

# THE ALVARIUM INSIDER





# ***Private Equity***

## ***Rusal to Acquire Stake in Indian Alumina Refinery***

Russian aluminum producer Rusal will buy a 26% share in India's Pioneer Aluminium Industries Limited for ₹2,010 crore (\$243.75 million). Rusal plans to eventually increase its ownership to 50%. The deal aims to help Rusal secure steady supplies of raw materials.

Source: reuters.com





# ***AI in Education & Technology Policy***

## ***Beijing Makes AI Education Mandatory in Schools to Shape Future Tech Leaders***

Beijing, China – The Beijing Municipal Education Commission has mandated that, beginning this fall, all primary and secondary schools provide at least eight hours of artificial intelligence (AI) instruction annually. This initiative introduces students as young as six to AI concepts, chatbot usage, and ethical considerations. Schools have the flexibility to integrate AI education into existing subjects like science and information technology or offer it as standalone courses. This move aims to cultivate future tech innovators and bolster China's position in the global AI landscape.



Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com)



# Government Initiatives



Source: [newsonair.gov.in](https://newsonair.gov.in)

## ***₹8,250 crore Fund for Creator Economy***

The Indian government has announced a ₹8,250 crore (\$1 billion) fund to strengthen the creator economy. This fund will help digital content creators with financing, skill training, and access to global markets.



Source: [indianexpress.com](https://indianexpress.com)

## ***Establishment of Indian Institute of Creative Technology (IICT)***

Alongside the fund, the government plans to set up the first IICT near Film City in Goregaon, Mumbai, with an allocation of ₹400 crore. This institute will focus on providing world-class education and training in media, entertainment, animation, gaming, and digital content creation.



# Startups

## ***Flipkart Co-Founder Binny Bansal Launches Opptra to Expand Consumer Brands in Asia***

Binny Bansal, co-founder of Flipkart, has launched Opptra, a tech-driven venture aimed at scaling consumer brands across Asia. Opptra operates as a master franchisee and licensing partner, offering end-to-end services such as product localization, distribution management, and AI-driven market expansion.



Flipkart co-founder Binny Bansal

Source: [business-standard.com](https://www.business-standard.com)



# ***EdTech | AI-driven Upskilling | Startup***

## ***Bengaluru-Based EdTech Startup Weskill Raises Pre-Seed Funding at ₹40 Crore Valuation***

Bengaluru-based AI-driven upskilling platform Weskill has raised an undisclosed amount in a pre-seed funding round, valuing the company at ₹40 crore (\$4.5 million). The funding was backed by high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and strategic investors.



Source: [indianstartupnews.com](https://indianstartupnews.com)



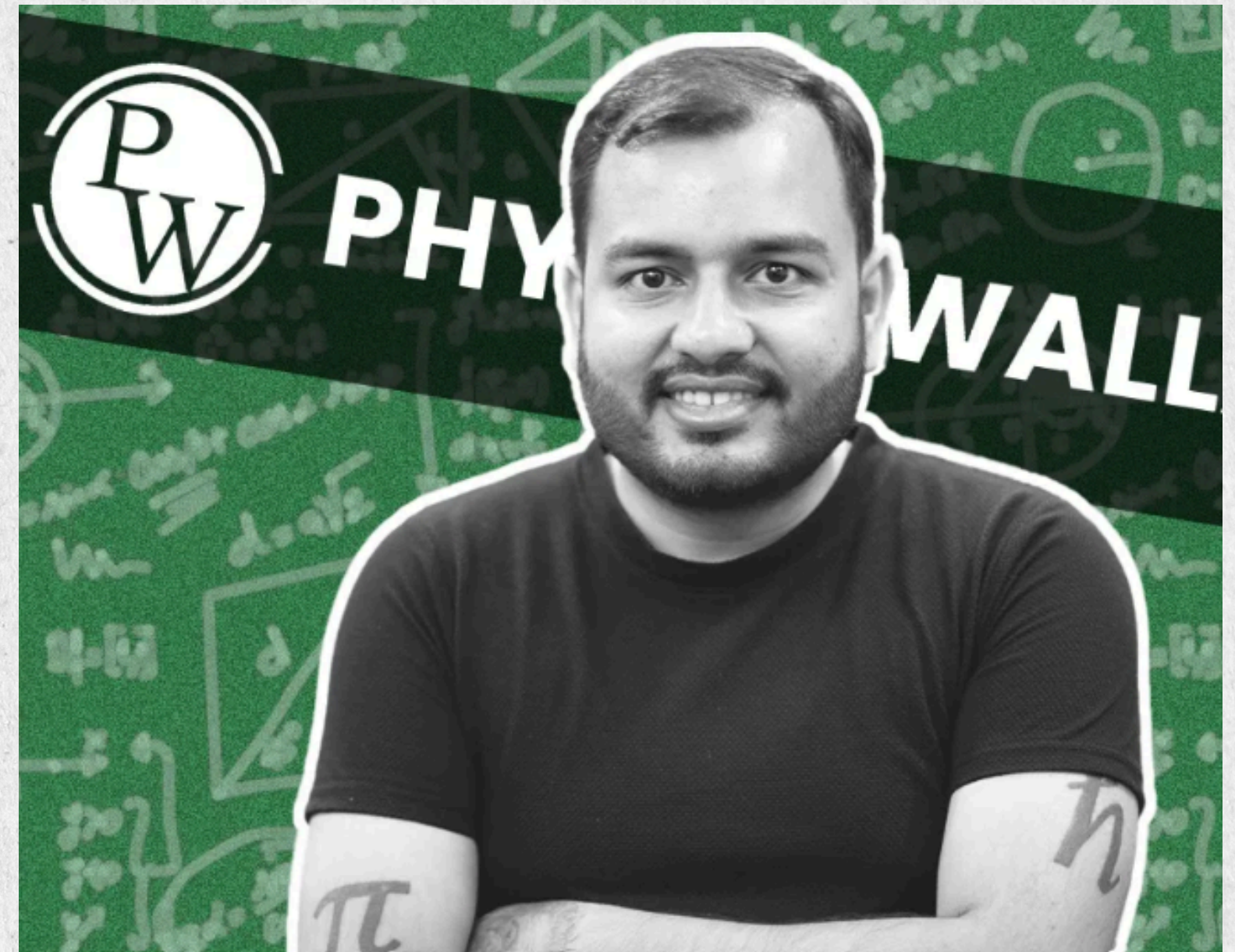
# ***EdTech | Corporate Governance | IPO Preparations***

## ***PhysicsWallah Strengthens Board Ahead of IPO***

Edtech unicorn PhysicsWallah (PW) has appointed three independent directors ahead of its IPO:

- Nitin Savara (Ex-Zomato Deputy CFO)
- Rachna Dikshit (Ex-RBI Regional Director)
- Deepak Amitabh (Ex-Bureaucrat)

The move aims to enhance corporate governance. PW has also issued bonus shares (1:35 ratio) and onboarded Kotak Mahindra Capital, Goldman Sachs, Axis Capital, and JP Morgan for IPO advisory.



Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com)



# ***EV & Automotive | IPO & Capital Markets***

## ***Ather Energy Revises IPO Valuation to ₹11,800 Cr Amid EV Slowdown***

Electric two-wheeler maker Ather Energy has lowered its IPO valuation to ₹11,800 crore, aiming to raise ₹3,700-4,000 crore. Founders Tarun Mehta, Swapnil Jain, and investors Tiger Global & NIIF will offload shares, while Hero MotoCorp (37% stake) stays invested.

The move comes as EV sales dropped 8% YoY, though Ather grew 20% YoY, trailing Ola Electric's 52% growth. Ola's IPO struggles (65% stock drop) add pressure on Ather's public debut.



Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com)



# Cybersecurity / Artificial Intelligence / Deepfake Detection

## **Neural Defend Secures \$600K Pre-Seed Funding for Deepfake Detection Tech**

Cybersecurity startup Neural Defend has raised \$600,000 (₹5.2 crore) in a pre-seed funding round, led by Inflection Point Ventures (IPV) with participation from MIT SBXI, Techstars San Francisco, and Soonicorn Ventures.

Founded in 2024 by Piyush Verma, Sivashankar Selvarajan, and Sumit Singh, Neural Defend develops AI-driven deepfake detection solutions for real-time, multimodal analysis. The company operates between San Francisco and India and is running pilot projects in New York and Singapore.

The funds will be used to enhance AI capabilities, support R&D, and accelerate product development to tackle deepfake cybersecurity threats.



Source: vccircle.com



# ***Fintech | Cross-Border Banking***

## ***BRISKPE Secures RBI Approval to Operate as Cross-Border Payment Aggregator***

Mumbai, India – BRISKPE, a Mumbai-based fintech company specializing in cross-border payment solutions, has received in-principle authorization from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to function as a Payment Aggregator for Cross-Border (PA-CB) transactions under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007.



Source: [electronicpaymentsinternational.com](https://www.electronicpaymentsinternational.com)



# ***Fintech / Neobanking / Cross-Border Banking***

## ***Zolve Raises ₹2,050 Cr in Series B to Expand Global Banking***

Neobank Zolve, founded by Raghunandan G, has secured ₹2,050 crore (\$251M) in Series B funding, with ₹417 crore (\$51M) in equity and ₹1,633 crore (\$200M) in debt. Investors include Creaegis, HSBC, SBI Investment, and Accel.

Zolve, serving 750,000+ users, offers cross-border banking solutions for Indians moving to the U.S. The funds will fuel expansion into Canada, UK, and Australia and introduce auto, personal, and education loans.



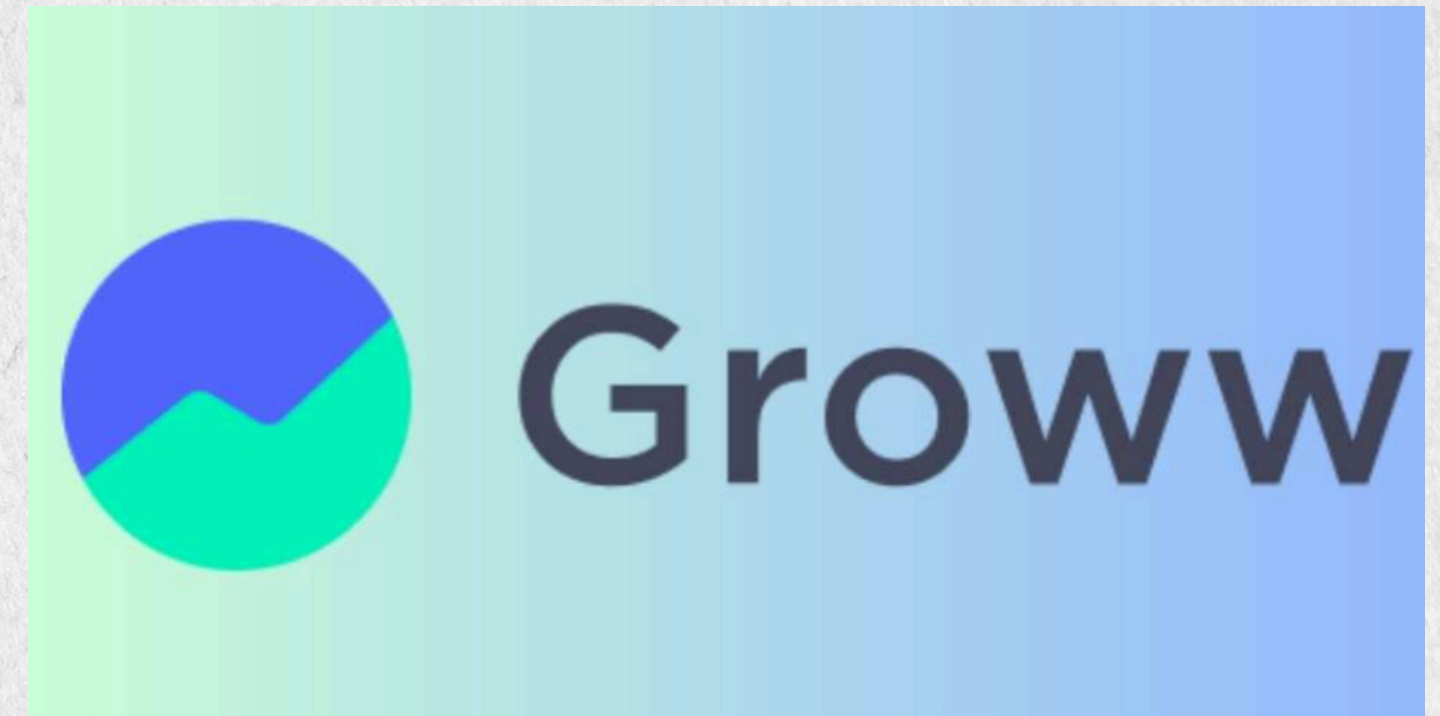
Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com)



# ***WealthTech | Fintech | M&A***

## ***Groww in Talks to Acquire WealthTech Startup Fisdom for ₹1,155–₹1,320 Crore***

Investment platform Groww is reportedly in advanced discussions to acquire wealthtech startup Fisdom, valuing the company between ₹1,155 crore and ₹1,320 crore (\$140–\$160 million). The acquisition aims to enhance Groww's presence in the wealth management segment. Founded in 2015 by Subramanya SV and Anand Dalmia, Fisdom provides stock and mutual fund investments, portfolio management, and wealth management services. This move aligns with Groww's broader strategy to diversify its services and strengthen its position in India's competitive fintech market.



Source: [economictimes.indiatimes.com](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com)



# Beverage / FMCG / Consumer Brands

## **Lahori Zeera Hits ₹312 Cr Revenue in FY24; Profits Triple**

India's fast-growing beverage brand Lahori Zeera reported a 47.2% revenue jump to ₹312 crore in FY24, with profits tripling to ₹22.5 crore from ₹7.6 crore in FY23. Strong sales of Lahori Zeera, Lahori Nimboo, and Lahori Shikanji drove this growth.



Source: [electronicpaymentsinternational.com](https://electronicpaymentsinternational.com)

### **Key Figures:**

- ✓ Procurement Costs: ₹184 crore (66% of expenses)
- ✓ Employee Costs: ₹27 crore (+68.8%)
- ✓ ROCE: 15.36% | EBITDA Margin: 13.65%

CEO Saurabh Munjal targets ₹500 crore revenue in FY25, with potential funding of ₹400-450 crore from Motilal Oswal.



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