



INDIAN STARTUP

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Commercial EV Fleet Operators Raise ₹850 Crore to Expand Clean Mobility Infrastructure Across India

Commercial EV fleet operators raised ₹850 crore to expand battery-swapping and charging infrastructure across Tier-2 corridors, supporting faster EV adoption, cleaner transport, and efficient logistics.



ECOSYSTEM

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AI-Powered Agri-Fintech Platforms Expand Credit Access to Over 50,000 Farmer Producer Organizations

AI-enabled agri-fintech startups and rural banks are expanding credit access to 50,000+ FPOs, strengthening financial inclusion and agricultural growth.



GOVERNMENT

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CGSS Crosses ₹5,000 Crore in Guaranteed Startup Lending, Expanding Access to Collateral-Free Credit
CGSS has enabled ₹5,000 crore in collateral-free startup debt, improving institutional financing, supporting expansion, and reducing dependence on equity funding.

Startup Times



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Indian DeepTech Funding Crosses \$1.2 Billion as Investor Confidence Accelerates

India's deep-tech ecosystem is witnessing a significant surge in venture capital activity, with seed and Series-A investments in deep-tech, robotics, and advanced semiconductor packaging startups crossing \$1.2 billion during the current quarter. The strong inflow of capital reflects growing investor confidence in technology-driven innovation and the country's expanding role in the global technology value chain.

The funding momentum has been supported by increased participation from institutional investors, venture capital firms, corporate investment arms, and government-backed initiatives focused on strengthening India's innovation ecosystem. Startups working in areas such as artificial intelligence, robotics, semiconductor manufacturing, automation, advanced materials, and industrial technologies are attracting heightened interest as industries seek next-generation solutions to improve efficiency and competitiveness.

Experts believe that the rise in early-stage funding demonstrates a shift in investor focus from traditional digital businesses toward technology platforms capable of creating long-term intellectual property and global market opportunities. The semiconductor sector, in particular, has gained prominence due to India's push for domestic chip manufacturing and supply chain resilience.

The growing availability of capital is expected to accelerate research and development, product commercialization, and talent acquisition across the deep-tech landscape.

Startup Reverse Flipping Gains Momentum as Firms Return to India

India's startup ecosystem is witnessing a strong reverse-flipping trend, with more than 15 prominent consumer-tech and fintech companies completing their corporate restructuring back to India through fast-track regulatory approval channels. The shift reflects growing confidence in India's business environment, capital markets, and regulatory framework. By relocating their parent entities to India, startups aim to simplify compliance, improve access to domestic investors, and position themselves for future public listings while strengthening their long-term growth strategy within the country.



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SPORTS

India's SportsTech Sector Gains Momentum as Analytics Startups Attract \$45 Million



Commercial EV Fleet Operators Raise ₹850 Crore to Expand Clean Mobility Infrastructure Across India

Commercial EV fleet operators have raised ₹850 crore to expand battery-swapping stations and high-capacity charging depots across Tier-2 cities and interstate corridors. The investment aims to reduce charging challenges, improve fleet efficiency, accelerate EV adoption, strengthen clean mobility infrastructure, and support India's sustainable transportation goals.

India's clean mobility sector has received a major boost as commercial electric vehicle (EV) fleet operators collectively raised approximately ₹850 crore in expansion capital to accelerate the development of battery-swapping networks and high-capacity depot charging infrastructure. The funding comes at a crucial time when the adoption of electric mobility is expanding rapidly across logistics, last-mile delivery, public transportation, and commercial fleet operations.

The newly raised capital will primarily be deployed to establish interstate battery-swapping stations and large-scale charging depots across Tier-2 cities and emerging industrial corridors. These regions are increasingly becoming important hubs for manufacturing, logistics, and e-commerce activities, creating strong demand for reliable EV charging infrastructure. Industry stakeholders believe that expanding charging access beyond major metropolitan areas is essential for supporting the next phase of India's electric mobility transition.

Battery-swapping technology has

emerged as a promising solution for commercial fleet operators because it significantly reduces vehicle downtime. Instead of waiting for batteries to recharge, drivers can exchange depleted batteries for fully charged units within minutes. This operational efficiency is particularly valuable for delivery fleets, ride-hailing services, and commercial transport businesses that depend on maximizing vehicle utilization throughout the day.

A substantial portion of the investment will also support the construction of high-capacity depot charging hubs capable of servicing large fleets simultaneously. These facilities are expected to include advanced energy management systems, smart charging technologies, and grid-optimization capabilities that help reduce operational costs while ensuring dependable power availability. Such infrastructure is becoming increasingly important as fleet operators expand their electric vehicle deployments across longer routes and intercity transportation networks.

The expansion aligns with India's broader clean energy and sustainability objectives. The government has been encouraging EV adoption through various incentive programs, policy measures, and infrastructure support initiatives designed to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and lower transportation-related emissions. Improved charging availability is widely regarded as one of the most critical factors influencing EV adoption rates, particularly among commercial users who require predictable and efficient operations.

Industry experts note that the focus on Tier-2 corridors reflects a strategic shift in the market. While major cities have witnessed significant EV infrastructure growth over the past few years, many smaller cities and regional transport routes still face infrastructure gaps. Addressing these gaps can unlock substantial growth opportunities by enabling commercial fleets to operate

seamlessly across wider geographic areas without concerns about charging availability.

The investment is also expected to generate positive economic effects by creating jobs in infrastructure development, maintenance, energy management, and technology services. Additionally, stronger charging and battery-swapping networks can encourage greater participation from vehicle manufacturers, logistics companies, and fleet operators, further strengthening the clean mobility ecosystem.

As commercial EV adoption continues to accelerate, infrastructure development is becoming a key competitive differentiator. The ₹850 crore funding wave highlights increasing investor confidence in India's electric mobility sector and underscores the growing recognition that robust charging and battery-swapping networks are essential for long-term industry growth.

AI-Powered Agri-Fintech Platforms Expand Credit Access to Over 50,000 Farmer Producer Organizations

India's agricultural financing ecosystem is undergoing a significant transformation as AI-enabled agri-fintech startups partner with regional rural banks (RRBs) to expand access to credit for Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs). Through these collaborations, micro-working-capital loans are being disbursed to more than 50,000 FPOs across the country, helping address one of the most persistent challenges in the agricultural sector: timely and affordable access to finance.

Farmer Producer Organizations play a crucial role in strengthening rural economies by enabling small and marginal farmers to collectively access markets, purchase inputs, negotiate better prices, and improve productivity. Despite their growing importance, many FPOs continue to face difficulties obtaining formal credit due to limited financial histories, lack of collateral, and lengthy loan approval processes. As a result, many organizations have traditionally relied on informal financing channels that often carry higher costs and greater financial risks. The emergence of AI-powered credit-scoring technologies is helping bridge this gap. Agri-fintech startups are leveraging artificial intelligence, machine learning, satellite imagery, transaction records, weather patterns, crop data, and alternative financial indicators to assess the creditworthiness of farmer groups more accurately. By analyzing multiple data points, these platforms can create detailed risk profiles that enable lenders to make faster and more informed lending decisions.

Regional rural banks are increasingly embracing these technologies as a way to improve outreach in underserved agricultural markets. By partnering with fintech firms, banks can streamline loan assessments, reduce operational costs, and accelerate disbursement timelines. This collaboration allows financial institutions to serve a larger number of FPOs while maintaining prudent risk management practices.

The micro-working-capital loans are designed to support a wide range of agricultural activities. FPOs can use the funds to purchase seeds, fertilizers, and farm equipment, manage storage and transportation costs, invest in post-harvest processing, and meet seasonal working-capital requirements. Access to timely financing enables organizations to plan operations more effectively and capitalize on market opportunities that may otherwise be out of reach.

The initiative is also contributing to broader goals of financial inclusion and rural economic development. By



bringing more farmer groups into the formal financial system, AI-enabled lending models help build credit histories and improve long-term access to banking services. This can create a virtuous cycle in which successful borrowing and repayment records unlock larger financing opportunities in the future.

Industry experts believe that the integration of technology into agricultural lending is reshaping how financial services are delivered in rural India. Traditional credit assessment models often struggle to evaluate small-scale agricultural enterprises due to fragmented data and limited documentation. AI-driven systems, however, can process diverse datasets and identify patterns that provide a more comprehensive picture of financial health and repayment capacity.

The growing adoption of digital lending solutions also aligns with national efforts to strengthen agricultural productivity, enhance rural incomes, and support technology-driven development. As the agricultural sector becomes increasingly connected through digital platforms, fintech innovations are expected to play an even larger role in improving access to financial resources.

With more than 50,000 FPOs benefiting from AI-powered credit programs, the partnership between agri-fintech startups and regional rural banks represents a significant milestone in rural finance. By combining advanced analytics with grassroots banking networks, the initiative is helping create a more inclusive, efficient, and scalable agricultural financing ecosystem. As these models continue to evolve, they have the potential to unlock greater economic opportunities for millions of farmers while strengthening the resilience and competitiveness of India's agricultural sector.

Growth-Stage Startups See 35% Rise in ESOP Buybacks and Secondary Transactions

Late-stage domestic venture funds are witnessing a significant rise in secondary market activity, with employee stock option plan (ESOP) buybacks and secondary share transactions increasing by 35% year-on-year. The trend is providing greater liquidity to employees, early investors, and founders associated with growth-stage startups.

The increase in transactions reflects the growing maturity of India's startup ecosystem, where companies are increasingly creating opportunities for stakeholders to monetize part of their holdings before a public listing or major exit event. ESOP buybacks, in particular, allow employees to convert a portion of their equity into cash while continuing to participate in the company's future growth.

For venture funds, secondary transactions also offer greater flexibility in managing portfolios and providing partial exits to investors. Rather than depending entirely on IPOs or acquisitions, funds can use secondary markets to generate liquidity and rebalance their holdings.

The growing activity could further strengthen employee participation in startup equity programs, making ESOPs more attractive as a component of compensation. As India's growth-stage funding ecosystem expands, stronger secondary-market liquidity is expected to support a healthier capital cycle and provide startups with greater flexibility as they move toward larger funding rounds and eventual public-market opportunities.





DPIIT Strengthens Deep-Tech Startup Support with Wider Evaluation Windows and Enhanced Grant Mechanisms

DPIIT is strengthening India's deep-tech ecosystem by expanding evaluation timelines and grant-in-aid support. The measures aim to help research-intensive startups finance R&D, prototypes, testing, and commercialization, while reducing investment risks, encouraging innovation, strengthening domestic technology capabilities, and attracting private capital.

India's deep-tech startup ecosystem is receiving a policy boost as the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) expands evaluation windows and strengthens grant-in-aid mechanisms under its broader Deep Tech Startup policy framework. The move is aimed at giving technology-intensive startups greater flexibility while improving access to institutional support during the early and highly capital-intensive stages of development.

Deep-tech startups typically operate in areas such as artificial intelligence, robotics, advanced materials, biotechnology, quantum computing, space technology, semiconductor manufacturing, and other research-driven fields. Unlike conventional technology businesses, these companies often require several years of research, testing, prototyping, regulatory approvals, and commercial validation before they can generate meaningful revenues. As a result, traditional startup funding models may not always be sufficient to support their development.

The expanded evaluation windows could provide deep-tech ventures with additional time to demonstrate technological progress and commercial potential. This is particularly important for startups developing complex hardware or scientific technologies, where product development cycles can be significantly longer than those of software-focused businesses. A longer evaluation period can allow policymakers and funding institutions to assess technological milestones, intellectual-property development, prototype performance, and market readiness more effectively.

The enhanced grant-in-aid mechanisms are also expected to play an important role in reducing the financing gap faced by early-stage deep-tech companies. Grants can help startups fund research and development, build prototypes, conduct laboratory testing, hire specialized talent, and undertake technology validation without immediately relying on substantial equity financing. This can help founders retain greater ownership while allowing them to focus on solving technically challenging problems.

For investors, stronger government-backed support can also reduce some of the risks associated with deep-tech investments. Venture capital investors often face uncertainty when investing in companies whose technologies may take several years to reach commercial scale. Public funding at critical development stages can help startups

reach important milestones before raising larger institutional rounds, potentially making them more attractive to private investors.

The policy enhancements come as India seeks to strengthen domestic capabilities in strategically important technologies. The country is increasingly focusing on reducing dependence on imported technologies while developing globally competitive intellectual property and manufacturing capabilities. Supporting deep-tech startups is therefore becoming an important component of India's broader innovation and industrial strategy.

Another important aspect is the potential impact on research commercialization. India has a large network of universities, research institutions, laboratories, and technical institutes, but converting research breakthroughs into commercially viable products has historically been challenging. Improved grant mechanisms could encourage greater collaboration between researchers, startups, investors, and industry partners, helping promising technologies move from laboratories to the marketplace. The framework could also benefit startups operating outside major metropolitan ecosystems. Deep-tech innovation often originates from research institutions and specialized technology clusters located across different parts of the country. Broader evaluation opportunities and accessible grant programs could encourage more founders to develop businesses around locally generated intellectual property and scientific expertise.

For the startup ecosystem, the policy shift signals a greater recognition that deep-tech ventures require different financing and evaluation models compared with conventional startups. Their success cannot always be measured through short-term revenue growth or user acquisition. Technological breakthroughs, patents, successful prototypes, testing results, manufacturing readiness, and scientific validation can be equally important indicators of progress.

The enhanced support could ultimately create a stronger pipeline of Indian deep-tech companies capable of attracting both domestic and international capital.

CGSS Crosses ₹5,000 Crore in Guaranteed Startup Lending, Expanding Access to Collateral-Free Credit



The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS) has enabled over ₹5,000 crore in sanctioned collateral-free financing, helping startups access institutional debt without traditional collateral. The initiative supports working capital, expansion, technology investments, and sustainable growth while encouraging lenders to finance innovative businesses.

CGSS-backed startup lending has crossed ₹5,000 crore, strengthening access to collateral-free institutional debt. The mechanism is helping innovative businesses overcome traditional financing barriers, reduce dependence on equity funding, and support expansion. By encouraging lenders to finance asset-light startups, CGSS is contributing to a more diverse and accessible startup funding ecosystem.

India's startup financing ecosystem is seeing stronger access to institutional debt as member lending institutions under the Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups (CGSS) report more than ₹5,000 crore in sanctioned collateral-free debt instruments backed by the scheme's credit guarantee mechanism. The milestone highlights the growing role of credit-based financing alongside traditional venture capital and equity investment.

For many startups, particularly early and growth-stage companies, raising debt can be challenging because conventional lenders often require substantial collateral, established cash flows, or lengthy credit histories. CGSS is designed to address part of this financing gap by providing credit guarantees to eligible lenders, helping reduce the risk associated with extending loans to innovative businesses.

The availability of collateral-free financing can be particularly important for startups that have developed viable products but have limited physical assets. Technology companies, SaaS businesses, fintech ventures, deep-tech startups, and other innovation-driven enterprises often hold significant intangible assets such as intellectual property, software,

data, and proprietary technology rather than traditional collateral. A guarantee-backed lending mechanism can therefore make institutional debt more accessible to these businesses.

The ₹5,000 crore milestone also reflects increasing confidence among lending institutions in India's startup ecosystem. Banks and other eligible financial institutions can use credit-guarantee support to expand lending while managing potential credit risks. This can encourage lenders to evaluate startups based more closely on their business models, financial performance, growth prospects, and repayment capacity.

Debt financing offers startups an alternative to raising additional equity. While venture capital can provide substantial growth capital, equity fundraising may dilute the ownership of founders and existing shareholders. Debt, when used responsibly, allows companies to raise funds without immediately giving up additional ownership. Startups can use such financing for working capital, technology investments, hiring, expansion, inventory, marketing, and other business requirements.

The scheme could also play a role in supporting startups that are transitioning from early-stage experimentation toward commercial expansion. Once companies begin generating predictable revenues, access to structured debt can help them scale operations without relying entirely on successive equity rounds.

Another important benefit is the potential to broaden startup financing beyond major metropolitan ecosystems. Smaller companies and startups operating in emerging technology and business hubs can face greater difficulty accessing institutional capital. Credit-guarantee mechanisms can help reduce some of the barriers faced by these businesses and encourage wider participation in India's formal startup economy.

However, responsible lending and careful assessment remain essential. Collateral-free financing does not eliminate repayment obligations, and startups must ensure that borrowed capital is aligned with sustainable revenue generation and cash-flow requirements. Lenders also need robust evaluation frameworks to distinguish viable businesses from companies carrying excessive financial risk.

GOVERNMENT

Startup India Seed Fund Expands Incubator Network to Accelerate Climate-Tech and Med-Tech Innovation

India's early-stage startup ecosystem is receiving fresh support as additional state-backed incubators are being empaneled under the Startup India Seed Fund framework to accelerate milestone-based prototype grants for emerging climate-tech and med-tech innovators. The move is aimed at strengthening the country's pipeline of technology-driven startups and helping promising ideas progress from early research and experimentation to commercially viable products. Climate-tech and med-tech startups often face significant challenges during their initial development stages. These companies typically require substantial investment in research, testing, prototyping, regulatory compliance, and product validation before they can attract larger private investments. Traditional venture capital may not always be readily available at this stage, particularly when startups are still developing their first working prototypes. Seed funding can therefore play an important role in helping founders overcome the initial financing gap.

The expanded network of state-backed incubators is expected to bring funding and mentoring support closer to startups operating across different regions. Incubators can provide entrepreneurs with access to laboratories, technical experts, industry connections, business mentors, testing facilities, and other resources required to develop their products. Their involvement can also help startups understand regulatory requirements and prepare for future fundraising and commercial expansion.

Under a milestone-based funding approach, startups can receive financial support as they achieve defined development targets. These milestones may include building a functional prototype, completing technical validation, conducting pilot projects, obtaining certifications, or demonstrating early customer adoption. Such a structure can encourage startups to use capital efficiently while giving funding institutions clearer indicators for measuring progress.

For climate-tech companies, seed funding can support innovations addressing areas such as renewable energy, energy efficiency, waste management, water conservation, sustainable agriculture, carbon reduction, and clean mobility. Many of these technologies require significant experimentation before they can be deployed at commercial scale. Early financial assistance can help founders test solutions, improve performance, and demonstrate their economic and environmental impact.

Med-tech startups can similarly benefit from prototype grants. Companies developing medical devices, diagnostic technologies, healthcare equipment, digital health solutions, and other innovative healthcare products often face lengthy product-development and validation cycles. Early-stage funding can enable entrepreneurs to build prototypes, conduct testing, work with healthcare institutions, and gather evidence needed to move toward wider adoption.

The participation of state-backed incubators could also contribute to a more geographically distributed startup ecosystem. While major cities such as Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi-NCR, Hyderabad, and Chennai remain important innovation hubs, several emerging cities are developing strong technology and research communities. Local incubators can help identify promising founders and connect them with national funding opportunities without requiring them to relocate to established startup centers.

Another important benefit is the potential to improve collaboration between startups, academic institutions, government agencies, and industry. Climate-tech and med-tech innovation often depends on specialized scientific knowledge and access to research infrastructure. Incubators can act as intermediaries, helping entrepreneurs build partnerships that accelerate product development and commercialization.

The expansion also reinforces the importance of government-supported capital in India's startup financing ecosystem.



avaan: How a Bad Airport Bill Became a Bootstrapped Shipping Brand

StartupTimes
Empowering Young Entrepreneurs

India's new way to **Simply Send**

Doorstep pickup and delivery across 19,300+ pin codes and 190 countries.

THE JOURNEY

- A frustrating airport bill revealed an unfair system.
- 20+ years in the express industry taught Meera the real cost — and the gap.
- Avaan India was founded to make sending simple, transparent, and accessible.

THE GAP SHE SOLVED

- ✓ Unfair excess baggage charges
- ✓ No shipment tracking transparency
- ✓ High costs for small senders

AVAAN SEND

- AI Powered
- Connected Partner Network
- Customer First Experience
- One Flat Fee*

*On domestic bookings only.

MEERA SINGH
FOUNDER & CEO, **avaan India**

www.startuptimes.net | "She put a heart into an industry built around cargo"

Meera Singh founded *avaan India* after an expensive airport excess-baggage bill exposed a gap in consumer shipping. Leveraging decades of cargo and hospitality experience, she built a bootstrapped platform offering affordable baggage, domestic, and global delivery services. *avaan* now serves individuals and small businesses through technology-driven logistics, airport kiosks, and transparent pricing.

Resistance came from industry insiders, not target customers. The breakthrough reframe: treat shipments as individual belongings needing commercial-grade transparency, not plain freight. Shifting focus from B2B to C2C immediately clarified pricing.

Meera Singh, Founder & CEO of *avaan India*, on building a bootstrapped excess baggage, shipping and global delivery brand out of one airport counter bill.

Meera started *avaan* after a bad airport bill convinced her that nobody was building shipping services for individual customers, only for businesses shipping in bulk. Her company is trying to close that gap.

Before *avaan*

Meera trained at the Institute of Hotel Management in Pusa, New Delhi, then started her career with The Oberoi, where she learned a lesson that has stayed with her since: service is not a department, it is a habit.

From hospitality, she moved into express cargo, spending close to two decades with Gati, one of India's most recognised cargo companies. It was there she learned, almost to the rupee, what it actually costs to move a kilogram of anything, anywhere in the country, knowledge she would later use to build *avaan India*.

Between Gati and *avaan*, she ran a hydroelectric project in Sikkim, where, in her own words, nothing arrives unless you have planned for it three times over. She successfully commissioned a 110 MW private hydropower project in the region. *avaan* applies the same discipline to individual customers that Meera spent two decades applying to large accounts.

The Bill That Started *avaan*

Meera was at an airport check-in counter, a few kilos over her baggage allowance, and was handed a bill for the excess. She had just spent two decades in cargo, and knew almost to the rupee what it should have cost. The bill had nothing to

do with the real cost of moving that weight, and everything to do with her having no other option. She paid it. And then she couldn't stop thinking about it.

There was no grand vision in that moment. There was a bill she was angry about, and enough industry knowledge that the anger didn't fade the way it does for most travellers. She realised she wasn't the only one, and nobody had built anything for people in that position.

The Gap Nobody Had Priced For

As Meera describes it, India's shipping industry had organised itself around two kinds of customers: businesses shipping in bulk, who could negotiate rates and choose between providers, and everyone else, the individual with a couple of extra bags, or the small business owner shipping their own orders because they weren't big enough for an enterprise contract.

That second group is larger than most people assume: individual travellers, and small businesses moving anywhere from five to fifty parcels a week, all charged unpredictable rates, with little visibility into where their shipment actually was.

avaan was built directly around that gap.

Three Services, One Network

Today, *avaan* runs three services, all booked through *avaan Send*, the company's consumer app. The app carries *avaan*'s tagline, "Simply Send." Whatever is being shipped, the process is meant to feel the same: one booking, doorstep pickup, transparent pricing, and tracking through to delivery.

RBI Maintains Supportive Credit Environment While Keeping Inflation in Focus

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is maintaining a supportive approach toward enterprise credit while continuing to prioritize price stability. By keeping benchmark repo rates steady, the central bank is seeking to balance the economy's financing requirements with the need to keep inflation aligned with its medium-term target of 4%.

Stable policy rates can provide greater certainty for businesses planning investments, expansion, and working-capital requirements. For startups and small and medium-sized enterprises, predictable borrowing conditions can be particularly important because financing costs directly influence their ability to invest in technology, hire employees, expand operations, and manage cash flows.

The RBI's liquidity-management approach also plays an important role in ensuring that adequate funds remain available within the financial system. By managing banking-system liquidity, the central bank can influence short-term interest rates and help maintain orderly credit conditions. A stable liquidity environment can support banks and financial institutions in extending loans to productive sectors of the economy.

At the same time, inflation remains a key consideration for monetary policy. Maintaining inflation around the 4% target is important for protecting household purchasing power and creating a more predictable environment for businesses and investors.



Excessive liquidity or rapid credit expansion can potentially add to inflationary pressures, making a balanced approach necessary.

For enterprises, the combination of stable benchmark rates and continued liquidity management could support financial planning and investment decisions. Companies may find it easier to assess the cost of borrowing and structure expansion plans when sudden changes in interest rates are limited.

India-EFTA Trade Pact Opens New Export Corridors for Indian Startups

India's trade relationship with the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) is entering a new phase as domestic export manufacturers and supply-chain startups begin testing pilot cargo corridors under the newly implemented trade and economic partnership tariff framework. The initiative is expected to improve market access and create new opportunities for Indian businesses seeking to expand into European markets.

The EFTA bloc comprises Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein. The trade partnership is designed to reduce tariff barriers, strengthen investment flows, and facilitate greater movement of goods between India and EFTA member countries. For Indian manufacturers, lower or preferential tariffs can improve price competitiveness and make exports more attractive to international buyers. Supply-chain startups are expected to play an important role in supporting this expansion. Pilot cargo corridors can help companies evaluate transportation routes, customs processes, warehousing requirements, documentation systems, and delivery timelines before scaling operations. Digital logistics platforms can further improve shipment visibility and help exporters manage cross-border supply chains more efficiently.

The initiative could particularly benefit sectors such as engineering goods, pharmaceuticals,

electronics, textiles, processed food, and technology-enabled manufacturing. Smaller exporters and startups may also gain access to new customers and distribution networks as trade procedures become more streamlined.

Beyond immediate export opportunities, the partnership could encourage Indian companies to strengthen manufacturing capabilities and integrate more closely with global supply chains. Increased demand from international markets may encourage businesses to invest in production capacity, quality standards, technology, and logistics infrastructure.



Local Currency Trade Surges, Cutting Costs for Cross-Border Businesses

Bilateral trade settlements using local currencies such as the Indian rupee, UAE dirham, and Indonesian rupiah have reached new quarterly highs, signaling growing adoption of alternative payment mechanisms in international commerce. The shift is helping businesses reduce dependence on major reserve currencies and potentially lower costs associated with currency conversion.

For Indian software exporters and logistics providers, local-currency invoicing can simplify cross-border transactions and reduce exposure to multiple conversion stages. Lower exchange-related charges can improve margins, particularly for small and mid-sized companies handling frequent international payments.



The growing use of INR-Dirham and INR-Rupiah settlement mechanisms also reflects broader efforts to strengthen direct trade relationships between India and key international markets. By enabling businesses to invoice and settle transactions more directly in partner-country currencies, companies can potentially reduce intermediary banking costs and improve payment efficiency.

Digital payment infrastructure and banking partnerships are expected to play an important role in supporting this transition. Faster settlement processes and improved transaction visibility can further benefit exporters managing recurring payments, supplier invoices, and international contracts.

SPORTS

India's SportsTech Sector Gains Momentum as Analytics Startups Attract \$45 Million



Indian SportsTech startups attracted \$45 million from international sports franchises and angel investors, accelerating AI-powered analytics, performance tracking, talent scouting, wearable technology, and data-driven solutions for global sports organizations.

India's SportsTech ecosystem is gaining significant investor attention as data-analytics and performance-tracking startups collectively secure approximately \$45 million in backing from international sports franchises and angel investor syndicates. The investment highlights the growing importance of technology, data, and artificial intelligence in improving athletic performance, team management, scouting, and fan engagement.

Sports organizations are increasingly relying on technology to make decisions that were traditionally based primarily on coaching experience and manual observation. Modern analytics platforms can process large volumes of information related to player performance, fitness, movement, workload, match statistics, and tactical patterns. By converting this data into actionable insights, SportsTech companies are helping teams make more informed decisions both on and off the field.

A major area of investment is performance tracking. Startups are developing platforms that combine wearable devices, computer vision, sensors, and cloud-based analytics to monitor athletes during training and competition. These systems can help coaches understand player workload, movement efficiency, recovery patterns, and performance trends. Such insights can support personalized training programs and potentially help teams manage fatigue and injury risks more effectively.

International sports franchises are also showing increasing interest in Indian SportsTech capabilities. India has a large technology talent pool, strong software development expertise, and a rapidly expanding sports industry. These factors are creating opportunities for startups to develop products that can serve both domestic leagues and global sporting organizations.

The funding is also expected to accelerate innovation in scouting

and talent identification. Analytics platforms can help organizations evaluate players using objective performance indicators, allowing scouts and coaches to identify promising talent across large geographic areas. This could be particularly valuable in India, where significant sporting potential exists beyond major metropolitan centers.

Artificial intelligence is becoming another important component of the SportsTech ecosystem. AI-powered systems can analyze match footage, identify tactical patterns, generate performance reports, and provide predictive insights. As these technologies become more sophisticated, teams may increasingly use them to prepare opponents, optimize lineups, and develop game strategies. Beyond professional athletes, SportsTech startups are expanding into fitness, grassroots sports, academies, and amateur training. Affordable performance-monitoring solutions can provide young athletes with access to tools that were previously available primarily to elite teams. This democratization of sports analytics could help improve training standards and create a stronger pipeline of talent.

The involvement of angel syndicates is also significant because early-stage SportsTech companies often require capital to develop proprietary technology, build specialized teams, and establish partnerships with sporting institutions. Early investment can help startups move from experimental products to scalable platforms capable of serving multiple teams, leagues, and markets.

The sector's growth could also generate opportunities across adjacent industries. Sports broadcasters, fantasy sports platforms, fitness companies, equipment manufacturers, and digital media businesses can integrate analytics to improve user experiences and create new revenue streams.

Global Investors Increase India Venture Capital Allocations as IPO Pipeline Strengthens



Global institutional investors are increasing allocations to India-focused venture capital funds, driven by strong startup IPO prospects, resilient corporate earnings, digital growth, and expanding capital markets. The additional funding could support innovation, larger startup rounds, international expansion, and long-term ecosystem growth.

Global institutional investors are increasing their allocations toward India-focused venture capital funds, supported by growing confidence in the country's startup ecosystem, strong domestic IPO pipelines, and resilience in corporate earnings. The trend reflects a broader shift among international Limited Partners (LPs) seeking exposure to India's expanding technology and innovation economy. Venture capital funds with India-focused strategies are benefiting from greater availability of global capital, giving them additional resources to invest in startups across sectors such as fintech, artificial intelligence, SaaS, consumer technology, climate-tech, deep-tech, and digital infrastructure. Increased LP commitments can provide funds with greater flexibility to support companies through multiple stages of growth. One of the major factors attracting institutional investors is India's developing public-market ecosystem. A stronger pipeline of startup IPOs offers potential exit opportunities for venture capital and private-market investors. Successful public listings can provide valuation benchmarks for privately held companies while demonstrating the maturity of India's entrepreneurial ecosystem. Corporate earnings resilience is another factor supporting investor sentiment. Stronger business performance across several sectors can improve confidence in India's broader economic outlook. For international

investors, a combination of economic growth, expanding digital adoption, and improving capital-market depth makes India an increasingly important destination for long-term investment. The deployment of global venture capital dry powder could also intensify competition among funds for promising Indian startups. Increased availability of capital may allow high-quality companies to raise larger rounds, invest more aggressively in product development, expand internationally, and strengthen their teams. However, investors are expected to remain selective. Rising allocations do not mean every startup will receive funding, as institutional LPs and venture funds continue to prioritize companies with sustainable business models, strong unit economics, scalable technology, and credible paths to profitability. The growing flow of international capital nevertheless represents an important development for India's startup ecosystem. If the trend continues, increased institutional participation could strengthen funding availability, support innovation, and create more opportunities for Indian startups to scale into globally competitive businesses while providing investors with potential long-term returns.

Key Highlights

- Global institutional LPs are increasing allocations to India-focused venture capital funds.
- Strong startup IPO pipelines are creating attractive potential exit opportunities.
- Resilient corporate earnings are strengthening international investor confidence.
- Additional capital can support fintech, AI, SaaS, climate-tech, and deep-tech startups.
- Increased funding may help promising companies scale faster and expand globally.
- Investors remain selective, focusing on profitability, sustainable business models, and strong unit economics.
- Continued capital inflows could strengthen India's position as a global startup hub.