

Fintech funding rises 14 pc to USD 2.2 bn in Jan-Sep; deal count falls 41 pc: Tracxn

NEW DELHI, OCT 13 : Indian fintech companies raised USD 2.2 billion in January-September 2026, up 14 per cent from a year earlier, even as the number of funding rounds fell 41 per cent, with five deals of USD 100 million or more making up nearly half the total, according to Tracxn.

Funding in the first nine months of 2025 stood at USD 1.9 billion. The number of rounds dropped to 153 from 260 a year ago, the data intelligence platform said in a report.

This year's funding is still only about 40 per cent of the peak of USD 5.5 billion recorded in the first nine months of 2021.

The five largest rounds together brought in about USD 1.1 billion. CRED's USD 540 million Series H round in June, backed by Meta, alone accounted for about a quarter of all funding.

The others were KreditBee's USD 220 million Series E in April, Weaver's USD 103 million Series B in March, Slice's USD 100 million Series D in September and Navi's USD 100 million Series C in August.

Late-stage funding, which includes Series C and later, private equity and pre-IPO rounds, nearly doubled to



USD 1.5 billion from USD 751 million, despite fewer deals (25 against 30). It made up 67 per cent of all capital raised and was the only stage to grow.

funding (Series A and B) fell 33 per cent to USD 668 million across 52 rounds, from USD 1 billion across 82 rounds. Seed funding dropped 57 per cent to USD 73.8 million across 76 rounds, from USD 173 million across 148 rounds.

The number of companies raising funds for the first time nearly halved to 30 from 59, the report said. Existing investors in the sector fell to 125 from 192, and

first-time investors fell to 33 from 48.

By segment, digital lending attracted the most funding at USD 809 million, followed by payments at USD 776 million and investment tech at USD 450 million.

Bengaluru's share of fintech funding rose to 62 per cent (USD 1.4 billion) from 52 per cent a year earlier. Mumbai followed with 24 per cent and Gurugram with 7 per cent.

The sector produced three new unicorns, startups valued at USD 1 billion or more: Square Yards, KreditBee and Neo Group, compared with two a year earlier.

lier.

There were three initial public offerings, up from two. They were led by Augmont, which had a market capitalisation of USD 757 million at its IPO in August, followed by Turtlemint (USD 471 million, June) and Kissht (USD 305 million, May).

Acquisitions fell 45 per cent to 11 from 20. The largest was Indiabulls Group's USD 110 million purchase of Fintech Cloud, followed by Oxyzo's acquisition of GoldenPi for USD 4.4 million and Choice's purchase of Fintoo for USD 1.1 million. PTI

Centre open to hearing stakeholders' views on LTCG tax: Nirmala Sitharaman

NEW DELHI, OCT 13 : union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has indicated that the government is open to hearing stakeholders' views on the long-term capital gains (LTCG) tax during consultations ahead of the next union Budget, amid growing debate among domestic and overseas investors over the taxation of equity investments.

Speaking at the Bloomberg New Economy Forum in New Delhi on Tuesday, Sitharaman said questions surrounding LTCG tax, securities transaction tax (STT) and the treatment of different asset classes had become important subjects of discussion. She described the debate as healthy, signalling that the government would consider stakeholder feedback during the Budget consultation process.

The Finance Minister's remarks come as investors examine the impact of taxes on equity market participation and investment returns. However, she did not announce any decision to abolish the LTCG tax, and her comments indicated that the issue would be open for discussion rather



than confirming a policy change.

Sitharaman also highlighted the growing participation of private capital in sectors such as renewable energy, semiconductors and artificial intelligence-related infrastructure.

"India's ambitions extended beyond AI applications to the underlying technologies needed to support their development, including chip design, manufacturing and packaging. The country has attracted investments across data centres, semiconductor manufacturing, power transmission, renewable energy, green hydrogen and green ammonia," she said. "The government has

also pursued semiconductor production across different technology segments, covering advanced chips as well as less sophisticated components that remain essential for a wide range of industries," she added. The expansion of these sectors is expected to create opportunities for private investors as India seeks to strengthen domestic manufacturing capabilities and develop infrastructure for emerging technologies, Sitharaman added. On infrastructure development, the Finance Minister said the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP), launched in late 2019, had crossed \$4.5 trillion.

She also pointed to the role of the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID) and the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIFF) in mobilising financing for large-scale projects.

Sitharaman said India had made substantial progress in building capacity across sectors over the past decade and expected the momentum to continue.

"Domestic capital was increasingly flowing into renewable energy, chip design, biosimilars, pharmaceutical manufacturing and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities. These investments reflect the broadening range of sectors attracting capital beyond traditional infrastructure and manufacturing," she added. The civil aviation sector, which she said was growing at around 16 per cent, was another area offering investment opportunities. The government expects investments across aviation and related services to support the expansion of India's transport infrastructure and industrial ecosystem.UNI

India at defining moment, unique opportunity to shape exponential tech like AI: IBM India & S Asia MD

Mumbai, Oct 13 : India is at a defining moment with a unique opportunity to shape exponential technologies like artificial intelligence, IBM India and South Asia Managing Director Sandip Patel said on Tuesday, noting that "when India builds, it builds for billions," which allows impact to scale.

Speaking at the IBM Think 2026 event in Mumbai, Patel said it is still 'day zero' of the AI revolution.

Most enterprises already run it, but only at the margins, a workflow here, a use case there, he said, and observed that this was valuable, but with 'marginal gains.'

The winners, he said, won't simply deploy more AI. They'll redesign how they work around agents, real-time data, automation, hybrid architecture and, above all, trust.

Enterprises that race ahead will be those who, in the AI era, fundamentally redesign how they work.

"...and that requires more than a frontier model or model discussions. It requires a new AI-led business model that truly brings together agents, real-time data, automation, hy-

brid architecture, and most importantly, trust," he said.

At the 'Think' keynote, Patel emphasised that India is at a defining moment.

"We have a unique opportunity to shape the future of exponential technologies like AI, because when India builds, it builds for billions, and when you build for billions, the impact scales for everyone," he elaborated.

A lot rests on data, he said. Beyond stored data lies data in motion, which can lose value within nanoseconds. A fraud-detection agent working on yesterday's data will always get it wrong, no matter how capable the model.

Hence IBM's push, including the Confluent acquisition, and what it has built with watsonx.data -- unite data at rest and in motion, to make timely governed information available to all application and AI systems.

As AI accelerates, so do vulnerabilities, Patel cautioned.

Business and government leaders alike are worried about what happens if regulations or geopolitics shift and the infrastructure their operations rely on



is no longer available on the terms they need, Patel said.

This is where sovereignty, or what he calls "digital swaraj" in the Indian context, comes in. IBM has been building layers of sovereignty and privacy across infrastructure environments.

What matters, he said, is making sovereignty operational by giving en-

NEWS

Bisleri International Promotes Responsible Waste Management as Official Hydration Partner of the Purple Umbrella Festival 2026

NEW DELHI OCT 13 : India (NewsVair) Bisleri International, India's leading packaged drinking water brand, collaborated with the Purple Umbrella Festival 2026 as its Official Hydration Partner. Held at Dr Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi, the festival brought together over 1,000 school students, and educators, climate experts, artists and innovators under the theme 'AI & Climate: Reimagining the Future Together.' The festival forms part of the Purple Umbrella Foundation's wider mission to empower one million young climate champions. Bisleri's flagship Bottles for Change initiative played a central role in sensitising young participants on responsible plastic waste management, recycling and circularity.

Bisleri International Promotes Responsible Waste Management as Official Hydration Partner of the Purple Umbrella Festival 2026

As part of the collaboration, Bisleri created a dedicated 'Greener Promise' experience designed to help students see plastic waste as a resource that can be recovered, recycled and reimagined. At the centre of the experience was Wings of Change, an art installation created from 2,000 used PET bottles, using creative expression to bring the idea of circularity to life. The company also showcased its Benches of Dreams, made from recycled plastic, offering participants a



tangible example of how discarded material can return to everyday use in a new form.

Speaking about the association, Dr Angelo George, CEO, Bisleri International, said, "It is vital to engage young people in conversations about environmental responsibility and inspire them to turn awareness into action.

The Purple Umbrella Festival offers students an opportunity to learn, exchange ideas and make more sustainable choices in their everyday lives. Through Bottles for Change, we continue to build awareness of responsible plastic waste management and recycling, encouraging everyone to play their part in creating a cleaner, greener planet."

Aligned with the Purple Umbrella Foundation's larger mission of empowering one million young climate champions, the festival encouraged young people to explore climate change as creators, problem-solvers and emerging climate champions. The-

atre, film, technology, innovation and dialogue were central to these interactions. The programme featured Theatre for Climate, short films and documentaries, student innovations, climate talks, a Climate, Health & Mental Wellbeing Conclave, and the Climate & Heritage Quiz.

Neeraj Kumar, Founder, Purple Umbrella Foundation, said, "The Purple Umbrella Festival is designed to encourage young people to think creatively about climate challenges and the role they can play in addressing them.

Bisleri's participation adds an important dimension to the festival by helping students understand the importance of responsible plastic waste management and recycling through hands-on experiences."

participation at the festival reinforced its commitment to advancing responsible plastic waste management and environmental awareness among young people. Through

Bottles for Change, the company continues to promote recycling and circularity while encouraging more responsible waste-management choices at the individual and community level.

About Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd.

With a legacy of over 50 years, Bisleri International Pvt. Ltd. has grown to become one of the largest premium beverage businesses in India. Being the makers of the country's largest-selling packaged drinking water, Bisleri follows a stringent process of 90 quality tests and a 10-stage purification. It remains true to its core value of providing consumers with pure, safe and healthy water.

Bisleri International has a strong presence with 130 operational plants and a robust distribution network of over 6,000 Distributors and 7,500 Distribution Trucks across India and UAE market. It offers a range of beverages that are produced for all occasions.

6.14-pc growth registered in freight loading in September 2026 over September 2025: Indian Railways

NEW DELHI, OCT 13 : The Indian Railways loaded 135.35 million tonnes of freight in September 2026, compared to 127.52 million tonnes in September 2025, registering a 6.14-per cent growth over the corresponding month last year, the Railway Board said on Tuesday.

"Several major commodity segments recorded strong growth during the month," a press note issued by the board said, adding that foodgrain loading grew by 25 per cent, clinker by 20 per cent, domestic container by 10 per cent and coal by 9 per cent.

Highlighting the efforts to step up domestic coal supply to power houses during September, it said, "The average number of coal rakes supplied per day increased to 443 rakes, compared to 397 rakes per day in September 2025, registering an



11.6 per cent growth."

"Freight revenue during September 2026 increased by Rs 1,266 crore over September 2025, registering a 9.3 per cent growth," the board said.

Outlining the growth on a cumulative basis, it said, "Indian Railways loaded

833.7 million tonnes of freight during April-September 2026, registering 4.1 per cent growth over the corresponding period last year. Freight revenue during the same period recorded 3.7 per cent growth."

"Indian Railways

recorded continued growth in freight and passenger segments during September 2026, with higher freight loading, and growth across several key commodity categories," the press note said, though it did not provide comparative data on passenger traffic. PTI