

STARTUP UPDATES

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Since the SC order, there has been a spurt in cryptocurrency-related activities in India, with some crypto exchange platforms reporting a 400% spike in trading activity. According to UsefulTulips.org, the combined monthly trading volume between the Indian Rupee and Bitcoin has nearly doubled between March and July on two foreign crypto exchanges, LocalBitcoins of Finland and Paxful of the US. Their total volume in March was \$8.14 Mn. By July the figure had reached \$16.26 Mn.

Facial recognition and iris scans could soon be used for Aadhaar authentication of beneficiaries using Jan Dhan bank accounts to access government Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) payouts and domestic transfers.

The National Payments Corp of India (NPCI) and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) are considering how to expand authentication factors used to vet customers using the Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AePS) amid an increased push toward contactless transactions, in line with Covid-19 hygiene protocols.

Mindtree Founders' Mela Ventures To Invest In B2B Early-Stage Tech Startups

Mela Ventures, a fund for B2B early-stage tech startups, started by Indian multinational technology company Mindtree founders Krishnakumar Natarajan and N S Parthasarathy, has marked the first close of its maiden fund worth INR 200 Cr.

The 'MV Core Tech Fund I' is a Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved Category-2 AIF (Alternative Investment Fund). According to reports, the company's maiden fund has received commitments from investors worth INR 130 Cr. The fund aims to make 4-5 investments in the coming 18 months, with a ticket size of INR 7-10 Cr. Mela Ventures will be looking to invest in companies working with technologies such as artificial intelligence, machine learning, augmented reality/virtual reality and quantum computing, among others.

With the coronavirus pandemic, most of India's small startup founders are scrambling through month after month to survive the crisis. According to a report by Local Circles in June, only 16% of startups and SMEs had enough cash to get through this pandemic.

According to Tracxn's India-Tech Semi-Annual Fact Sheet, the Indian startup ecosystem has seen the worst first half (H1) funding in three years. In the first six months of 2020, startup funding has fallen by 29% – from \$5.9 billion in 2019 to \$4.2 billion this year. Startups are now also turning to angel investors to raise money at the same valuation as their last round.

Digital Lending Startup CASHe Raises INR 12 Cr

App-based credit lending platform CASHe has raised INR 12 Cr in two tranches, from the Surendra Kedia Family Private Trust and Saroj Kumar Patnaik.

According to filings with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs accessed by Inc42, CASHe, through its parent company Aeries Financial Technologies Private Limited, has issued 2,15,824 equity shares at a face value of INR 10 per share and premium of INR 221.67 per share to the Surendra Kedia Family Private Trust, aggregating to a total of INR 5 Cr. Additionally, the company has issued 3,02,154 equity shares at the App-based credit lending platform CASHe has raised INR 12 Cr in two tranches, from the Surendra Kedia Family Private Trust and Saroj Kumar Patnaik.

Flipkart's Delivery Fleet To Be 100% Electric By 2030

Flipkart on Tuesday (August 25) committed to a phased integration of electric vehicles (EVs) into its entire delivery fleet by 2030. The e-commerce giant plans to do this by placing requirements in service contracts, installing charging infrastructure close to its 1,400 supply chain premises, conducting awareness programs and incentivising delivery executives for using EVs.

Kalyan Krishnamurthy, CEO, Flipkart Group, said, "As a homegrown company, we always pride ourselves in making e-commerce more inclusive, progressive and impactful for all our stakeholders, which also includes communities and the planet." The leading e-commerce company said in a statement that being the first e-commerce player in the country to commit to the transition, it will spearhead the sector's sustainability transformation, and support India's ambition of ensuring 30% electric mobility by 2030.