



**NEWS HIGHLIGHTS**

**Govt plans to launch a national center for artificial intelligence by July**

**Paytm enters hotel booking business, buys NightStay**

**IBM's Talent division to help enterprises cope with the challenges of reskilling**

**Google, Facebook, Twitter must do more against fake news: EU**

**Today's View**

**Blockchain for Aviation Safety**

Air transport has become an integral branch of the global transport system. Not only has aircraft technology changed, but the methods and models of the aviation business have transformed, as well. However, as per **Aeron** research, with over 100,000 flights made daily, serving over 2 million people, aviation safety is still a major concern. On an average, around 3,300 accidents related to air transport happen yearly, mainly due to the human factor.

Hence, organisations including airlines and airports are looking at innovative technologies like blockchain for enhancing the airline industry and bringing it to a new level of security, transparency, and high-quality operation.

Recently, **NASA** has proposed a blockchain-based air traffic management platform. It would employ an open-source permissioned blockchain to enable secure, private and anonymous communication with air traffic services. Blockchain would address the potential issues of privacy, prevent spoofing, denial of service and other attacks. The system will employ Hyperledger Fabric to ensure the platform can be rapidly deployed and economically maintained. The new framework also features certificate authority, smart contract support, and higher-bandwidth communication channels for private information that may be used for secure communication between any specific aircraft and any particular authorised member.

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**Oyo in advanced talks to acquire Innov8 for Rs 200 cr**

SoftBank backed budget hotel chain Oyo is in "very advanced" stages of acquiring co-working space company Innov8 for about Rs 200 crore in an all cash deal, five people familiar with the development said. Oyo, flush with funds, has been scouting for deals in the co-working segment for a while, at the behest of SoftBank, the people said.

**Sharing Space**  
Oyo is looking at both co-living and co-working opportunities. That has been the mandate from SoftBank. It sounds like a feasible arrangement for both, as Innov8 had also been looking at funding or similar buyout opportunities

**ONCE THE DEAL IS COMPLETED**

- Innov8 management will continue to run ops
- It will train Oyo staff for the first few months
- Founder Ritesh Malik, other early-stage investors are expected to exit

Source – The Economic Times

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Date – 30<sup>th</sup> Jan 19

Similarly, **Accenture** and **Thales** have developed a blockchain solution based upon the Hyperledger Fabric platform for tracking and authentication of aviation parts and materials. While **Air France** is collaborating with **Microsoft** and **Ramco Aviation** to develop blockchain applications for the maintenance of passenger airliners.

On the other hand, **Distributed Sky**, a non-profit organisation is using blockchain to overcome the challenges of the next level of air traffic control. It has already made tests both in computer simulations and in a real-world environment to ensure better air traffic control. The blockchain-based pilot projects showed that multiple flights/drones collision in the shared airspace can be avoided. Even **International Commercial Aviation Organisation (ICAO)** is working on a blockchain-based framework based on this concept.

Considering the importance of ensuring passenger and aeroplane safety, it's a welcome step to explore the use of high-end technologies like blockchain in the aviation sector.

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## Today's News

### Govt plans to launch a national center for artificial intelligence by July

The Central government, in its quest to simplify governance, is planning to launch a national centre for artificial intelligence. The centre is expected to be operational by July and work has begun for a launch. To be known as the National Artificial Intelligence Centre, the unit will be part of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), and will work in collaboration with other entities of the department such as the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), senior government officials said.

Source – *Business Standard*

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### duNOW app offers 'digital' help for MSMEs

A new app called duNOW has been launched to help MSMEs that struggle to access or use internet communication technologies for their business growth. duNOW has a free basic plan that gives businesses a digital store front to display products and services and accept payments 24x7. With flexible pricing (between Rs 20 and Rs 35 per day) businesses can choose a license that suits their budget.

The app, developed by Srivathsan Krishnamurthy and Bharath Balachandran, who had worked for US retail giant Walmart earlier, has both B2C & B2B functionalities. It has more than 50 features for businesses of all sizes. It can work for a wide range of businesses ranging from car and bike dealerships, apartment & resident associations, paying guest accommodations, passenger & commercial vehicle fleet operators, restaurants, hotels, gym and yoga studios. Educational centres such as daycare, after-school activity centres and infant care can also benefit.

Source – *BusinessLine*

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

### Uber to pull up users who take drivers for a ride

Uber India has updated its driver app to incorporate a safety tool kit and introduced community guidelines for customers in a bid to promote safety of drivers on the platform. The move is an important one in the ride-hailing industry which is largely a supply constraint market and wooing drivers to stick to a platform is crucial as the battle for market share between Ola and Uber intensifies.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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### SHAREit most downloaded tool app in 2018 in India

With 400 mn Indian users, China-based content-sharing app SHAREit was the most downloaded tool app in the country in 2018, said a new report by mobile data and analytics provider App Annie. It has also touched the third spot of the most active apps in India after WhatsApp and Facebook with 200 mn monthly active users, the company claimed.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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### Zerodha's Varsity to open soon on app

Varsity by Zerodha, a collection of stock and financial market lessons available on the website of Bengaluru-based stock broking and investment platform Zerodha, will soon be launched as a mobile application. The company will first come out with an Android app followed by iOS app for Apple devices. It would be made available free of cost, Rangappa said, who leads the Varsity programme at Zerodha.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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## IBM's Talent division to help enterprises cope with the challenges of reskilling

As rapid technology changes are forcing enterprises to up-skill their workforce, IBM is pulling in some of its best talents in various departments into a newly-formed division that will help companies deal with the staffing challenges brought about by robotics and Artificial Intelligence. "This is a new unit which will have its own revenue measurements. All of us have pumped in new leadership into this. Learning consultants have been pulled into this, AI consultants have been put into this. Our projections for the division are very high," Lula Mohanty, General Manager, IBM Global Business Services, Asia Pacific, said.

Source – BusinessLine

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## Paytm enters hotel booking business, buys NightStay

Paytm has launched hotel bookings on its platform and acquired NightStay, which offers deals on last-minute bookings at luxury hotels, as the Alibaba-backed payments and Ecommerce Company expands its travel business. Paytm said it plans to invest Rs 500 crore in scaling up its travel operations and has partnered with more than 5,000 hotels across the budget, luxury and business segments. Its hotel partners include chains like Sarovar, Zuri, Treebo, Indian Hotels Co's Ginger, Sterling and Vresorts. The company said it aims to reach 2 million hotels and alternative accommodations globally and become Asia's top hotel-booking destination by 2020.

Source – The Economic Times

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## SoftBank's India kitty set to cross \$10bn

Japanese telecom and internet major SoftBank is set to cross the \$10-billion milestone in the country as it closes investments in two e-commerce ventures – baby care retailer Firstcry and sector-focused logistics company Delivery. Both of these are expected to be in the \$400-450 million range, helping the Japanese billionaire Masayoshi Son-led firm cross the promised number in less than five years after he announced in October 2014 that he will invest \$10 billion over a decade.

Source – The Economic Times

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## Budget expectations: E-commerce, IT sectors look for tax sops, better clarity

The e-commerce sector is looking for an impetus to digitisation and, incentivising of digital transactions in the upcoming Union Budget, e-procurement firm Kobster's co-founder Karthik Ramaiah has said. In his pre-budget expectations, the entrepreneur said he was optimistic about a unified approach from the Centre, States and local bodies to ensure that a comprehensive tax and regulatory policy is uniformly implemented for facilitating e-commerce sector's growth in India.

Source – The Economic Times

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## Binny Bansal, Udaan founders back Crio, a learning platform for developers

Crio.Do, a learning platform for developers, has raised \$1 million in seed funding led by Binny Bansal, co-founder and former group CEO of Flipkart, along with other prominent members of the so-called Flipkart Mafia. The funding round saw participation from the founders of the B2B e-commerce platform, Udaan, Amod Malviya, Vaibhav Gupta and Sujeet Kumar, as well as Mekin Maheshwari who has founded Udhyan Learning Foundation.

Source – The Economic Times

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## Google, Facebook, Twitter must do more against fake news: EU

Google, Facebook, Twitter and Mozilla must do more to combat fake news as Europeans head towards an election or the companies will face the threat of regulatory action, the European Commission said. The EU's executive said signatories to the code of practice had taken steps to remove fake accounts and limit sites promoting fake news but said more was needed.

Source – The Economic Times

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## BankBazaar ties up with Ujjivan Small Finance Bank for personal loans

BankBazaar, an online marketplace for financial products, has partnered with Ujjivan Small Finance Bank for providing Personal Loans.

Source – BusinessLine

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