



NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

Banks are adopting account aggregator framework on data

Spotlight is on telemedicine in the season of flu

Pentagon reconsiders Microsoft contract after Amazon protest

Complaints against food apps up 100%

Today's View

Safeguarding Aviation, with Blockchain

With overall revenues of around \$900 billion in 2019 (as per **AviationOutlook**), the airline industry has been an integral part of the global transport system. With the developments in aircraft technology, methods and models of aviation business have transformed as well. However, as per **Aeron** research, aviation safety is still a major concern. On an average around 3,300 accidents related to air transport happen yearly, mainly due to human factor.

Hence, organisations including airlines and airports are looking at innovative technologies like blockchain for enhancing the airline industry and bringing it to a new level of security, transparency and high-quality operation.

Accenture and **Thales** have developed a blockchain-based solution based upon the Hyperledger Fabric platform for tracking and authentication of aviation parts and materials. Air France is collaborating with Microsoft and Ramco Aviation to develop blockchain applications for the maintenance of passenger airliners.

Recently, **NASA** has proposed a blockchain-based air traffic management platform. It would employ an open-source permissioned blockchain to enable secure, private and anonymous communication with air traffic services. Blockchain would address the potential issues of privacy, prevent spoofing, denial of service and other attacks. The system will employ Hyperledger Fabric to ensure the platform can be rapidly deployed and economically maintained.

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In tech-driven Telangana, the eyes have it

Official of the Telangana government's information and public relations team tweeted a graphic with a picture of the state's upcoming "command and control centre", along with a CCTV camera.

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| Telangana accounts for nearly 64% of India's CCTV deployments | State police's Women Safety Wing uses facial recognition system to track missing children |
| State currently has over 600,000 cameras; could rise to 1 million by end of 2020 | E-governance dept MeeSeva uses facial recognition via selfie for real-time authentication of identity for pensioners |
| It also uses state-of-the-art facial recognition technology (18 cameras in key Hyderabad transit points) | State piloted use of facial recognition to verify voter identity during municipal election in Hyderabad (2018) January |

Source – *The Economic Times*

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16th March 2020

On the other hand, **Distributed Sky**, a non-profit organisation is using blockchain to overcome the challenges of the next stage of air traffic control. It has already created tests in computer simulations as well as in a real-world environment to ensure better air traffic control. These projects have resulted in more efficient air traffic control, resulting in lower probability of collisions. Even **International Commercial Aviation Organisation (ICAO)** is working on blockchain-based framework based on this concept.

Considering the importance of ensuring passenger and airplane safety, it's a welcome step to explore the use of high-end technologies like blockchain in aviation sector. It's about time to see how the use of blockchain will take off in the aviation safety in the near future.

Today's News

Banks are adopting account aggregator framework on data

Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv, ICICI Bank, IDFC FIRST Bank, HDFC Bank, Indusind Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and State Bank of India are in various stages of adopting the account aggregator (AA) framework, according to an industry body, ahead of a public rollout of the new technology product in May.

Account aggregators are responsible for transferring, but not storing, client data. An AA ecosystem, as envisaged by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), would be a platform for financial services companies to reach out to the consumer to seek consent before using their personal data to optimise their product offerings.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Spotlight is on telemedicine in the season of flu

As the number of confirmed cases of Covid-19 continues to rise in India, telemedicine or online consultation has become the first point of contact for many who suspect they've contracted the disease. Companies such as Practo, 1mg, Medlife, mfine and a few others are reporting a several-fold increase in online consultations for a flu or fever-related ailments.

The increased need to seek a professional medical diagnosis along with a feeling that hospitals could be a point of contact with a person infected with the coronavirus is leading to this boom in telemedicine. Such a trend isn't only restricted to India, as the rest of the world too sees telemedicine at the frontlines of tackling the spread of the virus.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Indian Railways may lease land parcels to e-tailers

The Indian Railways is looking to monetise land parcels in smaller towns and cities by leasing them to e-commerce firms for setting up of warehouses. Rail Land Development Authority, a statutory authority, under the Ministry of Railways, for development of vacant railway land for commercial use said it is in talks with Flipkart, the country's biggest online retailer and will soon come out with an expression of interest. "Warehousing has a lot of scope and when in the era of same day delivery, e-commerce would like to have warehouse everywhere.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Tumbling rupee to push up prices of electronic goods

Prices of television, refrigerator and washing machine are set to go up due to steep depreciation of the rupee against the dollar, two senior industry executives said. Smartphone makers such as Xiaomi, Vivo and OnePlus plan to absorb the exchange rate impact as of now, with the industry fearing a slide in sales since prices are all set to go up due to increase in goods and services tax on smartphones to 18% from 12%. But they will factor the exchange rate in the pricing of future launches, the executives said.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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GST hike on phones will lead to immediate job cuts: Handset makers, retailers

Handset makers and mobile retailers said that the proposed GST hike will place an additional burden of Rs 15,000 crore on the common man, terming the move both “counter-intuitive and insensitive”, which will lead to immediate job losses and severely dampen future investments in manufacturing.

“To strike the sector with a higher GST at this stage is the equivalent of killing the goose that lays the golden egg. Not a savvy move by any stretch,” ICEA said on Sunday. The decision was taken in the 39th GST Council meeting chaired by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The move was made to correct the inverted duty structure. Handset makers, however, said that the rationale of correcting the inverted duty structure by increasing GST is misplaced.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Pentagon reconsiders Microsoft contract after Amazon protest

The Pentagon is reconsidering its awarding of a major cloud computing contract to Microsoft after rival tech giant Amazon protested what it called a flawed bidding process.

U.S. government lawyers said in a court filing this week that the Defense Department “wishes to reconsider its award decision” and take another look at how it evaluated technical aspects of the companies' proposals to run the \$10 billion computing project.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Complaints against food apps up 100%

Complaints over food quality and hygiene standards against online food ordering and delivery platforms look set to double during the current financial year with 1,955 grievances lodged between April 2019 and January 2020, as against 1,053 during the 2018-19 fiscal year.

The consumer affairs ministry said online food ordering and delivery services have increased during the last three years. “Some instances of sale of sub-standard food being delivered through online food delivery service platforms have come to notice of FSSAI. Whenever any [such] instance is received, the same is taken up with the commissioner of food safety of states/UTs. The Food Safety and Standards Act and Rules & Regulations framed there under have provisions to ensure food quality and hygiene,” the ministry said.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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IT firms seek client waivers so staff can work from home

Indian IT companies have asked their clients for waivers to let employees on projects work from home and are testing their systems, a key requirement before they can implement any widespread measure to allow their lakhs of employees to stay home.

Business continuity plans typically allow a subset of employees to work from home, with work also getting distributed to other cities as employees travel between them. But the spread of Covid-19 to multiple metro cities could result in centres across the country shutting down, requiring broader work-from-home authorisations.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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With DNA data, biotech firms can do rapid tests: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw

Indian biotech firms can quickly come up with rapid screen tests to diagnose the novel coronavirus infection, helping health administrators increase the scale of testing, Biocon chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw said.

“This rapid screening diagnostic can be done very fast, you just have to get primers. Once the primers are made available by government labs, many biotech companies can develop the diagnostic,” Mazumdar-Shaw told ET.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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