

Mumbai, July 17, 2026

YEAR 2026

UPI's Journey from Domestic Innovation to Global Payment Network

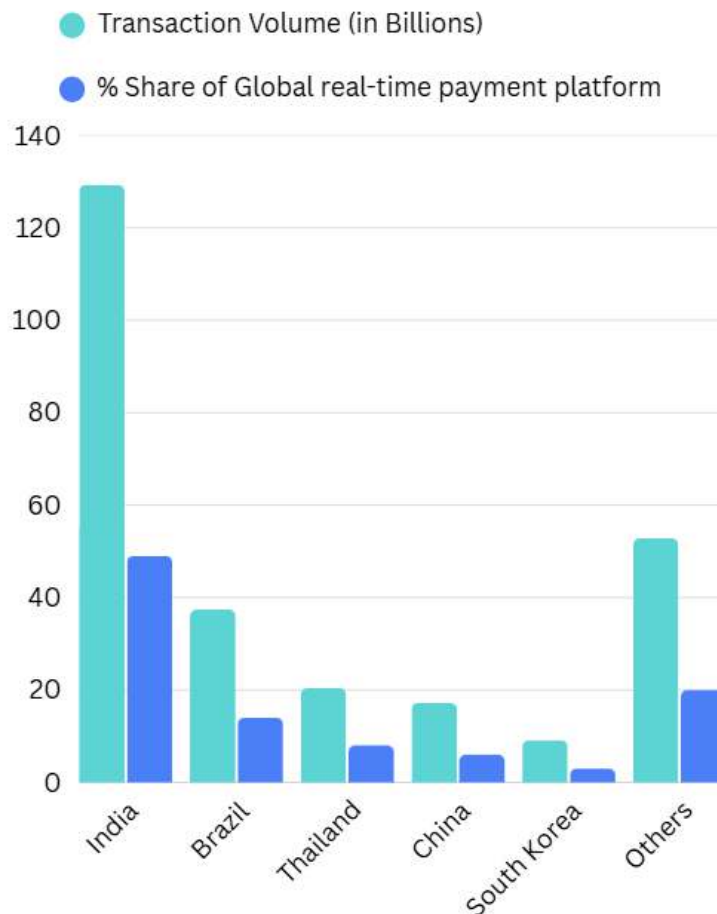


Fig. 1: Share of Global Real-Time-Payment Volumes of Top Countries (Source – PIB)

The Unified Payments Interface has evolved from a domestic digital payment innovation into one of the world's most influential real-time payment systems. In its June 2025 report, *Growing Retail Digital Payments: The Value of Interoperability*, the International Monetary Fund recognised UPI as the world's largest retail fast-payment system by transaction volume.

UPI now accounts for nearly 50% of global real-time payment volumes and has rapidly become the preferred mode of payment across India. Between 2017 and 2025, UPI transaction volumes recorded a compound annual growth rate of 221%, increasing its share to approximately 84% of India's total digital payments.

With more than 504 million users and 65 million merchants connected to the platform, UPI has transformed everyday financial transactions. It has expanded access to digital finance, supported micro and small enterprises, encouraged formalisation and created new opportunities in credit, commerce and financial technology. Its simplicity,

interoperability and low transaction cost have made it widely accepted across age groups, income categories and geographical regions.

The internationalisation of UPI marks the next stage of its development. Cross-border linkages, such as the integration of UPI with Singapore's PayNow, demonstrate how domestic real-time payment platforms can be connected to enable faster, more convenient and cost-effective international transactions. Several countries are also developing or exploring similar payment systems, reflecting growing global interest in India's Digital Public Infrastructure model.

As its international acceptance expands, UPI has the potential to develop into a global payment network. Its continued growth is expected to strengthen financial inclusion, increase digital consumption, improve MSME access to credit, promote fintech innovation and support new business models. These contributions could play an important role in India's aspiration to become a USD 35 trillion-plus economy by 2047.

UPI One World

UPI's evolution is no longer limited to domestic bank transfers and merchant payments. Its expansion now covers cross-border payment linkages, international merchant acceptance and services designed specifically for overseas visitors. Through partnerships led by NPCI International Payments Limited, UPI is increasingly being positioned as an exportable Digital Public Infrastructure that can connect India's payment network with overseas fast-payment systems and support tourism, remittances and international commerce.

An important initiative in this direction is UPI One World, a UPI-powered prepaid wallet for foreign nationals and NRIs visiting India. Eligible travellers can complete onboarding using their passport and valid visa, load the wallet through an international debit or credit card, and make payments at UPI-enabled merchants across India by scanning QR codes. This allows visitors without an Indian bank account or mobile number to participate in India's digital-payment ecosystem and reduces their dependence on cash or international cards.

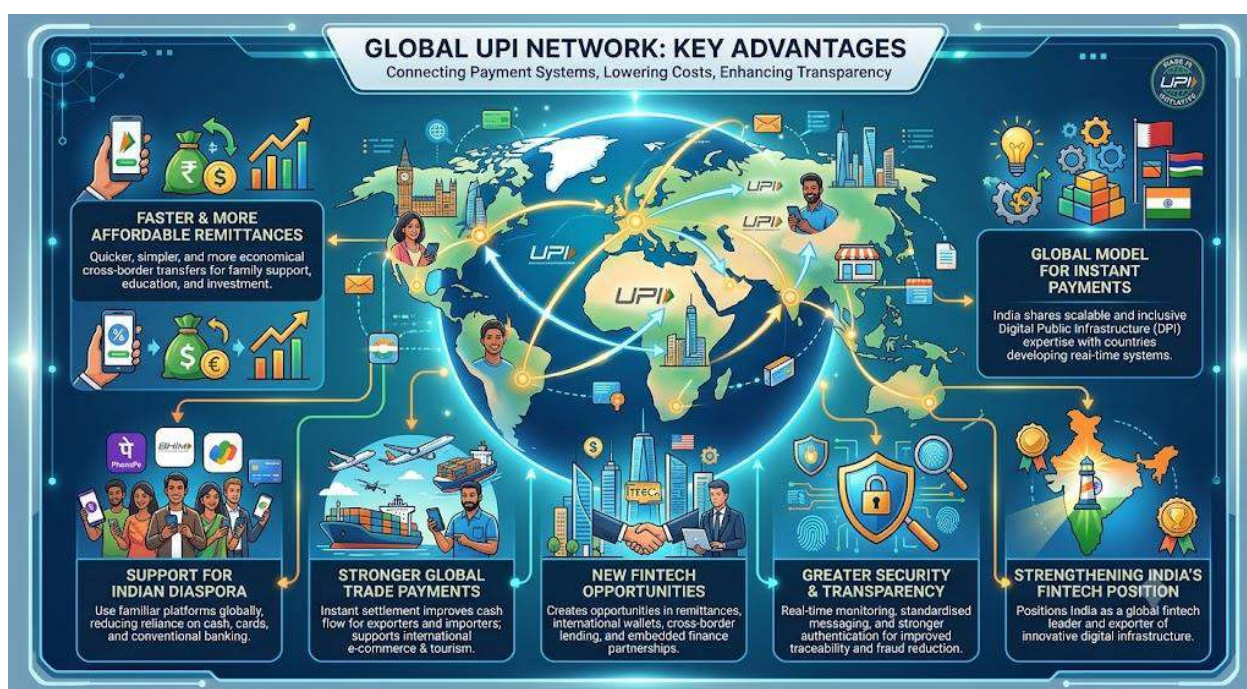
UPI's movement beyond domestic payments therefore represents a broader shift—from a national retail-payment platform to an internationally connected payment infrastructure. As adoption expands, it can improve the experience of foreign visitors, demonstrate India's digital capabilities and provide a foundation for more efficient cross-border financial connectivity.

Countries Accepting UPI

UPI's international presence is expanding through a mix of merchant acceptance arrangements, bilateral payment linkages and partnerships with overseas financial institutions. The nature and scale of integration differ across countries, ranging from QR-based payments for Indian travellers to real-time transfers between national payment systems. The following table outlines the current form of UPI connectivity in key markets.

Country	UPI Integration and Significance
Singapore	The UPI-PayNow linkage enables instant, low-cost transfers between India and Singapore, supporting remittances and stronger digital-payment connectivity.
United Arab Emirates	UPI is accepted at participating merchants, allowing Indian residents and tourists to make convenient QR-based payments.
France	France introduced UPI acceptance beginning at the Eiffel Tower, improving payment convenience for Indian tourists in Europe.
Mauritius	UPI supports merchant payments, tourism and remittances, strengthening digital financial ties between India and Mauritius.
Nepal	Indian travellers can use UPI at participating merchants in Nepal, supporting tourism and cross-border payment cooperation.
Bhutan	UPI enables QR-based payments for Indian visitors, improving convenience and supporting bilateral tourism and commerce.
Qatar	UPI acceptance at participating merchants facilitates easier payments for Indian visitors and residents.
Sri Lanka	UPI allows Indian travellers to make digital payments, supporting tourism and closer financial connectivity.
Cambodia	UPI-KHQR connectivity is being developed to enable cross-border QR payments and promote tourism and trade.
Greece	UPI acceptance is being expanded through local payment partnerships to support Indian tourists in Greece.

Benefits of an International UPI Network



A globally interoperable UPI network would reduce the cost and complexity of linking multiple payment systems. It can lower transaction fees, shorten settlement time and improve transparency by reducing dependence on several intermediaries. Greater interoperability would also encourage competition and innovation by making it easier for banks and fintech firms to develop cross-border payment solutions.

Key Advantages

1. Faster and More Affordable Remittances

Millions of Indians living abroad send money home for family support, education, healthcare and investment. UPI-based cross-border transfers can make these payments quicker, simpler and more economical than traditional channels that often involve delays and multiple charges.

2. Support for the Indian Diaspora

NRIs could use familiar platforms such as BHIM, PhonePe or Google Pay to make transfers and payments across borders. This would improve convenience and reduce reliance on cash, cards and conventional banking processes.

3. Stronger Global Trade Payments

Instant settlement can improve cash flow for exporters, importers and MSMEs. Lower payment costs and faster processing can also support international e-commerce, tourism and small-value trade transactions.

4. A Global Model for Instant Payments

By expanding UPI internationally, India is positioning itself as a creator of digital financial infrastructure. Countries developing real-time payment systems can benefit from India's experience in building a scalable and inclusive platform.

5. New Opportunities for Fintech Companies

Global UPI connectivity can create opportunities in remittances, international wallets, travel payments, cross-border lending and embedded finance. It can also encourage partnerships between Indian fintech firms, overseas banks and global merchants.

6. Greater Security and Transparency

Real-time monitoring, standardised payment messaging and stronger authentication can improve transaction traceability and reduce fraud risks. Better visibility of payment flows can also help authorities identify mule accounts and suspicious activity.

7. Strengthening India's Fintech Position

UPI marks India's shift from being primarily a technology service provider to an exporter of digital infrastructure. Its international adoption can strengthen India's position as a global fintech and Digital Public Infrastructure leader.

Global UPI Expansion Strengthening India's Economy

GLOBAL UPI'S EFFECT ON INDIAN ECONOMY



One Innovation. Global Impact. Limitless Opportunities.

Global expansion of UPI is strengthening India's digital economy, enabling seamless cross-border payments and unlocking new opportunities for businesses, consumers and the fintech ecosystem.



ECONOMIC IMPACT OF GLOBAL UPI



Lower Transaction Costs

Reduces reliance on traditional banking and fees for cross-border payments and remittances.



Faster & Efficient Payments

Real-time settlement improves speed, liquidity and cash flow for businesses and individuals.



Boost to Trade & Tourism

Seamless payments encourage tourism, raise foreign visitor spend and support international trade.



Stronger Financial Inclusion

Extends secure, affordable and accessible digital payments to a wider global user base.



Attraction of Foreign Capital & Partnerships

Strengthens India's position as a digital payments leader and attracts global collaborations.



Export of Digital Public Infrastructure

UPI is becoming a global DPI model, showcasing India's capability to design, build and scale world-class systems.

The global expansion of UPI has the potential to strengthen India's position as a leading digital economy while creating significant economic opportunities across trade, finance and technology. By enabling seamless cross-border payments, UPI reduces transaction costs, improves the efficiency of remittances and facilitates international trade and tourism. Wider global acceptance of UPI is also expected to increase foreign visitor spending, improve payment convenience for Indian businesses operating overseas and strengthen India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) exports.

The internationalisation of UPI also reinforces India's ambition to become a global fintech leader. By exporting its payment infrastructure rather than merely financial services, India is demonstrating its capability to develop scalable, secure and inclusive digital solutions. As more countries adopt or interconnect with UPI, Indian payment technology and standards are likely to become increasingly embedded in the global digital payments ecosystem.

Greater international adoption of UPI is expected to encourage innovation across banking, fintech and e-commerce. Financial institutions can develop new products for cross-border remittances, international merchant payments, travel, trade finance and embedded financial services. For Indian MSMEs and exporters, lower payment costs and faster settlement cycles can improve cash flow, reduce working capital requirements and enhance global competitiveness.

Influence On Startup Ecosystem and Global Investor Confidence



India's vibrant fintech ecosystem is well positioned to benefit from UPI's international expansion. The country is home to over 3,000 fintech startups, including globally recognised companies such as PhonePe, Razorpay, Groww, Zerodha, CRED and Paytm, which have leveraged UPI to build innovative digital financial products. The growing global acceptance of UPI creates opportunities for these companies to expand into international markets by developing solutions for cross-border payments, digital wallets, merchant acquiring, remittances and financial infrastructure.

The success of India's digital payments ecosystem has also attracted substantial investment from leading global venture capital firms, including Peak XV Partners (formerly Sequoia Capital India), Tiger Global, Ribbit Capital and SoftBank, reflecting strong investor confidence in India's fintech ecosystem. As UPI expands globally, Indian fintech companies are expected to benefit from increased investment, international partnerships and new market opportunities, further strengthening India's position as one of the world's fastest-growing digital innovation hubs.

Bridging The World

Building on its remarkable success in India, UPI is steadily evolving into a bridge connecting national payment systems with global commerce. Through NPCI International Payments Limited, India is partnering with governments, central banks and regulatory authorities to strengthen domestic payment infrastructure, transfer technology under the Digital Public Goods initiative and establish linkages between UPI and overseas payment networks. These partnerships are enabling faster cross-border remittances and convenient merchant payments while demonstrating the global relevance of India's interoperable digital payment architecture.

With its planned expansion to more than 20 countries by FY 2028-29, UPI has the potential to significantly transform international payment flows. Its cost-efficient infrastructure can reduce remittance expenses for both India and partner countries, while wider merchant acceptance can make overseas payments simpler and more accessible for consumers and businesses. As global adoption increases, UPI can emerge as a trusted foundation for affordable, seamless and inclusive cross-border payments, strengthening India's role in shaping the future of global digital commerce.