

# Standing Tall, the Best of the Best

Ola represents a hugely disruptive innovation and fast-paced growth, making it a worthy Unicorn



...and the award goes to

## CONTENDERS



### TA Krishnan | Ecom Express

Started by Blue Dart veterans looking to cash in on the ecommerce boom in India, Ecom Express is a specialist that delivers the goods for online retailers such as Flipkart, Snapdeal and others. It raised Rs 850 crore this year from Warburg Pincus in the biggest funding round for an ecommerce logistics company in India.



### Albinder Dhindsa | Grofers

Grofers is an on-demand delivery startup based in Gurgaon that is cashing in on the propensity of urban Indians to order everything from groceries to medicine from home. The startup was doing 180 orders a day in February and was then targeting 3,000 by end of 2015.



### Shashank ND | Practo

Practo was born out of frustration when co-founder Shashank ND could not forward his father's health report via email to get a second opinion. The company lists more than 2 lakh doctors and 8,000 hospitals in over 35 cities on its mobile application, and is rapidly expanding across geographies and businesses.



### Neeraj Kakkar | Hector Beverages

Hector Beverages began with protein drink Frissia and then launched energy drink Tzinga. But soon Paper Boat became its main act. The ethnic drinks brand, which comes in flavors like Golgappe Ka Pani, Jaljeera and Aam Panna, accounts for 75% of Hector's sales. Tzinga is India's second-largest energy drink after Red Bull.

## STARTUP OF THE YEAR

### Bhavish Aggarwal Ola

Ola cofounder and Chief Executive Bhavish Aggarwal is a fan of technology—he owns an all-Mac suite of gadgets, including MacBook Air, iPhone 5 and iPad Mini. He's trying something similar with his online taxi-aggregation company, India's largest.

In four years of its existence, Ola has expanded to 100 cities with a fleet of more than 2 lakh cars, is adding on-demand bus aggregation and a food and grocery delivery service, and is working on new initiatives including carpooling and logistics.

"Since inception five years ago, we have grown by leaps and bounds, now

present in over a 100 cities, impacting mobility of millions everyday," Aggarwal said. "While in the typical sense of the word, we have gone beyond being a startup, we are happy to accept the privilege of being nominated as the Startup of the Year in this first of its kind initiative by the Economic Times." Ola is seeded in a typical startup story: Aggarwal's parents thought he had gone crazy when he told them he was set to try his hand at running a taxi business. But he has scaled the business like no other startup in the past six months, despite running into a few regulatory hiccups.

In just a few months after incorporating Ola in Mumbai in April 2011, Aggarwal and cofounder Ankit Bhati, both alumni of the IIT-Bombay, raised funds from Snapdeal cofounder and CEO Kunal Bahl and angel investors Rehan Yar Khan and Anupam Mittal.

There has been no looking back since. Aggarwal's ambition is to change how India travels and revolutionise personal transportation in the country. "All of us have an entrepreneur in us," Aggarwal said in an earlier interview with ET.

"Few take the leap, doubting whether they will make it. But you'll never know unless you take the big step." Ola, now headquartered in Bengaluru, is now among India's most valuable Internet startups—at \$2.5 billion—and counts Japan's richest man, Masayoshi Son of SoftBank Group, and Russian billionaire Yuri Milner as investors. Tata group Emeritus Chairman Ratan Tata is an adviser.

In India, Ola challenged and won against incumbents such as Meru and far overtaken global giant Uber. This year, Ola acquired smaller rival TaxiForSure for \$200 million.



### Ritesh Agarwal | OYO Rooms

Without even owning a single property in the country, Oyo Rooms has become the largest branded network hotel chain within two years with a simple business model - online aggregation of budget hotels. It has now more than 12,000 rooms in over 1,200 hotels, larger than the country's biggest budget hotel chain - Ginger Hotels.



### Krishna Kumar | Simplilearn

The company was set up when the category of online professional certification did not exist, and within a year of inception, Simplilearn was earning \$100,000 (about ₹64 lakh at the current exchange rate) a month. It has trained over 100,000 professionals in over 150 countries, and is poised to expand its existing portfolio.



### Girish Mathrubootham | Freshdesk Technologies

Freshdesk is a cloud-based customer support and help-desk software company founded in Oct '10 by former Zoho executives Girish Mathrubootham and Shanmugam Krishnaswamy. It is one of the first software-as-a-service companies from India to take on the global market.