

orange boxes, where they unlock the designated one and then leave without having to seek assistance from an employee.

According to Pymnts.com, Home Depot isn't the only retailer seeing the in-store sales benefits of having lockers: Amazon's Lockers, for example, may be encouraging shoppers to make quick trips to Whole Foods stores. Research from inMarket showed that "micro" visits — or those between three and five minutes — increased 11 percent at locations that had the lockers compared to a 7 percent rise in stores without lockers since last August, with reference to reports from March.

The idea is that **Amazon** customers who stop at Whole Foods won't just visit the store to retrieve their packages: They might peruse the selection and purchase a drink or a promotional item. And, for Amazon, in particular, their trips also provide an opportunity for Whole Foods to make shoppers aware of changes at the grocery chain.

A different form factor is being used by **Walmart** for in-store pickup, it is installing what it calls "pickup towers," which will be hard for any shopper to miss. Standing 16-foot tall, the orange towers have a video screen where online purchasers simply swipe the order confirmation bar code from their phones. A conveyor belt delivers their merchandise to them.

The evolution in these e-commerce fulfilment models is a win-win model for all!

Today's News

Government backs net neutrality framework

The government will soon amend telecom licenses to incorporate rules on net neutrality, which will include a bar on blocking or slowing down of content, while allowing fast lanes only for 'critical' services and keeping 'content delivery networks' out of their ambit.

The Telecom Commission (TC), the highest decision-making body in the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), accepted the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India's recommendations of November 2017 in total on Wednesday, underscoring India's stance supporting an open internet. Supporters of net neutrality welcomed the move while Telco's said it could stifle innovation.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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IAN, YourNest invest in virtual reality startup SmartVizX

Virtual reality (VR) startup SmartVizX has raised Rs 10 crore (\$1.4 million) in a pre-Series A funding round led by Indian Angel Network's eponymous IAN Fund and angel fund YourNest Venture Capital.

Source – *VC Circle*

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

Shop101 raises \$5m in Series A funding

Mumbai-based social commerce platform Shop101 has raised \$5 million in Series A funding led by Stellaris Venture Partners. The round also saw participation from Vy Capital, TaxiForSure co-founder Raghunandan G and Livspace co-founder Ramakant Sharma.

Source – *BusinessLine*

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Finance Ministry proposes relaxing local data storage rules for payment firms

The Finance ministry has suggested a way forward regarding the ongoing debate around data localisation brewing between the Reserve Bank of India and the digital payment industry by saying that companies could be allowed to retain a copy of the data in the geography where it is being currently stored and the central bank could issue a clarificatory circular regarding the timeline it has given to the industry.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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SEBI looks at UPI as an alternative payment option for retail IPO investors

SEBI is looking to introduce Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as an alternative payment option for the retail IPO investors. Sebi is planning to come out with a discussion paper on this soon. UPI, being a mobile-based real-time payment platform for enabling instant transfer of funds from one bank account to another, can speed up the listing process, according to Sebi.

Source – *Inc42*

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Indian startup among three to sign MoUs with Amaravati developers

An Indian company is among three startups that have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Andhra Pradesh government, to offer solutions for the development of Amaravati, the state's new capital. UrbanStack is among the winners of the Amaravati Pitch Competition, results of which were announced by the Singapore and Andhra Pradesh governments at the World Cities Summit 2018 here.

The startup is an integrated data sharing platform that collects urban movement data for early intervention and policy making with the mobility patterns that emerge, said the Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) in a statement yesterday.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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Ola starts making money on each ride, inches closer to profitability

India's largest ride-hailing application Ola is inching closer to profitability as the company targets a public offering in the coming years even as its battle for market domination continues with US-based Uber.

Ola has started making money on each cab ride — a major milestone — after taking into account expenses such as driver incentives and customer discounts. But the company still has a long way to go towards profitability, which would mean recovering expenses for salaries and technology, according to three sources briefed on the matter. Ola is targeting profitability by year-end.

Source – *The Economic Times*

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P2P Transfers, Virtual Tickets Come to Google Pay

Google continues to refine its mobile payments platform as its confusing rebranding effort starts to smooth out, announcing new features to improve the user experience.

Perhaps the most important one is the integration of peer-to-peer payments into the Google Pay app. P2P transfers were enabled in the separate Google Pay Send platform this past March, seemingly in response to Apple's launch of a similar service based on the company's iMessages service; but it looks like the long-term plan was always to integrate this functionality into Google Pay, which is meant to consolidate and replace Google's other payment and wallet apps.

Source – *MobileID World*

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BSNL starts first internet telephony service in India

State-run telecom firm BSNL today unveiled first internet telephony service in the country that will allow users to dial any telephone number in India through its mobile app. Now BSNL customers will be able to make calls using the company's mobile app "Wings" to any phone number in the country.

Source – *BusinessLine*

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IT vendors 'patently' sharpening focus on developing newer technologies

Indian IT vendors seem to be taking a cue from leader IBM with increased focus on creating products, platforms and 'as-a-service' model for better returns from licence fee. This was evident from the number of patents filed by Tata Consultancy Services and Wipro on technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, cloud, Internet of Things and robotics.

Source – *BusinessLine*

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Kitco's Season 2 for mentoring start-ups is here

Kitco-Technology Business Incubator (TBI) is launching its 'myenterprise' Season 2 to provide guidance and hand-holding for promising start-ups. This year, the programme aims to provide assistance to start-ups that have already received seed funding and want to take their idea to the next level.

Source – *BusinessLine*

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