

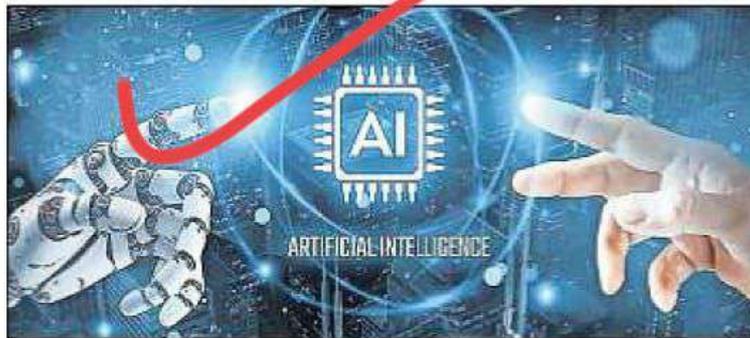
US tech giants bet big on India's AI future with \$67.5 bn investment surge

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (IANS)

INDIA'S digital journey reached a major turning point in 2025 as some of the world's biggest technology companies announced massive investments in the country's artificial intelligence and data centre ecosystem.

Firms such as Microsoft, Amazon, Google and Meta are together committing at least \$67.5 billion highlighting India's growing importance in the global digital economy.

These investments signal that India is no longer seen only as a large market for users. Instead, it is fast becoming a global hub where data is stored, processed and turned into advanced AI solutions. A recent report by 'The New York Times' noted that this scale of investment reflects strong confidence in India's long-



term digital growth.

The surge comes at a time when the world is generating enormous amounts of data. Artificial intelligence tools, cloud computing, digital payments, streaming services and billions of connected devices are producing data at an unprecedented pace. India, with the world's largest internet user base and a rapidly expanding digital economy, contributes a significant

share of global data traffic.

Until recently, however, the country had limited infrastructure to handle this load.

Technology giants have now moved quickly to fill that gap. Microsoft has pledged \$17.5 billion for AI-focused projects in India, including large data centres and advanced cloud infrastructure.

These facilities will support businesses, government plat-

forms and new AI applications. Amazon Web Services has announced plans to invest \$35 billion over the next five years to expand its cloud and AI operations across the country.

Google has committed \$15 billion and is working closely with Indian partners such as the Adani Group and Bharti Airtel.

This partnership model is helping global firms combine their technology with local infrastructure, energy networks and telecom services. Meta is also developing major facilities near Google's proposed sites, adding to the growth of large data centre clusters.

The country's digital public infrastructure, including Aadhaar, UPI and cloud-ready government systems, has made it easier to deploy AI and data services at scale.

'India producing 920 TPD energy from farm waste with 132 compressed biogas plants'

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (IANS)

UNION Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Hardeep Singh Puri, on Saturday said that India's compressed bio-gas and household energy infrastructure now has 132 compressed biogas plants, producing 920 tonnes per day (TPD).

"What was once waste is now powering progress. India has 132 Compressed Bio Gas plants producing 920 TPD today, with more capacity coming up under Sustainable Alternative Towards

Affordable Transportation (SATAT). Turning farm and organic waste into clean fuel, rural income and lower emissions under the leadership of PM Narendra Modi," Puri said in a social media post on X. The Minister added that India's broader household and fuel network has grown substantially, and currently spans across "33 crore Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) households including 10.35 crore Ujjwala connections, with an additional 25 lakh connections announced to take total to 10.60 crore connections".

Further, it included 1.56 crore piped natural gas (PNG) homes, 8,428 compressed natural gas (CNG) stations, a pipeline network of 25,429 km and growing LNG capacity.

The Minister said that the rapid expansion came from dedicated sustained effort, noting "trust is built through systems that work and deliver every single day." "India's energy infrastructure is designed around reliability,

efficiency and future readiness under the dynamic leadership of PM Narendra Modi," the X post further read.

The Government has taken various measures to enhance the availability of natural gas for power generation, which include expansion of the National Gas Grid to connect domestic gas sources as well as Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) terminals to power plants.



Hardeep Singh Puri

India's strong fundamentals to attract net FII inflows in 2026

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (IANS)

THE year 2025 saw record foreign institutional investor (FII) selling in India but significant improvement in the country's fundamentals is likely to attract net FII inflows in 2026, analysts said on Saturday.

In the month of December, FIIs sold equity worth Rs 30,332 crore through the exchanges.

This takes the total FII selling through the exchanges in 2025 to Rs 240,193 crore.

FIIs have bought or invested equity for Rs 73,909 crore through the primary market, taking the total net sell figure for 2025 to Rs 166,283 crore, as per NSDL data.

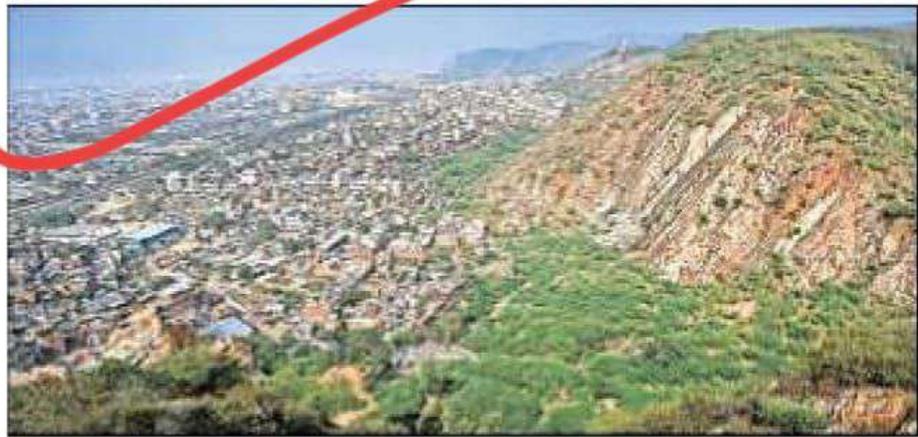
'One-third of Aravalli under ecological risk'

Independent study refutes Govt's 0.19 pc claim

JAIPUR, Jan 3 (PTI)

A PEOPLE-LED conservation collective, 'We Are Aravalli', on Saturday released a satellite audit claiming that nearly one-third of the Aravalli mountain range is under ecological risk, and demanded a complete ban on mining across the region.

According to the collective, an independent forensic analysis using satellite data and the Bristol FABDEM bare-earth model has found that 31.8 per cent of the Aravalli hill area lies below 100 metres in height, making it vulnerable to loss of legal protection under existing classifications. The group said the Government's assessment of the affected area at 0.19 per cent does not reflect the geological reality



The Aravalli Hills, as seen from the Sun temple at Galta ji, in Jaipur on Saturday. (PTI)

of the range. Climate scientist and environment activist Dr Sudhanshu, associated with the group, said the findings highlight a serious policy gap.

"Low-elevation hills are being wrongly dismissed as wasteland.

Scientifically, these ridges are critical groundwater recharge zones and natural dust barriers. Removing protection from them will accelerate desertification and water stress across north-west India," he said.

Indian Army to pioneer **ramjet-powered** 155 mm artillery shells

NEW DELHI, Jan 3 (IANS)

IN A landmark stride toward military self-reliance, the Indian Army is set to become the world's first Armed Force to operationally deploy ramjet-powered artillery shells for its 155 mm guns.

This initiative, part of India's broader Atmanirbharta (self-reliance) campaign, is being developed in collaboration with the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras.

The innovation promises to extend the range of conventional artillery shells by 30 to 50 per cent while maintaining their destructive power, marking a significant leap in battlefield capabilities. Artillery modernisation has long been a priority for the Indian Army.

The focus has been on enhancing the range and accuracy of



The ramjet technology promises to extend the range of conventional artillery shells by 30 to 50 pc while maintaining their destructive power, marking a significant leap in battlefield capabilities.

rockets and munitions to meet the demands of modern warfare. Conventional artillery shells, while lethal, are limited in range and precision compared to advanced missile systems.

By integrating ramjet technology into 155 mm shells, the Army aims to bridge this gap, giving its artillery units the ability to strike deeper targets with greater effectiveness. Ramjet propulsion is not new, having been successfully used in missiles for decades. However, applying it to artillery shells is a novel concept.

A ramjet is an air-breathing engine that requires no compressor or turbine. Instead, it relies on the forward motion of the projectile to compress incoming air. Once the shell reaches speeds of around Mach 2, or twice the speed of sound, the ramjet becomes operational. Fuel is then burned in the compressed air, producing thrust that sustains and extends the shell's flight. The project is being spearheaded by IIT Madras in part-

nership with the Army Technology Board (ATB). Developmental trials are currently underway, with successful tests already conducted at the Pokharan field firing ranges in Rajasthan.

These trials have demonstrated the feasibility of retrofitting ramjet modules onto existing 155 mm shells, meaning the technology can be applied across the Army's current inventory without requiring entirely new ammunition designs.

Once the technology is fully developed, it can be adapted for use in any of the Army's artillery systems, including the M777 ultra-light howitzer. This flexibility ensures that the innovation will not be restricted to a single platform but will enhance the overall artillery capability of the force.