



PERSPECTIVES Viewpoint Equity

India's equity market – Ready to rebound?

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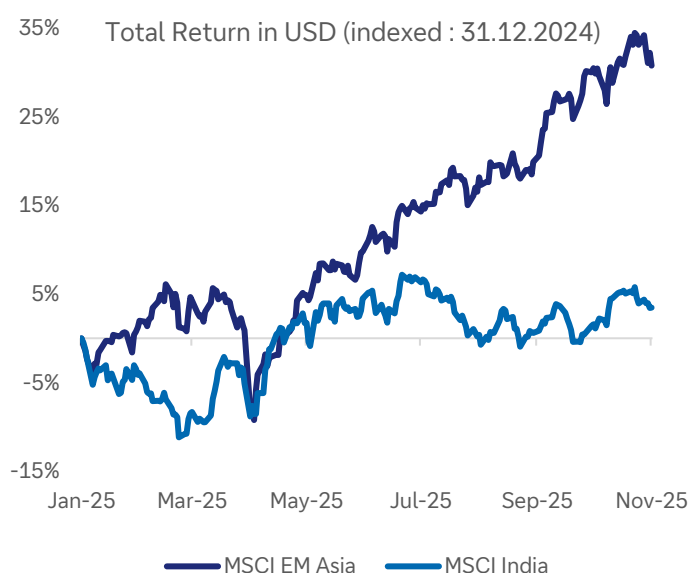
Key takeaways

- India's equity market is losing steam after being a post-pandemic outperformer as domestic sluggishness is compounded by global pressures from trade deal delays and foreign outflows.
- Foreign investors are selling Indian equities due to valuations concerns and trade deal delays, but domestic investors remain confident. While foreign investor outflows significantly impact short-term performance, their long-term effect should be limited. Prolonged trade uncertainty might however weigh on near-term sentiment.
- With domestic demand set to pick up, double-digit earnings growth is expected in 2026, and the market's mid-range valuation present a compelling opportunity for medium to long term investors.

Introduction

Since the pandemic, India's equity market has been a standout performer, delivering impressive annualised returns of around 15% in USD terms, thus comfortably outpacing most of its emerging market peers. However, in the last 12 months, this momentum has been showing signs of fatigue. Indian equities (MSCI India) have underperformed the broader emerging markets (MSCI EM Index) by over 28 percentage points (Figure 1). This begs the question: Will India's recent underperformance continue, or is there an opportunity for a rebound over the coming year? To address this, we delve deeper into the underlying domestic and global factors impacting India's equity market. Domestic investor sentiment has been dampened by challenges such as lacklustre domestic consumption, subdued corporate earnings and elevated valuations, while the global issues of ongoing delays in finalising the US trade agreement and sustained foreign capital outflows have further weighed on market performance.

Figure 1: Indian equities unable to match momentum of other emerging markets



Source: Datastream; Data as of November 10, 2025.

Economic momentum: Consumption-led recovery in focus

India's near term economic prospects hinge on two key factors – a pick-up in domestic consumption and the challenge posed by steep 50% US tariffs on Indian exports. While this external tariff threatens to dampen export performance (e.g. exports to US from India dived 12% yoy in September), a confluence of favourable domestic developments is set to invigorate household spending and offset global headwinds. Both monetary and fiscal authorities are proactively aligned towards enhancing household purchasing power.

Monetary policy boost: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) aggressively front-loaded rate cuts of 100bps in the

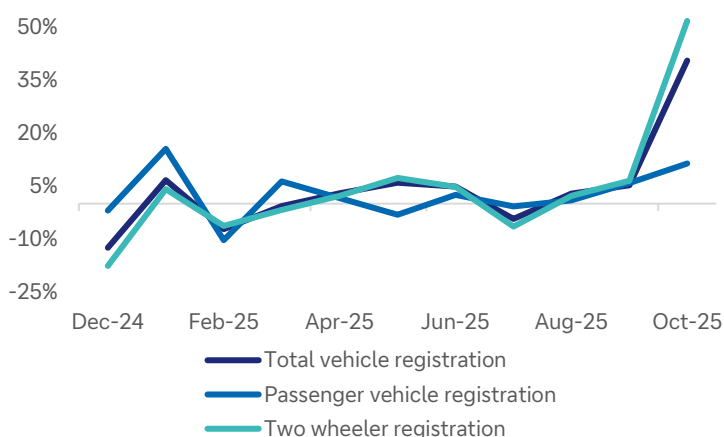


first half of 2025 in order to reduce borrowing costs. Over and above sustainable liquidity infusion of close to USD113bn has helped transmission of these rates.

Fiscal policy measures – the annual budget reduced income tax for Indians, resulting in a cumulative revenue budgetary loss (or fiscal incentive) of USD11bn. In September the consumption tax rationalisation provided consumers with an additional USD28bn. Both these measures are aimed mainly at the urban middle class in order to boost consumption.

In this context, according to high-frequency data, India witnessed record-breaking sales during the Diwali festival this October, with overall sales increasing by 25% compared to the previous year. Notably, vehicle registrations surged by 40% year-on-year, supported by higher sales of both passenger and two-wheeler vehicles (see Figure 2). This growth was driven by first-time buyers as well as customers upgrading to premium models. Lower Goods and Services Tax (GST) rates and the festive season significantly contributed to the rise in demand.

Figure 2: New vehicle registrations accelerate on festive demand and tax relief



Source: Datastream; Data as of November 10, 2025.

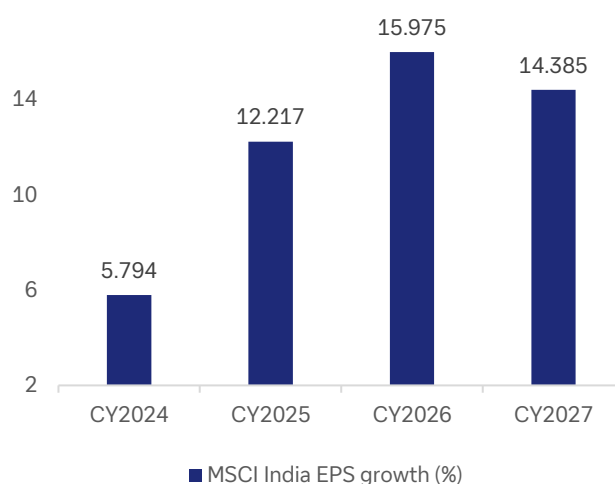
Moreover, a strong fiscal push in the form of capital expenditure on roads, rail and defence continues at a brisk pace (USD126bn annually) and is a key driver of long-term economic growth.

Earnings are expected to take off, after a tepid season

In the current earnings season, 56% of the bellwether MSCI India index companies have reported so far, revealing another quarter of modest single-digit earnings

growth. The beat-miss ratio slipped as fewer than half of the companies managed to exceed analyst expectations. Despite this, consensus expects earnings to pick up in the coming quarters, thanks to a low base effect from the prior year. The expected turnaround is set to be fuelled by factors such as a strengthening rural recovery supported by a good monsoon season, reduced consumption and income tax rates, along with lower borrowing costs due to ongoing monetary policy easing. Consensus thus estimates that earnings growth will accelerate to 16% in the calendar year 2026 and 14.4% in 2027 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Double-digit EPS growth on the horizon



Source: Datastream; Data as of November 10, 2025.

Notably, the earnings outlook differs significantly across sectors. Consumer discretionary, for example, is expected to witness a sharp rebound in 2026 (to 21.6%) after a muted 2025, suggesting cyclical recovery.

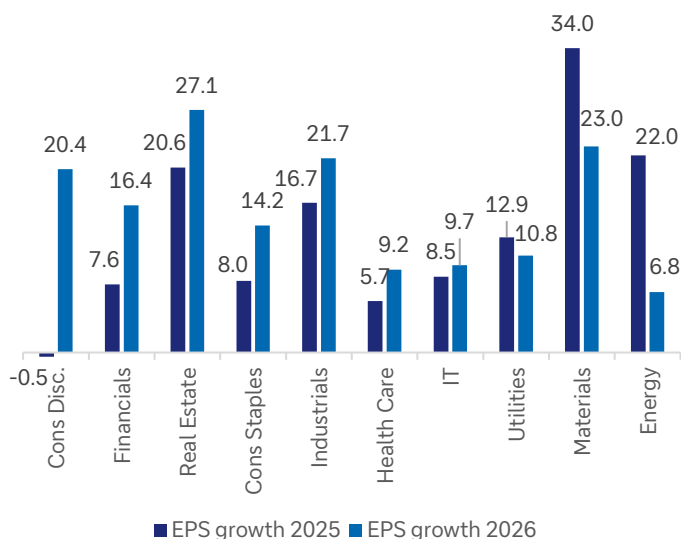
Financials sector EPS growth is set for an improving trajectory next year. It is expected to rise to 16.3% (Figure 4), more than doubling from the current year. This acceleration likely reflects a combination of factors such as credit growth recovery, normalisation of asset quality, and the benefits of reduced reserve and regulatory requirements by the central bank. Additionally, tax cuts and improving consumption could boost loan demand, supporting profitability.

India's IT sector has underperformed the broader Indian equity market, impacted by weak discretionary spending in the US and a slowdown in deal activity. The rise of AI is disrupting traditional outsourcing models – central to Indian IT exports – further dampening foreign investor sentiment. This is reflected in foreign investor flows –



Since the beginning of 2025, Chinese equities have attracted a substantial USD96bn in foreign inflows (as of September), while Indian equities have witnessed net outflows of approximately USD17bn – highlighting a marked global shift toward AI-driven investment opportunities.

Figure 4: 2026 EPS growth – analysts favouring Consumer Discretionary & Financials



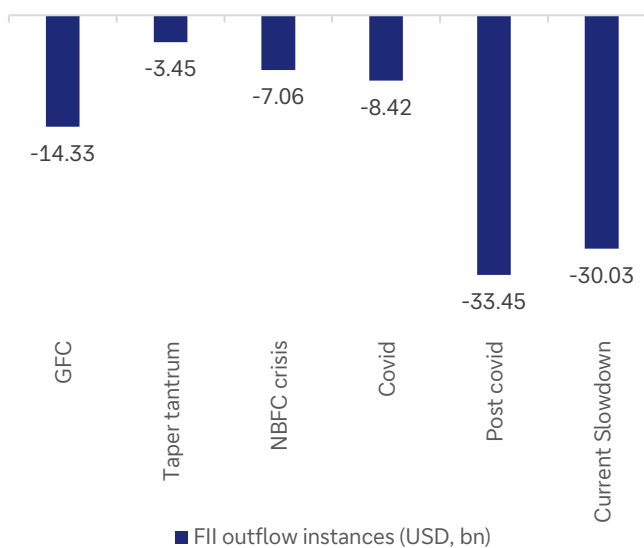
Source: Datastream; Data as of November 10, 2025.

Foreign investor sell-off, domestic investors pick up the baton

Since September 2024, foreign investors have withdrawn no less than USD30bn from Indian equities, representing approximately 3.2% of total foreign holdings. This recent wave of outflows ranks among the largest in history – second only to the post-Covid period, when withdrawals reached USD33.5bn. Previous episodes such as the Global Financial Crisis (-USD14.3bn), NBFC crisis (-USD7.1bn), and the onset of Covid (-USD8.4bn) saw significant but comparatively smaller selloffs (Figure 5). These elevated outflows highlight increased risk aversion, driven by stretched valuations relative to regional peers, delays in reaching a US-India trade agreement, and a weakening rupee that erodes USD returns for foreign investors.

Looking at these foreign portfolio investor (FPI) outflow numbers begs a question – what does this mean for MSCI India index returns? A regression test where the independent variable is FPI monthly flows in USD and the dependent variable is MSCI India monthly returns in USD – reveals that FPI flows have a substantial short-term

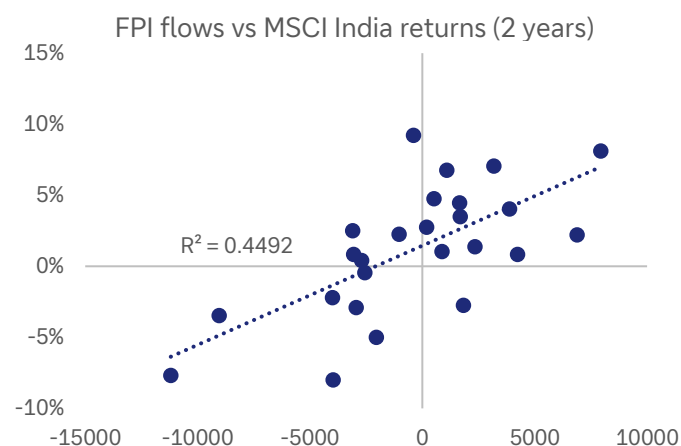
Figure 5: Foreign investor selling spree: USD30bn outflow is a historic high



Source: Bloomberg; Data as of November 10, 2025.

impact (R2 (Coefficient of determination) = 0.44 for 2 years of data) (Figure 6). However, in the long run, the impact fades somewhat, with R2 dropping to 0.29 based on 10 years of data (Figure 7). However, due to the possibility of reverse causality – such as in momentum investing, where stock returns may influence fund flows – simple regression models, which do not take this effect into account, may produce biased results. The findings should therefore be treated with caution.

Figure 6: Equity market pulse – FPI flows call the shots in short term

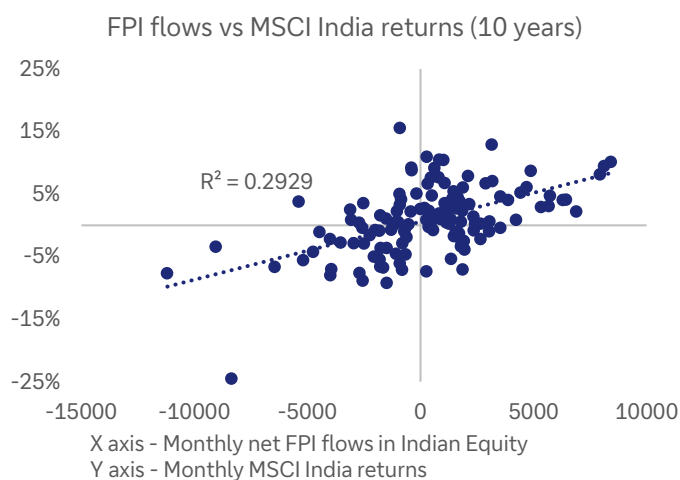


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Figure 7: Long run – FPI flows effect smooths relative to market returns



Source: Bloomberg; Data as of November 10, 2025.

Furthermore, major shifts are unfolding in India’s stock market. While FPIs reduce their stakes, domestic institutional investors are stepping up. Inflows into equity-oriented funds by domestic participants surged from USD19.5bn in 2023 to an impressive USD46bn in 2024. In fact, domestic investors have been net buyers for a solid 26 months, nearly offsetting the FPI outflows each quarter.

Where does valuation stand now?

India’s equity market has long enjoyed a premium valuation over other emerging markets, fuelled by its robust structural growth narrative. But after a lacklustre start to 2025, where do things stand now – and could the current landscape provide a potential opportunity before the next upswing? Over the last five years, the MSCI India’s 12-month forward P/E ratio has swung between 19x and 25x. Right now, valuations sit close to the midpoint of this range and just slightly above 5-year average of 21.8x (Figure 8).

While valuations had run up to high levels in 2024, largely due to domestic flows which kept the bid high, the lack of momentum in the economy and subdued earnings led to an expansion in the multiples. Now with the government addressing many of these issues, we see double-digit earnings growth returning over the next 2 years, leading to the market being at reasonable multiples. The consolidation over the past 14 months is offering decent entry points once again. Rotation of money from other markets which have performed strongly in 2025 is also a possibility.

Figure 8 : 5Y Indian equity market valuation in mid-range



Source: Datastream; Data as of November 10, 2025.

Conclusion

India’s equity market has underperformed the broader EM index by a wide margin since the beginning of the year. Yet, this underperformance may not be a sign of structural weakness, but rather a temporary pause in a longer-term growth story. A closer look reveals a market in transition – grappling with short-term headwinds while laying the groundwork for a potential rebound. On the domestic front, the economy is poised for a consumption-led recovery, supported by synchronised fiscal and monetary stimulus. Corporate earnings, though subdued in the latest season, are expected to rebound, with double-digit growth projected for 2026 and 2027. Foreign investor sentiment has weakened due to concerns over high valuations, uncertainty around the US-India trade deal, and currency depreciation. However, domestic institutional investors have helped stabilise the market by contributing record inflows and showing continued confidence in India’s long-term growth prospects.

Valuations have now moderated, offering a potentially attractive entry point for medium to long-term investors. Despite the constructive medium to long-term outlook,

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risks to Indian equities remain. A prolonged delay in finalising the US-India trade agreement could exacerbate external uncertainties and weigh on investor sentiment in the near term. Indian equities offer limited exposure to high-growth sectors such as AI and advanced tech that are driving global markets – this structural gap could act as a headwind for future returns and foreign investor inflows. However, with India’s growth increasingly being driven by domestic consumption and proactive policy support expected to neutralise some of the global headwinds and push the country’s economy to a higher growth trajectory.



Glossary

Earnings per share (EPS) are calculated as a companies' net income minus dividends of preferred stock all divided by the total number of shares outstanding.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is an indirect tax introduced in India on 1 July 2017, replacing a range of pre-existing taxes like VAT, service tax, central excise duty, entertainment tax, and octroi. GST unified the country's tax structure, simplifying the taxation of goods and services and eliminating the need for multiple taxes previously levied by both central and state governments.

INR is the currency code for the Indian Rupee.

The **MSCI Emerging Markets (MSCI EM)** Index captures large and mid cap representation across 24 Emerging Markets (EM) countries. EM countries include Brazil, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Egypt, Greece, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Korea, Kuwait, Malaysia, Mexico, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Taiwan, Thailand, Turkey and United Arab Emirates. With 1,190 constituents, the index covers approximately 85% of the free float-adjusted market capitalization in each country.

The **MSCI India** Index measures the performance of large and mid-cap Indian market segments, with 160 constituents covering 85% of the Indian equity universe.

An **NBFC (Non-Banking Financial Company)** is a company registered under the Companies Act that provides financial services similar to banks but does not hold a full banking license.

Price/earnings (P/E) ratios measure a company's current share price relative to its per-share earnings. In this context, LTM refers to last twelve months' earnings.

The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is the central bank of India.

USD is the currency code for the US Dollar.



Appendix

Historical performance

	7.11.2020 - 7.11.2021	7.11.2021 - 7.11.2022	7.11.2022 - 7.11.2023	7.11.2023 - 7.11.2024	7.11.2024 - 7.11.2025
MSCI EM	10.0%	-26.7%	10.4%	22.2%	24.5%
MSCI EM Asia	5.3%	-29.4%	12.6%	25.9%	24.3%
MSCI India	48.7%	3.0%	6.3%	33.0%	5.0%
USD/INR	0.3%	10.3%	1.7%	1.3%	5.2%

Source: Deutsche Bank AG, Bloomberg Finance L.P., LSEG Datastream. Data as of November 7, 2025.

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