



Google intensifies cloud war, ties enterprise deals to its AI

Google is using its in-house AI models, platforms to win long-term contracts with Indian cos

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Six years after shifting its focus beyond consumer applications to enterprise deals, Google's cloud division in India is using in-house artificial intelligence models and platforms to win long-term contracts.

In an interview with *Mint*, Sashikumar Sreedharan, managing director of Google Cloud India, said the company is increasingly seeing businesses in the country agree to long-term deals, as long as the propositions are backed by how they can use Google's Gemini suite of AI models and apps.

"India is a large, growing market where enterprises, especially small and medium businesses (SMBs), are continuing to digitize. They're also seeking digital transformation deals where they get access to latest AI tools that work on top of their own data. Add agentic AI capabilities to this, and we're actively pursuing cloud deals where Gemini plays key roles," Sreedharan said.

This, he added, is true for both businesses that are already engaged with other cloud services as well as new clients—India is a growing market, so there's no shortage of business here."

On 5 May, market research firm Synergy Group pegged Google Cloud as India's third-largest cloud services provider with 14% share behind Amazon Web Services (28%) and Microsoft Azure (21%).

Sreedharan, however, did not share how large Google's India cloud deals are with businesses. "For the longest time, our cloud business was consumer-led. It has only been six years since we ventured into the enterprise space seriously. Of course, this means that the consumer business is still larger, but enterprise demand is growing fast and steadily."



Sashikumar Sreedharan, managing director, Google Cloud India.

As per data from Tofler and Tracxn, Google Cloud India reported revenue of ₹2,070 crore in FY25. The company is yet to file its FY26 financials.

Sreedharan took over the top job at Google Cloud India last July. He also serves as managing director of Micro-

In an interview with *Mint*, Chandok had said that its enterprise clients, such as Apollo Healthcare and State Bank of India, were increasing their operations on Microsoft Azure driven by Copilot—the company's equivalent of Google's Gemini AI platform.

IT is early days still for India's push to publish FY26 results. Google believes its enterprise deals have a larger appeal, with Gemini as a frontier AI platform.

GOOGLE Cloud India reported ₹2,070 crore revenue in FY25, and is yet to publish FY26 results.

soft India until August 2023. Interestingly, on 5 December, Microsoft South Asia president Puneet Chandok offered a similar picture for how the company was approaching cloud deals with businesses in India.

Google, however, believes its enterprise deals have a larger appeal, with Gemini being one of the world's prominent frontier AI platforms alongside OpenAI's GPT and Anthropic's Claude. "It's only when you look at the bene-

fits of automating tasks such as invoicing and other internal processes with agentic AI that you realize the sweeping long-term benefits of cloud deals. We have both new-age startups and old SMBs keen on the cost benefits of automation, which is helping us win enterprise deals for our India cloud business at a fast pace," Sreedharan said.

However, the executive admitted that it still remains early days for India's push to enforce sovereign cloud adoption at scale. As a result, Google's own sovereign cloud offering has also remained limited in terms of its revenue contribution.

"We have leading banks and other public sector users being keen on sovereign cloud platforms. But, it is still early days—policies such as the Digital Personal Data Protection Act, which mandate varying degrees of localization, are still being enforced. Once these become the norm, we'll certainly see sovereign cloud demand from the public sector play up," he added.

Sovereign cloud refers to cloud-based IT storage and processing platforms that are built, operated, and serviced in India, without being directly accessible from outside the country's borders.

Industry analysts said the approach to crack long-term cloud deals by using AI as the key selling point is in line with how Indian businesses strike deals.

"Google and Microsoft have bundled productivity and work suites of applications, where they are increasingly integrating AI. This makes them different from Amazon, which does not have a productivity suite—but uses its open approach of integrating any AI platform into its cloud as its selling point," said Kashyap Kompella, veteran technology analyst and founder of consultancy firm, RPA2AI Research.

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Ashok Leyland tightens costs, accelerates overseas push

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Ashok Leyland is tightening costs, reinforcing supply chains and accelerating its overseas push, including into Indonesia and other Asean (Association of South-east Asian Nations) markets, betting on operational discipline to sustain growth after a year of double-digit earnings expansion, according to top company executives.

India's third-largest commercial vehicle firm reported a 10% year-on-year rise in net profit to ₹3,721 crore and a 16% increase in revenue to ₹56,362 crore for FY26. In the war-hit January-March quarter (Q1FY26), net profit rose 11% to ₹1,381 crore while revenue increased 17% to ₹14,605 crore.

Volumes supported the performance. Truck and bus sales rose 12% to 126,745 units, while light commercial vehicle volumes increased 18% to 74,448 units in FY26.

Managing costs and supply chain resilience is now central to the company's approach after the pandemic-led disruption, said Dheeraj Hinduja, chairman of Ashok Leyland, in a post-results interaction with *Mint*.

"Post-covid, we realized that we need to have a supply chain that is able to support us, come what may, in terms of the different scenarios that we might face. So from that perspective, I think there was good learning from the past," Hinduja said. "But as required, I would say, we are taking cost measures as well. We are looking at, without affecting the long-term growth prospects of the com-



Dheeraj Hinduja, chairman, Ashok Leyland.

pany when it comes to capex, Chief financial officer K. M. Balaji said cost measures are being driven through value engineering, e-sourcing and commercial negotiations. "It includes even looking at the component design, weight, as well as the materials that are used in that shape," Balaji explained. He has also been elevated to the board of directors for a period of two years.

The company has also set up cross-functional operational teams to improve coordination and reduce supply-chain disruptions. Together, these measures and higher volumes have supported growth, executives said.

Peer Tata Motors Ltd reported a 5% decline in consolidated net profit in FY26 to ₹3,030 crore. Excluding a ₹1,428-crore loss on investments linked to its equity stake in Tata Capital, profit rose 9% to ₹4,458 crore. Revenue increased 44% to ₹83,855 crore, supported by 14% growth in domestic and international volumes to 428,000 units.

Ashok Leyland's international sales rose 19% to 18,082 units, although disruption at its United Arab Emirates facility pulled down volumes in Q4 by 3% to 5,322 units.

Hinduja struck an optimistic note on FY27 growth prospects even as West Asia conflict weighs on demand. To support its overseas expansion, Ashok Leyland has set up a wholly owned subsidiary in Indonesia, where Tata Motors and Mahindra and Mahindra Ltd had secured orders for more than 105,000 LCVs earlier this year.

"It is one of the largest markets and we are making a start over there, exploring different options of products. And we have said that Bahrain, Middle East (West Asia), Africa, Saarc, Asean is our next major hub that we are trying to break into. So we are already present in the Philippines, we are already present in Malaysia and now starting into the Indonesian market as well," Hinduja said. The company is also accelerating development of battery technology through a partnership with Chinese battery firm CALB. A battery pack plant is being set up near Chennai under the partnership and is expected to begin operations in the first half of next financial year.

Jio spectrum dues shrink 4% ahead of IPO plans

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Reliance Jio's payment liability to the department of telecommunications (DoT) stood at ₹1.04 trillion as of March-end, down 4.2% from a year ago as it cleared earlier instalments, according to Reliance Industries Ltd's FY26 annual report.

The liability is primarily due to its historically aggressive spectrum acquisition strategy—most notably during the 2022 5G auction, in which it secured radio frequency worth ₹88,000 crore.

Reliance Jio is India's largest telecom operator by market share and accounts for most of Jio Platforms' business, which in the process of filing its draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) for the initial public offering (IPO).

For the March 2024 auction, the telecom operator has a deferred payment liability of ₹30,213 crore, which is payable in 13 equal annual instalments along with interest of 7.3% per annum. For the 2022 5G auction, Jio has a deferred payment liability of ₹73,425 crore, which is payable in 16 equal annual instalments.

For the July 2024 auction, the liability is ₹876 crore payable in 18 equal annual instalments, starting August 2026, the company said.

DoT did not conduct any spectrum auctions in FY26.

"As Jio evolves into a global technology leader, we are taking deliberate steps to strengthen its institutional framework, enhance transparency, and prepare it for the opportunities ahead," Reliance Industries chairman and managing director Mukesh Ambani said in the annual report.

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Reliance's luxury retail arm cuts losses; designer labels lag

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Reliance Industries Ltd's luxury retail business is starting to show operating leverage, helped by growth in premium beauty and global partnerships, even as several Indian designer labels in its portfolio remain loss-making.

Reliance Brands Ltd (RBL), Reliance Retail's flagship premium and luxury fashion business, posted a ₹3.49 crore loss in FY26, compared to ₹13.7 crore loss in FY25, according to the company's integrated annual report.

During the year, RBL absorbed five subsidiaries and joint ventures, including Genesis Colors and CAA Brands Reliance, bringing several more luxury fashion, designer-label and brand-management operations directly under the flagship company. Denim brand G Star also moved its business to another company, Ace Turtle.

RBL, which houses brands such as Burberry, Diesel and Paul & Shark, also entered new partnerships during FY26, including with Stella McCartney and MAX&CO, part of the Max Mara Fashion Group.

The company operates 935 stores and 762 shop-in-shops across India.

RBL has brands across luxury fashion, premium apparel, beauty-adjacent lifestyle, home, jewellery, food service and children's retail. Sephora emerged as one of the strongest-performing businesses in the portfolio, with revenue growth remaining strong and profits more than tripling, highlighting the momentum in India's premium beauty market.



Reliance Brands Ltd reported FY26 revenue of ₹3,494 crore, up 44.6% from a year earlier.

Meanwhile, Reliance's portfolio of Indian designer labels continued to struggle with scale and profitability despite years of investment.

Designer Rahul Mishra's business reported revenue of ₹68.6 crore in FY26 but posted a loss of ₹13.2 crore. Anamika Khanna's Aik-OK posted revenue of ₹21.8 crore and a loss of ₹9.9 crore. Ritika Kumar posted largely unchanged revenue of ₹270.34 crore in FY26 and a loss of ₹34.47 crore, and Abu Jani Sandeep Khosla said net profit to a ₹10.68 crore loss despite maintaining revenue of around ₹135 crore.

Reliance Retail did not report its FY26 results. RBL's queries list pressure. Industry executives said premium beauty has emerged as one of India's fastest-growing discretionary categories because of repeat purchases, gifting behaviour and lower luxury entry price points. Luxury fashion, by contrast, remains dependent on occasion-led spending, fit, merchandising and broader discretionary confidence.

Raahul Kapoor, founding partner at luxury brand consultancy Luxury Ampersand, Frolics Group said Reliance's beauty portfolio is outperform-

ing because beauty in the country has become an everyday luxury habit, while fashion is "an episodic aspiration".

Kapoor added that affluent Indian consumers are gravitating toward quieter luxury, craftsmanship, rarity and highly curated labels rather than broadly distributed premium fashion brands.

Industry executives remain bullish on the prospects of India's luxury market, pointing to growth in categories such as jewellery, watches, premium automobiles, beauty and high-end real estate.

"Fashion and lifestyle, however, are at a different stage of development. While demand is expanding beyond metro cities through e-commerce and digital discovery, building scale in luxury fashion requires a more complex and requires a broader retail ecosystem, strong brand creation and consistent execution," said Abhy Gupta of Delhi-based consultancy, Luxury Connect.

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हिन्दुस्तान

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Extract of Audited Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2026

Particulars	Quarter Ended				Year Ended			
	March 31, 2026*		March 31, 2025*		March 31, 2026*		March 31, 2025*	
	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)
Revenue from continuing operations	21,553	18,328	18,161	73,964	67,310			
Profit for the period (before exceptional items and tax) from continuing operations	7,311	3,797	6,993	17,890	17,094			
Profit for the period before tax (after exceptional items) from continuing operations	7,196	2,278	6,993	16,262	17,094			
Loss for the period before tax from discontinued operations	(4,010)	(2,144)	(2,443)	(10,636)	(9,037)			
Profit for the period after tax from continuing operations	6,188	1,908	7,182	14,108	16,499			
Loss for the period after tax from discontinued operations	(3,440)	(1,819)	(2,642)	(9,239)	(8,721)			
Profit for the period after tax from continuing and discontinued operations	2,748	89	4,540	4,869	7,778			
Total comprehensive income for the period (comprising profit for the period after tax and other comprehensive income/ (loss) after tax) from continuing and discontinued operations	3,104	259	2,708	5,308	5,524			
Paid-up equity share capital (Face value - INR 10/- per share)	7,367	7,367	7,367	7,367	7,367			
Other equity excluding revaluation reserves as per the balance sheet	(not annualised)	(not annualised)	(not annualised)	151,372	146,064			
Earnings/(Loss) per share (Face value - INR 10/- per share)	(not annualised)	(not annualised)	(not annualised)					
Basic & Diluted	8.40	2.59	9.75	19.15	22.40			
Discontinued operations	(4.67)	(2.47)	(3.59)	(12.54)	(11.84)			
Basic & Diluted	3.73	0.12	6.16	6.61	10.56			

*Refer Note 5

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of quarterly financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, as amended. The full format of the quarterly financial results are available on the Stock Exchange websites (www.bseindia.com and www.nseindia.com) and on the Company's website - www.hmvil.in.
- The above audited consolidated financial results for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2026 were reviewed and recommended by the Audit Committee of the Company at its meeting held on May 28, 2026. The statutory Auditors of the Company have conducted audit of these results in terms of Regulation 33 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, as amended from time to time and have issued an unmodified audit opinion.
- The audited consolidated financial results have been prepared in accordance with the Indian Accounting Standards ("Ind AS") prescribed under Section 133 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Companies (Indian Accounting Standards) Rules, 2015, as amended from time to time.
- Additional information on standalone financial results is as follows:-

Particulars	Quarter Ended				Year Ended			
	March 31, 2026*		March 31, 2025*		March 31, 2026*		March 31, 2025*	
	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)	Audited	Un-audited (Refer Note 6)
Revenue from continuing operations	21,553	18,328	18,161	73,964	67,310			
Profit before tax from continuing operations	7,217	2,258	6,970	16,399	17,011			
Profit after tax from continuing operations	6,209	1,885	7,159	14,245	16,416			
Loss before tax from discontinued operations	(4,010)	(2,144)	(2,443)	(10,636)	(9,037)			
Loss after tax from discontinued operations	(3,440)	(1,819)	(2,642)	(9,239)	(8,721)			
Profit after tax from continuing and discontinued operations	2,769	66	4,517	(5,006)	7,695			

- The figures of the quarter ended March 31, 2026 and March 31, 2025 are the balancing figures between the audited figures in respect of the full financial year and the published year to date figures upto December 31, 2025 and December 31, 2024 respectively, being the end of the third quarter of the financial year, which were subjected to limited review.
- On March 26, 2026, the Board of Directors of Hindustan Media Ventures Limited has taken decision in relation to discontinuation of OTTplay business with effect from March 31, 2026 (new OTTplay subscriptions packs will not be offered from March 31, 2026). Accordingly, financial results for the quarter ended March 31, 2025, quarter and year ended March 31, 2025 have been prepared in accordance with Ind AS 105 "Non-current Assets Held for Sale and Discontinued Operations".

For and on behalf of the Board of Directors

Shobana Bhatia
Chairperson

