

create an open and accessible technology aiding everyone to grow food and to grow food for everyone.

Driscoll's, one of America's largest produce distributors have been testing a number of robots to harvest berries. It has developed a robot strawberry picker called CROO (Computerized Robotic Optimized Obtainer) which can pick a plant in just 8 seconds. It can also cover eight acres in a single day and has efficiency equivalent to a team of more than 30 human pickers.

Similarly, in Europe, Spanish company **Agrobot** is developing a rival strawberry farming robot. Its machine uses up to 24 robotic arms to pick fruit and is capable of autonomous navigation. While England-based **Dogtooth Technologies** are developing its own series of smart autonomous robots capable of picking fruit. These robots are capable of autonomous navigation, locating and picking ripe fruit, and grading its quality.

Looking at a diverse range of applications of robotics in farming space, we are not far from the reality of having dedicated Robo-farms, especially in advanced countries.

Today's News

Bank of Baroda bets big on co-originating loans with NBFCs, Fintechs

Bank of Baroda (BoB), India's second-largest public sector bank, is betting big on co-originating loans with non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and Fintech companies. In this regard, BoB has entered into alliances with Srei Equipment Finance and ECL Finance to offer joint loans for infrastructure equipment and MSMEs.

Papia Sengupta, Executive Director, said the bank is in talks with more NBFCs and Fintech companies to leverage the model of co-originating loans. "We are very much there in the co-origination space. We have been always doing a lot of pool purchases (of assets). What we have found out actually is that in the case of some NBFCs the (co-origination) model is very good.

Source – BusinessLine

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Payments platform BharatPe raises \$50 million funding round led by Ribbit Capital

Payments platform BharatPe has raised a \$50 million funding round led by Ribbit Capital and Hong Kong-based Steadview Capital. Existing investors of the company Sequoia Capital, Beenext Capital and Insight Partners also participated in the round. Commenting on the funding, BharatPe cofounder Ashneer Grover said, "We plan to deploy these funds to aggressively expand our current merchant base of 1.45Mn to over 5Mn within the next one year and fulfil the capital requirements of the under-served offline merchants in India by lending to them."

Source – Inc42

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

ISB, Microsoft tie up to coach CXOs on how to move to AI

With Artificial Intelligence encompassing all sectors, businesses have realized the importance of AI but most of them don't really know how to embrace it, how to develop an AI strategy and how to bring in AI-ready culture.

Realizing this gap, the Indian School of Business (ISB) and Microsoft India have launched an exclusive Executive Programme for CXOs to tell them how to go about it — all in three days. Besides, the duo would also set up AI Digital Lab to collaborate in research to study issues that are relevant for business and public policy.

Source – BusinessLine

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Mumbai Fintech hub's find looks to solve Fintech's funding crunch with matchmaking programme

Despite being one of the most funded sectors in the Indian startup ecosystem, there have been plenty of startups that have had to close operations. According to Inc42 Data labs, Of the 2,707 Fintech startups launched in India around 400 have already shut shop and one of the major reasons is the funding crunch in the initial stages.

Mumbai Fintech Hub's FinD (FinTech Investment and Deals) is looking to bridge this gap, helping qualified startups gain access to a wider network of local and global investors.

Source – Inc42

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How Flipkart's PhonePe plans to become a major financial services player

Flipkart, founded in 2007, redefined India's internet commerce industry in a decade. It developed the cash-on-delivery model and made its own billion-dollar logistics unit in an economy rife with a fractured logistics system. After building a business up from scratch, the ecommerce company stirred up the market further in 2018 when Walmart acquired it for \$16 billion. All this while, another potentially mammoth business was sprouting under its shadows.

The foundation of this business came from Flyte, the digital music and content business Flipkart tried to build in 2012. But the online music store couldn't beat the odds. Neither e-wallets nor paying for music were widespread in India then. A bunch of other reasons also led to the venture closing within a year. But the lack of a smooth online payment process had planted the seeds of a potential money-spinner: a payments platform.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Mid-high income groups aged 20-35 drive Fintech adoption in India: EY Report

In the past couple years, Fintech, especially in the Indian start-up ecosystem has picked up speed in all aspects – an investment it attracts in market potential, as well as the usage. With the push towards digitisation, demonetization, and the rise of consumer internet market with the Jio revolution, Fintech – the one pervasive industry, has seen India become one of the countries with the highest adoption rate across the globe.

Since EY started calculating the FinTech Adoption Index in 2017, the Indian figure has been way above the global average. Where in 2017, the global average stood at 33%, in India, the adoption rate was 52%. Now, according to EY's FinTech Adoption Index 2019, the global average has risen to 64%, and India, in the lead with China has an adoption rate of 87%, followed by Russia and South Africa at 82%.

Source – *Entrackr*

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Reliance might launch e-commerce venture around diwali with kirana stores on-board

Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani could launch the offline-to-online ecommerce venture around Diwali, this year, according to a news report. The new ecommerce platform would link producers, traders, small merchants, brands and consumers with an O2O or hybrid sales model. Reliance announced its ecommerce plans at last year's annual general meeting and this year, the company is preparing for the launch with various acquisitions as well as expansion in the retail space.

The company plans to launch the ecommerce platform in two phases. First, a soft launch around Diwali, which would be followed by a full launch by December-January. Special Diwali discounts may also be offered to users, which seems to Reliance's go-to strategy for new services as seen in the launch of Reliance Jio and JioFiber.

Source – *Inc42*

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Alibaba Cloud pause start-up investments as it rethinks India strategy

Chinese tech giant Alibaba reportedly has temporarily paused all new investment to review its India strategy. The company has been an active large investor in the Indian startup ecosystems, having led funding rounds for Paytm and Zomato.

It has also invested in Paytm Mall, BigBasket, Snapdeal and Xpressbees. But now, with declining revenue and user base for Snapdeal and Paytm Mall, the Chinese company is reportedly disappointed with its investments due to their limited user base.

Source – *Inc42*

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With eyes on global market, OYO's Ritesh Agarwal to take a global role

Founder of the Indian hospitality unicorn OYO Hotels and Homes, Ritesh Agarwal will reportedly take up a larger role in the company's Singapore office as the company plans to establish itself as a global player.

"My deeper engagement in the global business is a natural progression given our continued growth over the last couple of years and the opportunities in the US, Europe, China, and Southeast Asia," Ritesh reportedly said. This move is said to be a part of the ongoing structural changes in OYO for the past 12 months as the company continues expanding its global operations.

Source – *Inc42*

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