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With a revenue of over Rs 26,600 crore IRFC becomes India's third-largest government NBFC

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Synopsis
Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) has been awarded Navratna status by the Government of India, marking its significant financial achievements, with over Rs 26,600 crore revenue and Rs 6,400 crore profit as of March 2024. IRFC continues to play a pivotal role in financing railway infrastructure, while also expanding into sectors linked to railways such as power and mining.

ANI

Representative image.

With a revenue of over Rs 26,600 crore and a profit after tax exceeding Rs 6,400 crore as of March 31, 2024, Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), a key financial institution under the Ministry of Railways, becomes India's third-largest government NBFC.

Earlier this week IRFC has been awarded the prestigious Navratna status by the Government of India.

IRFC has played a key role in funding nearly 80 per cent of Indian Railways' rolling stock and was the first CPSE to issue a 30-year tenor bond in overseas markets.

As of December 31, 2024, IRFC has a market capitalization of over Rs 2,00,000 crore, an asset under management (AUM) of Rs 4.61 lakh crore, a net worth of around Rs 52,000 crore, and a balance sheet size of more than Rs 4.81 lakh crore.

Established on December 12, 1986, as a 100 per cent government-owned entity, IRFC has been instrumental in financing the expansion and modernisation of Indian Railways. Over the years, it has evolved into a major financial player, registering as a Public Financial Institution under the Companies Act in 1993, an NBFC under RBI in 1998, and later as an NBFC-Infrastructure Finance Company (NBFC-IFC) in 2010.

In March 2018, it was granted Mini-Ratna Category-I status. The company was listed on stock exchanges in January 2021 at an IPO price of Rs 26, which has now surged to around Rs 140.

Expressing his happiness on this achievement, Manoj Kumar Dubey, CMD & CEO of IRFC, said, "Receiving Navratna status is a reflection of IRFC's financial strength and its commitment to supporting India's **railway infrastructure**. This recognition further motivates us to expand our capabilities and contribute more meaningfully to the nation's growth."

Beyond its core role in railway asset financing, IRFC is expanding into sectors with strong forward and backward linkages to railways, such as power generation and transmission, mining, fuel, coal, warehousing, telecom, and hospitality.

The company has already secured funding for 20 BOBR rakes for **NTPC**, worth Rs700 crore, and was recently declared the lowest bidder to finance a Rs3,190 crore loan for Patratu Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (PVUNL), a subsidiary of NTPC.

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Additionally, NTPC Renewable Energy Limited (NTPC REL), a wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC Green Energy Limited (NTPC GEL), has accepted IRFC's bid for Rs7,500 crore to finance a Rupee Term Loan (RTL) against its Request for Proposal.

IRFC is also actively exploring opportunities to fund rolling stock requirements for Indian Railways customers, container train operators, renewable energy needs of Indian Railways, Metro Rail projects, port rail connectivity, and PPP projects sanctioned by Indian Railways.

"We are committed to providing the most cost-effective financing solutions for capital-intensive railway projects. The whole railway ecosystem is on Capex upswing catering to the appetite of the largest population of the world in terms of freight and passenger movements both. As India moves towards a USD 10 trillion economy in the Amrit Kaal, IRFC will play an even greater role in mobilizing resources for infrastructure growth and modernization," said Dubey.

With its growing financial strength and strategic vision, IRFC remains at the forefront of financing India's railway infrastructure, ensuring sustained growth and long-term value for stakeholders.

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NEXT STORY

Building tomorrow: How incubators and accelerators power Dubai's thriving startup scene

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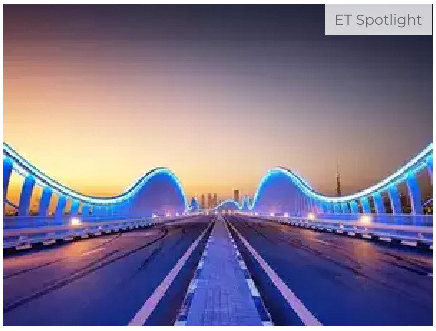
Synopsis

Tracing the role of incubators and accelerators—the backbone of Dubai's startup success story—in offering not just funding but also mentorship, networking opportunities, and access to cutting-edge infrastructure.



ET Spotlight

"Imagine an Indian software engineer teaming up with a Ukrainian hacker and a McKinsey-trained sales leader—these synergies create strong, well-rounded companies that are difficult to replicate elsewhere," says Prashant K (PK) Gulati, Chairman Emeritus, TiE Dubai. Gulati was speaking about Dubai's diverse ecosystem, which has been shaped by strategic moves such as the golden visa and open immigration policies that attract the best talent from India and other global markets.

For Indian entrepreneurs, Dubai presents a unique business opportunity—a market that is both capital-efficient and globally connected, providing seamless access to the Middle East, Africa, and Europe.

As of February 2025, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is home to over 37,800 companies, according to data intelligence platform Tracxn.

The Rasmal MENA October 2024 Funding Report highlights that the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) startup ecosystem raised $192.77 million across 45 startups. Dubai stood out, securing $62.62 million across 14 startups. Indeed, Dubai has reinforced its position as a premier startup hub, ranking first in the Gulf, with a startup ecosystem valued at over $23 billion by the end of 2023, per Startup Genome.

Incubators and accelerators: Catalysing Dubai's startup engine

As Dubai firmly positions itself as a global startup hub, the role of a robust network of incubators and accelerators in identifying, nurturing, and scaling startups couldn't be overstressed. According to data released by online data platform Statista, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) led the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) as the top incubator for startups, with over 5,600 registered by the second quarter of 2024, as cited in Emirates News Agency - WAM.

Over the past decade, initiatives such as in5, Dubai Technology Entrepreneur Campus (DTEC), and the Mohammed Bin Rashid Innovation Fund (MBRIF) have played a critical role in nurturing innovation and providing early-stage startups with the resources they need to scale and thrive, including those led by Indian entrepreneurs.

Today, in5, a Technology, Electronic Commerce, and Media (TECOM) Group subsidiary, is home to success stories such as Halo AI, an artificial intelligence-driven platform streamlining brand-influencer collaborations. In January 2025, Halo AI secured Arab Emirates Dirham (AED) 22 million in investments at the '1 Billion Pitches' competition, supporting its expansion across the MENA region.

Additionally, in5 has incubated Tabby, a buy-now-pay-later (BNPL) platform recognised as the region's first fintech unicorn, and Detectiome, a healthtech startup pioneering the first multi-cancer detection test tailored for Middle Eastern populations.

"Nurturing globally impactful innovation through the homegrown talent pool is a crucial pillar of in5's strategy, and we promote this global mindset within our community to foster start-up success," explains Majed Al Suwaidi, Senior

Vice President at TECOM Group PJSC, on behalf of in5. Notably, in5 has supported over 1,000 startups, which have collectively raised AED 7.8 billion in funding since its inception in 2013, contributing to Dubai's broader efforts to foster sustainable startup growth.

"We understand that industry nuances—be it evolving media consumption habits or sustainable commercialisation in the design and science sectors—significantly influence the success and longevity of startups in the tech, media, design, and science sectors," says Suwaidi.

DTEC, the largest technology innovation hub in the Middle East, supports fintech, artificial intelligence (AI), and blockchain startups by providing them with an enabling environment to scale. Meanwhile, MBRIF offers funding and strategic advisory to promising startups, reducing financial barriers and encouraging innovation across key sectors such as sustainability, logistics, and healthtech. MBRIF has supported high-potential startups with funding and strategic mentorship.

"When evaluating startups for inclusion in the MBRIF programme, we assess several key factors, including the team's composition, the innovation behind the product or service, its potential to create tangible value for the UAE economy, and its broader social impact. These elements help us determine whether the startup has the foundation to successfully scale in global markets," says Mohamed Al Fayed, CEO and Co-founder of GrubTech and Advisory and Decision Committee Member of Mohammed Bin Rashid Innovation Fund.

Startup incubators in Dubai are widely recognised for their strong support of early-stage ventures, though there is growing interest in enhancing pathways for long-term scaling and growth. "Multi-stage support is key, and at in5, we've contributed to the incubation of remarkable regional and global success stories that reaffirm this strategy. We recognise that our focus as the region's leading startup incubator must be to ensure not only the early-stage survival of startups but to consistently offer resources and guidance that transforms their promising concepts and ideas into scalable commercial successes," says Suwaidi.

Bridging the gap: How Dubai identifies and scales startups

The process of identifying high-potential startups involves a rigorous selection mechanism focused on scalability, innovation, and market demand. Incubators and accelerators actively scout for disruptive business ideas, providing them with access to corporate partnerships, regulatory guidance, and investor networks.

Once onboarded, startups benefit from tailored growth programmes, including pitch training, legal and regulatory support, and mentorship from industry experts. These structured interventions significantly increase their chances of securing investment and achieving long-term sustainability. Entrepreneurs from India's fintech, SaaS, and AI sectors are increasingly looking at Dubai as a springboard for global expansion, leveraging the city's business-friendly regulations and access to capital.

"Dubai's startup ecosystem has been a game-changer for Sav, providing the right mix of regulatory support, access to capital, and global accelerator networks. Progressive regulators, including CB UAE and The Dubai Financial Services Authority (DFSA), have been core enablers, making it easier to launch and scale in the region," says Purvi Munot, Co-founder and CEO at Sav. Munot also credits initiatives such as the Mohammed Bin Rashid Innovation Fund (MBRIF) by the Ministry of Finance—Sav's first regional accelerator—and recognition from the Ministry of Economy's UAE Future 100 list to have reinforced this AI-led fintech startup's credibility.

Investor sentiments: Why Dubai is a hotbed for startup investment

The presence of major accelerator-backed startups that have successfully scaled further reinforces investor confidence in the ecosystem.

Noor Sweid, Founding Managing Partner of Global Ventures, views Dubai as the ideal testbed for innovation and a gateway to global success, highlighting strong infrastructure, collaborative regulatory approach, and public-private partnerships that make Dubai attractive to international investors, in an interview released by **Business Dubai**.

"Scalability is often misunderstood—it's not a one-size-fits-all metric," Gulati tells Economictimes.com. "However, the true measure of scale isn't solely about numbers—it's about value per user. The Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) is a crucial factor that investors consider," he cautions, urging investors to evaluate both the "raw scale" and the "value" of each transaction and choosing markets where startups can generate sustainable revenue.

The road ahead

A recent study by Dubai SME, an agency of the Department of Economic Development (DED), found that startups now make up **50%** of the total companies registered in the emirate while employing half its workforce, as noted in Invest Dubai's **A Guide to Dubai's Start-up Incubators**. This growth aligns with Dubai's macroeconomic strategy and vision to transition into a knowledge-based economy with a strong focus on fostering India-UAE startup collaborations.

For startups looking to expand into Dubai, Gulati recommends keeping the focus on having a "strong product" and "execution speed and adaptability", adding that Dubai allows startups to "reach Product-Market Fit (PMF) faster and at a smaller scale, enabling profitability earlier than in larger markets".

With strong government backing, world-class incubators driving scalable innovation, an ever-expanding network of investors and a thriving India-UAE investment corridor, the emirate is on a clear path to becoming one of the world's leading hubs for entrepreneurship and ultimate launchpad for Indian entrepreneurs looking for global success.

Click this **link** for more on Business in Dubai.

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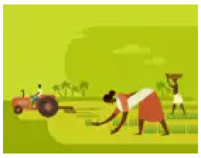

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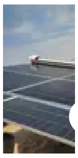

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