

With burgeoning traffic, the air quality index has exceeded limits for several air pollutants and Real Time Air Quality Management System is a necessary component of any smart city. **A.U.G Signals** has developed an innovative low-cost, compact, portable and reliable air monitoring product – **AirSENCE** that provides a commercially viable sensor network for real - time IoT – based air quality monitoring.

Uninterrupted power supply is a cornerstone for a smart city. For continuous supply of power in the smart city it is crucial to have strong and smart transmission and distribution. **BluWave –ai**, another Canadian company is on a mission to modernize electric energy deployment with distributed artificial intelligence software. Their products manage loads and distributed clean energy sources in real – time to make optimal allocations. BluWave – ai ingests large data sets, applies AI and optimizes system decisions in both energy and pricing contexts.

There are many definitions for smart cities, ranging from those that focus exclusively on the infrastructure to those that focus more on enabling citizens and communities to act smarter. In our next write-up we will talk about few other companies working on smart city solutions.

Today's News

Spreading their wings: Fintech firms are seeking new avenues of growth

India's financial technology startups, especially those doing the whole nine yards in payments, could take a cue. A lot of blood, sweat and money has gone into evangelising digital payments. It began with wallets and burning hundreds of millions of dollars in doling out cashbacks and discounts to prod Indian consumers to look beyond cash payments. It cost several million more to get merchants, including the neighbourhood grocery store owner or tea vendor, to adopt digital payments, either by way of wallets, quick response (QR) codes or the latest, Unified Payments Interface (UPI).

Source – Forbes India

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NPCI organises digital training workshops at 50 plus educational institutes on teacher's day

In a bid to empower educational institutes with smart way of digital payment alternatives, National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is organising digital training workshops at 50 plus institutions on the occasion of Teacher's Day. Over 35 colleges and 15 schools in Mumbai, Pune and Madhya Pradesh will participate in this activity which would cover over 15,000 students, parents, teachers, principals and other staff. This initiative is being executed in association with online fee payment platform OnFees. Participants will be familiarised with modes of digital payments, details on various payment applications, features and offers of RuPay debit and credit cards and practical session on BHIM app downloads and transactions.

Source – APN News

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This News Letter has been prepared with the assistance of G. Balakrishna and Aparna Anand

Uber could cut down travel time by 90% in Mumbai

Flying over the skyscrapers of the India's commercial capital could soon be as easy as calling a cab if Uber's plans for Mumbai come to fruition. Uber, which has been testing Air taxi services using electric helicopters also referred to as VTOL or vertical take-off and landing vehicles, is working on how it can decongest Mumbai traffic with the help of air taxis.

Source – BusinessLine

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Zomato acquires food start-up TongueStun for \$18 Mn

Gurugram-based online restaurant discovery and food delivery platform Zomato has acquired Bengaluru-based startup TongueStun Food for about \$18 Mn in a cash and stock deal. TongueStun was founded by Manjunath Ramakrishna in 2012. The start-up works as an e-marketplace and has so far raised around \$5 Mn funding from Unicorn Ventures, the early stage investing arm of investment bank o3 Capital and Haresh Chawla who is a partner at private equity fund, True North.

Source – Inc42

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AI start-up ThinCl raises \$65 million

ThinCl Inc., a California-based AI hardware start-up with offices in Hyderabad and the U.K., announced the successful closure of its \$65 million Series C round. The investment round was led by returning investor Denso and its subsidiary Nsitex Inc., and Temasek.

Source – The Hindu

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Govt's e-marketplace aims to pip Amazon, Flipkart in transactions

The government's public procurement website, GeM (Government e-Marketplace), through which it buys goods and services for its consumption, aims to record more transactions than e-commerce giants Amazon India and Flipkart put together.

GeM, which records transactions worth \$1.5 billion at present, aims to raise this figure to \$25 billion in three years. Amazon India and Flipkart, including Myntra, record online transactions of about \$12 billion at present.

Source – Mint

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Why telcos must ring in blockchain tech

That telecom companies in India are under financial strain is no secret. With continued aggressive pricing by the new entrant, there has indeed been heavy disruption. In order to grow at a sustained rate, the telcos are under pressure to introduce enhanced systems and technologies while maintaining cost-efficiency.

One of the important technologies being examined across the world is blockchain. And leading from the front is TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Association of India), which recently proposed the use of blockchain technology to curb and eventually prevent pesky telemarketing calls.

Source – BusinessLine

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After Paytm Money, other MF sellers too look at direct plans

As Paytm Money Ltd enables users to buy and sell mutual funds (MFs) through its app—launched on 4 September—some online firms and traditional brokerages are now shifting to selling direct plans, and many of them are also offering the service for free.

Kotak Securities Ltd, one of India's largest stock brokerage and MF distributors as well as Coin by Zerodha have shifted to selling direct plans. Kotak Securities will soon launch a plan that will allow customers to buy and sell direct plans on its platform at Rs. 99 a month or Rs. 999 a year.

Source – Mint

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9 AR/VR start-ups are first grads of Facebook accelerator

Nine start-ups in the emerging space of Augmented Reality (AR) and Virtual Reality (VR) have completed the three-month maiden cohort at the India Innovation Hub Accelerator, an initiative of Facebook.

Located at the tech start-up incubator T-Hub here, the accelerator has offered mentoring by nine mentors (one each) from the company, majority of them from its US headquarters and its other global offices.

Source – BusinessLine

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After Amazon and WhatsApp, Apple orders 'stop payment'

Silicon Valley giant Apple has shelved plans to launch a Unified Payments Interface-based payments platform in India after landing in a regulatory grey zone that has stalled the full rollouts of similar products by Amazon and WhatsApp as well.

Source – The Economic Times

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AI Startup Mad Street Den raises funding from Japan's KDDI

Mad Street Den, an India-US Computer Vision and Artificial Intelligence startup, has raised undisclosed funding from Japanese telecom operator KDDI through KDDI Open Innovation Fund 2, managed by Global Brain. The company plans to use the funds raised to improve its AI capabilities and grow their sales & marketing workforce.

Source – The Economic Times

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TSRTC starts commercial operations of electric buses in Hyderabad

Olectra-BYD has announced that its e-Buzz K9 electric buses have been put under commercial operations under Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC). The first lot of five zero-emission electric buses e-Buzz K 9 model have been flagged off today Ajay Mishra, Additional Chief Secretary, Energy and Arvind Kumar, Principal Secretary, Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD).

Source – BusinessLine

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