

**What's hot in IT - A Perspective from India
December 2020**

1. Science & Technology

- **Delhi Metro** commissions fully **driver-less trains** on Magenta line (28 Dec 2020)
- **L&T** prints 700 square feet house in Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu taking just 10.6 hours of machine time using **3-D Printing technology** – an important milestone with a huge potential for India (25 Dec 2020)
- **OneWeb** launches 36 satellites (of the planned 648 LEO satellites that will offer Internet to rural areas by Dec 2021) (20 Dec 2020)
- **ACM India Early Career Researcher Award** (funded by Persistent Systems) goes to **Dr Saket Saurabh** of **IMSc (Institute of Mathematical Sciences)** (22 Dec 2020)
- **Infosys Science Prize 2020** goes to
 - Dr **Hari Balakrishnan** of **MIT (Engineering & Computer Science)**
 - Dr **Prachi Deshpande** of **CSSS, Kolkata (Humanities)**
 - Dr **Rajan Sankaranarayanan** of **CCMB (Life Sciences)**
 - Dr **Sourav Chatterjee** of **Stanford (Mathematical Sciences)**
 - Dr **Arindam Ghosh** of **IISc (Physical Sciences)**
 - Dr **Raj Chetty** of **Harvard (Social Sciences)** (19 Dec 2020)
- Indian American **Raja Chari** is among the 18 strong team selected by NASA as “potential Men / Women on the Moon in 1924”(18 Dec 2020)
- **Britain's MHRA** (Medicine & Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency) **approves Pfizer's Covid-19 vaccine** under emergency use approval (2 Dec 2020); 90-year old **Margaret Keenen** of UK is the first human being to be administered Covid-19 vaccine (8 Dec)

2. Higher Education

- Union Government hikes its share (11% to 60%) of **Post Metric Scholarships** to nearly 40 Million SC students (23 Dec 2020)
- **JEE** to be conducted four times a year from 2021 (it was just one exam during 1967 to 2017, conducted twice in 2018, 2019 & 2020)
- **IIT Kanpur** starts **Sustainability Engineering Department** and a Department on **Cognitive Sciences** in December 2020
- Indian pharma major **CIPLA** Chairman **Yusuf Hamied** creates history; **Cambridge University** names its Chemistry Department after him till 2020; 25 Nobel Laureates are associated with this Department has (1 Dec 2020)

3. Policy

- **UK EU** sign **Free Trade agreement** as UK makes its **BREXIT** exit (25 Dec 2020)
- Union Government losses **CAIRN** case in international litigation; appeals against **Vodafone** arbitration to Singapore Court (25 Dec 2020)
- **Farmers' opposition** to Government's new **Agricultural Laws** disrupt life in Delhi for weeks in December 2020
- **Lucknow Municipal Bonds** listed on BSE - the first City in Uttar Pradesh to do so - (2 Dec 2020)

4. Special events and Milestones

- Jammu Kashmir had peaceful **Elections** for DDC with good participation; results were out on 23 Dec 2020
- **Chennai December Music season** goes virtual (15 Dec to 15 Jan)
- **Google, Intel, Dell, Citrix** form “**Cloud Alliance**” (18 Dec 2020)

IT in India

- **Mail, YouTube** services disrupted on 14 Dec 2020
- **HDFC Bank IT outage** leads to regulator (RBI) intervention (2 December 2020)
- In **US Presidential Elections** held on 3 Nov 2020 the Electoral College seals the win for Joe Biden (16 Dec 2020)
- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) in India seems to have slowed down considerably in December, though the Caseload crosses 10 Million in December
 - US plans to administer vaccines to **20 Million Americans by 31 Dec 2020**; could complete only 1 Million in the first 3 days
 - India sets up the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration (**NEGVAC**) to roll out vaccines; 10 Million health workers are the first priority; Government plans to administer vaccines to 300 Million people; as a pilot project, Government is connecting identified 85,634 cold storage points in 28,947 places in 4 States using innovative technology under Phase 1 of the plan (4 Dec 2020)
 - **Moderna** gets US FDA approval under emergency authorization approval (20 Dec 2020)
 - **US FDA** approves Pfizer vaccine (18 Dec); President-Elect Biden takes the vaccine (23 Dec)
 - **UK** approves Pfizer's vaccine (2 Dec 2020); 90-year old **Margaret Keenen** of UK is the first human being to be administered Covid-19 vaccine (8 Dec 2020)
- Covid-19 picture in December 2020
India's positivity rate is down and R-value below 1.0 from 24 Sep 2020
Un-lock 7 starts (2 Dec 2020)
On 27 Dec 2020, cases/deaths stood at
 - Global: 78 Mililon and 1.7 Million
 - India 10 Million and 147,000
 - USA: 18 Million and 320,000
- Death count
 - India 1st case (13 Mar), crossed 100 (6 Apr), 1,000 (29 Apr), 10,000 (16 Jun), 50,000 (17 Aug) and 100,000 (3 Oct), 125,000 (7 Nov), 147,000 (24 Dec)
 - USA 1st case (3 Mar), crossed 100 (18 Mar), 1,000 (28 Mar), 10,000 (8 Apr), 50,000 (25 Apr), 100,000 (29 May), and, 200,000 (25 Sep), 300,000 (16 Dec)
 - Global 1st case (11 Jan), crossed 100 (28 Jan), 1,000 (11 Feb), 10,000 (20 Mar), 50,000 (3 Apr), 100,000 (12 Apr), 500,000 (30 Jun), and, 1 Million (29 Sep), 1.5 Million (3 Dec)

5. Markets

- **Sensex** touches 47,000 (18 Dec 2020)
- **Google** acquires **Neverware**, New York City based software company with its tool **CloudReady** that converts old Windows PC into Chromebooks (16 Dec 2020)
- **IRCTC** IPO over-subscribed (12 Dec 2020)
- SaaS-based CRM software company **Salesforce** acquires **Slack** in a mega deal (\$ 27.7 Billion) (2 Dec 2020)

6. Products

- **ICICI Bank** rolls out **iMobile Pay** that works across Banks (9 Dec 2020)

7. Indian IT Companies

- **L&T** prints 700 square feet house in Kanchipuram in Tamil Nadu taking just 10 hours of machine time using **3-D Printing technology** – an important milestone with a huge potential for India (25 Dec 2020)
- **Infosys** bags the largest ever mega IT services order of \$ 3.2 Billion over 8 years from **Daimler** for (23 Dec 2020)

IT in India

- **Wipro** bags IT services order of \$ 700 Million over 5 years from German retailer **Metro** (23 Dec 2020)

8. MNC Companies in India

- **E & Y** to hire 9,000 techies in India in 2021 to boost its digital capabilities (24 Dec 2020)
- **Google** launched **Machine Learning Utilities for Research in Indian Languages**(MURIL) to help the R & D ecosystem in Indian languages (16 Dec 2020)
- **Fiat Chrysler** setting up **\$ 150 Million** digital hub in **Hyderabad** (15 Dec 2020)
- **Nokia** plant in Chennai outskirts starts manufacturing **5G Telecom gear** in India (4 Dec 2020)

9. Startup scene

- **DailyHunt** gets **Unicorn** status with **Google** funding (21 Dec 2020)
- **Zomato** gets \$ 600 Million infusion (18 Dec 2020)
- Online education start-up **upGrad** acquires **Rekrut** (15 Dec 2020)
- **[24]7.ai** hires 3,500 in India in 2020
- Aman Gupta founded **boAT** (India's wearables company) became the 5th in the world in this emerging market After **Apple, Xiaomi, Huawei** and **Samsung** (and tied with **Fitbit**), as per IDC Report (2 Dec 2020)

10. People

- Prime Minister **Modi** (along with Japanese & Australian Prime Ministers) conferred "**Legion of Merit**" by US President Trump (21 Dec 2020)
- IIT-Kanpur Alum Dr **Aravind Krishna**, current IBM CEO elected as **IBM Chairman** (16 Dec 2020)
- Noted Indian Scientist Dr Roddam Narasimha of "Flosolver fame" passed away (14 Dec 2020)
- US President-elect Biden and Vice-President elect Harris are TIME Magazine's Person of the year 2020 (10 Dec 2020)
- Indian pharma major CIPLA Chairman **Yusuf Hamied** creates history; **Cambridge University** names its Chemistry Department after him till 2020; 25 Nobel Laureates are associated with this Department has (1 Dec 2020)

11. Telecom / Infrastructure

- **4G spectrum auction** cleared by Union Cabinet (16 Dec 2020)
- Foundation stone laid for the New Parliament Building (10 Dec 2020)
- **BSNL Sylo** launch satellite-based IoT detection service (8 Dec 2020)
- Union Cabinet approves Project **WANI** to set up one million public W-Fi hotspots by Dec 31, 2021

12. Interesting Applications / Apps

- **FASTag** to be mandatory for toll collection on NHAI highways from 1 Jan 2021
- Dept of Post launches **Dak Pay** App (15 Dec)
- **RTGS** goes 24/7 from 15 Dec 2020
- **HDFC Bank's** IT outages lead to **regulator (RBI) intervention** (3 Dec 2020)

13. Interesting numbers

- **FASTag** collects Rs 80 Cr in a day involving 5 Million transactions (25 Dec 2020)
- **GST** collection goes past Rs 1 Lakh Crores indicating economic revival
- **Foreign exchange reserves** touched a new high of **\$ 581 Billion** (27 Dec 2020); March to November 2020 saw an increase of more than \$ 100 Billion! It was \$ 457 Billion in Jan 2020

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**” with 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