



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Amalgamation exercise 'has been smooth so far': BoB chief

NPCI cuts UPI usage fees to promote wider adoption

India's the second fastest digitising economy in the world: McKinsey

E-tail cash-burn may shrink by 67% in 5 years

Today's View

Drinks, stirred with AI

There are many ways artificial intelligence and machine learning can make the world more productive and effective. Apart from traditional sectors, multiple manufacturers including breweries are using AI to enhance production of various beverages as well.

Research by **J. Walter Thompson** shows that 77 percent of millennials living in developed countries would like to use AI to obtain better assistance in planning and cooking healthy meals and drinks.

IBM has partnered with the **Institute of Culinary Education** and **Bon Apétit** magazine for project 'Chef Watson' which generates beverages with an inventive approach to alcohol, such as drinks like the "Corn in the Coop" which mixes chicken stock with bourbon, apple juice and ginger, topped off with lemongrass, orange peel and a slice of grilled chicken.

On the other hand, AI-firm **IntelligentX** has created the world's first beer that used AI algorithms and machine learning with four different varieties: Black AI, Golden AI, Pale AI, and Amber AI.

Carlsberg, Copenhagen-based brewery, has created a multimillion-dollar three-year 'Beer Fingerprinting Project' in partnership with **Microsoft and the Technical University of Denmark**. Each day, they create 1,000 different beer samples to change the way new beers are created. The project uses sensors

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800 million transactions via UPI in March

Unified Payments Interface clocked close to 800 million transactions with Rs 1.3 lakh crore being settled in March, according to data shared by the National Payments Corporation of India.



Source – The Economic Times

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Date – 2nd April 19

that can determine the flavour fingerprint of each sample and analyze different yeasts. The data is collected by an AI system, to identify optimised combination for the new brews. Not only does the system allow products to get to market faster it can also help ensure the highest quality.

While **Champion Brewing Company** has teamed up with machine learning company **Metis Machine** in an effort to brew a new beer style. The first step in the process was to input information about the ten best-selling beer style nationally as well as data on the ten worst-selling brands. Then, based on the data, the algorithm determined the best recipe to create a potentially new best-selling beer style.

Apart from creating a perfect drink, AI is enhancing other aspects of serving the drink as well. For instance, it has also been observed that the foam on a freshly poured beer affects the experience of the sipper. To determine what makes a perfect foam, an Australian research team created **RoboBEER**, a robot who can pour a beer with such precision to create consistent foam pour after pour. While **Tito's** has partnered with US food website **Allrecipes** to launch an artificial intelligence-powered virtual bartender. The AI-powered bartending app, called Barkeep, will give users access to a host of different drinks recipes. It will offer trending, seasonally relevant cocktails and recommendations tailored to each user's preferences.

While it's admittedly too soon to tell, the possibility of using data to create personalized drinks makes AI-brewed beverages definitely intriguing. Cheers to Technology!

Today's News

Amalgamation exercise 'has been smooth so far': BoB chief

With Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank getting merged with Bank of Baroda with effect from April 1, 2019, the latter intends to harness the 'power of 3' so that the consolidated bank's business expands at a 15 per cent compounded annual growth rate and its market share trends towards 10 per cent from the current 6-6.5 per cent. Terming the amalgamation journey as frictionless so far, PS Jayakumar, MD and CEO, in an interaction with BusinessLine, said it will help increase the reach and depth of the consolidated bank. Further, there are cost savings that will accrue from revenue and cost side synergies.

Source – BusinessLine

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NPCI cuts UPI usage fees to promote wider adoption

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), which runs the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) network, has slashed usage fees for small transactions to expand the system's adoption among banks and payment service providers (PSPs). For UPI transactions up to Rs.1,000, the charge has been cut to 10 paise from 25 paise, NPCI said in a note to banks and PSPs that ET has seen.

Source – The Economic Times

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This News Letter has been prepared with the assistance of Vikas Madaan and Manish Kulkarni

Lyft's tumbling stock is a worrying sign for other unicorns

Lyft Inc. closed its second day of trading 4.2 percent below its \$72 public offering price, an ominous sign for the stampede of unicorn companies planning to follow the ride-hailing business to the stock markets this year.

The IPO has become a test case, not just for rival Uber Technologies Inc., but for a glut of highly valued startups like Pinterest Inc., Postmates Inc. and Slack Technologies Inc. that have signaled plans to list this year. Slack has selected the New York Stock Exchange for a planned direct listing this summer, a person familiar with the matter told Bloomberg.

Source – The Economic Times

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Airbnb checks into Oyo with \$200 m in tow

Airbnb has invested \$150-200 million in hospitality chain Oyo Hotels & Homes, making it the third successive strategic investor to buy a stake in the Gurgaon-based company. As part of the deal, Oyo is also likely to list its properties on the San Francisco-headquartered company's platform.

The funding valued the Indian company at a little over \$5 billion, according to people aware of the details of the transaction. Oyo has mopped up nearly \$1.2 billion in fresh capital in this round. Airbnb's investment also highlights the US company's attempts to push deeper into Asia's third largest economy, and evolve into an end-to-end travel services platform.

Source – The Economic Times

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India's the second fastest digitising economy in the world: McKinsey

The fast-growing digitisation of the Indian economy has potential to not only boost core sectors like IT, digital communication, and online retail but also transform several other areas of the economy — financial services, agriculture, logistics and education.

India had 560 million connected internet users, and citizens downloaded 12.3 billion mobile applications in 2018, more than any other country except China. The average Indian social media user spends 17 hours on the platforms each week, more than social media users in China and the US, says a new study by McKinsey Global Institute. The study finds that India is the second fastest digitising economy after Indonesia when compared to 17 mature and emerging economies, including the US, UK, China, and Brazil.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Trade war didn't stop Google, Huawei AI tie-up

When Huawei announced its latest smartphone last week, the world's largest telecommunications gear maker also shared another product — Track AI. Track AI promises to pair software with Huawei devices to let “non-trained professionals” diagnose eye conditions. Missing from the Chinese company's announcement was Google's work behind the scenes. Huawei Technologies built Track AI using TensorFlow, a set of AI software tools from Alphabet's Google. TensorFlow is also open-source, so anyone, anywhere can use it and Google can't control access.

However, a creative team that works with Google's advertising clients also provided marketing help to Huawei, according to Google spokesman Chris Brummitt. These teams regularly work with Google clients to “make the most of what's possible with technology, leading to ideas like this one”, Brummitt added, while stressing that no Google engineers worked on the project.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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E-tail cash-burn may shrink by 67% in 5 years

A significant shift in unit economics is on the cards for the country's e-commerce sector on the back of an expanding catalogue of products sold through the internet. A recent study by management consulting firm RedSeer says that cash-burn in the e-tailing sector is expected to shrink to “one-third of its current rate” by 2023, driven by changes in product category mix, among other reasons.

“E-tailing as a sector lost \$15 for every \$100 of GMV (gross merchandise value) in 2018. We expect this to shrink to \$12 in 2019 and \$5 in 2023,” RedSeer's recent note said. The report expects a fall in the share of mobiles and electronics — a category that fuelled the e-commerce boom — in coming years, and a rise in shares of higher-margin fashion and home need products. The discounts offered by the sector will also likely fall, the report said.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Flipkart doubling down on its tech presence in Israel

Flipkart, India's biggest ecommerce company, is doubling down on its technology base in Israel six months after acquiring analytics startup Upstream Commerce, said people aware of the development. The company is putting in place a management team and setting up an R&D centre focussing on cyber security, cloud computing and data protection while actively scouting for acquisitions in the country.

“While the size of the team itself is small, Israel is a market Flipkart wants to actively pursue for AI, computer vision and security tech,” said a person aware of the company's plans.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Alibaba-backed Paytm gets greenlight from India's market regulator to launch stock broking services

Paytm's subsidiary — Paytm Money has received approval from Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) the market regulator to start stock broking. With this, one can soon start buying shares through Paytm Money.

Additionally, Paytm Money has also signed a partnership with the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange. In an official blog, the company wrote, “We will be introducing new capabilities & offerings on our platform, such as trading in equities & cash segments, derivatives, ETFs and exchange traded products.”

Source – *Business Insider*

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