

Indian Railways have started incorporating drones into their operations, such as the Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) project to inspect railway lines and assess the progress of new constructions.

Similarly, US-based **SkySpecs** is using drones to inspect turbines, removing the need for dangerous and costly manual inspection. On the other hand, **Federal Aviation Administration** in Colorado is collaborating with **Xcel Energy** for a pilot project involving drones flying above power lines and utility infrastructure around the state.

Considering the need to build indigenous drones for military and other sectors, India's first private Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) or drone manufacturing facility has been set up by **Adani Defence & Aerospace** jointly with **Elbit Systems**.

The integration of drones within the infrastructure sector doesn't mean that manual methods are soon to become obsolete. Instead, state-of-the-art technologies like drones can be used in conjunction with existing methods, using real-time data to add more detail to ground reports and surveys to provide more meaningful insights.

Today's News

Bank on many lenders, NPCI tells UPI players

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has asked payment service providers on its popular payments platform UPI to adopt a multibank model in a bid to ensure "full resilience" of the country's payments ecosystem, which was disrupted after regulatory curbs were imposed on Yes Bank late last week.

The curbs caused outages in the services of leading UPI players such as PhonePe and BharatPe, where the distressed lender was the sole banking partner. NPCI, which acts as an umbrella organisation for retail payments and settlement systems in India, said on Tuesday that it had already first advised large UPI players to operate under a multi-bank approach in September 2017.

Source – Economic Times

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Coronavirus outbreak: Google recommends all North America employees to work from home

Alphabet's Google is recommending all of its North American employees to work from home if their roles permit, the search giant said on Tuesday, aiming to minimize the risk of spreading the coronavirus.

The new recommendation is an expansion of a similar guideline it gave to employees in San Francisco Bay area. Most of the big companies have so far limited the work-from-home option to specific regions in the United States.

Source – Business Standard

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Infy writes off its \$4.5M investment in WaterLine Data Science

Infosys on Tuesday said it has written off \$4.5 million it had invested in WaterLine Data Science, a US startup. Infosys had made these investments through its innovation fund in two tranches in 2016 and 2018.

In January, Hitachi Vantara had announced that it intends to buy Waterline. Infosys in a regulatory filing said that it informs that Waterline Data has completed the process of dissolution.

Source – Economic Times

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Accel Partners leads \$3M funding round in online events hosting platform Airmeet

Online events hosting platform Airmeet has raised \$3 million (about Rs 22 crore) in fresh funding in a round led by marquee venture capital firm Accel Partners, the Bengaluru-based startup announced on Monday.

Other investors participating in the pre-Series A round include, early-stage investor Venture Highway, stage-agnostic European investment firm Global Founders Capital and angel syndicates CloudCapital, Better Capital, 100x Entrepreneur Fund and Sequoia Scout, according to an official statement released by Airmeet.

Source – Economic Times

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Small sellers find an online route to customers via tech platforms

Small sellers, which retail mainly through big ecommerce marketplaces such as Flipkart and Amazon, are now trying to directly connect with consumers through technology platforms such as Shopify.

This comes at a time when they, led by an online vendors' group, have intensified the fight against established ecommerce players over alleged predatory pricing and preferential treatment to select large vendors. The All India Online Vendors Association (AIOVA), which has taken on these large marketplaces legally, has partnered with Shopify to help its around 4,500 members set up their own online storefronts.

Source – Your Story

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As WhatsApp Pay debut looms, rivals add more storefronts to keep up

Google Pay and PhonePe are adding more storefronts to their payment platforms, in a bid to beat WhatsApp Pay's imminent entry and explore alternative money-making avenues after the government waived processing fees on Unified Payments Interface transactions.

PhonePe's Switch and Google Pay's Spot, their commerce layers, are tying up with hundreds of businesses in the country, enabling them to open mini digital storefronts within the payment apps where users can browse for products and services. This will aid easy user discovery without merchants having to spend heavily on technology. PhonePe said it had more than a hundred apps live on Switch and expects that to cross 500 by the end of the year. Consumer brands that use Switch include Domino's, Oyo Hotels and Goibibo. Google Pay started Spot with seven merchants, including MakeMyTrip and UrbanClap.

Source – Economic Times

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IBM roll out advanced AI tool that can read idioms

With an increased demand for advanced artificial intelligence (AI) across businesses, IBM has rolled out advanced AI based solutions under Watson that can read and analyse complex English language including meaning of idioms.

The technology major said this advanced version of natural language processing (NLP) for its Project Debater would have the capability to understand challenging aspects of conversational English helping organisations to get greater clarity and more insights from their data.

Source – Economic Times

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Alibaba's Alipay to open app to more services to take on Meituan

Ant Financial, an affiliate of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba, will start allowing third-party vendors to offer services such as food delivery and hotel bookings on its Alipay mobile payment platform in an expansion beyond its financial services focus. Alipay traditionally competes against Tencent's WeChat pay in China for mobile payments and financial services, with users using both apps daily for tasks such as paying bills, buying groceries or booking taxis. But Alipay said on Tuesday it plans to start allowing third-party vendors that offer services like retail, food and healthcare on its platform, moving into a realm that analysts say will pit it more firmly against on-demand service giant Meituan Dianping's "super-app".

Source – LiveMint

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Walmart asks Mynta to reduce discounts, streamline processes

To focus on profitability, US retailer and Flipkart Group parent Walmart has clamped down on processes at online fashion retailer Mynta, which includes shutting down small warehouses, bringing down the level of inventory and reducing discounts on the online platform, sources said.

Source – Your Story

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