. Discuss in the context of the Climate Risk Index 2026 findings. **(250 Words)**



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Page 06 : GS 2 : Social Justice

According to the World Health Organization's Global TB Report 2025, India has achieved a 21% decline in Tuberculosis (TB) incidence — from 237 per lakh population (2015) to 187 per lakh (2024). This decline is almost double the global average (12%), positioning India as one of the top-performing high-burden countries in TB control.

The progress reflects India's strong commitment under the TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, innovative case-finding mechanisms, and expanded treatment coverage through community-driven and technology-enabled strategies.



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Tuberculosis incidence falling in India by 21% a year: WHO report

Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

India's tuberculosis (TB) incidence, with new cases emerging every year, fell by 21% – from 237 TB cases per lakh population in 2015 to 187 per lakh population in 2024 – almost double the pace of decline observed globally, at 12%, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) Global TB Report, 2025, the Union Health Ministry said in a release issued on Wednesday. This was one of the highest declines in TB incidence globally, outpacing reductions noted among other high-burden countries.

“India's innovative case finding approach, driven by the swift uptake of newer technologies, decentralisation of services, and large-scale community mobilisation, has led to the

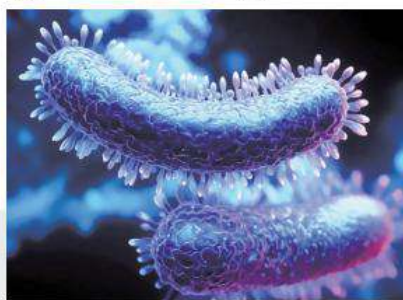
India leads global TB fight

India records one of the world's steepest tuberculosis declines, doubling global progress through innovation and outreach

■ TB incidence fell 21% (2015–2024), from 237 to 187 cases per lakh.

■ Treatment coverage rose from 53% (2015) to 92% (2024)

■ 26.18 lakh diagnosed out of 27 lakh estimated cases



■ The number of missing cases reduced from 15 lakh (2015) to <1 lakh (2024)

■ The treatment success rate in India was about 90%, against the global average of 88%

■ TB mortality declined from 28 deaths per lakh to 21 deaths per lakh (2015–2024)

country's treatment coverage to surge to over 92% in 2024, from 53% in 2015 – with 26.18 lakh TB patients being diagnosed in 2024, out of an estimated incidence of 27 lakh cases,” the release said.

The Ministry said this had helped reduce the number of “missing cases” – those who had TB but were not reported to the programme – from an estimated 15 lakh in 2015 to less than one lakh in 2024.

Also, there is no significant increase in the number of multidrug-resistant (MDR) TB patients in the country, adding that treatment success rate under the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan increases to 90%, ahead of the global treatment success rate of 88%.

India's TB mortality rate has also decreased from 28 per lakh population in 2015 to 21 per lakh population in 2024, reflecting significant progress in reducing deaths due to TB.

Since its launch in December 2024, India's flagship TB elimination mission, the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, has achieved extensive reach, screening over 19 crore vulnerable individuals for TB across the country, leading to the detection of over 24.5 lakh TB patients, including 8.61 lakh asymptomatic TB cases, the report said.

Key Findings

Indicator	2015	2024	Progress
TB Incidence	237 per lakh	187 per lakh	↓ 21%



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Indicator	2015	2024	Progress
Global Average Decline	–	–	↓ 12%
Treatment Coverage	53%	92%	Major improvement
Patients Diagnosed	–	26.18 lakh (out of 27 lakh est.)	97% reporting
Missing Cases	15 lakh	< 1 lakh	Drastic reduction
Treatment Success Rate	–	90%	Global avg: 88%
Mortality Rate	28 per lakh	21 per lakh	↓ 25%
MDR-TB Cases	–	Stable (no major rise)	Controlled spread

Static Integration

What is Tuberculosis (TB)?

- A communicable bacterial disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, primarily affecting the lungs but can spread to other organs.
- Mode of Transmission: Airborne — via droplets from an infected person.
- Symptoms: Cough >2 weeks, fever, weight loss, night sweats.

Global and National Frameworks

Framework	Year	Objective
WHO End TB Strategy (2015–2035)	2015	Reduce TB incidence by 90% and deaths by 95% by 2035 (base: 2015).
National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination (India)	2017–2025	Eliminate TB in India by 2025, five years ahead of the global SDG target (2030).
SDG Target 3.3	–	End epidemics of AIDS, TB, malaria, and other communicable diseases by 2030.

Government Initiatives and Innovations

(a) TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (2024–)

- India's flagship mission for elimination of TB by 2025.
- Screening: Over 19 crore people screened, 24.5 lakh patients detected (including 8.61 lakh asymptomatic).
- Focus on community engagement, digital tools, and private sector integration.



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(b) Key Components

- Ni-kshay Portal: For real-time case tracking, treatment adherence, and data management.
- Ni-kshay Mitra Initiative: Enables citizens and organizations to “adopt” TB patients for nutritional and emotional support.
- Decentralisation of Services: Diagnosis and treatment facilities at district/block level.
- Newer Diagnostics: Rapid molecular tests (CBNAAT, TrueNat), digital X-rays, AI-based reading tools.
- Nutrition Support: ₹1,000/month via Ni-kshay Poshan Yojana for TB patients.

Significance of India's Achievement

- Global Leadership: Among the few high-burden countries showing sustained double-digit decline.
- Health System Strengthening: Demonstrates effective integration of technology, community participation, and political commitment.
- Reduced “Missing Cases”: Indicates better reporting and surveillance.
- Economic Impact: TB elimination supports higher productivity; TB costs India an estimated \$340 billion (2019–2030) if unchecked.

Challenges Ahead

- Drug-Resistant TB (MDR/XDR): Although stable, remains a serious public health threat.
- Urban Slums & Migrants: Hard-to-reach populations still face diagnosis and adherence issues.
- Stigma & Awareness: Social taboos hinder timely testing and treatment.
- Post-TB Recovery: Many cured patients continue to face long-term respiratory complications.
- Funding & Sustainability: Continued investment needed beyond 2025 for complete eradication.

Conclusion

India's remarkable 21% annual decline in TB incidence, as reported by the WHO, underscores the nation's strong political commitment and innovative public health strategies. While this progress puts India on track to eliminate TB ahead of global targets, challenges like drug resistance, socio-economic disparities, and health system capacity must still be addressed. Sustained funding, technology integration, and community participation remain vital to achieving a TB-free India by 2025 — a model for the world in disease elimination.



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UPSC Prelims Practice Question

Ques: With reference to the World Health Organization (WHO) Global TB Report 2025, consider the following statements:

1. India's TB incidence declined by 21% between 2015 and 2024.
2. India's rate of decline in TB incidence is slower than the global average.
3. India's treatment success rate under the TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan is higher than the global average.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (A) 1 only
- (B) 1 and 3 only
- (C) 2 and 3 only
- (D) 1, 2, and 3

Ans : b)

UPSC Mains Practice Question

Ques: India's success in reducing TB incidence highlights the importance of technology-driven public health interventions. Discuss. **(250 Words)**



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Inter-State rivalry that is fuelling India's growth

Last month, when Google unveiled its plans for its largest Artificial Intelligence (AI) data centre outside of California, U.S., in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu gleefully claimed bragging rights – a global tech titan choosing his State for a marquee investment over regional rivals such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The jubilation in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, could be heard across State borders. In Tamil Nadu, a former All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam Minister chided the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam-led Stalin government for failing to woo Google, although it is headed by a true-blue Tamil. Across another border, a Karnataka Minister suggested, with barely concealed envy, that Andhra Pradesh had lured Google with “extravagant subsidies”.

Strip away the politics, though, and what you see is something profoundly healthy – competition among States for investment – a potentially powerful engine for growth. For the first time in decades, Chief Ministers are not queuing in Delhi's corridors of power, but are in boardrooms of multinationals and corporate conclaves, persuading investors that India's best destination is their State.

Central patronage to competitive federalism

To appreciate this shift, cast your mind back to pre-1991 India. For four decades after Independence, capital investment was largely a political decision made in New Delhi. The “commanding heights” of the economy were occupied by bureaucrats who dispensed patronage through licences, permits and quotas. The country's industrial geography was determined by political calculation rather than market forces. The Centre decided what should be produced, how much should be produced, and, crucially, where it should be produced.

States, on their part, vied for investment not by wooing potential investors but by wooing politicians in Delhi.

The reforms in 1991 changed that. By dismantling industrial licensing and opening India to trade and investment, liberalisation shifted power – at least partly – from the Centre to the States. One of the unstated hopes then was that economic freedom would unleash competition among States to attract investors through better infrastructure, governance and policy stability.

That transformation took time. For much of the next two decades, investment decisions remained Delhi-centric. Public enterprises continued to dominate and State bureaucracies were slow to adapt to a more entrepreneurial era. The promise of reforms is now being realised.



Duvvuri Subbarao
is a former Governor,
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(2008-2013)

The rise of competitive federalism has been one of the quiet revolutions of the past decade. States today compete not just with land, concessional utilities and tax breaks, but with reliability – predictable policy, faster clearances, skilled labour and good governance.

Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka vying for global tech mandates – from Google to Micron – is evidence of a maturing federal economy. When Foxconn debated where to locate its electronics facilities, States from Maharashtra to Tamil Nadu made pitches at the highest level. When Vedanta and Foxconn announced their semiconductor joint venture, both Maharashtra and Gujarat lobbied intensely, with Gujarat eventually breasting the tape. The tussle between Tamil Nadu and Telangana over electric vehicle (EV) manufacturing hubs underscored how investment courting has become a professional, high-stakes exercise.

Experience in other federations

India is not unique in this. Healthy subnational competition is a defining feature of all successful federations.

In the United States, when Amazon announced plans for a second headquarters, over 200 cities submitted proposals offering tax breaks, infrastructure support and workforce commitments. Although critics called it a subsidy race, it forced cities to improve governance and transparency. Many of the proposals later formed blueprints for urban renewal projects even where Amazon did not invest.

In Germany, the federal Länder (States) compete to attract high-tech industries. Bavaria's transformation into an innovation hub – home to BMW, Siemens and a cluster of “Mittelstand” firms – owes much to policy agility that other German States have since emulated.

Australia and Canada show similar patterns. Australian States compete to attract mining, clean energy and education investments, while Canadian provinces such as Ontario and British Columbia vie for technology and film production hubs. The result in all these cases is a virtuous cycle: competition that spurs innovation, efficiency and reform.

India's own States are now entering that league. The best-performing ones are magnets for both capital and ideas, setting governance benchmarks that others must meet or exceed.

The Centre, to its credit, has encouraged this shift. Rankings on ease of doing business, startup promotion and export readiness have intensified competition in constructive ways. Investors, once daunted by India's bureaucracy, now see its regional diversity as a positive – multiple entry

points, each with distinct strengths. Andhra Pradesh's ease of doing business, Punjab's entrepreneurial verve, Tamil Nadu's skilled workforce, Gujarat's infrastructure, Jharkhand's mineral base and Uttar Pradesh's vast untapped potential – each is part of a mosaic that together makes India a federation of opportunity.

Competition, of course, carries risks. It should not degenerate into a race to the bottom. States must guard against reckless subsidies or indiscriminate land giveaways that undermine fiscal stability. The smarter path lies in competing through competence and credibility, not concessions.

Healthy rivalry also fosters imitation of best practices. When one State reforms single-window clearances, others follow. When one launches an EV policy, others sharpen theirs. A Haryana success provokes a Himachal response; a Madhya Pradesh reform triggers a Chhattisgarh recalibration; an Odisha initiative spurs West Bengal to better it. This dynamic, cross-State learning is driving policy diffusion across India – a hallmark of vibrant federalism. The global manufacturing and services landscape is now in churn. As multinationals diversify away from China, they seek scale, predictability and credible governance. The “+1” in the China+1 formula must be earned – State by State. No investor lands in “India” in the abstract; they land in Bengaluru, Bhopal or Bhubaneswar. In that sense, India competes globally through its States.

The new federal compact

In just three decades, India has moved from a permission-based economy to a persuasion-based one. States no longer queue for Delhi's patronage; they campaign with CEOs and investors, pitching their case with confidence and data.

This is a transformation of mindset as much as of policy. The Andhra Pradesh-Tamil Nadu-Karnataka exchanges over Google's data centre may sound like parochial bickering, but they actually signify a maturing federal compact. States now view every investment not as central patronage but as a conquest earned through effort.

Every time Andhra Pradesh secures a tech data centre, or Gujarat wins a semiconductor plant, or Uttar Pradesh's electronics parks around Noida light up with new investment, or West Bengal breathes life into its ports and power grids to attract industry, the benefits ripple far beyond State borders. Each success strengthens supply chains, builds skills, and deepens India's industrial fabric. The bottom line: In the race for investment, every State that wins for itself, also wins for India.

States are no longer queuing for Delhi's patronage but are campaigning with investors and pitching their case with confidence and data

GS. Paper 2 Indian Polity and Economy

UPSC Mains Practice Question: Competitive federalism has emerged as a key driver of India's economic transformation. Discuss with reference to recent trends in inter-State investment rivalry. (150 Words)



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Context :

India's federal structure is undergoing a quiet transformation. The recent announcement of Google's plan to set up its largest AI data centre in Andhra Pradesh triggered not only political reactions but also a wave of competitive enthusiasm among neighbouring States such as Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

- What may appear as political one-upmanship is, in reality, a sign of vibrant "competitive federalism" — where States actively compete to attract investments, improve governance, and build infrastructure to boost growth.
- This marks a significant departure from India's earlier "license-permit raj" era, where investment decisions were centrally controlled. Today, States have become active agents of growth, shaping India's overall economic trajectory.

Background: Evolution from Centralized Planning to Competitive Federalism

Pre-1991 Scenario:

- India followed a centrally planned economy where industrial licenses, quotas, and investment approvals were decided in New Delhi.
- States depended on central patronage to secure industries and public sector projects.
- This led to political lobbying rather than competition based on governance or efficiency.

Post-1991 Liberalisation:

- Economic reforms dismantled industrial licensing and opened the economy to private and foreign investment.
- Power to attract capital shifted from the Centre to the States.
- States now had to compete on infrastructure quality, policy stability, governance, and skilled labour.

This evolution from "permission-based" to "persuasion-based" economy marked the rise of competitive federalism in India.

What is Competitive Federalism?

- Definition:
Competitive federalism refers to a system where different levels of government (mainly States) compete with each other to attract investment, talent, and resources, thereby fostering innovation and efficiency in governance.



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- It complements cooperative federalism, where the Centre and States collaborate for national objectives.

Key Features:

- Decentralisation of decision-making.
- Market-based competition among States.
- Focus on policy innovation, efficiency, and investor confidence.

Example:

- Business Reforms Action Plan (BRAP) and Ease of Doing Business rankings by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) rank States annually based on business reforms.
- Aspirational Districts Programme (NITI Aayog) — competitive improvement among backward districts.

Current Context: Inter-State Competition as a Growth Driver

- Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka are currently vying to attract AI, semiconductor, and EV investments.
- Google's AI data centre in Andhra Pradesh, Foxconn's electronic hubs, and Vedanta-Foxconn's semiconductor joint venture between Maharashtra and Gujarat show how competition for high-value investments has intensified.
- Such rivalry has turned Chief Ministers into "policy entrepreneurs", pitching their States globally to multinational corporations.

Economic and Governance Significance

(a) Boost to Federal Dynamism

- Encourages States to improve governance, infrastructure, digitalisation, and policy consistency.
- Reduces over-dependence on the Central government for growth initiatives.

(b) Enhances Investment Climate

- Investors now evaluate State-level business ecosystems — e.g., Tamil Nadu's skilled workforce, Gujarat's infrastructure, Andhra Pradesh's administrative efficiency.
- This has diversified India's investment map beyond traditional metro hubs.

(c) Promotes Policy Innovation

- States replicate successful policies — e.g., single-window clearance systems, startup policies, EV manufacturing hubs.
- Encourages learning through imitation — a positive spillover of rivalry.

(d) Strengthens National Growth



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- Each State's success contributes to India's macroeconomic expansion.
- As Dr. Subbarao notes: "Every State that wins for itself, also wins for India."

International Comparison

Country	Example of Subnational Competition	Outcome
USA	Over 200 cities bid to host Amazon's HQ2 project.	Boosted urban planning and local reforms.
Germany	Länder compete for high-tech industries like BMW, Siemens.	Bavaria emerged as innovation hub.
Australia	States compete for mining and clean energy projects.	Drives sectoral diversification.
Canada	Ontario & British Columbia attract tech and film investments.	Encourages service-sector excellence.

These examples show how decentralized competition within federations can drive productivity and innovation.

Risks and Challenges

(a) Race to the Bottom:

- Unchecked rivalry can lead to fiscal imprudence, as States offer excessive subsidies or land concessions to lure investors.
- This can erode State finances and create regional disparities.

(b) Uneven Development:

- Developed States with better infrastructure (like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra) may continue to attract more investment, leaving poorer States behind.

(c) Coordination Gaps:

- Excessive competition may weaken cooperative federalism, making it harder to achieve national goals (e.g., uniform tax policies, environmental standards).

Role of the Centre and NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog's role has evolved to promote "Team India" approach—fostering healthy competition through indices and rankings:
 - Innovation Index
 - Export Preparedness Index



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- Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index

- These rankings not only encourage States to perform better but also promote evidence-based governance.

The Centre's approach thus balances competition with cooperation — ensuring that rivalry leads to reform, not regression.

Way Forward

- Compete through Competence, not Concessions: Focus on infrastructure, governance, and workforce, not on tax breaks.
- Promote Cooperative Competition: Collaboration on regional clusters (e.g., South Indian tech corridor, Eastern industrial belt).
- Strengthen Fiscal Responsibility: Maintain transparency in subsidies and incentives.
- Share Best Practices: Inter-State forums and NITI Aayog platforms should help States learn from one another.

Conclusion

- India's journey from a centralised, license-controlled economy to a federation of competing States marks a landmark shift in its developmental narrative. The "Inter-State rivalry" observed today—whether over Google's AI centre or Foxconn's semiconductor plant—is not a sign of division, but a testament to India's maturing federalism.
- As Duvvuri Subbarao aptly notes, this rivalry represents "a transformation of mindset as much as of policy"—where success is earned through reform, innovation, and governance excellence.
- In this race, every State that wins investment and innovation adds strength to the national economy, proving that competitive federalism is the new engine of India's growth story.