

# Companies in Kolkata

Business, Commerce, and Corporate Landscape of the City of Joy

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Kolkata, formerly known as Calcutta, is one of India's oldest and most culturally rich metropolitan cities. As the capital of West Bengal and once the capital of British India, Kolkata has a business heritage that stretches back over three centuries. The city was the commercial heart of the British Empire in Asia, hosting the headquarters of leading trading companies, banks, and industrial conglomerates. Today, Kolkata remains a significant commercial and industrial centre, home to major corporations across IT, finance, jute, tea, steel, engineering, and retail sectors.

While Kolkata has ceded some commercial dominance to Mumbai, Delhi, and Bengaluru over the decades, the city is experiencing a renaissance driven by government investment in infrastructure, a growing IT sector, and a renewed entrepreneurial spirit. The West Bengal government's initiatives such as the Bengal Business Summit and investments in IT parks like Sector V, New Town Kolkata, and Rajarhat have attracted national and multinational companies back to the city. This report profiles the most prominent companies headquartered in or with major operations in Kolkata across key sectors.

## 1. ITC Limited

### Overview

ITC Limited is arguably the most prominent and diversified corporation headquartered in Kolkata. Founded in 1910 as the Imperial Tobacco Company of India Limited, ITC has evolved into a multi-business conglomerate with interests spanning cigarettes and tobacco, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG), hotels, paperboards, packaging, and agribusiness. With annual revenues exceeding Rs. 70,000 crore and a market capitalisation that consistently places it among India's top 10 listed companies, ITC is a flagship of Kolkata's corporate landscape. Its Virginia House headquarters on Chowringhee Road is one of the most iconic office buildings in the city.

ITC's FMCG portfolio — encompassing brands like Aashirvaad (atta and spices), Sunfeast (biscuits and noodles), Classmate (stationery), Fima (personal care), and Engage (fragrances) — has emerged as the fastest-growing part of its business, rivalling Hindustan Unilever in several categories. The company's e-Choupal initiative, which connects over 4 million farmers digitally, is one of India's most celebrated rural technology programmes.

## 2. Coal India Limited

Coal India Limited (CIL), headquartered in Kolkata, is the world's largest coal mining company and a Maharatna public sector undertaking under the Government of India. Founded in 1975, CIL produces over 700 million tonnes of coal annually, supplying fuel to more than 80% of India's thermal power plants. With a workforce exceeding 250,000 employees and operations across eight subsidiary companies spread over Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal, and other states, CIL is not just an energy company but a social institution that sustains entire communities in India's coal belt.

### **3. Haldia Petrochemicals Limited**

Haldia Petrochemicals Limited (HPL) is one of India's largest petrochemical companies and a cornerstone of West Bengal's industrial economy. Located in the Haldia Industrial Complex, approximately 136 km from Kolkata, HPL operates a fully integrated petrochemical complex with a capacity to produce over 700,000 tonnes per annum of polymers including polyethylene and polypropylene. The company is a joint venture between the West Bengal government, the Chatterjee Group, and the Tata Group. HPL feeds a downstream ecosystem of plastic processing industries across eastern India, supporting thousands of small and medium enterprises.

### **4. Tata Steel — Eastern Operations Hub**

While Tata Steel's corporate headquarters are in Mumbai, Kolkata houses one of the company's most significant regional offices and oversees its eastern operations. The Jamshedpur plant — the cornerstone of Tata Steel's India business — is managed from this Kolkata base. Tata Steel's Tinsplate Company of India is the country's leading producer of tin mill products. The company's presence in the Kolkata region contributes substantially to employment and supply chain activity across West Bengal and Jharkhand, supporting ancillary industries ranging from raw material suppliers to logistics providers.

### **5. UCO Bank**

UCO Bank, headquartered in Kolkata, is one of India's oldest public sector banks, with roots tracing back to 1943 when it was established by the G.D. Birla family. With a network of over 3,000 branches across the country and overseas offices in key financial centres, UCO Bank serves millions of retail and corporate clients. The bank plays a critical role in financial inclusion in eastern India and has been a key participant in government-led programmes like Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana. In recent years, UCO Bank has invested heavily in digital banking, mobile applications, and fintech partnerships to modernise its service delivery infrastructure.

### **6. Indian Bank — Eastern Regional Headquarters**

Although Allahabad Bank was merged with Indian Bank in 2020, Kolkata continues to serve as the eastern regional headquarters for this merged entity. Allahabad Bank was one of India's oldest and most respected banks, established in 1865, and had deep roots in eastern India's commercial and agricultural lending ecosystem. The merged Indian Bank continues to maintain a strong presence in Kolkata, serving the MSME, agricultural, and retail banking needs of West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, and the northeastern states through hundreds of branches and digital banking channels.

## 7. IT Companies in Kolkata — A Growing Ecosystem

Kolkata's IT sector, while smaller than Bengaluru or Hyderabad, has grown substantially over the past decade. The Sector V area in Salt Lake City and the New Town IT hub near Rajarhat have attracted major IT companies including Cognizant, Wipro, Infosys, TCS, IBM, and Capgemini. These companies operate large delivery centres in Kolkata, employing tens of thousands of engineers and IT professionals from across West Bengal, Odisha, and the northeastern states. The availability of skilled graduates from institutions like IIT Kharagpur, Jadavpur University, and Presidency University provides a steady talent pipeline.

### Webel Technology — Local IT Champion

Webel Technology Limited, a Government of West Bengal enterprise, is the state's apex body for promoting electronics and IT industries. Webel manages IT parks, provides incubation support to startups, and offers IT solutions to government departments. The Webel ecosystem has spawned hundreds of small and medium IT [companies in Kolkata](#), creating a grassroots IT economy that complements the large delivery centres of multinational firms. Kolkata also hosts a vibrant startup scene, with incubators at institutions like IIT Kharagpur and Calcutta University nurturing the next generation of technology entrepreneurs in areas like fintech, edtech, agritech, and healthtech.

## 8. The Tea Industry — Kolkata as the Global Tea Trading Hub

Kolkata is the historical nerve centre of the global tea trade. The city is home to the Kolkata Tea Auction Centre, one of the largest tea auction platforms in the world, where teas from Darjeeling, Assam, and Dooars are traded by buyers from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. Major tea companies with headquarters or significant offices in Kolkata include Goodricke Group, Jay Shree Tea and Industries (Birla Group), and Chamong Tea. These companies manage sprawling tea estates in the Himalayan foothills while exporting premium teas to over 50 countries. The tea industry employs over 1 million workers in West Bengal alone.

## 9. The Jute Industry — Kolkata's Industrial Heritage

Once called the 'Golden Fibre' of India, jute is inseparably linked with Kolkata's industrial identity. The Hooghly River belt — stretching from Budge Budge in the south to Naihati in the north — was home to over 100 jute mills at its peak, earning the region the title of the 'Jute Capital of the World.' While the industry has declined significantly due to competition from synthetic fibres, it is experiencing a revival driven by global demand for sustainable, biodegradable packaging materials. The National Jute Board, headquartered in Kolkata, is working with companies and artisans to develop value-added jute products for fashion, home decor, and industrial applications.

## 10. Spencer's Retail Limited

Spencer's Retail, headquartered in Kolkata, is one of India's oldest and most recognised retail chains, with a history dating back to the 19th century when it catered to British colonists. Today, Spencer's operates hypermarkets and supermarkets across 35 cities, offering a wide range of groceries, electronics, apparel, and lifestyle products. The company, owned by the RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group, is undergoing a digital transformation with enhanced e-commerce capabilities and a loyalty programme. Spencer's is a cherished brand in Kolkata, with several flagship stores that are among the busiest retail spaces in the city.

### RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group

The RP-Sanjiv Goenka Group is one of Kolkata's most prominent business conglomerates, with interests spanning power generation and distribution (CESC Limited), retail (Spencer's, Nature's Basket), entertainment (Saregama India), and sports (Lucknow Super Giants in cricket). CESC Limited, the flagship company, distributes electricity to over 3 million consumers in Kolkata and Howrah, making it one of the few private sector electricity distributors in India operating in a major metro. Saregama India, one of Asia's largest music labels, has digitised over 1.5 lakh songs and reinvented itself as a digital IP company.

## 11. Andrew Yule and Company

Andrew Yule and Company, now a Government of India enterprise, is one of the oldest British-era managing agency houses that survived and was nationalised post-independence. Headquartered in Kolkata, Andrew Yule operates businesses in tea, engineering (electrical motors and switchgear), and general manufacturing. Though a shadow of its former colonial-era self, the company remains significant as a publicly listed PSU with a rich heritage and a steady order book from government and defence procurement.

## 12. Balmer Lawrie and Co. Limited

Balmer Lawrie, another Kolkata-headquartered public sector enterprise with British origins (founded 1867), is a diversified conglomerate with businesses in industrial packaging, greases and lubricants, logistics, travel, and refinery services. The company is known for being consistently profitable among PSUs and has received several government awards for corporate governance and performance. Its lubricants brand is a trusted name in industrial and automotive applications across India. The company's logistics arm is one of the leading cold chain and freight forwarding operators in eastern India, handling a significant share of the region's export and import cargo.

## 13. ABP Group — Media and Communications

ABP Group, headquartered in Kolkata, is one of India's oldest and most respected media conglomerates. Its flagship publication, Anandabazar Patrika, founded in 1922, is one of the highest-circulating Bengali-language newspapers in the world. ABP's media portfolio includes ABP News (a leading Hindi news channel), ABP Ananda (Bengali news), ABP Majha (Marathi news), ABP Live (digital news), and multiple print and digital titles. The group has navigated the transition from print to digital media more successfully than most legacy publishers, leveraging strong brand equity and editorial credibility built over a century.

## 14. Healthcare — Apollo Gleneagles and Medical Tourism

Kolkata is home to several landmark healthcare institutions, including Apollo Gleneagles Hospital — a joint venture between the Apollo Hospitals Group and Parkway Health of Singapore. Apollo Gleneagles is the premier tertiary care hospital in eastern India, attracting patients from Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar alongside Indian patients. Fortis Hospital in Kolkata and Medica Superspecialty Hospital (a locally founded chain) are other significant healthcare providers. The healthcare sector is one of Kolkata's fastest-growing industries, supported by medical tourism and a large catchment area covering eastern and northeastern India, a combined population of over 400 million people.

## Kolkata's Business Future — Reinvention and Resilience

Kolkata's corporate landscape is a fascinating blend of colonial legacy and modern ambition. From the trading houses of the British era to the PSUs of independent India, and now to the IT companies and startups of the digital age, the city has always been a significant player in India's economic story. The narrative of decline, often repeated by commentators comparing Kolkata to Mumbai or Delhi, misses the deeper resilience and adaptability of the city's business community.

Key sectors driving Kolkata's corporate revival include information technology and IT-enabled services (growing at 15% annually), healthcare and medical tourism, logistics and warehousing (driven by its strategic location near Bangladesh and the northeastern states), and sustainable industries like eco-friendly jute and organic tea. The West Bengal government's Bengal Global Business Summit has attracted investment commitments of over Rs. 3.5 lakh crore in recent editions, with significant follow-through in sectors like food processing, logistics, and renewable energy.

The city's strengths — a highly educated workforce, relatively lower real estate and operating costs compared to tier-1 cities, excellent connectivity via Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport and the Kolkata Port Trust, and a rich cultural tradition that attracts creative talent — position it well for a new chapter of growth. As India's economy expands to become the world's third largest by the early 2030s, Kolkata is poised to reclaim a more prominent position in the national corporate hierarchy, driven by the companies and entrepreneurs who have never stopped believing in this great city of joy.

