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## American IT firm Ebix to spend \$200 mn more on buyouts in India

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**MUMBAI:** American software and services company Ebix Inc., which bought payments firm ItzCash for \$120 million in May, plans to spend at least an extra \$200 million for acquisitions in India, a top executive said.

The Nasdaq-listed company provides solutions on infrastructure exchanges, enterprise systems and risk compliance in insurance, healthcare and financial services, among others.

"We had earlier planned and talked about spending a \$100 million, but I think that number is too small for where we are headed right now. We will end up spending at least twice that amount," said Robin Raina, CEO, Ebix Inc. After ItzCash, Ebix has spent \$60-65 million in acquiring three remittance businesses, he added.

Ebix entered India with the purchase of 80% in ItzCash for ₹800 crore from Essel Group and other shareholders in May.

In September, Ebix acquired the money transfer business of Paul Merchants Ltd for \$40.7 million.

In August, Mint reported that Ebix had agreed to acquire the money transfer service scheme (MTSS) business of YouFirst Money Express Pvt. Ltd. Also in August, it announced that it would be acquiring the MTSS assets of Wall Street Finance Ltd, along with its unit Goldman Securities Ltd.

Ebix will now look for acquisitions in newer segments such as travel and lending, Raina said. Through ItzCash, Ebix has presence in prepaid cards, bill payments and remittance. In 2016-17, ItzCash processed payments worth ₹14,000 crore through its network.

"Travel is one of the priorities. We think there is an amazing opportunity in travel. When you travel, there are a lot of different things that happen; consumers buy a lot of different things when they travel and somebody needs to bring all of that together in one place," said Raina. Lending is another area that Ebix is considering, he added.

Including future acquisitions and its own growth plans, Raina feels Ebix's India operations has the potential to become a \$500 million revenue business in the next 3-4 years.

# Ebix to spend \$200 mn on acquisitions in India

US-based software firm eyes acquisitions in travel and lending, says CEO Raina

BY SWARAJ SINGH DHANJAL

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MUMBAI

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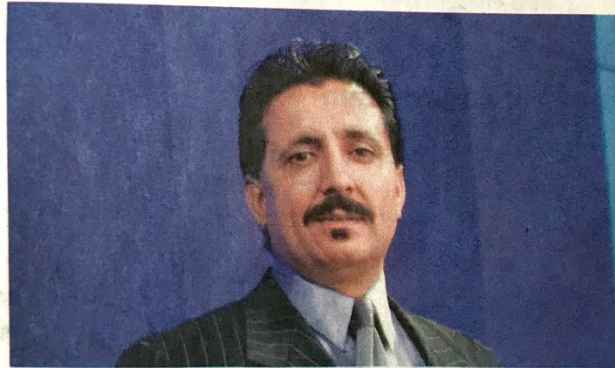
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Including future acquisitions and its own growth plans, Raina feels Ebix's India operations has the potential to become a \$500 million revenue business in the next 3-4 years. Ebix, which started back end operations in India in 2001, began customer-facing services only in 2017 with the acquisition of Itz-

Cash, attracted by the opportunity from increasing digitization.

Raina added that unlike other financial services firms that target issues in silos, Ebix has approached the sector with a view of consolidating various customer needs on one platform.

"In India, you have one company doing wallets, one on insurance, some other focusing on remittance, and others focused on travel. However, the consumer remains the same; the same consumer is saying he wants to travel, or buy insurance, or send/receive money. The consumer is not really saying that they want to go to 45 different players to get 45 different services," said Raina.

"By consolidating all these needs on one platform and using the same last-mile connectivity, you bring ease for the consumer, efficiency of doing the business as back-end costs reduce, and merchants or distributors on your network can also now offer multiple services to their customers," he added.

Ebix has over 45 offices across Australia, Brazil, Canada, India, New Zealand, Singapore, the US and the UK, and processes over \$100 billion worth of transactions annually across its platforms. The company has a market capitalization of over \$2 billion.