



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Bank on many lenders, NPCI tells UPI players

As WhatsApp Pay debut looms, rivals add more storefronts to keep up

Small sellers find an online route to customers via tech platforms

IBM roll out advanced AI tool that can read idioms

Today's View

Infrastructure lift-off with Drones

Infrastructure sector has the second largest share in FDI inflows. Cumulative FDI inflows in the sector totalled US\$ 13 billion last year, as per government statistics. Despite having such high contribution in the economy, the sector has seen limited innovations from technology domain.

Infrastructure planning, inspection and documentation have traditionally been limited to manual, 'from the ground' methods. Even though helicopters can be used for analysis in order to get an aerial vantage point, doing so is often impractical due to difficult terrain, commercial feasibility etc. Hence, smaller-sized aerial vehicles like drones are playing a significant role in driving the infrastructure industry forward.

According to a **MarketsandMarkets** research report, global market for drones is expected to reach \$5.5 billion by 2020. On the other hand, as per PwC's global report 'Clarity from above: transport infrastructure', drones have potential to reduce life threatening accidents by up to 91%.

With the help of additional sensors, drones can provide infrastructure and construction professionals with in-depth and actionable data. For instance, numerous infrastructure companies like **Tata Projects, Larsen & Toubro, National Highways Authority of India** etc. have been leveraging drone-based solutions like Indshine's cloud-based platform, **Felix**, to visualise drone data and generate geospatial analytics for infrastructure sectors such as railways, mining, construction and power transmission.

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Maharashtra caps Ola, Uber surge pricing at three times taxi fare, but defers rule till April 6

In a mixed bag for Ola-Uber users, the Maharashtra state government has capped the fares of app-based cabs at three times the fare of kaalipeeli taxis.

₹1-2 HIKE LIKELYFOR AUTOS, TAXIS

- ➤ Govt OKs ₹1-2 fare hike for autos & taxis subject to transport authority nod
- > But the hikes may take one year to be implemented, says transport minister

Source - The Economic Times

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Indian Railways have started incorporating drones into their operations, such as the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) project to inspect railway lines and assess the progress of new constructions.

Similarly, US-based **SkySpecs** is using drones to inspect turbines, removing the need for dangerous and costly manual inspection. On the other hand, **Federal Aviation Administration** in Colorado is collaborating with **Xcel Energy** for a pilot project involving drones flying above power lines and utility infrastructure around the state.

Considering the need to build indigenous drones for military and other sectors, India's first private Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) or drone manufacturing facility has been set up by **Adani Defence & Aerospace** jointly with **Elbit Systems.**

The integration of drones within the infrastructure sector doesn't mean that manual methods are soon to become obsolete. Instead, state-of-the-art technologies like drones can be used in conjunction with existing methods, using real-time data to add more detail to ground reports and surveys to provide more meaningful insights.

Today's News

Bank on many lenders, NPCI tells UPI players

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has asked payment service providers on its popular payments platform UPI to adopt a multibank model in a bid to ensure "full resilience" of the country's payments ecosystem, which was disrupted after regulatory curbs were imposed on Yes Bank late last week.

The curbs caused outages in the services of leading UPI players such as PhonePe and BharatPe, where the distressed lender was the sole banking partner. NPCI, which acts as an umbrella organisation for retail payments and settlement systems in India, said on Tuesday that it had already first advised large UPI players to operate under a multi-bank approach in September 2017.

Source - Economic Times

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Coronavirus outbreak: Google recommends all North America employees to work from home

Alphabet's Google is recommending all of its North American employees to work from home if their roles permit, the search giant said on Tuesday, aiming to minimize the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

The new recommendation is an expansion of a similar guideline it gave to employees in San Francisco Bay area. Most of the big companies have so far limited the work-from-home option to specific regions in the United States.

Source - Business Standard

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Infy writes off its \$4.5M investment in WaterLine Data Science

Infosys on Tuesday said it has written off \$4.5 million it had invested in WaterLine Data Science, a US startup. Infosys had made these investments through its innovation fund in two tranches in 2016 and 2018.

In January, Hitachi Vantara had announced that it intends to buy Waterline. Infosys in a regulatory filing said that it informs that Waterline Data has completed the process of dissolution.

Source - Economic Times

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Accel Partners leads \$3M funding round in online events hosting platform Airmeet

Online events hosting platform Airmeet has raised \$3 million (about Rs 22 crore) in fresh funding in a round led by marquee venture capital firm Accel Partners, the Bengalurubased startup announced on Monday.

Other investors participating in the pre-Series A round include, early-stage investor Venture Highway, stage-agnostic European investment firm Global Founders Capital and angel syndicates CloudCapital, Better Capital, 100x Entrepreneur Fund and Sequoia Scout, according to an official statement released by Airmeet.

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Source - Economic Times

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Small sellers find an online route to customers via tech platforms

Small sellers, which retail mainly through big ecommerce marketplaces such as Flipkart and Amazon, are now trying to directly connect with consumers through technology platforms such as Shopify.

This comes at a time when they, led by an online vendors' group, have intensified the fight against established ecommerce players over alleged predatory pricing and preferential treatment to select large vendors. The All India Online Vendors Association (AIOVA), which has taken on these large marketplaces legally, has partnered with Shopify to help its around 4,500 members set up their own online storefronts.

Source – Your Story

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As WhatsApp Pay debut looms, rivals add more storefronts to keep up

Google Pay and PhonePe are adding more storefronts to their payment platforms, in a bid to beat WhatsApp Pay's imminent entry and explore alternative money-making avenues after the government waived processing fees on Unified Payments Interface transactions.

PhonePe's Switch and Google Pay's Spot, their commerce layers, are tying up with hundreds of businesses in the country, enabling them to open mini digital storefronts within the payment apps where users can browse for products and services. This will aid easy user discovery without merchants having to spend heavily on technology. PhonePe said it had more than a hundred apps live on Switch and expects that to cross 500 by the end of the year. Consumer brands that use Switch include Domino's, Oyo Hotels and Goibibo. Google Pay started Spot with seven merchants, including MakeMyTrip and UrbanClap.

Source – Economic Times

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IBM roll out advanced AI tool that can read idioms

With an increased demand for advanced artificial intelligence (AI) across businesses, IBM has rolled out advanced AI based solutions under Watson that can read and analyse complex English language including meaning of idioms.

The technology major said this advanced version of natural language processing (NLP) for its Project Debater would have the capability to understand challenging aspects of conversational English helping organisations to get greater clarity and more insights from their data.

Source – Economic Times

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Alibaba's Alipay to open app to more services to take on Meituan

Ant Financial, an affiliate of Chinese e-commerce Alibaba, will start allowing third-party vendors to offer services such as food delivery and hotel bookings on its Alipay mobile payment platform in an expansion beyond its financial services focus. traditionally competes against Tencent's WeChat pay in China mobile payments and financial services, with users using both apps daily for tasks such as paying bills, buying groceries or booking taxis. But Alipay said on Tuesday it plans to start allowing third-party vendors that offer services like retail, food and healthcare on its platform, moving into a realm that analysts say will pit it more firmly against on-demand giant service Meituan Dianping's "super-app".

Source - LiveMint

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Walmart asks Myntra to reduce discounts, streamline processes

To focus on profitability, US retailer and Flipkart Group parent Walmart has clamped down on processes at online fashion retailer Myntra, which includes shutting down small warehouses, bringing down the level of inventory and reducing discounts on the online platform, sources said.

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Source - Your Story

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