

Block, bulk deals top ₹1 tn in 2026 as M&A engine slows

Major transactions include stake sales in Vishal Mega Mart and Anthem Biosciences

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With high interest rates, valuation gaps and global upheavals weighing on traditional mergers and acquisitions (M&A), promoters and institutional investors are turning to the secondary market, pushing block and bulk deals so far in 2026 to one of the highest levels in recent years, despite bearish sentiment.

A total of ₹1.1 trillion has changed hands through open-market trades so far in 2026 (till 15 April), up 25% from the same period a year earlier, according to data from capital markets platform Prime Database.

Investors are using block and bulk deals to realign portfolio weights or pare long-held positions quickly in a volatile market, said Deven R. Choksey, founder and managing director of DRChoksey FinServ.

“What we are seeing is a clear rotation of capital. Despite pressure on benchmark indices, these trades are largely happening in fundamentally strong companies. The market has successfully absorbed over ₹1 trillion of supply while continuing to hold key technical support level,” he said.

The largest bulk and block deals this year have involved promoters or foreign portfolio investors. Among the biggest transactions are Kedaara-backed Samayat Services' offloading of ₹7,636 crore worth of equity in Vishal Mega Mart Ltd in late February and True North-backed Viridity Tone's sale of a 3.6% stake in Anthem Biosciences Ltd for ₹1,262 crore in March.

The value of bulk and block deals in 2026 is the second-highest for the first four months since at least 2021,



Open-market activity in 2026 may surpass ₹5.84 trillion recorded in 2025. ISTOCKPHOTO

although 2024 remains an outlier at ₹2.15 trillion, driven by several multi-billion-dollar deals, including British American Tobacco's ₹17,500 crore divestment in ITC Ltd, Rakesh Gangwal's ₹6,800 crore stake sale in Inter-

rebalance their portfolios.

India's M&A activity during the period has declined 56% to \$7 billion (about ₹66,000 crore) from \$15.9 billion (about ₹1.5 trillion) a year ago, according to professional services firm

DEAL DYNAMICS

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INVESTORS are using these deals to rebalance portfolios and exit positions in volatile markets

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Globe Aviation Ltd, and Singtel's ₹5,800 crore divestment in Bharti Airtel Ltd.

The current trend, according to market participants, could be attributed to a lack of alternative exit routes for private equity firms and to the need for sovereign wealth funds to

Grant Thornton Bharat. The number of initial public offerings (IPOs) has also fallen. *Mint* reported on 12 March that India's multi-year IPO boom was slowing as the US-Iran war weighed on market sentiment and depleted liquidity.

Secondary block deals and qualified

institutional placements (QIPs) take less time to execute than IPOs and strategic sales, Arbind Maheswari, head of India equities, BofA Securities, told *Mint* on 16 April.

“QIPs and block deals are then an easy sell for capital that is looking to get deployed at reasonable valuations,” he said.

Nipun Goel, head of investment banking at IIFL Capital, told *Mint* earlier that India's secondary market typically follows a specific sequence: after a period of volatility, activity in block and bulk deals or QIPs usually picks up before the primary market windows finally reopen.

The volatility seen in the first four months of 2026 has not deterred these transactions. Instead, it has created entry points for domestic mutual funds, which have been the primary buyers on the other side of these institutional exits.

For instance, HDFC Mutual Fund bought Vishal Mega Mart shares worth ₹1,100 crore when the company's promoter offloaded equity through a secondary transaction in February. In the same month, Parag Parikh's PPFAS Mutual Fund bought 56 million units of Embassy Office Parks REIT worth ₹2,364 crore, after Capital Income Builder, American Funds, and Small Cap World Fund sold nearly a 5.5% stake in the real estate investment trust for ₹2,200 crore through open-market deals.

“The trend is expected to continue through the second quarter as several PE mandates approach their expiration dates and IPO anchor lock-ins near their end,” a merchant banker at a domestic firm told *Mint*, on the condition of anonymity.

With the total already exceeding ₹1 trillion, full-year open-market activity may surpass the ₹5.84 trillion recorded in 2025.