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Topics Covered

- Retail inflation hits a historic low of 0.25% in October
- UMEED portal
- Inter-State rivalry that is fuelling India's growth
- Tuberculosis incidence falling in India by 21% a year: WHO report

Retail inflation

Retail inflation hits a historic low of 0.25% in October

T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation fell to a historic low of 0.25% in October, with the government attributing this fall to the first full month's impact of GST rate cuts, a favourable base effect, and drop in inflation of several food items such as vegetables and fruits.

According to the government, this is the lowest rate of inflation measured in the current series of the Consumer Price Index.

That is, it is the lowest rate of inflation since January 2012. The data reveal that the fall in overall inflation is largely due to the statistical impact of the base effect on food inflation.

footwear, cereals and products, transport and communication, etc.," the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said.

Statistical base effect

According to economists, this decline is however due to a statistical base effect rather than an actual fall in prices. That is, because food inflation in the same month of last year was 9.7%, the change in prices this October looks relatively better.

Inflation in the housing category, too, accelerated to 3% in October 2025 from 2.8% in October 2024.

The clothing and footwear category was one of the few other than food that saw inflation easing in

The data show that the food and beverages category saw prices contract 3.7% in October 2025, following up on a contraction of 1.4% in September.

"The decline in headline inflation and food inflation during the month of October 2025 is mainly attributed to the full month's impact of decline in Goods and Service Tax [rates], favourable base effect and to drop in inflation of oils and fats, vegetables, fruits, egg,

October, to 1.7% from 2.7% in October last year, likely on account of the GST rate cuts. The pan, tobacco and other intoxicants category saw inflation quicker to 2.9% in October 2025 from 2.5% in the same month last year.

The miscellaneous category, which captures all other items not included in the major sub-groups, saw inflation accelerate to 5.7% in October 2025 versus 4.3% in October last year.

Record low

The chart shows retail price inflation (in %), measured by the Consumer Price Index, from January 2012 to October 2025



Retail inflation dropped sharply to **0.25% in October 2025**, the lowest since 2012. The government says this fall is due to **GST rate cuts, a favourable base effect, and lower food prices** (especially vegetables, fruits, oils, and cereals).

However, economists say the drop is mostly because of the **base effect** — last year, food inflation was very high (9.7%), making this year's prices look lower in comparison.

- **Food & beverages:** prices fell by 3.7%.
- **Housing inflation:** slightly up to 3%.
- **Clothing & footwear:** down to 1.7% (helped by GST cuts).
- **Miscellaneous items:** inflation rose to 5.7%.

In short: **Inflation seems low mainly due to last year's high prices, not a real price drop.**

Retail inflation means the **rise in the prices of goods and services that households buy for daily use** — like food, clothes, housing, fuel, etc. It shows how much more expensive things have become for the average consumer.

It is measured in India using the **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**, which tracks the changes in prices of a fixed basket of essential items.

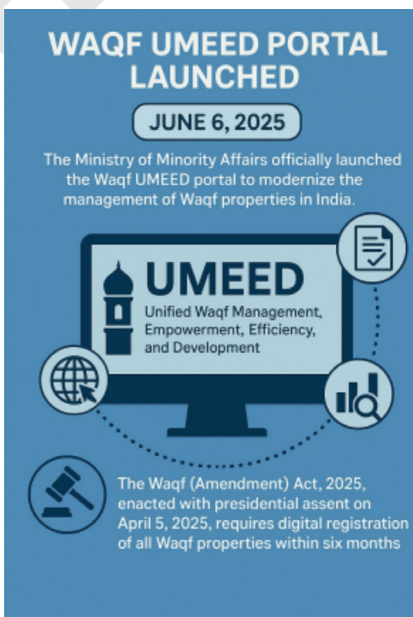
UMEED portal

UMEED Portal stands for “**Unified Management, Evaluation and Empowerment of Waqf Data.**”

It is a **centralised online platform** launched by the **Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India** to ensure better **digitisation, management, and monitoring of waqf properties** across the country.

Key Features:

- **Digitisation of Waqf records:** Helps create a digital database of all Waqf properties in India.
- **Transparency:** Aims to prevent misuse or encroachment of Waqf lands.
- **Monitoring:** Allows the Central Waqf Council and State Waqf Boards to track property use, income, and development.
- **Maker system:** Each property's details are uploaded by trained personnel called makers (often mutawallis).



Inter-State rivalry that is fuelling India's growth

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,
 Reserve Bank of India
 (2008-2013)

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

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.

Google has decided to set up its biggest **AI data centre outside the U.S. in Andhra Pradesh**, which created excitement and political reactions in nearby States like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. But beyond politics, this shows a **positive trend — healthy competition among Indian States** to attract investments.

Earlier, before 1991, the **Central government controlled most investments**, and States had to depend on Delhi's approval. After the **1991 economic reforms**, States got more freedom to attract industries. Now, they compete by offering **better infrastructure, skilled workers, stable policies, and ease of doing business** instead of just waiting for central help.

This trend, called “**competitive federalism**,” is similar to what happens in countries like the U.S., Germany, and Australia, where local governments compete to bring in jobs and industries.

However, experts warn that competition should not turn into a “race to the bottom” by giving **too many subsidies or free land**. Instead, States should focus on **good governance, reliability, and innovation**.

Overall, this new competition is **making Indian States stronger and helping the country grow**, as every State's success adds to India's economic progress.

Tuberculosis falling in India

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.

According to the WHO Global TB Report 2025, India has made major progress in fighting tuberculosis (TB).

- TB incidence (new cases each year) fell by 21% — from 237 cases per lakh people in 2015 to 187 per lakh in 2024 — which is almost double the global rate of decline (12%).
- Treatment coverage improved sharply — from 53% in 2015 to 92% in 2024, thanks to new technologies, decentralised services, and community participation.
- "Missing cases" (people with TB not reported or treated) dropped from 15 lakh in 2015 to less than 1 lakh in 2024.

- **Treatment success rate** under the **TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan** reached **90%**, higher than the global average of **88%**.
- **TB deaths (mortality rate)** also declined — from **28 per lakh in 2015** to **21 per lakh in 2024**.
- Since its launch in **December 2024**, the **TB Mukht Bharat Abhiyan** has screened **over 19 crore people** and detected **24.5 lakh TB patients**, including many **asymptomatic cases**.

Overall: India is showing one of the **fastest declines in TB cases in the world**, with **stronger detection**, better treatment, and fewer deaths