

BMW'S CARGO BIKE AND E-SCOOTER CONCEPTS, NASA PICKS SPACEX FOR JUPITER'S MOON MISSION, JAPAN'S MOST POWERFUL QUANTUM COMPUTER

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life

BMW's two new micro-mobility vehicle concepts, an electrified bicycle and an e-scooter for city use. | Picture by special arrangement.

BMW Group has unveiled two micro-mobility vehicle concepts, an electrified bicycle and an e-scooter for city use. The compact, three-wheeled cargo bike concept has been developed to offer high agility, flexible usage options and increased year-round suitability. Its variably usable loading platform with attachments is designed for transporting loads as well as for leisure activities, BMW said. The e-scooter concept has been ergonomically designed making it suitable for everyday use. It offers riding stability and is extremely compact when packed up, making it ideal for carrying in the car boot. Both concepts have been designed to scale up electric range with regard to the respective application. Also, the battery pack can be removed and charged at home. Earlier this month, [the German luxury automotive firm had unveiled its new electric two-wheeler designed for the city.](#)

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NASA has selected SpaceX to provide launch services for Earth's first mission to conduct detailed investigations of Jupiter's moon Europa. The mission will use a sophisticated suite of science instruments to investigate whether the icy moon has conditions suitable for life. It also aims to capture high-resolution images of Europa's surface, determine its composition, look for signs of recent or ongoing geological activity, measure the thickness of the moon's icy shell, search for subsurface lakes, and determine the depth and salinity of Europa's ocean. The Europa Clipper mission is slated to launch in October 2024 on a Falcon Heavy rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Centre in Florida. The total contract amount for launch services is approximately \$178 million, according to the space agency. In another space update, [the ISRO-NASA joint mission NISER satellite, aimed at making global measurement of land surface changes using advanced radar imaging, is proposed to be launched in early 2023.](#)

IBM and the University of Tokyo unveiled Japan's most powerful quantum computer as part of their ongoing collaboration to advance the country's exploration of quantum science, business and education. The IBM Quantum System One is now operational for researchers at both scientific institutions and businesses in Japan, with access administered by the university. The computer offers users access to repeatable and predictable performance from high-quality qubits and high precision control electronics, IBM noted. Besides, the quantum resources are tightly coupled with classical processing so that users can securely run algorithms requiring repetition of quantum circuits on the cloud. It is the second system to be built outside the United States, following the recent unveiling of one in Germany, administered by Fraunhofer Gesellschaft. In a separate development, [researchers at the Cambridge Research Laboratory of Toshiba Europe demonstrated that quantum information can be successfully sent over optical fibres exceeding 600 km in length.](#)

Spotify has introduced a feature to help its users discover new music and podcasts from the artists and shows they follow on the platform. 'What's New' is updated in real-time, so the users

will get to listen to new content just as it's released. Users can access the feed by clicking the new bell icon, located at the top of the home tab on their phone. A blue dot indicator on the bell icon will let them know at a glance if new songs or episodes have been released since their last visit. It also includes filters that allow users to sort for new music releases or new podcasts and show episodes to help them find what they are looking for more quickly. The feature is rolling out to all users globally on iOS and Android over the coming weeks, Spotify said. In another update, [Spotify beat Wall Street estimates for second-quarter revenue on Wednesday, as the music streaming company reported a 20% jump in paid subscribers for its premium service.](#)

Google Cloud and SAP on Thursday announced a partnership to help customers execute business transformations and migrate critical business systems to the cloud. The collaboration will also help enhance existing business systems with Google Cloud capabilities in artificial intelligence and machine learning. Moreover, customers can benefit from the planned global availability of multiple SAP services and products on Google Cloud's scalable cloud infrastructure and network. "This new partnership will enable customers to seamlessly bring their most critical business systems and applications to a future-proof, secure and low-latency environment," Rob Enslin, President at Google Cloud, said in a statement. This week, [Google also launched a new bug bounty platform to celebrate the ten-year anniversary of its Vulnerability Rewards Programme.](#)

Since the pandemic started, video conferencing platforms have gained popularity with an increasing number of people relying on them daily. The usage of video conferencing apps like Zoom, Microsoft Teams and Google Meet grew 151% year-over-year in the first half of 2021, according to a report by analytics firm Sensor Tower. And, the combined monthly active users of the same cohort of apps in the first half of 2021 were more than 2.5 times higher than the year-ago period, the report noted. However, the global installs of the three apps in the first six months of this year has dropped to 422 million from 626 million in the first half of 2020. All three platforms have introduced a number of features over the last 18 months to improve the virtual experience of users. In another development, [Microsoft said this week that its Teams now has nearly 250 million monthly active users.](#)

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Twitter, Google, Microsoft and Photoshop maker Adobe urged the U.S. Congress to come together to protect Dreamers, with Google saying they wanted DACA to be "cemented" into law.

Josh Giegel, the chief executive and co-founder of Virgin Hyperloop foresees us zipping between cities in minutes.

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