

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

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Airtel to serve 2,100 N-E villages

Amazon claims 1.5 times faster growth than Flipkart

Today's View

'Stack'-ing India on Top

What's common between Aadhaar, Digital Lockers, e-Signatures and UPI?

India Stack. A part of the widely pushed Digital India initiative, it is the largest API program on the planet. It enables governments, businesses, start-ups and developers to utilise a unique Digital Infrastructure stack to solve India specific problems through presence-less, paperless, and cashless service delivery. Even state governments like the Andhra Pradesh government are exploring the potential of emerging technologies like **Blockchain** through a platform similar to that of India Stack.

The beauty of India Stack is that it is open and freely available for private players to develop useful technology products and services. Tech start-ups including fintechs are using this framework to develop mobile apps and make services available to a large section of the population instantly. For example, **EasyGov** has built a cloud based solution using India Stack to help Indian citizens discover whether they are eligible for various government welfare schemes.

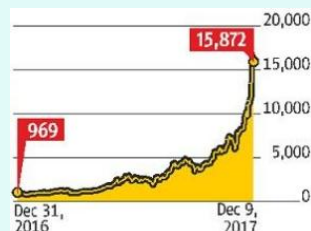
Similarly, another Fintech **Megdap** is offering AI-based language processing, digitisation and analysis to enable financial institutions to communicate with the rural customers by digitising and extracting KYC documents available in their local language.

Some Fintech start-ups are going one step beyond the traditional financial sector as well. For instance, **Journee** has developed automated cloud-based fare collection system based on India Stack and UPI to ensure a smart commuting experience to its commuters with increased operational efficiency and reduction in hidden revenue loss.

INTERESTING NEWS

Bitcoin enters overseas remittances space

Indian employees of overseas companies are bringing their money into India as bitcoin, a cost-free alternative to converting dollars into rupees. Recipients of such remittances have a clear arbitrage opportunity because of the 5-10% premium for bitcoins in India.



Unocoin has tied up with Bitwage, a blockchain-powered platform, to help overseas cos send money to India.

Source – Business Standard

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Date – 11th Dec 17

India Stack can potentially make government services more efficient and help reduce leakages. This is underscored by the fact that the Government has saved Rs 58,000 crore through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme used in various subsidy programmes, as per official government sources.

If implemented right through concerted efforts of all stakeholders, India Stack has the potential to transform India – from a paradigm where offline/cash transacting small retailers to an India where even a small street vendor would be conducting all his transactions digitally and effectively investing his savings through digital channels.

Today's News

Retailers up the ante against revised merchant discount rates

Retailers are gearing up to protest against revised MDRs for debit card transactions. RBI changed the basis of MDR as per the category of a merchant from the existing rule for the charges to be based on size of transactions. The RBI has increased MDR for all organized retailers to 0.9% for POS transactions up to Rs 2,000, from current rates of 0.25% for transactions up to Rs 1,000 and 0.5% for transactions between Rs 1,000 and Rs 2,000. Since most debit card transactions are below Rs 2,000, the marginal benefit of cost coming down to 0.9% has not helped retailers.

"This is not a fully thought out step. This is going one step forward and two steps backward," said Anand Agarwal, CFO, V-Mart Retail. "If the cost of operation goes up, we would not be inclined to promote digital payments."

Source – Business Standard

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Business confidence rises in October-December: CII

Companies in Indian are optimistic that the country's economic growth will gain traction during the third quarter this fiscal. The CII Business Confidence Index (BCI) has climbed up to the level of 59.7 during October-December 2017 compared to 58.3 in the previous quarter, reflecting an improvement in perception regarding overall economic conditions amidst indications of a normalization in business situation post recent disruptions.

"The survey underscores the perception that the economy is on a sustainable recovery path, with the many government interventions having an impact on the ground. The climb in business confidence underpins the hope that the upward trend one is seeing on macro figures would be sustained," CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said.

Source – The Economic Times

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This News Letter has been prepared with the assistance of Sadhika A. and Manish Kulkarni

Google targets small merchants, stores to push payment arm Tez

Google's Tez plans to diversify into merchant payments strongly. Having already partnered with multiple billers and telecom companies, Tez is targeting small merchants and street corner stores to popularize the app for merchant payments.

"We are also currently working on integrating our systems with larger merchants," said Diana Layfield, VP, PM, Google.

Source – The Economic Times

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DHL's e-commerce logistics arm to start India ops soon

DHL's dedicated ecommerce logistics arm is starting operations in India. It has made investments in India since 2014 through the parent; and will now have its own presence. The company aims to launch its India operations by March.

Source – The Economic Times

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Bitcoin: 1,000 people own 40% of the market

40% of bitcoin is held by perhaps 1,000 users. The whales can coordinate their moves or preview them to a select few. Many of the large owners have known one another and stuck by bitcoin through the early days; they can potentially band together to tank or prop up the market.

Source – Bloomberg

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Future Group taps start-ups to unlock consumer data

Future Group is looking to unlock data of around 500 mn consumers who have shopped on its offline stores across 255 cities in the country, offering technology start-ups to build models and solutions to increase engagement with them. This is a part of its larger aim to increase customer spends. "Our first goal is to build a data lake and understand the customer profile. Once the profile is ready, the vision for the start-ups (part of C&D Labs) is to come in and solve multiple problems on top of this data lake," said Rajiv Prakash, advisor C&D Labs and digital transformation, Future Group.

Source – Business Standard

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Airtel, Jio in race to provide cloud services to govt

Airtel and Reliance Jio are set for another bout. This time, the telcos are pitching against each other to grab a larger pie of the country's cloud services market and are in the running to become government-empanelled cloud service provider.

Amazon, IBM, Microsoft, BSNL and HP, among others, are also in the fray. The government would give empanelment to 15 firms for providing cloud services to Central, state, and local governments, and public sector bodies in India. Of the 15, the ministry has cleared seven — AWS, BSNL, CtrlS Data Centers, ESDS Software Solutions, Net Magic IT Services, Sify Tech and Web Werks India.

Source – Business Standard

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Airtel to serve 2,100 N-E villages

Airtel has signed an agreement with the DoT and the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) to provide mobile services to over 2,100 unconnected villages in the Northeast. Airtel would set up over 2,000 mobile towers/sites and deliver telecom connectivity to over 2,100 villages over the next 18 months. The deployment would also boost connectivity along important national highways in the region. Airtel would get about Rs 1,610 crore from the USOF for executing the project.

Source – Business Standard

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Amazon claims 1.5 times faster growth than Flipkart in GST era

Flipkart and Amazon both said their ecommerce businesses grew sharply in the 3 months ended Sept, registering a significant recovery from the months before the government introduced GST. Flipkart said its ecommerce business grew at about 85% y-o-y in terms of gross merchandise value (GMV) in the Jul-Sept quarter that included its flagship festive sales events.

Amazon India said it registered 72% y-o-y growth in terms of gross merchandise sold (GMS) for the September quarter, compared with 59% growth in April-June.

Source – The Economic Times

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Masking personal data to protect privacy crucial for India, say experts

Using the concept of de-identification to protect an individual's right to privacy and creating laws that constantly re-evaluate the difference between harmful and good use of data is crucial for India.

That could mean developing a token system that lets the UIDAI hold a master-list of data, while generating token numbers for all other KYC requirements, suggested the panel at the Global Technology Summit.

Source – Livemint

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Amazon India posts 67% sales volume growth in September quarter

Amazon India said its gross sales volume rose 67% from a year earlier, as the online retailer continued to grow at a rapid pace and keep larger rival Flipkart in its sight.

Gross sales by value jumped 72% during the quarter. The broader online retail market is estimated to be growing at roughly 25-30%. Gross sales refers to the value of goods sold on a platform. Amazon India also claimed it grew much faster than Flipkart in Apr-Sep, saying gross sales rose 66% in the six months. Naspers, in its half yearly report, indicated that Flipkart grew 43% during that period.

Source – Livemint

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