

**What's hot in IT
An Indian Perspective
April 2020**

Science & Technology

- **Vaccine** for Covid-19 is finally around the corner; **Oxford** University team announced the start of **human trial** on April 23, 2020; Pune-based **Serum Research Institute** (one of the seven organizations selected by Oxford team for manufacture) is getting ready to manufacture the vaccine; if trials go well, SRI may produce 5 Million per month for 6 months and 10 million for another 6 months (India is among the largest manufacturers of vaccines, globally); several such initiatives are happening globally
- Several Science & Technology Institutes in India are coming together and offering solutions to contain Covid-19 menace; several start-up are rising to face the challenges too

Higher Education

- On April 22, 2020, **5 of the older IIT's** decide to pull out of **Times Higher Education 2020 Rankings**, citing lack of transparency
- In **Times Higher Education Impact ranking** based on UN Millennium Development Goals, **IIT-KGP** gets 57th rank globally (the only Indian Institute in Top 100)

Policy

- On April 22, 2020 **Supreme Court** held the Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Governments' decision to **reserve 100%** of the teaching jobs to Scheduled Tribes in notified tribal areas **unconstitutional**; in another ruling on April 29, 2020 **Supreme Court** also held that **NEET will be the sole test** for admissions to **Medical colleges** and stopped the separate test for admission to **CMC Vellore**
- With the consolidation in Public Sector Banks, **Allahabad Bank, Andhra Bank, Corporation Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Syndicate Bank** and **United Bank of India** become history on April 1, 2020

Special events and Milestones

- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) continues to cause havoc throughout the month of April

As of April 30, 2020,
 - Globally, there were 31,93,886 cases and 2,27,638 deaths
 - USA has the largest share with 10,92,328 cases and 63,538 deaths
 - India had 33,050 cases and 1,074 deaths
- Spain, Italy, UK and France has more than 24,000 deaths
- India had the first death on March 13, 2020 (in Karnataka); the death toll climbed to 100 on April 6, 2020 and 1,000 on April 18, 2020
- USA had the first death on March 3, 2020; the death toll climbed to 100 on March 18, 1,000 on March 28, 10,000 on April 8, 20,000 on April 13, and, 50,000 on April 29, 2020
- India announced its first **lockdown** during March 25 to April 14; extended to May 3; likely to get extended further; **partial opening** of services started on April 20; Secretaries to the Government started attending offices from April 13 and Deputy Secretary level officers started attending offices from April 15
- Chief Minister of Gujarat **tests positive** on April 15

IT in India

- **UK Prime Minister** tests positive, get admitted into hospital, had to be treated in ICU and returns home on April 15, causing considerable anxiety; he resumed work on April 29, 2020
- In an interesting development, India sends malaria drug **HCQ** to **United States, United Kingdom** and **Israel** in April 2020
- **Oxford University** starts human trial of its vaccine; Pune-based Serum Research Institute is one of the agencies contracted by Oxford University team for its manufacture
- Chinese City of **Wuhan** (where Corona Virus originated) opens up after 76 days of lockdown on April 14, 2020
- US GDP contract by 4.8% the steepest ever quarterly loss; there is panic everywhere in the global markets
- Oil price goes sub-zero in the “futures market” thanks to drastic demand reduction due to “lockdown” in most parts of the world

Markets

- Amidst so much bad news, there is a silver lining; **Facebook** acquires 9.99% stake in **Reliance Jio** for Rs 42,000 Crores on April 20, 2020; this partnership will use Reliance Retail network to transform millions of small-time Kirana stores
- **Covid-19** and Oil Price dropping to sub-zero level in Futures market, there is blood bath in the global markets in April 2020
- **Indian Rupee breaches 76** against USD on April 7, 2020; rebound to 74 on April 30, 2020

Products

- **Google Meet** will be free from May 1, 2020; competes with the highly popular **Zoom** meeting solution; **Microsoft Team** also gets traction with new features
- **Apple** launches iPhone SE 2 at \$ 399 on April 15, 2020
- **OnePlus** launched its **OnePlus 8** and **OnePlus 8 Pro** on Apr 14, 2020

Indian IT Companies

- **Facebook** acquires 9.99% stake in **Reliance Jio** for Rs 43,574 Crores on April 22, 2020
- **TCS** posts a **top line** of Rs **39,946 Crores** and a **bottom line** of **Rs 8,049 Crores** on April 15, 2020; its **headcount** on March 31, 2020 stood at **448,464**
- **Infosys** posts a **top line** of **Rs 23, 267 Crores** and a **bottom line** of **Rs 4,335 Crores** on April 20, 2020; its **headcount** on March 31, 2020 stood at **242,371**
- **Wipro** posts a **top line** of **Rs 15,710 Crores** and a bottom line of **Rs 2,330 Crores** on April 15, 2020; its **headcount** on March 31, 2020 stood at **182,886**
- None of them provided guidance for 2020-21 amidst chaos created by Covid-19

Telecom

- **Airtel** gave **\$ 1 Billion** (Rs 7,500 Crores) 4G order to **Nokia** on April 28, 2020

People

- President's Secretary and former IAS Officer **Sanjay Kothari** was appointed as **CVC** (Central Vigilance Commissioner) on April 25, 2020
- India-born (Andhra Pradesh) and educated (B Tech from IIT Kanpur) **Dr Arvind Krishna** takes charge as **IBM CEO** on April 6, 2020
- **Pravin Rao**, COO, **Infosys** is the new **Chairman of NASSCOM**; **Rekha Menon** of **Accenture** is the **Vice Chair**; both effective April 6, 2020

Interesting Apps & Applications

- **Uber** launches **Uber-Medic** focused on healthcare workers in April 2020 in India (following its UK experiment earlier)
- On April 15, 2020 **Aarogya Setu** (Covid-19 related) App creates history; **crosses 50 million in 13 days**, the fastest growing mobile App globally

Interesting numbers

- **Ramayan**, the TV Serial directed by Ramanand Sagar broadcast on DD National sets a world record with 77 Million viewers on April 16, 2020
- **Income tax department** processes Rs 4,250 Crores of **refunds** in a week (April 6-12, 2020); in the same period **Railways** settle **refund** of Rs 1,490 Crores!
- **Covid-19 shocker on the economy** - as of Apr 29, 2020 **GST collection** for March 2020 is just Rs 28,309 Crores (as against Rs 1.13 Lakh Cr for March 2019)!

Professor Sowmyanarayanan **Sadagopan** (ss@iiitb.ac.in) is the Director of IIIT-Bangalore. These are his personal views. He has been writing on "**What's hot in IT**" from an Indian perspective continuously from 1997; Times of India, Financial Express and IT Magazine carried the monthly (and yearly columns) till 2016; IEEE India has been carrying the quarterly columns since 2017