

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

ClearTax strengthens top deck with 3 executives from Amazon, Adobe & Microsoft

NASSCOM signs MoU with SkillUp Online

LenDenClub raises \$1 million from Artha Venture Fund, others

LetsVenture to expand scope of investment platform

Today's View

Gig Economy 2.0

With technology changing the way workplaces are evolving, a novel concept called 'Gig Economy' is being leveraged by numerous companies as well as workers. As per **Forbes**, it refers to the increased tendency for businesses to hire freelancers for a concentrated short-term project.

Regarded as the 'future of work', Gig Economy 2.0 is driven by the plethora of freelance opportunities with flexible work hours without any time barriers. A recent study by **McKinsey** estimates that around 20% of the workforce in developed markets is engaged in independent work.

According to **Oxford Internet Institute's 'Online Labour Index'**, India leads the global Gig Economy with a 24% share of the online labour market, with demand for software developers, creative and marketing professionals. The younger generation is choosing flexibility over job security and benefits, according to the index.

New-age start-ups are bringing customized options for the Gig Economy workers and making this a viable career option for the youth. For instance, till just a few years ago, the concept of sharing an office space was alien to the Indian ecosystem, and finding office space was one of the biggest challenges for start-ups and those servicing the on-demand ecosystem. Today, the likes of **WeWork, The Hive, and Work Square**, etc. have introduced India to co working spaces, and Indian start-ups and investors are now backing this movement in a big way.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI) funding is at a record high

During the second quarter of this year, the (AI) start-ups brought in \$7.4 billion in funding, the single highest amount ever in a quarter, according to CB Insights. The number of deals grew as well, rising in step with the money raised. There were 488 AI deals, the second highest number in a given quarter.



Source – The Economic Times

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Date – 30th Aug 19

On the other hand, there has been a meteoric increase in the total number of marketplaces that connect individuals, companies and startups to Gig Economy participants. Organized players like **Flexingit**, **Tapchief**, etc. act as a bridge between a corporate and an individual, whereas globally the likes of **Fiverr** and **Freelancer** have made an impact on individuals working independently in the gig economy, particularly in the creative fields.

Similarly, **PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)** has launched 'Talent Exchange' that matches independent consultants to client projects.

Though the Gig Economy might not be applicable to all economy participants, it is expected to see more millennials joining the freelance workforce and the introduction of crowdsourcing platforms providing work opportunities to thousands of freelancers from all over the world. To reap the maximum benefits of this form of economy, it is imperative to ensure other factors like skill levels and technological access of the masses to fall in the right place, along with the support of regulatory and government agencies.

Today's News

ClearTax strengthens top deck with 3 executives from Amazon, Adobe & Microsoft

Fintech start-up ClearTax, which provides income-tax e-filing and compliance solutions, has roped in senior executives from Amazon, Adobe and Microsoft to strengthen its top management deck. ClearTax, which is among 32 of India's 3,500 fintech start-ups that are potential unicorns, according to start-up tracking and intelligence platform Tracxn, says it will grow its revenue and user base by 3X this year on the back of the recent top management hires.

Vishal Dubey, who has 21 plus years of experience in Telecom, Internet and Media sectors, has been onboarded as Executive Vice-President for Family Business (MSME). He will be responsible for developing dedicated products for MSMEs and primarily focus on GST solutions. Previously, Dubey-led India business for Amazon Fuse and Mobile Business Development, where he was responsible for building strategic partnerships with telcos and smartphone companies to acquire e-commerce and Prime customers for Amazon.

Source – BusinessLine

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LenDenClub raises \$1 million from Artha Venture Fund, others

Peer-to-peer lending start-up LenDenClub has raised \$1 million (Rs 7.2 crore) in a pre-series-A funding round, led by existing investor Artha Venture Fund. Several family offices like the UAE-based Transworld Group participated in the round, along with angel investors like Health and Glow director Shuchi Kothari, Livspace cofounder Ramakant Sharma, Narendra Karnavat and others. This is the follow-up of an Rs 4.5 crore seed round the Mumbai-based start-up had done in 2018, after receiving the P2P NBFC lending licence from the Reserve Bank of India.

Source – The Economic Times

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

NASSCOM signs MoU with SkillUp Online

Trade association NASSCOM (The National Association of Software and Services Companies) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with SkillUp Online to teach subjects like artificial intelligence, big data, cloud technologies, cyber security and blockchain.

The courses taught will be certified by NASSCOM. SkillUp Online will first launch foundation-level learning modules on AI and big data. They will also launch NASSCOM-certified learning programs for up-skilling initiatives in the consumer, business and academic segments.

Source – The Economic Times

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Wipro expands its partnership with Google Cloud

Wipro said it has expanded its strategic partnership with Google Cloud to accelerate cloud adoption and digital transformation for global enterprises. The Bengaluru-headquartered software services exporter said it has a dedicated practice focused on Google Cloud Platform (GCP).

The practice powers business and technology transformation for enterprises and helps them win in an 'experience economy' through differentiated offerings around application modernization, data, analytics, artificial intelligence, SAP workload migration, and industrialized cloud migration at scale, said the company in a press release.

Source – The Economic Times

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LetsVenture to expand scope of investment platform

LetsVenture, a Bengaluru-based technology platform that connects angel investors with start-ups, is expanding its scope to address the needs of growth-stage start-ups. Besides, it would also focus on a new vertical that helps family offices find investment opportunities in start-ups. "As an extension of the support to early growth stage entities, we have recently started 'Let's Go' to support the funding needs of start-ups that matured to the growth stage," said Shanti Mohan, founder and chief executive officer.

Through this new window is open for all growth-stage start-ups, it would give preference to the start-ups that received initial funding on it. The platform has also launched an exclusive window for investors from family offices, with turnover ranging from Rs 500-1,000 crore. "We have about 127 such members on board. They have so far invested Rs 70 crore in the last six months. This segment is growing," she said.

Source – BusinessLine

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MasterCard continues to battle rising challenge of digital fraud

The ever-expanding digital payments industry has put the spotlight on cyber-related issues. Financial services major MasterCard acknowledges the problem and is focusing on mitigating digital fraud, which has been on the rise in India and the world as more and more people switch to digital transactions. "More than 70% of the detected frauds are from digital transactions, which are 35% of our volume. So, we've been focused on solving the digital fraud because that is the business which is growing at a faster pace," said Ajay Bhalla, president, cyber and intelligence solutions, MasterCard.

MasterCard recently launched an authentication product called Identity Check Express that enables customers to verify transactions on their own. The product will let MasterCard cardholders allow a one-time merchant specific consent on their trusted mobile device for transactions less than Rs 2,000.

Source – Business Standard

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Media industry seeks clarity on FDI norms in digital media

The media industry is seeking clarity as they await details on the government's move to permit 26 per cent FDI for uploading and streaming of news and current affairs through digital media. Ashish Pherwani, Partner and Media and Entertainment Leader, EY India, said, "This move will necessitate a re-think of their India strategy by many digital news companies and may require clarity between digital news production companies, news aggregators and platforms. The definition of digital media itself will be critical."

Analysts said that the government was earlier silent on the issue of FDI in digital media. Himanshu Parekh, Partner and Head, Corporate and International Task, KPMG India, said, "The FDI policy currently permits 49 per cent foreign investment in uplinking of news and current affairs TV channels and 26 per cent in the print media sector, both through government approval rate, but it was silent on FDI in digital media segment."

Source – BusinessLine

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U GRO Capital disburses Rs 500 crore of debt since January

U GRO Capital, a tech-enabled lender to small businesses, has disbursed Rs 500 crore of debt to about 1,000 customers since January this year. The firm's disbursements rose to Rs 218 crore in the first quarter of FY20 from Rs 64 crore in Q4 FY19, and ended the quarter with an annualized disbursement rate of Rs 1,200 crore.

"These disbursements happened at a challenging time, with the slowdown looming over and Small and Medium Enterprises and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises finding it difficult to raise funds. The NBFC crisis has led to banks and private lenders becoming more cautious in lending," said U GRO Capital Chairman and Managing Director Shachindra Nath.

Source – BusinessLine

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Edtech start-up Vedantu secures \$42M from Tiger Global, WestBridge Cap

Edtech platform Vedantu has raised \$42 million in fresh funding, led by New York-based Tiger Global Management and WestBridge Capital. The investment will enable Vedantu to popularize its online live tutoring sessions in small towns and cities across the country.

"Majority of this fund we are planning to deploy into building awareness about this category and our brand. Investments into our technology and platform will be the second pillar enabled by this round," said Vamsi Krishna, CEO of Vedantu.

Source – The Economic Times

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