

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Nasscom unveils mentor programme for AI startups

Blockchain startup Ripple set to launch new crypto-based product xRapid

India surpasses US and Japan in automation, AI adoption: Study

Myntra eyes mall space, may open large stores

## Today's View

### Big Data 'Flavour-Shots'

In our previous article, we have seen how beverage companies are employing business intelligence to improve their offerings. Companies are now employing advanced technologies like AI and Big Data to differentiate themselves from others.

We all know that artificial intelligence is only as good as the delicious big data fed into it. That's why **Coca-Cola** started monitoring their self-service soda machines, which allow customers to mix their own drinks. As the machines allow customers to add their own choice from a range of 'flavour-shots' to their drinks while they are mixed, enabling the company to pick the most popular combinations and launch it as a ready-made, canned drink called "**Cherry Sprite**".

The beverage companies are also employing the power of AI to improve their loyalty programmes. For example, Coca-Cola launched its loyalty program based on the open source machine learning framework, **TensorFlow** to achieve frictionless proof-of-purchase. The end result allowed the user to take a picture of the bottle cap that was then translated into a code at a 99.97% accuracy. It takes about one second to process the image, and the success of this effort led to the technology becoming a core component for Coca-Cola's web-based promotions.

**Akhil Handa**

+91 22 6759 2873  
akhilhanda@bankofbaroda.com

**Manish Kulkarni**

+91 22 6759 2885  
manish.kulkarni@bankofbaroda.com

### Auckland, Christchurch & Wellington in Ola's New Zealand trip

Ride-sharing app Ola announced plans to begin operations in New Zealand, starting with Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington, without specifying a launch date. This will be the third international market expansion for Ola this year.

**Long Trip**

- This will be the third international market expansion for Ola this year
- Firm launched operations in Australia in February and in the UK in August
- To compete with Uber in Auckland, Christchurch, Wellington and Zoomey
- Brian Dewill named country manager for New Zealand

Source – The Economic Times

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Date – 19<sup>th</sup> Sep 18

Big data is also being leveraged to ensure consistent product quality, irrespective of the growing season of raw materials of beverages. Beverage companies like **PepsiCo** is leveraging the big data to combine weather data, satellite images, information on crop yields, pricing factors and acidity and sweetness ratings, to ensure that orange crops are grown in an optimum way, and maintain a consistent taste. The algorithm then finds the best combination of variables in order to match products to local consumer tastes in the 200-plus countries around the world where its products are sold.

Similarly, to improve user-experience, **Coca-Cola** has partnered with **Microsoft** to unlock “the special Coca-Cola experience” which guesses the age of user as well as the age of the Coke bottle the user is holding. Similarly, it has partnered with **Salesforce**, to build AI-based app which allows the sales-representatives to take a picture of a cooler at the retailers which will automatically count the bottles as well as determine the “Coca-Cola purity” (which shows if bottles of other brands are located in the cooler), and will also make adjustments based on loads of external data like past purchases or even events that are happening in the area.

Looking at the diverse ways in which beverage companies are employing AI and Big Data to improve the user experience, we can be rest-assured that we will get to see more such interesting experiences during our drinks-break!

## Today's News

### Nasscom unveils mentor programme for AI startups

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) unveiled the second phase of the 10,000 start-ups initiative that will focus on mentoring deep technology ventures in areas such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML) and blockchain. Nasscom, the lobby group for the IT industry, aims to tap the trillion dollar opportunity in the future demand for AI-related technology through its initiative called ‘Accelerate 10X’, Debjani Ghosh, and president at Nasscom told reporters at a press conference.

Source – Mint

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### Blockchain startup Ripple set to launch new crypto-based product xRapid

Blockchain startup Ripple is set to launch a cryptocurrency-centred product with commercial applications as early as mid-October. According to a report in CNBC, Sagar Sarbhai, Ripple’s head of regulatory relations for Asia-Pacific and the Middle East, said that the company had made ‘significant headway’ with its product called xRapid. The product is aimed at helping banks in speeding up transactions using the XRP cryptocurrency. The company explains that xRapid uses XRP as a sort of bridge between currencies. This will allow banks and payment providers the ability to process cross-border transactions faster.

Source – MoneyControl

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This News Letter has been prepared with the assistance of G Balakrishna and Manish Kulkarni

### Google Pay now has 25m monthly active users

Google, which recently rebranded its payment offering from Tez to Google Pay, has 25 million monthly active users who have collectively carried out about 860 million transactions over the past year, the company said in a blog post.

Source – The Economic Times

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### OYO, Cure.Fit among most sought after startups in India: LinkedIn

Five-year-old hospitality startup OYO, health and wellness firm Cure.Fit, and on-demand delivery service dunzo.in are among the top 25 companies that made it to the list of the most sought after start-ups in India released by LinkedIn on Tuesday. The list revealed that Bengaluru has emerged as a major hub for start-ups to rise and shine. Out of the 25 companies on the list, 11 are headquartered in Bengaluru, seven in Mumbai, three in Gurugram and two each in New Delhi and Pune.

Source – The Economic Times

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### LetsVenture launches funding initiative to support early-age startups

Online funding platform LetsVenture has launched an initiative to support fledgling start-ups in transitioning from seed stage to Series A and B funding rounds through to raising “growth” capital of \$1-5 million, the company said in a statement on Tuesday.

Source – Mint

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## India surpasses US and Japan in automation, AI adoption: Study

Automation arrived long back in India and the country is now driving Robotic Process Automation (RPA) and Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based technologies globally -- even ahead of the US and Japan -- a new study said on Tuesday.

According to "Augmented Human Enterprise" -- an academic study conducted by Goldsmiths (University of London) and enterprise software provider Automation Anywhere -- 71 per cent of Indian respondents said their employees used RPA and AI-based augmentation to its full potential -- the highest proportion for any of the four markets surveyed. While 66 per cent Indians said that they are empowered to take risks, 77 per cent said that their organisation prioritised employee development.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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## Myntra eyes mall space, may open large stores

Myntra, India's largest online fashion retailer, is talking to several mall operators in top cities to open multibrand brick-and-mortar outlets, including large department stores, people with knowledge of the development said. The Walmart-owned company plans to sell women's fashion, sports and lifestyle products, accessories and cosmetics through these stores under the Myntra brand, competing with Shoppers Stop and Lifestyle among others.

Half a dozen top mall executives spoke to, in Delhi-NCR, Mumbai and Bengaluru, said Myntra approached them in the past few months, seeking space ranging from 3,000 sq ft for outlets selling cosmetics products to 20,000-30,000 sq ft for department stores. The formats will include 'Myntra Women', 'Myntra Sports' and 'Myntra Beauty' and will be franchisee-run, they said.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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## Capgemini, Amazon Web Services launch initiative to help enterprises go digital

French technology services major Capgemini and Amazon's cloud computing division Amazon Web Services (AWS) have announced a strategic initiative to accelerate enterprise digital transformation via Cloud technologies. With a focus on the European market, the group initiative will help clients enhance business insights, agility, security and cost effectiveness to drive improvements in their business performance.

It will also open up new business opportunities for enterprises through the implementation of artificial intelligence (AI), automation, and innovative customer interfaces, Capgemini said in a statement. The initiative combines AWS's comprehensive ecosystem of Cloud technologies with Capgemini's global expertise in applications, on-premises infrastructure and Cloud-managed services to drive time-to-market reduction, productivity gains and cost savings.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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## Singapore's payments transformation pushes ahead with single QR code

A long-awaited piece is finally in place that will get Singapore's electronic payments transformation going. Singapore on Monday launched a single, standardized QR or Quick Response code for e-payments in what could be a global model for other jurisdictions.

Source – *Business Times*

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## IFC to invest in B2B logistics startup Shadowfax

International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private-sector investment arm of the World Bank, plans to invest in Bengaluru-based logistics startup Shadowfax Technologies Pvt. Ltd. In a disclosure on its website, IFC said the planned investment will help the three-year-old business-to-business (B2B) logistics startup expand its operations. IFC did not specify the amount it plans to invest.

Source – *VC Circle*

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## Phi-Commerce to enter credit segment

Pune based payment processing firm Phi-Commerce plans to enter the credit segment over the next six months, CEO Jose Thattil told. The company currently provides an e-Cash on delivery (eCoD) payment solution, PayPhi, which offers a cashless payment option to consumers at the time of delivery.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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