



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Single GST form likely for service providers

Small payment companies look to cash in on digital pay boom

UIDAI to discuss Aadhaar deadline issue with RBI, TRAI

India, Israel sign nine agreements

Alibaba-backed bicycle-sharing company Ofo enters India

Today's View

Digital Diplomacy

In our previous article ([link here](#)), we talked about how governments are using diplomatic tools to tackle cyber-crime. However, with the ever so dynamic technological landscape, governments are complementing diplomacy with digital tools to maintain and enhance diplomatic relations among states, international organisations and other international bodies.

Governments are employing digital tools like **social media**, **web-sourced analysis**, **big data** and **data mining** for scenario generation, conflict simulation and even for gamification. Leveraging such digital tools, the U.S. has set up a **Virtual Embassy** of the U.S. to Tehran in Iran, after closure of its physical presence. Interestingly, this Embassy has the same status as other traditional U.S. Embassies. It acts as the primary official resource for the Iranian people to get information directly from the U.S. government about U.S. policy and culture.

Various International organizations and alliances such as **North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)** are employing data-driven technologies to achieve digital diplomacy through delivering better service and exchanging large volumes of information in real time.

U.S. is leveraging social media to a large extent to drive digital diplomacy. It has a dedicated Department of State focused on cyber-diplomacy with a widespread social media presence (230 **Facebook** pages, 80 **Twitter** accounts, 55 channels on **YouTube** and 40 accounts on **Flickr**). Additionally, various

INTERESTING NEWS

UIDAI allows face recognition for Aadhaar

UIDAI has decided to enable face recognition for biometric verification for Aadhaar, in addition to fingerprint and iris scans, from July 1.



This is meant to facilitate the authentication of those who are unable to verify biometrically due to their worn-out fingerprints, old age or hard work conditions. The facility will be allowed on a need basis and can be used only in “fusion mode”.

Source – Business Standard

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Date – 16th Jan 18

cyber-diplomacy programs including **Dipnote**, **Digital Outreach Team**, **Opinion Space**, **Democracy Dialogues** and **Civil Society 2.0** have been instituted in the pursuit of employing diplomatic strategies in the digital domain.

Apart from cyber-diplomacy programs, innovative mediums like gamification have also been leveraged to improve digital diplomacy. For instance, mobile game **X-Life Games**, focused on the current tech savvy generation, fosters cultural exchange between Arabic, Persian, and English speaking communities with.

Other countries, like **Australia**, have also employed an International Cyber Engagement Strategy to promote digital technologies as a tool for economic development in the form of digital delivery of services for e-governance and entrepreneurship.

Back home, India is driving its digital diplomacy initiatives through partnerships with countries like **Israel**. Such partnerships have showcased the potential to help India in developing its cyber infrastructure and other technologies like **cloud computing**, **big data analytics** and **artificial intelligence** by engaging with Israeli tech companies in 'Silicon Wadi' – Israel's booming startup ecosystem.

With technology increasingly getting to be a major driver for both power and legitimacy in areas of foreign affairs and diplomacy, we feel that political leaders need to collaborate with tech-leaders to prepare for a world of digital diplomacy.

Today's News

Single GST form likely for service providers

Service providers such as telcos, banks, insurers and airlines may need to file just one centralized form for GST, which will ease the compliance burden on service providers with a multi-state footprint. The GST Council is expected to consider significant relaxation in law and procedures, including a centralized registration facility to make compliance easier. It will also consider changes to input tax credit regime to allow credit for tax paid on rent a cab services.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Small payment companies look to cash in on digital pay boom

Small payment entities are trying to take retail cash payments digital. One of the early adopters of UPI, Trupay has partnered with banks for settlements and has installed Trupay payment solutions at over 12K merchant locations, offering simple and cheap digital payments solutions. Payments are expected to shift towards asset-light models such as BharatQR and UPI.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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

Zeta puts funds in PeopleStrong HR Services

Zeta invested an undisclosed sum in PeopleStrong HR Services for a minority stake. The investment has been made in conjunction with Zeta, which offers a range of solutions, including digitized employee tax benefits, digital gifting platform and cashless cafeteria solutions for workplaces, and PeopleStrong entering into a strategic and commercial partnership which will see both companies jointly launch a human resources-focused mobile app later this week.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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PE fund True North sets up data analytics arm

True North launched a data analytics platform — Actify Data Labs — with initial investment of \$10 mn. The subsidiary will focus on helping True North portfolio companies take decisions using data analytics. It will selectively service third-party clients too.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Razorpay raises \$20M funding

Razorpay raised \$20 mn, led by Tiger Global and Y Combinator with participation from Matrix Partners. Funds to be used for the next phase of growth through scaling of products, bolstering technology, and expanding to newer markets like South East Asia.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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UIDAI to discuss Aadhaar deadline issue with RBI, Trai

Top officials at the UIDAI will meet the banking and telecom regulators to discuss whether there is a need for fresh deadlines to link the Aadhaar number with essential services, as new security protocols are introduced to improve privacy and secure the world's largest digital repository of personal information.

The new security protocols, which allow users to transact with a virtual ID while expecting service providers to generate virtual tokens aimed at masking the unique number, comes into effect only from June.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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India, Israel sign nine agreements

India and Israel signed nine agreements, including in the areas of cyber security and oil and gas, following delegation-level talks headed by PM Narendra Modi and Benjamin Netanyahu. A MoU on cooperation in cyber security was signed which envisages cooperation in the field of cyber security to develop, promote and expand cooperation in the field of human resources development through various platforms and arrangements such as training programmes, skill development, and simulator-based hands-on training.

It also envisages collaborating in the field of cyber security resilience, promoting B2B cooperation in cyber security and facilitating industrial summits.

Source – *Business Standard*

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Alibaba-backed bicycle-sharing company Ofo enters India

Alibaba-backed Chinese bicycle-sharing service Ofo is entering seven markets in India on a pilot basis — Indore, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Delhi, Pune, Coimbatore, and Chennai — ahead of home-grown Ola. Ofo would also offer services at Pune and Coimbatore. The firm is looking at India as its next big global market.

Launched in December, Ola had said its Pedal service was gaining massive interest from campuses and cities across the country. However, before Ola talks about its expansion, Ofo has begun rolling out its service in Bengaluru aggressively. It has announced partnership with Paytm.

Source – *Business Standard*

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EDII-incubated startups get Yes Bank funding of Rs.1.16 cr

Startups incubated at the Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India (EDII) have received debt funding of Rs. 1.16 crore from Yes Bank. Earlier this year, EDII had tied up with Yes Bank to lend to startups supported by EDII under the CGTMSE program (Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises).

Source – *BusinessLine*

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Alibaba and Microsoft AI beat humans in Stanford reading test

Alibaba on Monday said its artificial intelligence research outperformed mortals in a global reading comprehension test. The tech has many uses, from customer service to museum tutorials to medical enquires — some of which are already being handled by chatbots globally. AI systems were subject to queries from the Stanford Question Answering Dataset, which assessed reading comprehension.

Source – *Financial Times*

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Vivo opens exclusive e-store to grow market share

Vivo is expanding its online play through its new exclusive online store, which will sell its V and Y series in handsets besides accessories, as the smartphone brand bets on growing internet penetration to get more share in India.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Ford plans \$11 billion investment, 40 electrified vehicles by 2022

Ford Motor sharply increases its planned investments in electric vehicles to \$11 bn by 2022 and have 40 hybrid and fully electric vehicles in its model lineup. Of the 40 electrified vehicles, 16 will be fully electric and the rest will be plug-in hybrids.

Source – *Reuters*

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