

**Banks to ensure cash withdrawals, remittances at branches**

**New business models to take fintech beyond payments, credit**

**Banking in the ‘cloud’ with Thought Machine**

**Vertical e-commerce numbers fall 20% as users curb spending**

## Today’s View

### Streamlining E-Commerce

In today’s turbulent times, the importance of e-commerce is underlined once again. However, in order to make it more user-friendly, e-commerce firms are leveraging social media to further improve the visibility of the sector. With the introduction of social commerce, it has come to play a vital role in consumers’ everyday spending choices.

As per **Brightcove** survey, 74 percent of respondents said there was a link between viewing a video on a social platform and making a purchasing decision. Similarly, as per **Internet Retail Social Media Report**, the rate of e-commerce growth from social shopping is exceeding the overall growth rate for e-commerce in the U.S. by about 10%.

Social e-commerce is adding a social layer to the business which adds a way for the consumers to have a social shopping experience. For example, one can browse and compare products on **Facebook** and then make the purchase on Facebook itself, instead of going to the e-commerce company’s site to make the purchase. Multiple companies are creating entire ‘Shop Now’ stores and even Messenger is being used by companies to interact with consumers.

Similarly, **Instagram** has launched its shopping feature, enabling brands to tag products within their organic posts and create more immersive experiences for consumers. And with the addition of its native payment feature, Instagram will allow shoppers to buy items without even having to leave the platform.

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### State curbs choke ecommerce supplies

Ecommerce operators were forced to cancel or reschedule lakhs of orders for essential goods such as food, groceries and medicines across several cities on Sunday as local authorities and the police ordered them to shut warehouses, blocked trucks carrying supplies and dissuaded delivery agents from moving around on the streets.

#### Hitting A Bump

Police across several states shuttered on-ground ops of ecomm cos | Movement of trucks carrying supplies blocked; delivery agents stopped on roads

Ecomm cos like Grofers, BigBasket and Img faced curbs despite govt exempting them from Section 144

Source—The Economic Times

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23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020

On the other hand, Twitter has also enabled social commerce features on its platform. Essentially, any product that a user tweets will include a buy button, which means user can buy directly without leaving Twitter. Like Facebook, **Twitter** stores common payment information so that it doesn't need to be entered repeatedly, making the mobile shopping experience smoother.

Back home, **Amazon** has launched social commerce platform **Spark** to tap next-gen shoppers in India. Initially, it will be available to all Amazon Prime members in the country. The idea is to get the consumers more engaged instead of directly pushing sales. Since it is based on user interest, Spark will help one to avoid hundreds of options that come with regular search. A user after feeding in his interest just has to tap on the product photo link to buy it.

Social commerce is changing the e-commerce Industry because it's changing consumer behaviour on social platforms. It's now easier than ever to go from *liking* a bag on Instagram to buying a bag on Instagram. While this may be a scary prospect for customers' wallet, it's most definitely a wonderful opportunity for the businesses to scale-up their online revenues.

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## Today's News

### Vertical e-commerce numbers fall 20% as users curb spending

Specialized online retail verticals, such as Lenskart, Myntra, Nykaa, Pepperfry, FirstCry and Zivame, which have a significant offline presence, have seen sales fall as much as 20% over the last two weeks, investors in the know and industry experts told ET. In some cases, the decline has been as high as 35%, they said.

The downturn is expected to continue as people defer discretionary spending and companies cut marketing costs and discounts to increase runway in order to survive the Covid-19 pandemic, people in the industry said.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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### Curefit scoops up Rs 832 crore funding led by Singapore's Temasek

Integrated health, wellness and fitness startup Curefit has raised an estimated Rs 832 crore in fresh funding led by Temasek, the Singapore government-backed investment company. The financing round, has also seen the entry of two new investors to the Bengaluru-headquartered company's investor cap table, GableHorn Investments and Ascent Capital.

Additionally, several existing investors of Curefit, which include venture capital firms Accel Partners and Chiratae Ventures, along with the investment arm of global consumer goods giant Unilever, have also participated in the latest funding round.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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### Edtech on an ad spree as schools and colleges shut

"India's learning won't stop. Every student will now have free access to our live online classes & premium content." The full-page print advertisement dated March 19 from live tutoring platform Vedantu was one among many by education technology firms, which have been on advertising overdrive over the past few weeks.

Several other ed-tech firms also have put out similar ads on the front pages of national dailies. At a time when schools, colleges and tuition centres are shut due to the Covid-19 virus outbreak, ed-tech firms are trying hard to bag new users as online education takes off globally.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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### Banking in the 'cloud' with Thought Machine

UK-based Thought Machine—a fintech that builds cloud-based core banking platform—has been drawing great deal of attention recently for all the right reasons. Established by former Google engineer, Paul Taylor in 2014, Thought Machine's cloud-based core banking solution—Vault—aims to revolutionize banking.

TM is a result of Taylor's existing entrepreneurial feats and works at Google. After witnessing customer's affinity towards voice banking and personalized services, the CEO decided to build and offer a platform for multiple third-party banking services under one umbrella

Source – *Money Control*

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## Covid19, the perfect storm for startups and investors

It was just in mid-February when the DOW and NASDAQ hit their all-time highs, though it now feels like a lifetime ago. The longest ever bull market in US stocks had been running on steroids, in no small way helped by the flood of cheap liquidity, which inflated prices across all asset classes. The Indian venture eco-system was also coming off its best year, with companies raising a record \$12 billion of capital.

While the world was enjoying the sunshine, dark storm clouds were building up in a meat market in Wuhan. Fast forward six weeks and we are now in the grip of a global pandemic, with unprecedented market volatility and a looming global recession. Public health and safety are the immediate concerns, but we have to be prepared for the collateral damage that will eventually hit the economy.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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## Starting with a small shop in Delhi, UBON is today present across 3,000 cities in India

The mobile accessories industry in India has seen a boom in India over the years. From power banks, mobile chargers to earphones and handsets, there is enormous demand for them. According to a report by research platform Research Nester, the Indian mobile phone accessories market is expected to reach \$3.54 billion by the end of 2024.

Mandeep Arora's father was into the trading of mobile accessories such as earphones for walkmans in one of Delhi's oldest and biggest markets, Lajpat Rai Market. Mandeep joined the wholesale business in 1998 and noticed a lot of gaps in the electronics industry.

Source – *Your Story*

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## Curefit scoops up Rs 832 crore funding led by Singapore's Temasek

As we sit here and read this, the world is at war with a virus. The Coronavirus, or COVID-19 as it is formally called, has wreaked havoc around the world. In just the past 24 hours, there has been a massive spike in confirmed cases of the Coronavirus in the US, while Italy continues to struggle with each passing day setting new unfortunate records of the daily death toll. Authorities globally are asking us to do everything possible to stay protected from this virus, by practicing social distancing, isolating ourselves, washing our hands regularly with soap and generous use of hand sanitizers. And yet, here we have a startup which is sharing a rather novel idea, though the timing is a bit perplexing.

Felix Biotechnology, a biotech startup says that it wants to fight bacterial infections with, yep you didn't guess it, viruses. This may just be a bad time to broach this idea, isn't it? What they say is that a lot of people die of bacterial infections globally every year and will continue to do so. Drug resistant bacteria kills as many as 700000 people around the world every year and could kill more than 10 million people annually by the year 2050, according to the United Nations, which released this report in May last year. The belief is that drug resistant infections pose an even bigger threat in developing countries.

Source – *News 18*

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## New business models to take fintech beyond payments, credit

When you mention fintech, what comes to mind is digital payments and loans. While Paytm and PhonePe dominate digital payment apps, the likes of IndiaLends and Capital Float have been expanding access to credit for consumers and small businesses. Traditional banks too rely mainly on lending for their business.

So it's not surprising that alternative credit startups dominate the portfolio of even an impact investor like Omidyar Network India.

Source – *Live Mint*

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## Banks to ensure cash withdrawals, remittances at branches

Amid lockdown in several states to contain the spread of COVID-19, banks will ensure at least four essential services — cash deposits and withdrawals, cheque deposition, remittances, and government transactions — at their branches from March 23. For the rest, depending on the situation in each branch, the banks may suspend other services, Indian Banks Association (IBA) Chief Executive Sunil Mehta said.

IBA, lobby group of the Indian banking industry, said bank customers should visit the branch only in case of absolute necessity. Bank employees are also facing the same challenges that all people are. Most of the services that banks offer are available online. Customers should use the mobile and online banking channels for non-essential services.

Source – *Business Standard*

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