

Daily Economic News Summary: 28 September 2016

1. Paytm buys edutech start-up Edukart

Source: **Live Mint** ([Link](#))

Payment services provider Paytm (One97 Communications Ltd) has bought education technology start-up Edukart, backed by cricketer Yuvraj Singh and Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma, after it failed to raise new funds, said three people aware of the development. The purchase, whose value wasn't disclosed, is a so-called acquihire—or buying out a company primarily for the skills and expertise of its staff. Ishan Gupta, founder and chief executive of Earth Education Valley Pvt. Ltd, which runs Edukart, has joined Paytm as vice-president of business and is looking after Paytm's seller financing team, while the 50-odd employees of Edukart will handle various responsibilities around seller services, the people cited above said on the condition of anonymity.

2. Altico Capital invests Rs500 crore in realty firm Nirmal Group

Source: **Live Mint** ([Link](#))

Altico Capital India Pvt. Ltd, a non-banking financial company (NBFC) backed by Asia-focused investor Clearwater Capital Partners LLC, has invested Rs500 crore in three residential projects of Mumbai-based Nirmal Group. The money will be used to refinance some loans and for construction. The projects against which Nirmal Group has raised the money include one with three condominium towers named Amethyus, Zircon and Turquoise; a residential project named One Edition in suburban Mulund; and an early-stage project near Thane. The developer will also refinance loans from Capital First and Piramal Fund Management Pvt. Ltd, among others.

“We have structured the financing of the transaction in a way that it involves both early stage and late stage projects. Most of these projects are 85% complete and 50% sold; so, the capital will give the pace of construction a boost, which will eventually also drive sales,” Altico Capital chief executive Sanjay Grewal said over the phone. In a statement, Altico Capital said the projects being financed have a total saleable area of about 2 million sq. ft. Of this, about 1.25 million sq. ft is in advanced stages of construction.

3. India improves in Global Competitiveness Index

Source: **Live Mint** ([Link](#))

India's ranking in the Global Competitiveness Index for 2016-17, released by the World Economic Forum (WEF), improved 16 places to 39, making it the fastest riser up the ranks among 138 countries surveyed. India's competitiveness improved across the board, particularly in goods market efficiency (60), business sophistication (35) and innovation (29). WEF said recent reform efforts by the government have concentrated on improving public institutions (up 16

places), opening the economy to foreign investors and international trade (up 4), and increasing transparency in the financial system (up 15).

4. LeEco seeks to open 1,000 stores in India by December 2017

Source: **Live Mint** ([Link](#))

Chinese tech firm LeEco expects 50% of its revenue in India to come from physical stores, as it seeks to open 1,000 outlets in the country by December 2017 to widen its reach and build a strong brand recall. LeEco, which filed an application with the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) for opening single brand retail stores five months back, is expected to launch 500 stores in the first six months of 2017. These will be a mix of company owned stores as well as franchise outlets, said Atul Jain, chief operating officer, smart electronics business, at LeEco India. "This is in line with our aim to be among top three brands in the country by 2018," said Jain. The company did not disclose the investment required for setting up the stores. LeEco has an offline presence in China too, according to Jain.

The company has already tied up with multiple distributors across organized and unorganized channels in the country and is already available in about 3,000 outlets in cities including Delhi-National Capital Region, Meerut, Varanasi, Mumbai, Pune, Chennai and Bengaluru. It expects to reach 65 cities and have a presence in 6,000-8,000 outlets by November-December.

5. Infosys unveils modular e-commerce platform

Source: **Business Standard** ([Link](#))

Software major Infosys Ltd on Wednesday unveiled a mobile first and modular platform to drive e-commerce programmes across retail channels. The platform has been developed by Skava, a Silicon Valley-based e-commerce start-up that the IT major acquired in June 2015 for \$120 million, to enable businesses leverage cloud-based micro-services and white label applications to launch new offerings and improve conversion rates of digital channels. "The platform can integrate into present technologies, while providing a future-ready architecture for next-generation shopping experiences leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning, natural language processing and virtual reality (VR)," the IT major said. The platform also has a mobile-first responsive web store and native mobile shopping applications that can be managed by non-technical business users through its studio, an intuitive web-based experience management tool. "The architecture of Skava platform helps simplify and accelerate the deployment of e-commerce services cost effectively and without large up-front investments," a company statement said.

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