

## NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

**Flourish Ventures to continue its investment spree in India's FinTech space**

**SoftBank Appoints Manoj Kohli as India Head to Strengthen Public Policy**

**Credit Saison and Capital Float join hands to offer digital financing to SMEs**

**Japanese VCs, Invest India highlight opportunities for Indian Startups in Japan**

## Today's View

### Tech in Lobbying

Lobbying is an attempt by individuals or private interest groups to influence the decisions of government. Lobbying can be a positive force in democracy, it can also be a mechanism for powerful groups to influence laws and regulations at the expense of the public interest.

According to Federal disclosures, tech giants **Amazon, Google** and **Facebook** have spent nearly half a billion US dollars on lobbying over the past decade. Silicon Valley corporations and companies globally are increasing investments for lobbying.

Lobbying is an effective way to enact political change. But it has historically only been available to special interest groups and corporations with cash to invest. A new age startup **CrowdLobby** hopes to change that. **CrowdLobby** works by featuring campaigns around issues that its community of users has deemed to be important.

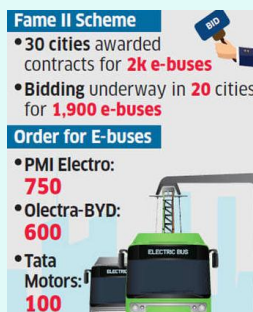
Danish start up **Ulobby**, founded in 2016, offers a **SaaS** platform that makes it possible for everyone to work as lobbyists and professionalise their lobbying activities. **Ulobby's** vision is to make the discipline of lobbying more democratic, transparent, and accessible to everyone. The startup offers different solutions for organisations and public affairs specialists, including automated political monitoring. Based on machine learning users can fine tune political tracking to their context.

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**PMI Electro, BYD Olectra grab maximum government Electric Bus Tenders**

Haryana-based PMI Electro and Chinese electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer BYD Olectra have scored the biggest contract.



**Fame II Scheme**

- 30 cities awarded contracts for **2k e-buses**
- Bidding underway in **20** cities for **1,900 e-buses**

**Order for E-buses**

- PMI Electro: **750**
- Olectra-BYD: **600**
- Tata Motors: **100**

Source – Inc42

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**LawMaker.io**, which bills itself as a platform that gives those in the U.S., the chance to create propositions for new laws through crowdsourcing. They enable support to be built around popular ideas that are eventually handed over to law makers to propose legislation.

**India Tech** is a think-tank and lobby group set up by domestic consumer internet giants like Flipkart and Ola. It was launched to primarily represent the interests of local ventures and create a lobby group that aims to ensure a level playing field for domestic startups in India.

For an elected government to work, citizens and groups need to be heard. Government has the power to help individuals and lobbyists take the word of the people to the corridors of power to create a positive change.

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## Today's News

### Credit Saison and Capital Float join hands to offer digital financing to SMEs

Non-banking finance company (NBFC) Capital Float has entered into a co-lending partnership with Japanese financial services major Credit Saison, which will see both parties disburse business loans to India's under-financed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). As part of the agreement, Capital Float – which counts the likes of Sequoia Capital, Ribbit Capital and Amazon among its list of backers – and Credit Saison, which received its NBFC licence from the Reserve Bank of India in October last year, will provide working capital financing to MSMEs, particularly to those from the country's tier-2 towns and cities and beyond. "This is a partnership that has been in the works for a few months now and has officially gone live in January. The unique thing about this is (that), this is probably the first time that a premier Japanese financial major has joined hands with an Indian NBFC," Sashank Rishyasringa, cofounder of Capital Float, which has a loan book of about Rs 8,500 crore, told ET.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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### Japanese VCs, Invest India highlight opportunities for Indian Startups in Japan

Following up on the promises to collaborate and strengthen the startup ecosystem in India and Japan, Japanese investors have been some of the most active participants in the investment landscape. Not only have investors backed Indian startups with mega funding rounds, but have shown a keen interest in being a partner for Indian startups and the tech ecosystem. And it's not just about the SoftBank Vision Fund. The Japan External Trade Organisation (JETRO), Invest India and NASSCOM came together on Wednesday (January 22) to host a conference in Mumbai to enable discussions and explore opportunities to solidify the partnership of Indian startups, tech businesses and their Japanese counterparts. JETRO, NASSCOM and Invest India said the collaborations between Indian and Japanese companies blends the strengths of both worlds with India.

Source – *Inc42*

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This News Letter has been prepared with the assistance of Preeti Patil and Prithwiji Ghosh.

### Flourish Ventures to continue its investment spree in India's FinTech space

Impressed with the growth of India's fintech space, Tilman Ehrbeck, managing partner at Flourish Ventures, said that the venture capital firm is looking to invest in sectors such as neo-banking, gig economy, embedded finance and insurtech. Since its spin-off from Omidyar Network, the investment firm founded eBay's Pierre Omidyar, Flourish Ventures has so far invested in around 13 startups working in utility and fintech sectors. Flourish Ventures also manages a \$300 Mn fund which invests in fintech startups, out of which the company has already invested around \$60 Mn in startups globally.

Source – *Inc42*

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### Google CEO thinks AI will be more profound change than fire

Google's chief executive officer has left no doubt about how important he thinks artificial intelligence will be to humanity. "AI is one of the most profound things we're working on as humanity. It's more profound than fire or electricity," Alphabet Inc. CEO Sundar Pichai said in an interview at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland on Wednesday. Alphabet, which owns Google, has had to grapple with its role in the development of AI, including managing employee revolts against its work on the technology for the U.S. government.

Source – *Bloomberg*

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## Cisco LaunchPad is Bringing Cutting-edge Technologies into the Mainstream with Its All-New 6th Cohort Program

At Cisco, innovation lies at the heart of every vertical and domain it forays into. When Cisco announced its LaunchPad Program in 2016, its aim was to create solutions for the next generation of internet users. The programme brings together Cisco technologies, startups, and the partner community to deliver business-relevant, end-to-end tech solutions. For the 41 startups that have graduated from the cohorts over the years, the LaunchPad has created an opportunity to be part of a programme that supports and nurtures co-development, co-creation, new business models and joint go-to market strategies (GTM). She adds that working closely with the core teams, senior management, and the discipline required, pushed them ahead in their journey. For Ramas Rangaswamy, Director, Cisco, who mentored QNu Labs, it was a great experience to see how startups approached problems, the detail they go into, and learning about their technology.

Source – Your Story

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## Deepinder Goyal is ordering food from this Delhi-based startup, and no it's not Zomato

Do you know what is common between Hike Founder Kavin Bharti Mittal, Zomato Founders Deepinder Goyal and Pankaj Chaddha, Chaayos Founder Nitin Saluja, cricketer Virat Kohli's brother Vikas Kohli, YouTuber Kusha Kapila, Singer Aastha Gill, and UrbanClap Founder Abhiraj Bhal? It's the place they order food from: Delhi-based cloud kitchen startup Caterspoint. Launched in October 2016 by a young chef Anshu Raj (now 26), Caterspoint is a cloud kitchen that delivers nutritious, innovative, low calorie, and tasty food to its customers. The foodtech startup designs its menu by including the forgotten ingredients in our mother's recipes like sago (sabudana), poha, upma, curd rice, custard, kheer, and many more. The Caterspoint menu covers about 260 items that have breakfast, lunch, snacks, dinner, desserts, refreshing beverages, and exotic options like porridges, oatmeal, a variety of salads, and sandwiches.

Source – Your Story

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## SoftBank Appoints Manoj Kohli as India Head to Strengthen Public Policy

SoftBank has appointed Manoj Kohli as its India head. Kohli, who comes with more than 40 years of experience, will be in charge of government relations and public policy efforts. This comes after a nearly five-year stint as the chairman of SoftBank's renewable energy business SB Energy. In his new role, Kohli will be supporting SoftBank, SoftBank Vision Fund, and the banking giant's portfolio companies' interests in India, says TOI. Kohli is expected to help secure necessary approval for the smooth functioning of the company's operations. He was formerly the managing director and CEO of Bharti Airtel. SoftBank also recently appointed Vikas Agnihotri as its first operating partner in India.

Source – Inc42

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## Working with small web publishers, this adtech startup has notched up \$10M in ARR

The digital advertising journey is a game mastered by Google and Facebook. While they take a lion's share of digital advertising, several publishers suffer because display advertising is broken with inefficient client-side ad auctions in real-time bidding, and there is rampant banner blindness. The problem is publishers don't have the tools to measure and solve for this blindness. Delhi-based startup AdPushup's ad revenue optimisation suite helps small, medium, and large publishers thrive by helping increase their display advertising-based revenue.

Source – Your Story

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## India's fintech segment continues to be key market: Naspers CEO

South Africa's internet and media giant Naspers will continue to double down on investment in India's tech startup ecosystem, with a renewed focus on new-age credit products and backing entrepreneurs with original ideas as opposed to emulated business modes. Speaking at the ongoing World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Bob van Dijk, group CEO of Naspers said that India has been a key market for technology investments in recent years. "...It always surpasses all our views (about the state of the market). Also, the quality of entrepreneurship and education is very high."

Source – Live Mint

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