

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

Science & Technology

- On May 30, 2020, two NASA **astronauts, Robert L. Behnken and Douglas G. Hurley**, were launched into orbit; they could **dock at the International Space Station** at 1:22 PM EST on May 31, 2020 and shake hands with the three other astronauts already living there; the astronauts were flown by Elon Musk owned **SpaceX**; it is the first time ever for a private company to take humans into space. The last time NASA astronauts had lifted off for the International Space Station from American soil was way back in 2011!
- **Vaccine for Covid-19** is being chased by nearly 100 groups around the world, though immediate large-scale availability (post trials) is uncertain; a global Consortium of 100+ countries has been formed to address scientific challenges posed by Covid-19; with USA pulling out of WHO, the global effort got weakened though
- Several **Science & Technology Institutes in India** are **coming together** and offering solutions to contain Covid-19 menace; several start-ups are rising to face the challenges too

Higher Education

- On May 9, 2020 CBSE 10th and 12th Class exam dates announced July 1-15
- On May 8, 2020 JEE (Advanced) dates announced Aug 23
- On May 6, 2020 JEE (Main) Dates announced July 18-23
- On May 1, 2020 MHRD announces Calendar for HEI (Higher Education Institutes)

Policy

- A new Tax **Form 26AS** that captures more holistic information was notified by CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes) on May 29, 2020
- **US President terminated** relationship with **World Health Organization** on May 28, 2020, expected to considerably weaken the global efforts in improved health of people on this Planet
- On May 28, 2020 US President Trump signs executive order **limiting liability to social media** platforms like Twitter; this may have large-scale impact on tech companies globally
- Domestic flights start on May 25; Delhi Airport to operate 380 flights on May 25, 2020
- On May 24, 2020 **Domestic Airfare capped** for 3 months (till Aug 24)
- China agrees for WHO probe finally on May 18, 2020
- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** announces a slew of **measures to boost the economy** in a series of announcements in the week of May 18, 2020; earlier, **PM announced Rs 20 Lakh Crores (about \$ 300 Billion - 10% of GDP)** as relief package in his 4th Address to the Nation on May 12, 2020

Special events and Milestones

- **Southwest Monsoon** set on Kerala soil on **May 31, 2020**, a day ahead of June 1; it is important for India – a country of 1.3 Billion population with a high percentage of people depending on Agriculture for livelihood
- **TMSC of Taiwan** announces its investment into a **Chip Plant in Arizona, USA** with investment of **\$ 12 Billion** on May 14, 2020
- **Ashok Leyland** starts making low-cost ventilators in their truck plants in May 2020
- **A shorter route** (1-week long drive in place of 5-weeks long drive) to **Kailas Manas Sarovar** was inaugurated on May 7, 2020
- After a five year wait, "**kadalai mittai**" (**chikki** or sweet made of peanuts and jaggery) from the small town in Toothukudi District, **Kovilpatti** in Tamil Nadu got geographical indication (**GI**) tag on May 1, 2020

- **Indo-China border** and **Indo-Nepal border** saw **tension** during May 2020; luckily, as of May end, discussions at military, government and political level appears to have worked!
- **Killing of African American George Floyd**, by a Police person in **Minneapolis**, led to widespread **violence** across the cities in **USA** (May 25)
- **Cyclone AMPHAN** causes havoc in West Bengal and Odisha States with death toll of more than 70 in West Bengal; Bangladesh was affected too (May 22)
- **Railway accident** (after a record of accident free operations for the past 12 months) kills 10 people on May 8, 2020
- **Fire in Vizag plant** kills 10 on May 6, 2020

- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) continues to cause havoc throughout the month of May
 - **Lockdown** that was to expire on May 14, 2020 extended till May 31, 2020; layered withdrawal in the form of Un-Lockdown 1.0 to take effect on June 1, 2020 with places of worship, restaurants and Malls set to open on June 8, 2020
 - PM announces Rs 20 Lakh Crores (about \$ 300 Billion) and 10% of GDP as relief package in his 4th Address to the Nation on May 12, 2020; Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman follows it up with details on May 13, 2020; major Policy for MSME's, Essential Commodities Act modification to "free up" agriculture sector and PSU's to be amalgamated in the non-core sector, were announced
 - On May 31, 2020, cases / deaths stood at
 - 6.05 Million and 369,000 (Global)
 - 182,000 and 5,164 (India)
 - 1.8 Million and 105,000 (USA)
 - The State of **Sikkim** managed to have zero incidence till May 22, 2020
 - Death count growth
 - India 1 (Mar 13), 100 (Apr 6), 500 (Apr 19), 1,000 (Apr 29), 2,000 (May 10), 4,000 (May 25), 4,971 (May 30)
 - USA 1 (Mar 3), 100 (Mar 18), 1,000 (Mar 28), 5,000 (Apr 4), 10,000 (Apr 8), 50,000 (Apr 29), 100,000 (May 30)
 - Global 1 (Jan 15), 100 (Jan 28), 1,000 (Feb 11), 5,000 (Mar 13), 10,000 (Mar 20), 50,000 (Apr 3), 100,000 (Apr 12), 200,000 (Apr 28), 300,000 (May 16), 357,000 (May 30)
 - Armed Forces pay tribute to Covid-19 warriors (Healthcare workers – Doctors, Nurses, Sanitary workers and Police personnel) on May 3, 2020 by lighting up ships in 18 locations (from Mumbai to Cochin to Chennai to Vishakhapatnam), showering flower petals on hospitals and singing *military tunes in multiple hospitals to cheer them up*
 - Elizabeth Jenner's insightful book **Coronavirus: A Book for Children** (available for free download on May 2) is an instant success!
 - **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
 - **Tirupur cluster** expects **\$ 500 Million exports** revenue from making COVID-19 N 95 masks!
 - **Ashok Leyland** starts making low-cost ventilators in their truck plants in May 2020
 - 64 flights start evacuating thousands of Indians in UAE, Singapore, Thailand and Malaysia starting May 7, 2020; several Navy ships join this mission too
 - **Shramik Express** Trains start moving migrant labourers starting May 1, 2020; nearly million of them moved by Railways

Markets

- **Microsoft** buys **Metaswitch Networks** on May 19, 2020
- **Covid-19** continues to batter the stock markets globally; India's stock market index Sensex closes at 32,065 on May 29, 2020

Products

- **NOKIA** launched 3 budget smart phones – **C5 Endi** priced \$ 169, **C2 Tava** priced \$ 109 and **C2 Tenen** priced \$ 69 (May 28)
- **Xiaomi** launches **Mi 10 5G** phone for Rs 34,499 on May 13, 2020
- **Xiaomi** launches **Mi Box 4K** (streaming device) for Rs 3,499 on May 8, 2020
- **Microsoft** launched **Surface Go 2** (\$ 399) and **Surface Book 3** (\$1,999) on May 8, 2020
- **Microsoft** launched **Surface Pro X**, **Surface Pro 7** and **Surface Laptop** priced INR 98,999, INR 72,999, and INR 98,999 respectively, in India on May 4, 2020
- **Zoom** announces Ver 5.0 with vastly improved security features on May 2, 2020
- **Google Meet** is free from May 1, 2020; competes with the highly popular **Zoom** meeting solution; claims 50 Million downloads in 30 days! **Microsoft Team** also gets traction with new features; claims 75 Million active users on May 22

Indian IT Companies

- **HCL** acquires **Cisco SON** (Self Optimizing Networks) technology to push 5G for \$ 50 Million (May 30, 2020)
- **Wipro** appoints **Thierry Delaporte**, currently COO of Cap Gemini as **CEO** effective July 6, 2020; this is the first time Wipro has identified a non-Indian as CEO; Delaporte is quite familiar with India and he managed **iGate** merger with Cap Gemini; nearly half of Cap Gemini's workforce (1,25,000) based out of India; the current Wipro CEO Abidali Neemuchwala is stepping down on June 1, 2020
- **Jio Mart** e-Com stores starts operation in 200 Cities in India on May 25, 2020
- **TCS** talks of only 25% workforce in premise by 2025 in its Annual Report to its shareholders; announces its 25th AGM as Online AGM on June 11, 2020 (May 20)
- **Bharti Airtel** announces a loss of Rs 5,237 Cr for Jan – Mar quarter, but ARPU (Average Revenue Per User) increasing to Rs 154 from Rs 135 in the previous quarter (leading to its stock price going up)
- **Airtel** goes for **IBM RedHat** solution for its 5G network (May 12, 2020)

MNC Companies

- Samsung, Oppo, Lava and Vivo mobile phone plants in NOIDA start production on May 9, 2020
- BMW, Daimler and Honda plants start production in India on May 6, 2020
- **IBM** announces global **layoffs** on May 22, 2020, the first after the new CEO took over on Apr 6, 2020
- **HPE**, **Dell** too confirms cut in employees / employee salaries / benefits
- **Uber**, **Oyo** and other "gig economy" companies announce massive layoff

People

- **Thierry Delaporte**, currently COO of Cap Gemini, will be the CEO (effective July 6, 2020) of the Bangalore-based IT Services major **Wipro**
- **India's Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan** is **WHO Executive Board Chairman**; coming at this crucial time of global pandemic Covid-19 and India's strategy to contain Covid-19 well, this acquires special significance
- **Prof Shankar Shrikhande**, Indian mathematician who served for a long time in North Carolina, and famous as "**Euler Spoiler**" for his Proof that one of Euler's Conjecture was not true and made it to New York Times front page on April 26, 1959 passed away in an Ashram in Andhra Pradesh at the ripe age of 103 on May 8, 2020

Start-ups

- Bangalore-based **Ola Electric** acquires Amsterdam-based electric Scooter company **Etergo** BV (May 27, 2020)
- **Airtel** acquires **VoiceZen**, a start-up focused on conversational technology (May 20, 2020)
- **KhataBook** - a start-up that helps small *Kirana* stores fast-track outstanding cash collection thru messages - raised \$ 60 Million in Series B funding in May 2020

Interesting Apps & Applications

- Government released the source code of contact tracing App **Aarogya Setu** on May 23, 2020
- **NPCI** designed **AePS** (Aadhar Enabled Payment System) helped **Post Office Bank** to distribute **cash at doorsteps** of 38 Lakhs citizens totaling Rs 720 Cr during Mar 25 to May 1
- With **Covid-19** forcing home stay for millions of students in India, **VC (video conferencing)** gets increased attention; Government of India has announced Award for **home-grown VC** solution; **Google Meet** is free from May 1, 2020; competes with the highly popular **Zoom** meeting solution; claims 50 Million downloads in 30 days! **Microsoft Team** also gets traction with new features; claims 75 Million active users on May 22

Interesting numbers

- With 5,000 cars produced in May 2020, **Hyundai** becomes the first International auto maker to **export 3 Million "Made in India" cars** (over the past 20 years)
- **US unemployment** crosses 41 Million by May end
- 58,318 **passengers flew** on Indian skies on Day 1 (May 25, 2020) when domestic flights were resumed in India; the numbers were 62,641 passengers on Day 2 (May 26) and 67,861 passengers on Day 3 (May 27)
- Government of India increases **COVID-19 testing** dramatically, from 4000+ on April 1 to 41,000+ on May 1; by mid-May India could ramp up testing to 100,000 a day; by end May it was nearly 150,000 tests per day
- Cooking **gas cylinder** (with no subsidy) **price slashed** by Rs 162 (base price around Rs 700) on May 1, 2020

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