

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

Science & Technology

- **Turing Award 2020** announced on March 18, 2020 goes to computer graphics pioneers **Pat Hanrahan** of Stanford University (incidentally also a co-founder of the hugely successful Analytics software vendor **Tableau**, acquired by **Sales Force** recently) and **Ed Catmull** former President of **Pixar Animation**
- **Abel Prize** announced on March 18, 2020 goes to **Hillel Furstenberg**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel and **Gregory Margulis** of Yale University, USA for their contribution to probabilistic methods in combinatorics
- **ISRO** postpones its **GIST-1 satellite launch** of March 5, 2020

Higher Education

- **QS World** Rankings 2020 announced on March 5, 2020 has 2 Indian Institutes – IITB (44), IITD (47) in Top 50 for Engineering; IIMA (6), and IIMB (8) in Asia Top 50 for Management

Policy

- **OTT platforms** (Netflix and Hot Star) asked to reduce video quality to make way for increased bandwidth demands from people working from home in March 2020
- Government of India announces Rs 50,000 Crores incentive for Electronics Manufacturing on March 23, 2020
- Government okays **Wi-Fi in flight** on March 2, 2020; **Vistara**, the first airline likely to offer this service soon
- **US Fed** cuts Federal Funds rate by 50 points on March 2, 2020; several countries follow suit
- **Supreme Court** overrules RBI decision to stop **Crypto-currency** in India on March 2, 2020

Special events and Milestones

- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) is declared Pandemic by UN on March 9, 2020; global headcount of cases has crossed 8,58,000 and more than 42,000 deaths reported, with US accounting for the highest number of 1,85,400 cases as on March 31, 2020; India reports the first death on March 9, 2020; India had 1,397 cases and 35 deaths as of March 31, 2020; most Schools and Colleges are shut in India by March 12, 2020; IT companies move to work from home; with Malls, Movie Halls, Marriage Halls shut, it is a scary situation; **Prime Minister Modi** announces “**Janata Curfew**” for a day on March 22, 2020; again decided to go for “**complete shut-down**” for **21 days** (March 25 to April 14)!
- **MWC** (Mobile World Congress) is **off** for the year 2020! **IPL** and **Olympics** getting postponed!
- Government announces several **governance relaxation** in the wake of “complete shut-down”
- **YES Bank** troubles mount; RBI supersedes Board; SBI set to take 40% share; withdrawals frozen at Rs 35,000 forcing panic in consumers' minds; finally, re-opens with no condition on withdrawals on March 19th

- There was some good news amidst so much gloom; **Indian Railways** had **zero fatalities in the past 12 months** in its 116 years creates history

- **Nirbhaya** case culprits finally were hanged to death on March 20, 2020

Markets

- **Covid-19** and Oil Price dropping to \$ 30, there is mayhem in stock markets everywhere. India's stock market indices Sensex and NIFTY had record single day fall ever of 1,485 and 567 respectively, on March 12 , 2020; Dow Jones saw 2,000 pints drop on the same day; globally stock exchanges have fallen by at least 25%; expected to be the worst since 2008 crisis. On March 31, 2020, **Sensex** ends at 29,468 and **NIFTY** at 8,597 (By March 31, 2019 they were 39,000 and 11,700 respectively)
- **Indian Rupee breaches 76** against USD on March 23, 2020; rebound by March 31, 2020
- **SBI Cards IPO** over-subscribed 26 times by March 5, 2020

Indian IT Companies

- **ICICI Bank** launches **ICICI Stack** on March 15, 2020 to boost the FinTech start-up ecosystem
- **Wipro** in the "**World's Most Ethical Companies**" list (Ethisphere Institute) of March 16, 2020; incidentally, it is the 9th year in a row!
- Bangalore-based **TALLY Solutions** (accounting used by millions of accountants in dozens of countries) extends any-device based browsing of TALLY data, an important step in the evolution of the product
- **Sonata** (Bangalore-based IT Services company) **acquires** Melbourne, Australia-based **GAPBusters**, a company that specializes in UX for customer surveys, on March 5, 2020

MNC IT Companies in India

- **Capgemini** to hire 30,000 in India in 2020 (up from 12,000 announced earlier)

Telecom

- **Mobile phones** to get costlier due to GST increase from 5% to 18% on March 14, 2020
- **Indians** consume more than **11 GB/month data** according to Nokia's MBIT (Mobile Broadband India Traffic Index) Report of February 27, 2020
- **AGR** (caused by Supreme Court ruling) causes grievous wound to the telecom sector; **Vodafone-Idea** almost on the verge of shutting shop; **Airtel** springs a surprise by **paying up to Rs 18,000 Crores** by February 29, 2020!

People

- **Salesforce** appoints ex SBI Chair **Arundati Bhattacharya** as **India CEO** on March 15, 2020
- **Bill Gates** steps down from the **Board of Microsoft** (the iconic company that he co-founded with Paul Allen) on March 12, 2020
- **Dr Ajay Bhushan Pandey** (IITK CS B Tech, PhD from Univ of Minnesota, ex UIDAI Chairman, GSTN Chairman) is the country's **Finance Secretary** from March 5, 2020
- India-born **Rajiv Suri** steps down as **Nokia CEO** on March 2, 2020

- **Dr Jack Welch**, (PhD in Chemical Engineering from Univ of Illinois), 84-year old former **CEO of GE** and famous for his faith in "6-Sigma" and in "emerging markets" passed away on March 5, 2020; he inaugurated **Jack Welch Tech Center** in Bangalore in 2001 that was a game changer for MNC's operating in India

Start-ups scene

- US-based **Idera** acquires Bangalore-based **FusionCharts** on March 15, 2020

IT in India

- **Tri-Cog**, Bangalore-based company specializing in remote diagnostics of heart patients (ET, FE Award winning start-up) gets \$ 10.5 Million funding on March 5, 2020
- **ClearTax** buys GST Unit of **Karvy** on March 4, 2020

Interesting Apps & Applications

- Samsung R&D Institute launches **Samsung Digital Library** in 100 Government Schools in Karnataka with Samsung Tablets and curated content on February 29, 2020

Interesting numbers

- **GST** collection for February 2020 crosses Rs 1 Lakh Crores; for the fourth month in a row

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