



THE COMPENDIUM

BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS NEWSLETTER

INDEX

01

International Relations

- A. India's Foreign Policy- Championing the Global South
- B. Russia and India's Special and Privileged Relationship
- C. Donald Trump's Tariff Play

02

Economy

- A. Union Budget 2025
- B. Revival of Public Sector By Indian Government

03

Entrepreneurship

- A. Walmart's Next Big Move: Supply Chain Revolution
- B. Bharat Startup Grand Challenge
- C. India's Tech IPO Boom: Bright Entrepreneurial Future

04

Market Situations

- A. Withdrawal by Foreign Investors
- B. Losses in FPI Investments

05

Special Happenings

- A. Maha Kumbh Mela 2025
- B. Facts about Maha Kumbh

06

Finance

- A. Odisha topped Fiscal Health Index by NITI Aayog
- B. India dropped Privatization

07

Media & IT

- A. Swiggy's New Lunch: Snacc
- B. Intel's New Launch Amid Leadership Shakeup

08

Consulting Firms

- A. Accenture partners with NVIDIA
- B. Keystone Partners acquires CCI Consulting



INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY: CHAMPIONING THE GLOBAL SOUTH

India's foreign policy, articulated by External Affairs **Minister S. Jaishankar**, focuses on deepening **multilateralism** while adapting to a changing global order. India has developed issue-based partnerships with groups like the Quad, BRICS, and the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**, allowing it to balance multiple alliances based on national priorities.



Central to India's approach is its solidarity with the Global South, championing sovereignty and independence.

India's relationship with the United States has evolved into a strong strategic partnership, covering security, trade, technology, and science.

Despite occasional policy shifts in the US, the foundation of this relationship remains solid.



On the other hand, India's engagement with China is complicated by historical disputes and ongoing border tensions, requiring a focus on mutual respect and long-term stability in Asia.

In the **Indo-Pacific**, India has strengthened ties with **Japan, Australia, ASEAN countries**, and the **Quad**, fostering collaboration in areas like climate action, maritime security, and digital connectivity.

India continues its longstanding relationship with Russia, which is built on shared strategic interests.

Regionally, India has played a key role in assisting neighbors, such as providing **financial aid to Sri Lanka in 2023**, while navigating **complex relationships with Myanmar and Afghanistan**.

India also advocates for **multilateral reforms**, particularly within the United Nations, to ensure greater representation for the Global South.

Additionally, India leads initiatives like the **International Solar Alliance** and the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure**, reflecting its growing responsibility in tackling global challenges such as climate change, food security, and humanitarian crises.



A STRATEGIC SYNERGY: RUSSIA AND INDIA'S 'SPECIAL AND PRIVILEGED' RELATIONSHIP

On January 26, President Vladimir Putin expressed his warm congratulations to Indian President Droupadi Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on India's 76th Republic Day.

He emphasized that Russian-Indian relations are grounded in a "**special and privileged strategic partnership**" and expressed confidence that both countries will continue strengthening their **bilateral cooperation** across various sectors. Putin highlighted that this collaboration supports both nations' interests and contributes to the development of a fair multipolar international order.



He also reflected on India's remarkable achievements since adopting its Constitution 75 years ago, **praising** the country's progress in **socioeconomic, scientific, and technical fields**, and its **growing influence on the global stage**.

Putin affirmed Russia's commitment to further productive cooperation with India.

Additionally, **Putin confirmed plans to visit India later this year as part of the regular framework for reciprocal annual engagements between the leaders of both nations**. The visit's exact dates will be finalized in early 2025. The two leaders maintain regular communication, including frequent phone calls and **in-person meetings at international events**, such as the **22nd Russia-India summit in July 2024** and the **BRICS summit in October**.



DONALD TRUMP'S TARIFF PLAY: WHAT INDIA STANDS TO GAIN OR LOSE IN THE NEW TRADE WAR

India's trade surplus with the U.S., which reached **\$120 billion in FY24**, has made it a target for retaliatory measures under Donald Trump's second presidency. Trump has warned that BRICS nations, including India, could face **100% tariffs** if they continue **de-dollarizing**.

The **U.S.** remains India's **largest trading partner**, with goods such as **textiles and pharmaceuticals** driving the relationship. However, any tariff increase could impact key sectors like IT and automobiles. Trump's proposed **"external revenue service"** could impose stringent tariff enforcement, potentially reshaping trade dynamics.



Indian IT services could be affected if U.S. visa rules tighten under Trump's **"America First"** policy, while high tariffs on **automobiles and pharmaceuticals** could block Indian goods from key markets. India has previously retaliated with **counter-tariffs**, such as on **U.S. steel**, and may respond similarly if new duties are imposed. An analysis of trade data shows India's tariff gap with the U.S. remains one of the largest among key trading nations.

While **China** faces a **478-point gap**, **India's is 25 points**, underscoring the disparity in treatment. Yet India's higher domestic tariffs on U.S. goods, such as a **30% duty on tobacco**, contrast sharply with the **60% tariff imposed by the U.S. on Indian exports**. (source: World Bank)

Trump's tariff policies could significantly disrupt global trade flows. While this poses risks, such as reduced demand for exports, it also offers **India** a chance to become a **key player in reconfigured supply chains**.



WHAT'S IN STORE FOR THE UNION BUDGET 2025 - KEY EXPECTATIONS TO LOOK OUT FOR

As the nation gears up for the **Union Budget 2025** which is set to be presented in the Lok Sabha on **1st February 2025** by the Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, there are certain key expectations that the experts predict and some focus areas that the government could target.

The Indian economy has shown resilience in recent years, despite challenges like the pandemic's still showing effects, global supply chain disruptions, and constant inflationary pressures. With a projected growth rate of **6.5% for FY 2025-26** (as per the IMF), the government faces the dual task of maintaining growth momentum while ensuring fiscal prudence. The Fiscal Deficit remains a focal point, with the government aiming to meet its target of **4.5% of GDP by FY26**.



Major changes that are expected to be showcased through the budget are:-

1. TAX REFORMS TO EASE COMPLIANCE-
2. AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND MIDDLE-CLASS RELIEF-
3. OVERHAUL OF CAPITAL GAINS TAX
4. INCREASED STANDARD DEDUCTION FOR SALARIED INDIVIDUALS
5. FOCUS ON JOB CREATION
6. CLARITY ON CRYPTOCURRENCY TAXATION

The Union Budget 2025 holds the potential to reshape India's economic trajectory by prioritising both **short-term recovery** and **long-term structural reforms**. With expected key focus areas around infrastructure, welfare, and job creation, this budget could set the stage for India's next phase of economic transformation.



REFORM OVER SALE - GOVERNMENT'S NEW APPROACH TO THE REVIVAL OF PUBLIC SECTOR

As a major shift in policy, the Indian government in January 2025 has announced to change its approach to the privatisation of state owned enterprises with focus revitalising and restructuring key public sector firms rather than pursuing widespread disinvestment, signaling a significant change in India's economic reform agenda.

Over the past years, India was gradually moving towards privatisation with an aim to reduce government control in non-strategic sectors, however due to large set of challenges faced during the same, the government has decided to pivot to a more sustained approach as a part of a larger effort to address financial challenges faced by key public enterprises while retaining control in critical sectors.



This is demonstrated by the governments shift to prefer revitalisation over privatisation as they have put in “abeyance” the privatisation of over 9 state owned units including Madras Fertilizers, Fertilizer Corp of India, MMTC etc.

The government has also announced a **\$1.5 billion package for struggling public enterprises** to be revived such as Pawanhans along with a separate **\$1.3 billion package to revive the debt-laden Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL).**

This marks a new privatisation strategy for 2025 making it a pivotal moment in the evolution of the economy. The government's focus on revamping public sector firms, instead of divesting them, presents an opportunity for long-term growth and stability. By strategically managing state assets, the aim is to foster sustainable growth while strengthening the role of public sector enterprises in driving national development with integration of more green energy, digital transformation, and global trade.



WALMART'S NEXT BIG MOVE: INDIA'S STARTUPS REVOLUTIONIZING THE SUPPLY CHAIN GAME

Walmart recently announced that it will conduct pilot programs in collaboration with three India-based startups, aiming to enhance its U.S. supply chain and sourcing operations. The three startups—KBCols Sciences, GreenPod Labs, and Cropin—were selected after participating in Walmart's Growth Summit last year, an event designed to connect innovators with Walmart's global supply chain network. The pilots will test innovative solutions that focus on improving product availability, reducing waste, and creating more sustainable manufacturing practices.



- **KBCols Sciences** (Pune) manufactures natural dyes from agricultural waste, offering a more sustainable alternative to synthetic dyes used in textile production. The pilot will test these dyes on materials like woven fabric and cotton.
- **GreenPod Labs** (Chennai) produces plant extract sachets that slow the ripening of fruits and vegetables, extending their freshness during shipping. This could improve sourcing and reduce waste, with Walmart piloting the technology with UC Davis.
- **Cropin** (Bengaluru) offers an AI-driven AgTech platform to optimize crop yield and resource use. The pilot will test this technology on produce supply chains, aiming to improve yield estimation, crop health, and reduce waste.



These initiatives are part of Walmart's broader strategy to drive innovation and sustainability within its supply chain. The company views technological advancements as crucial to creating a more resilient and efficient global supply network. Walmart's collaboration with these startups is an example of its commitment to embracing new ideas and technologies from around the world. As part of its Sparkubate program, Walmart is helping to scale these startups' solutions, addressing some of the most pressing challenges in retail today.

THE BHARAT STARTUP GRAND CHALLENGE KICKS OFF A NEW ERA OF INNOVATION

On **National Startup Day 2025**, Union Minister **Piyush Goyal** launched the Bharat Startup Grand Challenge, in collaboration with 20 large corporations, aimed at encouraging innovation in sectors like renewable energy, agritech, healthcare, robotics, blockchain, and semiconductors. The government plans to launch **75 such challenges by the 2026** Startup India anniversary, offering startups cash prizes, funding, mentoring, and capacity-building opportunities.



In his keynote address, Goyal highlighted the government's commitment to supporting startups through policy and infrastructure, fostering India's emergence as a global leader in innovation. Over the last decade, the number of startups in India has skyrocketed from **400 in 2016 to over 157,000 in 2024**, creating **17.28 lakh jobs**, with 51% of DPIIT-registered startups in tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

The event also marked the launch of the **Startup Mahakumbh** scheduled for **April 2025**, with Sanjeev Bikhchandani emphasizing the growing mainstream appeal of entrepreneurship. Government schemes like the Fund of Funds and the Startup India Seed Fund are boosting progress, with a focus on fostering deep-tech innovation.

India now boasts over 110 unicorns, making it the world's third-largest startup ecosystem. The government's efforts ensure India remains a key player in global innovation and growth.

RISING STARS: INDIA'S TECH IPO BOOM SIGNALS A THRIVING ENTREPRENEURIAL FUTURE

India's startup ecosystem has evolved into a global powerhouse, achieving significant milestones and reshaping entrepreneurship, as highlighted in the India Tech Unicorn & Exits **Report 2024 by Orios Venture Partners**. This transformation is evident through successful IPOs, a growing number of unicorns, and Indian startups' expanding global ambitions.

A Decade of Empowerment

Entrepreneurship in India has evolved significantly over the past 15 years. Once limited to business families, the rise of venture capital has made it accessible to all. This shift has created 127 unicorns, valued at \$385 billion in 2024. Key milestones like Swiggy's \$600 million IPO and Zomato's Sensex inclusion have bolstered investor confidence and marked the ecosystem's maturity.

Sectoral Dominance: E-commerce and Fintech Lead

E-commerce, particularly quick commerce, and fintech dominate India's startup landscape. Bengaluru remains the startup hub, driving growth and contributing six out of seven new unicorns in 2024.



The Profitability Shift

Profitability is becoming a key focus for startups. Of the 127 unicorns, 29 are profitable, with others nearing break-even. Companies like Zepto are balancing market capture with a path to profitability, moving away from past strategies of reckless customer acquisition.

Women Entrepreneurs: A Growing Force

Women leaders are making their mark, with 19 unicorns led by women. This growing diversity is especially strong in sectors like education and women's apparel, with companies like Mobikwik showcasing the increasing inclusivity of India's startup ecosystem.

Conclusion: A Cultural Shift

India's startup ecosystem has become a global force, reflecting not just business growth but a cultural shift in how entrepreneurship is nurtured. With increased innovation, maturity, and global reach, the positive momentum will continue to drive future growth.



FOREIGN INVESTORS WITHDRAW ₹64,156 CRORE FROM INDIAN EQUITIES IN JANUARY 2025, INVESTOR SENTIMENT SHIFTING

Foreign investors have pulled ₹64,156 crore from Indian equities in January 2025, marking one of the highest monthly outflows in recent years. Rising U.S. bond yields, the depreciation of the Indian rupee, and underperforming corporate earnings have made the Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) to move their funds to safer, high-yielding assets in developed economies. According to reports from Livemint and Reuters, the outflow is a contrast to the reports of December 2024, where ₹15,446 crore was invested by FPIs, signaling a shift in market dynamics.

The withdrawals have not only increased stock market volatility but also put pressure on the Indian rupee, further highlighting the interconnectedness of foreign investments and economic stability.

The withdrawal of ₹64,156 crore by Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) in January 2025 has raised several concerns:



1. Volatility Soars as FPIs Exit Indian Markets in Record Numbers

The large-scale outflows have caused instability in the Indian stock market, leading to sharp fluctuations in indices. This volatility may prevent retail and institutional investors from participating in the market.

2. Liquidity Crunch: How January's FPI Outflow Impacts Indian Growth

With FPIs withdrawing significant capital, liquidity in the market decreases, potentially limiting access to funds for businesses and stalling economic activity.

3. Impact on Sectors Dependent on FPI Inflows

Sectors like IT, financial services, and consumer goods, which often rely on strong FPI participation, may see reduced growth opportunities and lower valuations.

4. Economic Stability Under Pressure

If FPI withdrawals continue, it could lead to reduced capital inflows, adversely impacting India's fiscal health and long-term growth outlook.

REVERSAL OF FORTUNES: FROM DECEMBER GAINS TO JANUARY LOSSES IN FPI INVESTMENTS

- **Total Outflow in January 2025: ₹64,156 crore.**
- **Previous Month (December 2024): FPIs invested ₹15,446 crore, showing a sharp reversal in January.**

Sectoral Strain: IT and Financials Hit Hard by FPI Outflows

- The Financial Services and IT sectors, attracting substantial FPI investments, experienced significant selling pressure.
- Mid-cap and small-cap stocks faced heavier selling compared to large-cap stocks.



UltraTech Cement in Advanced Talks to Acquire Heidelberg Cement India

UltraTech Cement, India's leading cement producer, is in advanced negotiations to acquire HeidelbergCement India from its German parent company, HeidelbergCement. The German firm holds a 69% stake in its Indian unit, valued at approximately ₹33.8 billion (US\$391.08 million) as of the previous Friday's close.

HeidelbergCement India operates four plants with a combined annual capacity of 12.6 million tonnes. The company has attracted interest from multiple suitors, including IPO-bound JSW Cement.

This development is part of a broader competitive struggle between UltraTech and Adani Group to expand capacities and secure greater market share amid healthy cement demand forecasts.

Following the news, HeidelbergCement India's shares climbed 8%. The company is due to report its quarterly results later this week.



This marks a significant shift in the competitive dynamics of India's cement industry. This move can be analyzed from several perspectives:

1. **Market Consolidation,** UltraTech's Move to Cement Dominance: The deal represents a clear trend toward consolidation in the cement industry, with larger players like UltraTech aiming to expand their market share. UltraTech, by acquiring a substantial stake in HeidelbergCement India, would strengthen its dominant position and leverage economies of scale, making it more competitive against other industry giants like ACC Ltd. and Shree Cement.
2. **Strategic Expansion,** Tapping Central India's Potential: HeidelbergCement India holds a strong regional presence in markets such as Central India, which UltraTech could strategically tap into. UltraTech's ability to integrate these assets would enhance its geographic reach and allow it to better serve demand across India's growing infrastructure and real estate sectors.



3. Financial Boost, ₹33.8 Billion Deal Reshapes Cement Industry: Financially, the ₹33.8 billion valuation could strengthen UltraTech's portfolio, boosting its market capitalization. It may also provide UltraTech with access to newer technology, production facilities, and a broader distribution network, all of which would enable it to streamline operations and improve margins.

IMPACT

Small Players Face Big Challenges: Competitive Pressures Mount

The acquisition could place immense pressure on smaller cement producers who might struggle to compete with UltraTech's expanded capacity and lower operational costs.

Price Dynamics: Will Consolidation Drive Costs Up or Down?

The market's response to this deal could influence cement prices. If UltraTech achieves greater economies of scale, it might reduce production costs, but there is also the risk of price hikes if the market becomes less competitive.

Investor Sentiment: Stock Market Awaits the Aftermath A Game-Changer for UltraTech and HeidelbergCement Investors

: Investors may react positively to the deal, anticipating increased profits and stronger market positioning, leading to an uptick in UltraTech's stock price.

Maha Kumbh Mela 2025: A Confluence of Spirituality, Culture, and Community

Kumbh Mela (the festival of the sacred pitcher), in Hinduism, is a religious pilgrimage that is celebrated four times over a course of 12 years. The geographical location of Kumbh Mela spans over four locations in India and the Mela site keeps rotating between one of the four pilgrimages on four sacred rivers as listed below:

- In Haridwar, Uttarakhand, on the banks of Ganges
- In Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh on the banks of Shipra
- In Nashik, Maharashtra on the banks of Godavari
- In Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh, at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical invisible Sarasvati



The Kumbh Mela is rooted in the myth of Samudra Manthan, where gods and demons churned the ocean to obtain amrita, the nectar of immortality. During this process, Lord Shiva consumed the deadly poison that emerged, earning him the name Nilkantha. The pot of nectar was seized by Jayanta, who placed it at four sacred locations. Celebrated every twelve years, Kumbh Mela attracts millions of devotees seeking spiritual benefits, as these sites are believed to hold mystical powers from the spilled nectar.

The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 commenced on January 13, 2025, on Paush Purnima, marking the start of a 45-day-long spiritual celebration in Prayagraj. This year's event is particularly unique due to a rare constellation alignment that occurs once every 144 years. Thousands of devotees gathered at the Sangam—the sacred confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers—to partake in the first holy dip of this monumental occasion.



Some Facts about Maha Kumbh 2025

- **Total Pilgrims Expected:** Approximately 40 to 45 crore devotees are anticipated to attend over the 45 days.
- **Peak Days:** A big influx is expected on key dates, particularly during Mauni Amavasya, where estimates suggest 8 to 10 crore visitors may participate.
- **Mela Area:** The event will cover approximately 4,000 hectares, a 25% increase from the previous Kumbh Mela held in 2019.
- **Estimated Budget:** The budget is set at around ₹7,500 crore a significant increase from previous events.



- **Economic Transactions:** The Maha Kumbh Mela is expected to garner an estimated amount of ₹2 lakh crore to ₹2.5 lakh crore, which may account for about 0.8% of India's GDP, according to Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT).
- **On Makar Sankranti (January 14),** approximately 3.5 crore devotees participated in a sacred dip at the Triveni Sangam, marking one of the largest gatherings in history.
- **The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025** has achieved remarkable milestones, breaking records with over 10 crore visitors as of January 23, 2025.



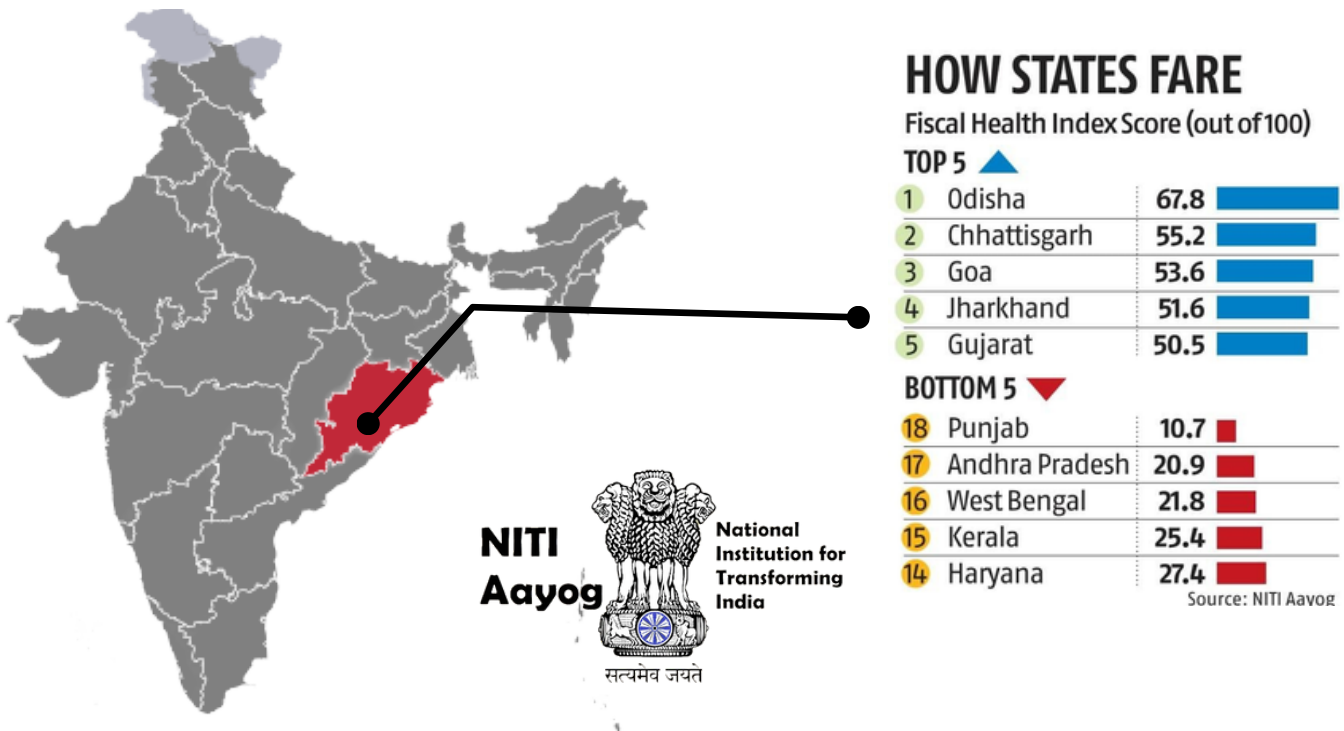
Celebrating India's Spirit: Republic Day 2025 with Pride and Patriotism

India celebrated its 76th Republic Day on January 26, 2025, at Kartavya Path, marking the 75th anniversary of its Constitution with a grand display of cultural heritage and military strength. President Droupadi Murmu led the celebrations, joined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and other dignitaries. Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto attended as the Chief Guest, with Indonesia's armed forces participating in the parade.

The event featured 31 tableaux under the theme Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas, highlighting India's rich traditions and progress. Notable displays included the Maha Kumbh festival and such as the Pralay missile and the Sanjay battlefield surveillance system. The parade also showcased a historic fly-past by 40 Indian Air Force aircraft, while over 5,000 folk and tribal artists performed along Kartavya Path.

The celebrations concluded with the national anthem and the release of balloons commemorating 75 years of India's Constitution, reinforcing a sense of unity, patriotism, and cultural pride.

ODISHA TOPS FISCAL HEALTH INDEX BY NITI AAYOG



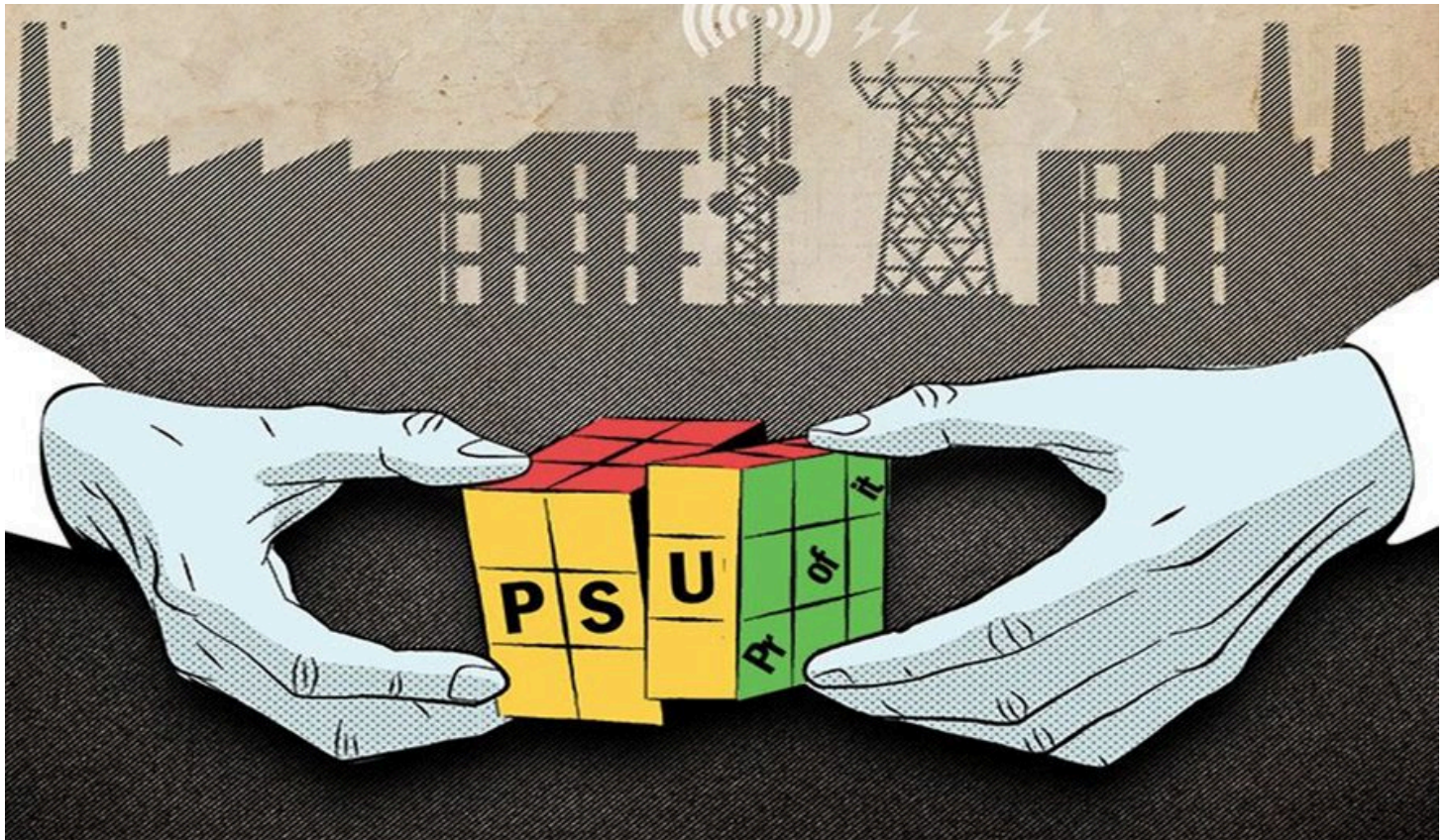
In January 2025, Odisha achieved a significant milestone **by topping the Fiscal Health Index** compiled by NITI Aayog, the Indian government's premier policy think tank. This recognition highlights the **state's exemplary performance in debt management and revenue mobilization**, marking it as a model for fiscal responsibility. Odisha's ability to manage its finances effectively has been praised for ensuring fiscal stability, **despite challenges faced by other states in balancing budgets and managing public debt**. The state's top ranking **reflects its successful strategies** in increasing revenue collections, **optimising expenditures**, and **implementing reforms** that ensure better financial governance. By maintaining fiscal discipline while ensuring sustained investment in development, Odisha has positioned itself as a **key player in India's economic growth and fiscal health**.

Historically, like many other states in India, Odisha **faced challenges related to fiscal deficits, low revenue generation**, and a high reliance on central grants. For years, the state struggled with balancing its budget while managing debts, especially as **it sought to address infrastructure needs, social welfare programs, and economic development**. However, the state government's focus on strengthening financial governance and ensuring fiscal prudence has led to a success. The **state excelled particularly in the Debt Index (99.0) and Debt Sustainability (64.0) rankings**, reflecting its effective debt management strategies.





INDIA DROPS PRIVATIZATION, BOOSTS STATE FIRMS WITH BILLIONS



The Indian government has decided to **abandon its previous privatisation plans** for several state-run enterprises. Instead, it **will invest billions of dollars into revitalizing and modernizing state-run companies**. This new direction, revealed by sources familiar with the matter, is part of a **broader policy shift** aimed at boosting the efficiency and profitability of state-owned businesses. The government **plans to pump substantial funds** into these firms, with an emphasis on enhancing their operational capabilities rather than selling them off to private investors. This **change in strategy comes** as India faces **mounting pressure to ensure that its public sector companies remain competitive** and continue to contribute significantly to the economy.



Revitalizing state-owned firms **saves jobs, strengthens the economy**, improves public services, and **upgrades infrastructure**. It ensures stable key industries, supports sustainable growth, and can lead to long-term profits more profitable public sector could potentially **reduce the burden on taxpayers** in the future, as state-run enterprises become self-sustaining.

CAN'T HELP CRAVINGS? SWIGGY'S SNACC BRINGS SUPERFAST SOLUTIONS

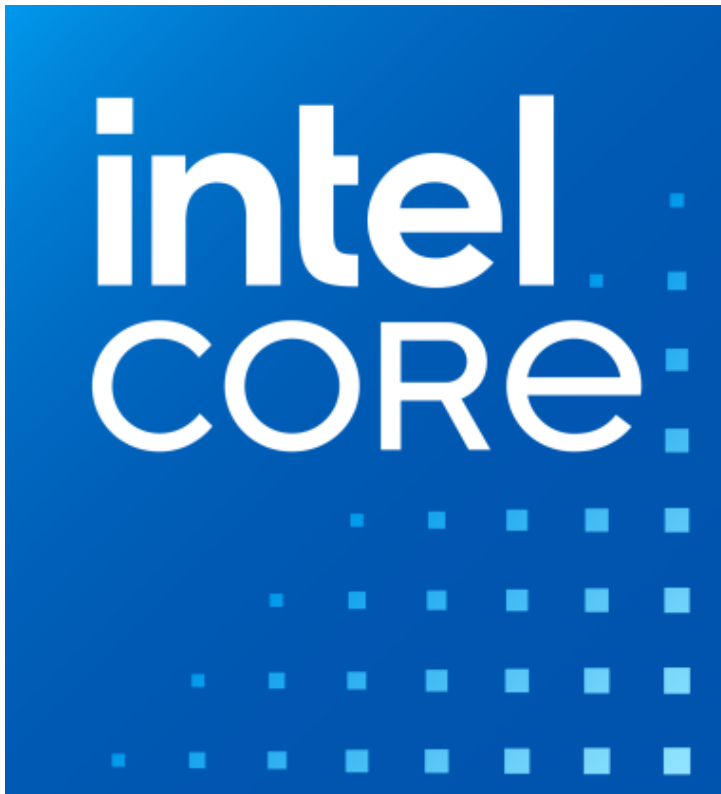
Swiggy has officially launched a new **standalone app named Snacc**, aimed at providing **rapid food delivery services** within a timeframe of 10 to 15 minutes. This innovative app was introduced on January 7, 2025, and is **currently available in** selected neighborhoods of **Bengaluru**. The initiative reflects Swiggy's **response to** the **increasing demand for quick and convenient dining options** among urban consumers.

The Snacc app **targets primarily millennials and Gen Z users**, who are increasingly **seeking fast service for snacks** and light meals. The **menu features a variety of items**, including breakfast options, coffee, baked goods, cold beverages, eggs, and protein-rich snacks



Operationally, Snacc **differentiates itself from Swiggy's** existing delivery services **by utilizing a centralized hub stocked with ready-to-serve products**. This model allows for **quicker and more reliable service** compared to traditional restaurant partnerships. By streamlining the delivery process, Snacc aims to **enhance customer satisfaction** and meet the growing expectations for speed in food delivery. The launch of Snacc **positions Swiggy in direct competition with other rapid delivery services** such as Zepto Cafe and Blinkit Bistro, which have already established their presence in the quick delivery market. With **plans to expand** the Snacc service to other regions across India following its initial rollout in Bengaluru, Swiggy is **strategically positioning itself to capture a significant share of the burgeoning ultra-fast food delivery sector**.

Intel's New Launch Amid Leadership Shakeup



For businesses striving to stay ahead in the AI era, **Intel introduced the Intel Core Ultra 200V series processors with Intel vPro®.** These new processors **offer dramatic performance gains, enhanced efficiency, and robust security and manageability features** to help modernize IT environments. Intel's second-generation Core Ultra processor, the 200V **is designed to handle on-device AI tasks** while simultaneously offering **better overall battery life** and performance than prior Intel chips. The company previously **showed off the Core Ultra 200V for consumer systems in September.** Intel is pushing the Core Ultra 200V line as a major upgrade for enterprise users **looking to get into using on-device AI apps** rather than those that run exclusively in the cloud. On-device AI promises better overall safety and privacy because, unlike cloud-based AI apps, you don't have to send your data over the internet. Instead, your PC processes your data locally.

Intel's latest offering **comes at a precarious time** for the company. In December, **Intel's board ousted CEO Pat Gelsinger after** the chipmaker's **stock price collapsed some 60% over** the last year. At least some of those declines have to do with Gelsinger's massive **turnaround effort** that sought **to transform Intel into a third-party contract chip manufacturer**. But the move has proven costly for Intel. Even after turning its Intel Foundry segment into an independent subsidiary to coax customers into trusting that the company would treat its own chips and customers' semiconductors the same, the venture continues to hemorrhage cash. Intel's announcement comes as it **faces stiff competition** from longtime rival AMD



In addition to the Core Ultra 200V's AI capabilities, Intel is **banking on Microsoft's move to end support for Windows 10** in October as **a potential boon** for chip and device sales in the latter half of the year. The 200V is also **Intel's first chip designed to meet Microsoft's Copilot + PC standard**

CONSULTING AND AI - ACCENTURE LEADS THE CHARGE WITH ITS BOLD MOVE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NVIDIA

Accenture is leading the charge in AI-powered consulting with its expanded partnership with Nvidia, aiming to revolutionise business transformation across industries. This strategic alliance is designed to drive AI adoption, enhance automation, and scale business operations, establishing Accenture as a dominant and one of the first movers in AI consulting solutions. The consulting industry is set to undergo a dramatic shift as AI becomes integral to most business operations. Accenture has largely capitalised on this revolution, reporting almost a billion dollar surge in AI (Gen AI) bookings for the latest quarter.



With this momentum, Accenture is also training its employees in cutting-edge AI technologies, while also launching a dedicated Nvidia business group to accelerate the development of “Agentic AI systems” which will automate complex functions such as marketing, customer service, and supply chain management across industries. The impact of AI on Accenture’s consulting business is undeniable. In the latest quarter, the firm’s total bookings reached \$18.7 billion, with AI-related projects contributing significantly to this total.



To meet growing demand, Accenture has expanded its workforce by thousands of employees, predominantly in India, to meet its growing demand of AI experts.

Accenture’s bold investments in AI has not only positioned it as a leader in the consulting space but also set a new benchmark for the entire industry pushing competitors like McKinsey, BCG, and Deloitte racing to adopt AI strategies, Accenture is paving the way for a future where AI is at the heart of business transformation and consulting.

A NEW ERA IN HR CONSULTING - KEYSTONE PARTNERS ANNOUNCES THE ACQUISITION OF CCI CONSULTING

In a striking move to improve its human resources consulting offerings, **Keystone Partners**, a leading player in the **HR consulting space**, has announced its **acquisition of CCI Consulting**, a renowned provider of career management, talent development, and outplacement services. This acquisition positions **Keystone to increase its range of offerings into a more comprehensive provider of integrated workforce solutions, catering to the evolving needs of modern businesses.** CCI Consulting which has earned a **stellar reputation** for its expertise in executive coaching, talent development, and workforce transition and with businesses now facing an increasingly complex labor market driven by remote work trends and generational workforce shifts, through this acquisition Keystone Partners is seizing the opportunity to further strengthen its position in the HR services industry. This acquisition enables **Keystone to offer a more expansive and holistic suite of services, making it a one-stop solution** for organizations navigating talent management challenges.

The integration of CCI Consulting provides several significant benefits to Keystone's clients as they are able to get Holistic HR services allowing access to broader solutions along with enhanced expertise and a global reach and scalability, enhancing the global impact.



Key Features of the Acquisition

By bringing CCI Consulting into the fold, Keystone Partners gains a wealth of specialised HR expertise that enhances its ability to serve organizations at every stage of their workforce journey such as:

- 1. Comprehensive HR Solutions:** From leadership coaching to outplacement services, Keystone is now equipped to offer end-to-end HR consulting that helps organizations develop, transition, and retain top talent.
- 2. Industry-Leading Talent Development:** The acquisition allows Keystone to enhance its offerings with CCI's proven talent development programs, designed to cultivate future leaders and boost organizational performance.
- 3. Workforce Transformation:** As businesses adapt to the new world of work, Keystone's expanded services can guide companies through complex HR transformations, improving both employee engagement and productivity.