

Winners of The Economic Times Startup Awards 2017 will be selected by a jury comprising the best minds in the business



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**DREW BREUNIG**  
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Augmented humans with strong incentives will always beat 'AI'.

**Tech Buzz**  
Images of Nokia 8 Leak Online



Reliable leakster Evan Blass has leaked the images of the upcoming Nokia 8. The Nokia 9 looks like a dual-camera sporting flagship So far, all the Nokia phones that have launched have been mid-range devices. The phone will reportedly have a 5.3-inch quadHD display, Qualcomm's latest flagship processor, either 4 or 6GB of RAM, and dual 13-megapixel Zeiss cameras. - Gizmodo

**QuickByte** ANIRBAN BORA



**Wow! Google Glass is Back at Work**



You may have thought Google Glass was dead, but the search giant has quietly resurrected its once-controversial smart glasses. A new version of Glass has secretly been used by hundreds of employees at companies like GE, Boeing, DHL, and Volkswagen for the last two years. The new Google Glass Enterprise Edition is designed with factory workers in mind. The new Google Glass has several improvements over the original, which Google made available to consumers in 2013. - BI

**Jargon Buster**  
**Failover**  
It is the constant capability to automatically and seamlessly switch to a highly reliable backup

# Alibaba Wants to be in this BigBasket

**SUITORS LINE UP** Temasek, Fosun also in talks to invest in online grocer

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**Bengaluru:** BigBasket's line-up of suitors is getting longer after Amazon shrugged it off. Chinese ecommerce giant Alibaba has joined investee firm Paytm Mall in the talks to pick up a stake in BigBasket, according to a person familiar with the developments. Separately, India's largest online grocer is holding fundraising talks with Singapore's sovereign wealth fund Temasek Holdings and China's Fosun Group as well, another person said. The Alibaba-Paytm Mall combine, which has begun due diligence, has offered to invest \$200 million in BigBasket at a valuation of nearly \$900 million post the investment, these people said, declining to be identified. That's in line with what the grocery startup was seeking and double what it was estimated to be worth when it raised capital in March last year. ET reported last week that Alibaba-backed Paytm Mall was in talks to acquire a significant minority stake in BigBasket.

As for Temasek, it is unclear yet if it will join the ongoing funding round with Alibaba and Paytm Mall or wants to invest directly in BigBasket later. Fosun's venture capital arm Kinzon Capital, on the other hand, is in discussions with BigBasket for co-investment in the ongoing funding round with a cheque of \$20-30 million. "It is for the founders to decide who they would like to go with," one of the people mentioned above said. A spokeswoman for Alibaba declined to comment on what she said was "market speculation."

"As matter of policy, we do not comment on market speculation and rumours," said an associate on behalf of Temasek in response to ET's queries. BigBasket did not respond to ET's emailed questions. Fosun could not be immediately reached for comment.

In an interview last week, Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma said that investment in an grocer was in line with the company's online-to-offline strategy. Paytm Mall, which was spun out from parent One97 Communications this year to an entity called Paytm Ecommerce, received an infusion of \$200 million in March from Alibaba and SAIF Partners.

Alibaba, which along with its payments affiliate Alipay owns more than a 50% stake in Paytm Mall, has been doubling down on grocery and physical retail investments globally. In November, Lazada, an Alibaba-backed ecommerce platform in Southeast Asia, acquired Singapore-based online grocer RedMart. Alibaba is also investing \$305 million in offline discount supermarket chain Sanjiang Shopping Club in China. Amazon, too, is focusing on the online grocery market in India. The company is likely to begin directly selling groceries and other food products online after recently securing the government's approval for its proposed \$500-million foreign direct investment in the business.

BigBasket, which was valued at \$450 million during its previous fundraising led by Dubai-based Abraaj Group, was in discussions with Amazon

## A PICK FOR EVERYONE



## CCI Approves SoftBank's 20% Investment in Paytm

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**Mumbai:** The Competition Commission of India has approved SoftBank Group's acquisition of a 20% stake in One97 Communications, the parent of digital payments leader Paytm. SoftBank paid ₹9,000 crore (\$1.4 billion) for the stake in Noida-based One97 two months ago, making it the biggest investment by the Japanese internet and telecom conglomerate in the Indian internet ecosystem. The go-ahead clears the path for SoftBank to transfer the funds. "We are utilising the capital to build scale for the systems to handle the load of transactions. As far as our relations with SoftBank are concerned, they will partner us in some of the other investments in startups in India and further our reach in Japan and other countries," said

Vijay Shekhar Sharma, founder of Paytm. Sharma added that Paytm currently had \$200 million in capital and had not yet allocated the proceeds from the deal with SoftBank. The company is set to launch its payments bank before August 15. Paytm Payments Bank is set to expand to 31 branches and 3,000 customer service points in the first year of operations. It will be live on the Unified Payments Interface, joining about 50 banks

using the retail payment platform. Existing Paytm wallet users are in the process of being transferred to the payments bank. Earlier this week, Fino Payments Bank began operations with 410 branches.

for an investment but the talks reached a stalemate over various issues, including valuation. The two parties have held talks multiple times and could revive discussions. BigBasket had also explored a merger with SoftBank-backed Grofers alongside holding fundraising discussions with financial investors. Investment bank Morgan Stanley is advising BigBasket in its talks.

## 'GST will be a Great Source of Data'

Our Bureau

**Bengaluru:** Nandan Nilekani, former UIDAI chairman, believes that the conversation around the goods and services tax (GST) has mostly been around challenges, but it can also be viewed as a great source for data interpretation. Nilekani was speaking at an event along with DJ Patil, the former chief data scientist for the Obama

government. "The big thing that people have not seen from a data perspective is — the recent launch of the goods and services tax. A lot of focus has been on the challenges, but actually it is a fantastic data issue. Because for the first time eight million businesses will be digitally recorded in a central tax database. It has never happened before," said Nilekani.

Nilekani believes the scale of operations wherein everything from a "steel rod to a haircut" will be recorded and thus generate never-before-seen data. "The average is about 120 invoices per business. You are talking about a billion records every month... it will flow digitally into the GST system. That is a massive source of figuring out how the economy is

doing, where is it going, where it is not going and supply chain efficiencies," said Nilekani. "The former Infosys chief, who led the Aadhaar drive, also said that India has been able to leapfrog in digital initiatives as there is no 'legacy' and these initiatives are being carried out in such a manner so as to put the "user at the seat of the table". "The advantage we have in India is- we have no legacy. (Now) we have 500 million Aadhaar-linked bank accounts and we run the world's biggest cash transfer program. This is deep stuff. Now with Digital Locker Authority, we have a way to organise data by putting people at the centre of it. It is lucky that we do not have anything. We can leapfrog," he said.

# RentoMojo Raises \$10 million in Series-B Funding

Bain Capital Ventures, former Lending Club CEO Renaud Laplanche and existing investors Accl Partners & IDG Ventures also participated in round

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**Bengaluru:** Consumer leasing platform RentoMojo has secured \$10 million in series-B funding from Bain Capital Ventures and former Lending Club CEO Renaud Laplanche, who invested in a personal capacity. Existing investors Accl Partners and IDG Ventures also participated in the round. "We are looking at the India opportunity in two categories — Indian companies going after the local market, and those based in India but chasing global markets," said Sahil Deshpande, managing director of Bain Capital Ventures (BCV). "RentoMojo is very focused on the needs of the Indian market." RentoMojo raises lease capital from financial institutions for products

rented to consumers for long periods. It has 25,000 subscribers and leases about 14,000 products every month, including furniture, appliances and bikes. Geetansh Bamanian, chief executive of RentoMojo, said the funds will be used for maturing the product and building a good credit scoring algorithm, improving user experience, as well as building a strong team by hiring at the leadership level. "We are also open to looking at acquisitions if we see intrinsic value," Bamanian said. He said the startup plans to enter new categories for leasing over the next few months, but did not give any details. RentoMojo had earlier raised \$7 million in two rounds from Accl and IDG.

This is BCV's first investment in a startup in the country that is focused on the domestic market. The

venture capital arm of US-based alternative investment firm Bain Capital had earlier invested in software companies founded in India but addressing the US or global markets. Pune-based ScaleArc, for instance, BCV's investment in RentoMojo was done from the \$600-million fund it had closed last year.

Deshpande, who was a series-A investor in US-based peer-to-peer lending company Lending Club, will join RentoMojo's board. "We were also impressed by RentoMojo's team. The company has almost perfected a unique model where they can get customers furniture, appliances and vehicles, while

## Rolling out the RED CARPET

Starting today, we showcase the five entrants who are at the very top in each of the eight categories in which the ET Startup Awards 2017 will be presented.

### BOOTSTRAP CHAMP

<p><b>ReportGarden</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2013 <b>Founder:</b> Ashok Varma (in pic) <b>Based:</b> Walnut, California <b>What it does:</b> Its advertising automation software helps ad agencies and brands improve the impact of their digital advertising</p>	<p><b>SignEasy</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2010 <b>Founder:</b> Sunil Patro (in pic) <b>Based:</b> Bengaluru <b>What it does:</b> The startup allows users to electronically sign and fill documents from smartphones, tablets and the web.</p>
<p><b>Wingify Software</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2009 <b>Founder:</b> Paras Chopra (in pic) <b>Based:</b> Delhi <b>What it does:</b> Its website testing platform helps both small and larger enterprises optimise their online presence.</p>	<p><b>FACE</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2009 <b>Founders:</b> B Rajesh Kumar (in pic), V Venkata Raghulhan <b>Based:</b> Coimbatore <b>What it does:</b> The skill-development company caters to college students as well as entry-level employees across industries.</p>

**Tredence**

**Founded:** 2013  
**Founders:** Shub Bhowmick (in pic), Shashank Dubey, Sumit Mehra  
**Based:** Bengaluru  
**What it does:** Offers analytics solutions to clients across domains, including retail, pharma, telecom, hospital, banking, financial services and insurance.

### TOP INNOVATOR

<p><b>Altigreen Propulsion Labs</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2013 <b>Founders:</b> Amitabh Saran (in pic), Lasse Moklegaard, John Bangura <b>Based:</b> Bengaluru <b>Key investors:</b> Jupiter Capital, Chetan Maini <b>What it does:</b> Altigreen offers a retrofit solution that allows any vehicle to be converted into a hybrid. It is creating intellectual property in after-market products for automotive systems using eco-friendly technologies.</p>
<p><b>Bugworks Research</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2014 <b>Founders:</b> Anand Anandkumar (in pic), Santanu Datta, V Balasubramanian <b>Based:</b> Bengaluru <b>Key investors:</b> Baxter Ventures, 3one4 capital, Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw <b>What it does:</b> It has developed a way to mitigate a key component of drug-resistance and enable the entry of antibiotics into superbugs.</p>
<p><b>Netradyne Technologies</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2015 <b>Founders:</b> Avneesh Agrawal (in pic), David Julian <b>Based:</b> San Diego, California <b>Key investors:</b> Reliance Industries <b>What it does:</b> It uses AI-based tools to analyse driver behaviour, helping commercial vehicle fleets to quickly detect risks and apply more resources where necessary.</p>
<p><b>Pandorum Technologies</b></p> <p><b>Founded:</b> 2011 <b>Founders:</b> Arun Chandru (in pic), Tuhin Bhowmick <b>Based:</b> Bengaluru <b>Key investors:</b> Binny Bansal, Sachin Bansal, Small Business Innovation Research <b>What it does:</b> It designs and develops 3D-printed human tissues for medical research and therapeutics.</p>

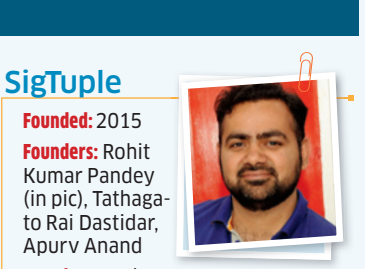
In the runup to the ET Startup Awards 2017 jury meeting on July 22, your favourite newspaper will bring you what the jury members expect in a winner. Today, Biocon's Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw and IIM-Indore's Rishikesh T Krishnan share their views



**KIRAN MAZUMDAR-SHAW**  
CHAIRPERSON, BIOCON  
I will be looking for the novelty of the idea, how passionate the founders are about the idea and taking it to the market, their understanding of market opportunities, and their go-to-market strategy. Also, their risk-appetite. Do they have the ability to endure a rocky ride? As for the novelty of a business idea, it is the intellectual property the entrepreneurs have created. It could be the business model, the business itself, or the technology.



**RISHIKESHA T KRISHNAN**  
DIRECTOR, IIM-INDORE  
In recent years, we have seen a quantum jump in both the quantity and quality of Indian startups. I will be looking for startups that can become global leaders and not just Indian leaders. I will be looking for the quality of an idea and companies that have distinctive and scalable solutions to solve endemic Indian problems. The most important factors will be demonstrated impact and the potential to be a global leader.



**SigTuple**  
**Founded:** 2015  
**Founders:** Rohit Kumar Pandey (in pic), Tathagata Rai Dastidar, Apurv Anand  
**Based:** Bengaluru  
**Key investors:** Accl Partners, IDG Ventures, pi Ventures, Axilor Ventures, Endiya Partners, VH Capital, Sachin Bansal, Binny Bansal  
**What it does:** It builds intelligent medical diagnostics solutions using machine-learning techniques.

## Paying it Forward



RentoMojo raises lease capital from financial institutions for products rented to consumers for long periods

**\$7 million** Funds raised earlier from Accl, IDG

also securitising these assets and selling the cashflow to institutions," Deshpande said. While Bain Capital has offices in India and has made a number of investments in the country, BCV will not have a base here immediately. Deshpande said he reached out to Laplanche to look at the Indian startup as he saw similarities between the two founders. "When I met Geetansh, he reminded me a lot of Renaud 10-15 years ago... He had a good understanding of the market, a narrow focus on what he was doing and a broad vision of how it will be applicable. I asked Renaud to meet Geetansh," Deshpande said. "Given Renaud's experience in founding and operating Lending Club, in effect creating the P2P lending industry, I could not think of a better person to partner with, to help RentoMojo become a very big business capable of changing the lives of millions of people." This funding also marks Laplanche's first investment in India, according to Deshpande. Laplanche, who last year left Lending Club following a loan malpractice scandal, recently started another lending company, Upgrade. "In the past 10 years, I've met more than a hundred companies implementing some variation of marketplaces for credit, lease, or rental in some region of the world. RentoMojo is hands down the most impressive I've seen in terms of clarity of vision and business model, early execution that already generates amazing economic returns, and a pretty straight path to making it a very big business capable of changing the lives of millions of people," Laplanche said in a statement.