8 Indian Startup News That You Don't Want To Miss This Week

We bring to you the weekly dose of important Indian startup news of the week.

Once again, Paytm was the biggest newsmaker in the Indian startup ecosystem. This week, the Indian startup made three announcements. The company announced that its QR feature now allows offline merchants to accept unlimited payments directly to their bank accounts at 0% charge. The company is gearing up to invest $77.75 Mn (INR 500 Cr) over the next 12 months to conduct merchant training and awareness initiatives.

It also introduced 'Paytm Loyalty Points' that can be accumulated by its users and can be used in all platforms and the offline merchant base of Paytm. Furthermore, the digital payments giant is gearing up to add more features to its loyalty programme in the coming few days.

The last development was mainly pertaining to the founder and CEO of Paytm, Vijay Shekhar Sharma. He pledged about 5% of his personal holding in Paytm Mall for the ESOP pool. This move would add about $50 Mn worth of stocks to the ESOP corpus, which will then become almost 10% of the overall company. As per regulatory filings for the financial year, 2017, with the Registrar of Companies, Sharma who had over 19% stake in Paytm Mall now owns about 14% stake.

Important Indian Startup Stories Of The Week
Government To Bear MDR Charges On Payments Up To INR 2000
In order to encourage small shops to accept digital payments, the government has decided to bear the charges merchants pay to banks i.e-the merchant discount rate (MDR), on purchases of up to $31(INR 2,000) using a debit card, BHIM or Aadhaar. While the charges for debit cards have been waived, payments by credit card will continue to attract MDR.

UIDAI Temporarily Bans Airtel From For Flouting Aadhaar Rules
Bharti Airtel and Airtel Payments Bank, the country's first payments bank, has been temporarily banned from conducting eKYC of customers using Aadhaar. The stringent action was taken by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on the basis of allegations that the telecom major was using Aadhaar-based SIM verification of customers to open payments bank accounts without their "informed consent"

Amazon To Launch Private Smartphone Brand Tenor
The Indian arm of global ecommerce behemoth Amazon is gearing up to launch a private smartphone brand, Tenor, in January 2018. The development comes just over a month after Flipkart announced its entry into the country's smartphone market with Billion Capture+. Amazon India had previously launched two smartphone models, Tenor E and G, in India back in September.
RELATED STORIES:
• Paytm Introduces Loyalty Scheme To Encourage Users To Transact Digitally
• Digital Payments Giant Paytm Set To Launch Incubator For Startups

• [Digital Payments Startup Benow Acquires Finmo In Cash And Stock Deal](#)
The company also announced that its popular membership programme, Amazon Prime has grown to encompass over 11 Mn Prime eligible products across categories in India this year, compared to the 2 Mn products it offered in 2016. The programme saw customers from over 350 cities across the country signing up in 2017.

Alibaba Cloud To Set Up Its India Data Centre
Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Chinese ecommerce giant Alibaba, is all set to open its India data centre in January 2018. As part of its announcement earlier today, the company has invited clients to sign up for services to be delivered by the new data centre.

Situated in Mumbai, the India data centre will help meet the surging demand for cloud computing services among the fast-increasing number of small and medium-sized businesses in the region.

Government Imposes Regulations On Ecommerce Firms
Starting from January 1, 2018, all ecommerce firms in the country will have to display the exact MRP (as in Maximum Retail Price) of packaged products, including electronic gadgets, smartphones as well as consumer durables and non-durable goods. As per a government mandate released recently, the price details will have to be clearly mentioned both on the online platform and on the products themselves. Additionally, ecommerce companies have been ordered to display the name of the country that the products were manufactured or assembled in.

Mohandas Pai Expresses Concerns Over Angel Tax
Investor and ex-CFO at Infosys Mohandas Pai raised the startups' angel tax dilemma, addressing the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley; PM Narendra Modi; Minister of Law and Justice and IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad and Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant. In a recent tweet, Pai said, "Sir, startups are getting harassed by Income tax officials for raising capital, threatening to consider it as income! Very bad scene and many are angry and upset, may shift overseas. Appeal process broken, takes 15 years. Pls intervene."

Flipkart Bets On AI Development In India
The Indian startup is taking big steps to make headway in the area of artificial intelligence by creating an internal unit called AIforIndia, in order to put machine learning and AI at the core of its business. The ecommerce player will invest "hundreds of millions of dollars" in the AI initiative over the next few years.Flipkart has already begun recruiting AI experts, building infrastructure, striking hardware partnerships and working with top educational institutions, including IITs in this direction.

Other Indian Startup Stories Of The Week
Paynear Rebrands Itself To Payswiff
After acquiring Singapore-based Goswiff Pte Ltd, Indian omni-channel payment solutions startup Paynear Solutions has rebranded itself to Payswiff Solutions Pvt. Ltd. The rebranding and renaming were undertaken to reflect the strong cultures and values of both the companies, reinforce the business synergies and leverage the strong brand equity of both Paynear and

GoSwiff, post-acquisition.

NASSCOM Partners With China's Dalian Municipal For IoT Collaboration
The National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) signed a MoU with Dalian Municipal People's government in China to launch a collaborative platform. Dubbed as the Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza (SIDCOP), the platform will be powered by AI and IoT, so as to enable technology exchange between the startup ecosystems of both the countries. The dedicated IT Plaza will serve as an exclusive place for interested IT providers of all sizes to begin operations and avail benefits provided by Dalian BEST City administration. The platform will work on online as well as offline modes.

Aditya Birla Finance Limited Partners With MoneyTap
The subsidiary of Aditya Birla Capital Limited announced a strategic partnership with credit line-based Indian startup MoneyTap in its effort to ease consumer lending. The partnership will allow MoneyTap users to avail credit from ABFL and is targeted at the middle-income consumer segment in 20 cities across India. The new partnership enables ABFL to leverage MoneyTap's technology and data platform to evaluate and issue credit to the customers and provide the best customer experience

APT Online Starts BHIM Payments Through Benow's UPI Solution
Mumbai-based digital payment startup Benow has enabled APT Online's 4800+ Consumer Service Centers to accept digital payments through BHIM and other UPI apps from its citizens. This partnership has resulted in Benow acquiring more than 10,000 merchants across Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh within eight months of launching the BHIM Enablement Services. Other than APT Online, well-known brands such as Mad Over Donuts, ISCKON, Wellness Forever, Rediff, etc. are already using Benow's solution.

Swiggy Partners With Sodexo Meal Card
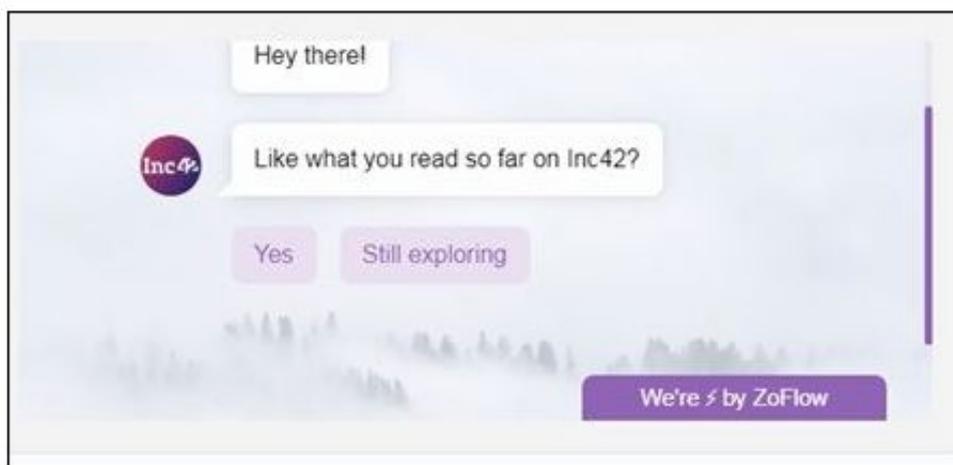
The foodtech startup has announced its partnership with Sodexo, which will enable 3 Mn Sodexo users across India to order from Swiggy. This partnership offers the maximum benefit to those who use their Sodexo Meal Cards only to purchase food and non-alcoholic drinks both at

work and home.

Xiaomi Integrates Google Tez As Its Payment Option On Its Platforms

The Chinese handset maker has integrated Google's UPI-based digital payment service Tez as a payment option on its ecommerce platform Mi.com and Mi Store app. With this, users will be able to use Google Tez to pay for any purchases directly from their bank account. After establishing itself in the P2P payments space, Google Tez is looking to enter into merchant payments sector.

Ola Launches The Ola Lite App

In order to facilitate its users who have low internet speeds, the ANI Technologies owned cab aggregator launched the Lite app, which has features like offline booking and has a size of less than 1 megabyte. The app has a variety of hyperlocal offerings of Ola and also has an interactive, easy to use interface.

ND Commerce Plans To Expand Its Cross-Border Offerings

The Indian ecommerce company announced that it has created a cross-border ecommerce capability in terms of overseas sellers and international exporters and logistics providers to enable cross -order ecommerce into India Under this unique offering, ND Commerce has enrolled several international sellers with over 1 Million SKUS. Such overseas sellers can now offer their products to India consumers through online marketplaces through the ND Commerce Shop-No-Borders Initiative.

Co-Working Space 'THE MOSAIC' Opens Doors In Mumbai

The co-working space, designed for those with a discerning lifestyle and an inclination towards health and wellbeing, launched its first centre in Mumbai. THE MOSAIC redefines the concept of co-working space by offering a holistic lifestyle that incorporates aspects of wellness in all its offerings, and also offers knowledge sessions on topics like crypto-assets, sector analysis, etc. In the next few months, it plans to expand its footprint to five more metro cities.

Hike Wallet Crossed 10M Transactions In Nov 2017

Indian startup Hike Messenger announced that it has crossed 10 Mn transactions per month on its Wallet, Hike Wallet has seen exponential growth over the last two months. Of the 10 Mn transactions, 70% were on recharge and the remaining 30% on P2P.

Stay tuned for next edition of News Roundup: Indian startup news of the week!