Hospitals line up expansion plans with 34,000 new beds

Leading chains plan ₹40K crore infra revival to close capacity gap over next 3–5 years

ANJALI SINGH
Mumbai, 7 April

India's leading hospital chains are undertaking aggressive expansion plans over the next three to five years to bridge the widening demand-supply gap in the country's healthcare infrastructure.

According to industry estimates, the private sector is expected to add over 34,000 new beds cumulatively by 2028–29 (FY29), entailing an investment of around ₹40,000 crore.

Geographically, the expansion is heavily concentrated in North and South India, accounting for roughly 46 per cent and 30 per cent of the new capacity, respectively, followed by West India at 13 per cent, and the East and Central regions at 11 per cent.

A significant 38–40 per cent of this new capacity, equating to around 14,000 beds, is targeted towards Tier-II and Tier-III cities, indicating a broadening reach beyond the major metropolitan areas.

This comes amid a steady rise in healthcare demand driven by growing urbanisation, an increase in lifestyle-related ailments, and greater health awareness after the pandemic. The private sector currently accounts for 60–65 per cent of hospital beds in India. With public health infrastructure struggling to keep pace, private providers are stepping in to fill the void, announcing sizeable capacity expansion plans to tap into this unmet demand.

According to industry estimates, the expansion will entail a capital outlay of over ₹40,000 crore — a mix of greenfield, brownfield, and acquisition-led growth — backed by internal accruals, existing cash reserves, and incremental debt.

Apollo Hospitals, one of the largest private healthcare providers in India, is rolling out a two-phase expansion to add 3,512 beds — a 34.5 per cent increase from its current capacity of 10,169 beds. The total investment earmarked is ₹6,100 crore.

Phase I, expected by 2025–26 (FY26), will lead to the addition of 1,737 beds in Pune, Kolkata, Hyderabad, and Gurugram at an investment of ₹2,880 crore.

Phase II, which will commence from FY26 to FY29, will add 1,775 beds in Chennai, Varanasi, Mumbai, and Lucknow with an investment of ₹3,220 crore.

"We are focused on expanding our presence and enhancing specialised centres of excellence across key locations," said Suneeta Reddy, managing director (MD), Apollo Hospitals Enterprise. "Better asset utilisation in existing facilities, volume growth, and high-end tertiary care will drive revenue, average revenue per occupied bed, and earnings before interest, tax, depreciation, and amortisation growth."

Apollo's expansion is largely focused on metropolitan and Tier-I cities, leveraging its brand recall and integrated care ecosystem. The group is also open to selective Tier-II expansion, particularly where it has demonstrated strong return on capital employed.

Max Healthcare is planning to increase its bed capacity by 76 per cent by 2027–28 (FY28), adding roughly 3,700 beds to its existing base of 5,036 beds as of the third quarter of 2024–25. The planned capital expenditure (capex) stands at ₹5,000 crore for FY26–28. About 76 per cent of the new capacity will be in metro cities, while the remainder will cater to Tier-II cities. Max has land parcels with the potential to add over 4,000 beds after FY28, though formal plans for these are still under development.

"We have outlined an estimated capital outlay of ₹5,000 crore to be incurred over the next three years," said Abhay Soi, chairman and MD, Max Healthcare. "About 76 per cent of the new capacity will come up in metro cities, with the rest in Tier-II locations."

Gurugram's Artemis Medicare is set to more than double its current bed strength of over 800, targeting a total of over 2,000 beds in the next five years. The expansion will focus on the Delhi–National Capital Region and select Tier-II cities in North India. The company has already raised ₹330 crore from the International Finance Corporation and is planning projects that will bring in 800–1,000 new beds, including a hospital with over 300 beds in Raipur.

"This growth will fill healthcare gaps in large northern cities, reduce patient load at urban hospitals, and increase access in underserved regions," said Ashutosh Jha, chief — strategy, M&A, investor relations and organisation growth, Artemis Hospitals.

Mumbai-based Jupiter Life Line Hospitals is investing ₹1,350 crore to build three greenfield hospitals in West India, adding 1,300 beds — effectively doubling its current capacity.

Ankit Thakker, executive director and chief executive officer, Jupiter Life Line Hospitals, said, "Our focus remains on Tier-I cities in West India, where demand for advanced healthcare is growing rapidly."

According to credit rating agency Icra, the addition of 34,000 new beds by FY29 represents a 2.3–2.5 per cent increase in the country's private hospital bed base, necessitating capex exceeding ₹40,000 crore. This investment is expected to be financed through a combination of internal accruals, existing cash reserves and incremental debt, supporting a diverse range of expansion strategies including greenfield projects, brownfield developments, and strategic acquisitions.

■ Growth driven by urbanisation, lifestyle diseases, and post-pandemic awareness

APOLLO	MAX
3,512 beds	3,700 beds
₹6,100 crore	₹5,000 crore

ARTEMIS	JUPITER
Doubling to 2,000+ beds	1,300 beds
₹330 crore raised from IFC	₹1,350 crore investment

■ Adds 2.3–2.5% to private bed base (Icra)

CCI seeks more info in plaint against qcom companies

RUCHIKA CHITRAVANSHI & SHARLEEN D'SOUZA
New Delhi/Mumbai, 7 April

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has sought additional information from the All India Consumer Products Distributors Federation (AICPDF) on its complaint against quick commerce companies, according to people in the know. The AICPDF had filed a complaint with CCI on behalf of its president, Dhairyashil Patil, against Blinkit, Zepto, and Instamart last month.

According to a source, CCI has asked the distributor's body for details on relevant market share of each of the quick commerce players in the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) industry. It has also sought clarity on whether the FMCG companies have any exclusive agreement for distribution.

The CCI has asked the complainant for evidence of discriminatory pricing by any of the players from any consumer based on consumer location, device type or purchasing behaviour, and also evidence of any product being sold below cost price.

The antitrust watchdog has also asked for evidence to show that quick commerce players have tie-in-agreements which has resulted in them bundling products and selling the same as a package.

The complaint, seen by *Business Standard,* alleged that "quick commerce companies were indulging in practices of deep discounts and exclusive supply and distribution agreements, thereby engaging in unfair pricing and affecting the competition in the market for selling consumer goods."

The CCI, once it receives a formal complaint, can order an investigation if it is satisfied with the information shared. It also has the option to seek comments from the parties named in a complaint or the party that has filed the complaint before ordering an investigation.

Last year, the AICPDF had written to the Union Ministry of Finance over fund utilisation and fund accumulation by quick-commerce companies and deep discounting of goods on their platforms.

In October last year, it had written a letter to CCI over various issues the traditional supply chain is starting to face due to the rapid growth of quick commerce which includes the appointment of these platforms as direct distributors of FMCG items by several companies.

The federation had also written to the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India after which the food sector governing body asked ecommerce and quick-commerce food business operators to ensure a minimum shelf life of 30 per cent or 45 days before expiry of products at the time of delivery to consumers.

Tomato tumble trims veg thali cost

HARSH KUMAR
New Delhi, 7 April

The cost of preparing a home-cooked thali declined in March, with the price of a vegetarian thali falling 3 per cent year-on-year, while the cost of a non-vegetarian thali remained unchanged. The shift reflects a sharp drop in vegetable prices — especially tomatoes — which contributed to the overall reduction, according to Crisil Intelligence.

"Vegetable prices remained subdued in March, with onion, potato, and tomato prices falling month-on-month (M-o-M) due to fresh arrivals. However, we expect prices to bottom out and begin rising in April, as seen last year in the case of potatoes and tomatoes. Onion prices are likely to be supported by strong export demand, while potato prices are expected to rise as cold storage stocks enter the market. Tomato prices, too, may see a moderate increase due to lower rabi arrivals," said Pushan Sharma, director — research at Crisil Intelligence.

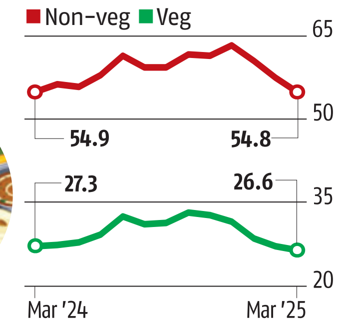
The drop in the vegetarian thali's cost was driven primarily by a 34 per cent fall in tomato prices, which declined to ₹21/kilogram (kg) in March 2025 from ₹32/kg in March 2024. This was partly offset by price increases of 2 per cent for potatoes, 6 per cent for onions, and 19 per cent for vegetable oil.

The non-vegetarian thali's cost remained flat due to a 2 per cent rise in broiler prices, which make up about half the total cost. While the sharp fall in tomato prices helped prevent an increase, rising prices of other ingredients counterbalanced the decline.

On an M-o-M basis, the cost of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian thalis declined in March 2025 by 2 per cent and roughly 5 per cent, respectively.

A FULL PLATE

Cost of preparing a thali at home (in ₹)



Source: Crisil

5-day banking week unlikely this year

HARSH KUMAR
New Delhi, 7 April

The Union finance ministry has indicated that the proposed policy of a five-day banking week will not be implemented in 2025-26 (FY26), citing potential disruptions to banking operations, according to sources.

A senior government official said: "While discussions with the Indian Banking Association (IBA) are ongoing, the five-day banking initiative is unlikely to come into effect this year."

The official added that such a change could negatively impact banking services, particularly on Saturdays, which is a critical day for many customers to complete their banking transactions.

"Many customers prefer to visit branches on Saturdays for their physical banking needs, even with the increasing digital presence," the official noted, stressing on the importance of maintaining in-branch service.

The issue is compounded by the current challenges in the banking sector, especially the difficulties banks face in acquiring and retaining deposits. The official pointed out that efforts to boost business through door-to-door campaigns and physical presence have become vital to maintaining growth.

The comments follow calls from bank employees' unions for the implementation of a five-day work week.

In March 2024, the All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC) raised concerns, stating that the unions had consistently demanded that the IBA ensure the introduction of a five-day work week as part of the Bipartite Settlement.

The unions had signed a memorandum of understanding with the IBA in December 2023, calling for Saturdays to be declared holidays under the Negotiable Instruments Act.

AIBOC said that IBA had recommended the proposed change to the government, which is now awaiting approval from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Centre.

A senior official from the IBA said: "We are in continuous talks with both the government and employee unions, but as of now, no final decision has been reached."

The demand for a five-day work week comes amid a shift in the banking industry's staffing pattern. Official data shows public sector banks (PSBs) have seen a drastic reduction in workforce over the past decade.

The number of clerks has dropped from 398,801 in 2013 to 246,965 in 2024, a decrease of 151,836 employees. Sub-staff numbers have dropped from 153,628 in 2013 to 94,348 in 2024. Overall, PSBs have seen a reduction of 139,811 employees in this period.

Conversely, private sector banks have seen a substantial increase in staff, with employee numbers rising from 229,124 in 2013 to 846,530 in 2024 — an increase of 617,406.

In March, Rajya Sabha member Sandosh Kumar P of the Communist Party of India asked the finance minister to address bank unions' demands, including filling vacancies in PSBs and five-day work week.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour of a Rajya Sabha session, Kumar said the United Forum of Bank Unions — an umbrella organisation of nine unions — had called for a 48-hour bank strike on March 24-25 to press for their demands.

One of the major concerns raised was the shortage of staff in PSBs, he said.

BEHIND THE SCENE

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- According to official data, PSBs have seen a drastic reduction in workforce over last decade
- From **398,801** clerks in 2013, the number dropped to **246,965** in 2024
- Sub-staff levels declined from **153,628** in 2013 to **94,348** in 2024

[TECH DIGEST]

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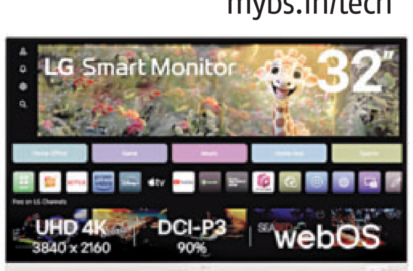

LG unveils 4K UHD smart monitors in India

LG has unveiled a new lineup of smart monitors in India, including the 27SR75U and 32SR75U models. According to the company, these monitors deliver 4K UHD resolution and are integrated with webOS23, enabling access to popular streaming services and offering over 100 free channels via the "LG Channels" service. Priced at ₹32,000 onwards, the new models are available on the company's official website and Amazon.

Sony LinkBuds Fit launched

Sony has introduced its latest earbuds in India, the LinkBuds Fit. This new model comes equipped with features like high-resolution audio support (LDAC), advanced noise cancellation, and AI-driven "ultra-clear calls." The Sony LinkBuds Fit are priced at ₹18,990 and available in Black, White, and Green variants.

Samsung releases One UI 7 for Galaxy S24 series

Samsung has started rolling out its Android 15-based One UI 7 update to earlier models. Initially launched in January with the Galaxy S25 lineup, the One UI 7 version introduces redesigned app icons, enhanced animations, expanded personalisation features, and new Galaxy AI capabilities for supported devices. The update is being released in stages.