for non-lithium battery development," he adds.

Zinc also offers a higher theoretical energy density than lithium-ion, that is, the maximum possible energy that a battery or energy storage system can store. This means longer range per charge, if technical barriers, such as rechargeability and scalability can be overcome. However, the challenge lies in making them rechargeable. "If we crack the chemistry, zinc batteries could power both stationary energy storage and mobility," says Bauri.

Globally, companies in countries like Canada are already developing zinc-air batteries for home back-up and grid storage. India, Bauri says, needs focused R&D before the market is ready for such new technologies. "If we invest in the right research now, zinc-ion could emerge as a credible alternative to lithium-ion," he adds.

Are We Doing Enough?

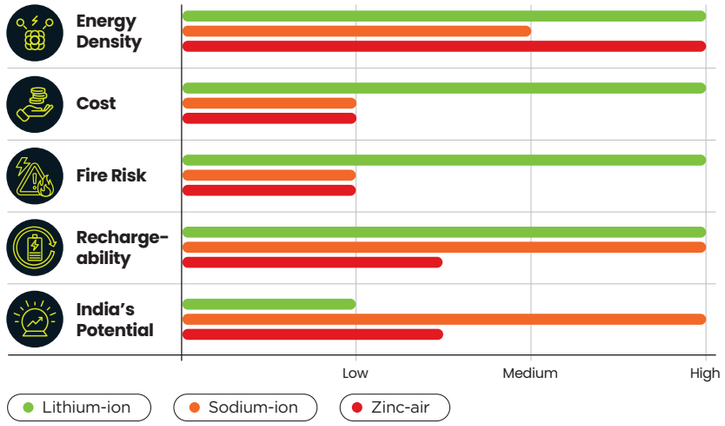
Launched in 2021, the PLI scheme for Advanced Chemistry Cell battery storage offers incentives to achieve a battery-manufacturing capacity of 50GWh. But experts argue that the scheme, while necessary, doesn't go nearly far enough. More support is needed to boost R&D and scale up indigenous cathode and anode manufacturing.

"The current PLI is geared only towards main component manufacturing—like module, cell, wafer, polysilicon in solar and battery cells in energy storage," says Rishabh Jain, senior programme lead at CEEW.

Critical components don't qualify for PLI support, even though capex is high, he says, and adds, "The logic could have been PLI winners would procure from domestic manufacturers, which would develop the ecosystem. However, delays in some PLI projects have also reduced the financial viability of the component manufacturers."

Viable Alternatives

Challenges around lithium-ion batteries are prompting researchers to explore other options, but India needs focused R&D before the market is ready for new technologies



Source: Industry data and experts

What is needed is investing in national labs focused on cell chemistry and materials science, as well as nurturing global innovation partnerships

The solution is taking India's battery ambitions upstream. This means investing in cathode and anode factories, mineral refining and crucially, R&D for next-generation batteries.

But cost remains the central challenge. "Technology know-how may exist in parts of the world, but without price parity and without government support, Indian manufacturers can't compete—no matter how good the product is," Jain says. To counter China's low prices, which are supported by state subsidies, India needs subsidy matching, low-interest financing and domestic demand assurance.

Apart from costs, India also needs to keep pace with rapid innovation or risk being left behind. What is needed is investing in national labs focused on cell chemistry and materials science, as well as nurturing global innovation partnerships.

An important lesson can be drawn from China's tightly integrated battery-supply chain. India, by contrast, presents a fragmented industry where anodes, cathodes and processing tools are all imported.

To truly power its energy transition and meet its 2030 EV targets, India needs to build its battery backbone, not just buy it. If not, the country could see another replay of the rare earth saga, vulnerable to geopolitical calculations and external supply shocks.

With a calm presence and a sharp vision, **Salil Parekh** is leading Infosys into a new era of technology, innovation, and global relevance without making much noise.

Salil Parekh: A Leader Reshaping Infosys

Salil Parekh has been leading Infosys, one of India's biggest IT companies, as Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director since January 2018. Under his leadership, Infosys has embraced bold new technologies and built deeper global partnerships. Recently, his work and vision were recognised with a 22% salary hike, taking his annual pay for FY 2024-25 to ₹80.6 crore.

But who is the man behind the numbers?

Salil Parekh is a quiet but strong leader. He studied Aeronautical Engineering at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay. Then, he earned two Master of Engineering degrees in Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering from Cornell University in the US. With this strong technical background, Salil quickly rose through the ranks in the global tech world.

Before joining Infosys, Salil worked for over 25 years at Capgemini, a French multinational IT services company. There, he held several leadership roles and was instrumental in building the company's North American business and offshoring strength. He also served as the Chairman of Capgemini's North America Executive Council. Earlier in his career, he was a partner at Ernst & Young, helping scale their Indian operations.

At Infosys, Salil is now focused on making the company "AI-First". At the World Economic Forum in Davos earlier this year, he explained what that really means. Infosys is currently building four "small language models," these are AI systems trained on specific industry data, such as banking or IT operations. Clients prefer these smaller, focused models because they can be easily used within their own company systems.

In addition, Infosys is developing 100 AI-powered "agents". These agents are like smart digital assistants that can help businesses with tasks like customer support, code writing, and monitoring IT systems.

Beyond Infosys, Salil also plays a role in global partnerships. He serves on the boards of Advance CT, which supports innovation in Connecticut, and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF), which promotes deeper ties between the two countries.

Salil Parekh is not someone who often makes loud headlines, but his steady leadership is shaping Infosys into a future-ready company, one where AI isn't just a buzzword, but a core way of working.

How **Virender Jeet,** the Product-Led CEO is powering Scale and AI driven Innovation at Newgen.

Leading With Clarity

OB Newgen has seen consistent growth over the last 33 years. What were the key drivers of this performance?
At Newgen, we've stayed true to one belief, we are a product company. For 33 years, our growth has been powered by relentless innovation, customer focus, and execution excellence. Our evolution from BPM and ECM to an AI-first, low code platform with agentic orchestration has been deliberate, not reactive. We consistently invest 15% of our revenues into R&D, building proprietary IP, industry accelerators, and Agent Studio that now power critical workflows across banking, government, and healthcare.

OB Which regions have contributed most to your growth story?
India remains our largest and most mature market, led by deep partnerships in banking and government. The Middle East continues steady growth in compliance-heavy sectors like BFSI. North America, now contributing 20–25% of revenue, is a key engine driven by AI adoption in financial services and healthcare. We're also seeing strong momentum in APAC markets.

OB What sets Newgen's AI capabilities apart from others?
We don't treat AI as an add-on. It's embedded across content, process, and communication layers. Through NewgenONE and Agent Studio, enterprises can build contextual, compliant, and autonomous workflows with full governance. This is not just smart automation, it's explainable, secure, and built for regulated environments. That's how we deliver Zero Blind Spots across operations and outcomes.

OB What role does the NewgenONE platform play in your strategy?
NewgenONE is the backbone of our product strategy. It unifies process automation, content management, communication, and AI on a single low code platform. It enables enterprises to modernize end-to-end with agility. Whether digitizing loans or orchestrating citizen services, NewgenONE ensures intelligence is built-in not bolted on.

OB Where is Newgen headed in the future?
We're evolving into the platform of choice for intelligent enterprises. With AI, low code, and agentic orchestration at the core, we're building for a future that's autonomous, compliant, and insight driven. Our focus is on delivering measurable outcomes with explainable AI, deep vertical capabilities, and Zero Blind Spots across how enterprises work.

OB What defines your leadership style in this fast-changing tech landscape?
Clarity, curiosity, and conviction. I believe in staying connected to our technology, customers, and teams. I lead with a product-first mindset, encouraging innovation and shared accountability. Leadership, to me, means creating a culture where people are empowered to solve, adapt, and grow together.