

What's hot in IT - A Perspective from India

Sep 2020

Science & Technology

- **Human trials of Covid-19 vaccine from Oxford** was halted and re-started after 6-day pause in mid-September, demonstrating the risk involved in fast-paced vaccine development
- **Rafael fighter Jet** formally inducted into Indian Airforce (10 Sep 2020)
- **GPT-3** (Open AI's powerful language generator program) writes "A robot wrote this entire article. Are you scared yet, Human?" in **Guardian** newspaper (8 Sep 2020)
- **DRDO** successfully tests **Hypersonic technology** vehicle that could move at 6 times the speed of sound (7 Sep 2020)

Higher Education

- **JEE (Advanced)** for admission to IIT's held successfully by IITD-led Committee on **Sep 27, 2020**; with more than 1,50,000 candidates taking the exam there was record **96% attendance**; the exam had provisioned 3,40,000 online computer nodes in 222 cities and 1,001 exam centers across the length and breadth of the country and confirming to full safety (social distancing and sanitization norms) (thanks to **TCS**) to protect against Covid-19); there was opposition and even public interest litigation in Supreme Court earlier
- **Parliament** gives **Institute of National Importance** status to **IIT's** in Surat, Bhopal, Bhagalpur, Agartala and Raichur set up in PPP mode (23 Sep 2020)
- National Law School, Bangalore **NLSUI** decides to go for independent Entrance Exam (other than National Level CLAT); Supreme Court intervenes and **NLSUI** had to go with CLAT (21 Sep 2020)
- **JEE (Mains)** Examination for admission to technical courses (proctored online mode) held during 1-6 Sep 2020, after Supreme Court refused stay; 6.35 Lakh students appeared for the exam in 660 centers spread across 232 Cities (out of 8.41 Lakhs students registered); results were declared on 11 Sep 2020; 24 candidates had 100 score
- **NEET** Exam for admission to Medical courses (paper-based) was held on 13 Sep 2020; there was 85% attendance
- **American Express** sets up **Analytics Lab** at **IITM** (3 Sep 2020)

Policy

- International **arbitration** case of Rs 22,000 Cr claim of **retrospective tax** amount against **Vodafone** goes against Indian government (26 Sep 2020)
- **Election Commission of India** announces dates for **Bihar Election**; **polling** on Oct 28, Nov 3 & Nov 7; **results** on 10 Nov 2020 (26 Sep 2020)
- **Indian Parliament** meets in spite of Covid-19 with sufficient preparation for touch-free operations and maintaining social distance; **Union Government** passes **liberal Labour Laws** to help **manufacturing** and **free farmers** to sell their produce beyond government channels to help **Agriculture**; however, the Policies are not well received with several political parties going against (25 Sep 2020)
- **Karnataka Government** announces a new **IT Policy** to create 6 million jobs by 2025 with focus on Tier II and Tier III towns (3 Sep 2020)
- **Places of Worship** open on 1 Sep 2020; **Metro services** start from 7 Sep 2020

Special events and Milestones

- Amidst all the gloom **IPL takes off** (25 Sep 2020)
- **China snooping on 10,000 influential Indians** makes headline news in September (14 Sep 2020)
- **India & China** enter into 5-point **truce** on border tension (12 Sep 2020)
- **RIL** is the first Indian company to cross **market capitalization** of **\$ 200 Billion** (10 Sep 2020)

IT in India

- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) continues to cause havoc throughout September and the global **death toll nearing 1 Million** (30 Sep); **Oxford University** trial gets halted for 6 days and then resumed in mid-Sep; final nod for vaccine production expected soon; companies like Serum Institute in Pune India gearing up for production; countries are preparing logistics for distribution; ICMR sets up Vaccine Portal on 28 Sep 2020
 - India's **Vice President Venkaiah Naidu** tests **Covid-19 positive** (29 Sep 2020)
 - India's positivity rate is down to 7.4% and R-value below 1.0; total case decreasing for nearly 10 days (30 Sep 2020); has the third largest number of deaths (next only to USA and Brazil); however, India has lowest rate per million population
 - **Un-lock 4** ends (25 Sep 2020)
 - On 30 Sep 2020, cases/deaths stood at
 - Global: Near 30 Million and nearing 1 Million
 - India: More than 6 Million and near 100,000
 - USA: Near 7 Million and more than 200,000
 - Death count
 - India 1st case (Mar 13), crossed 100 (6 Apr), 1,000 (29 Apr), 10,000 (16 Jun), 20,000 (6 Jul), 40,000 (6 Aug), 96,318 (29 Sep)
 - USA 1st case (Mar 3), crossed 100 (Mar 18), 1,000 (Mar 28), 5,000 (Apr 4), 10,000 (Apr 8), 50,000 (Apr 29), 100,000 (May 30), and, 200,000 (25 Sep)
 - Global 1st case (Jan 11), crossed 100 (Jan 28), 1,000 (Feb 11), 10,000 (Mar 20), 50,000 (Apr 3), 100,000 (Apr 12), 500,000 (30 Jun), and, 1 Million (29 Sep)

Markets

- **NVIDIA** acquiring **ARM** (that was earlier acquired by **SoftBank**) for \$ 40 Billion creates waves in global semiconductor industry (17 Sep 2020)
- Other **acquisitions** in Sep 2020 include
 - **Microsoft** buying **Zenimax**, owner of the popular video game **Bethesda**, for \$ 7.5 Billion (23 Sep 2020)
 - **HCL** (3rd Indian IT Services company) **acquiring** Australia-based IT Services company **DWS** for \$ 115 Million (21 Sep 2020)
 - Confusion around **Oracle** acquisition of **Tik-Tok** US assets (17 Sep 2020)
- **IPO scene** on **Indian stock markets** saw lot of traction in Sep 2020
 - **Happiest Minds IPO** opens on 1 Sep 2020; over-subscribed by 151 times, making founder Ashok Soota twice lucky that too at the age of 77 (his startup **Mindtree IPO** was oversubscribed more than 100 times in 2007); listed at Rs 351 on BSE at 111% premium over issue price of Rs 166 (16 Sep 2020)
 - service provider for Mutual Funds **CAMS IPO** garners Rs 666 Cr and **oversubscribed** by 45 times (18 Sep 2020)
 - Cloud communications service provider **Route Mobile IPO** generates more than Rs 600 Cr and subscribed 73 times (11 Sep 2020)

Products

- **Google** launched **Google Pixel 4a 5G** (prices \$ 499) & **Pixel 5** (priced \$ 699) Android phones, **Google TV** (\$ 49 including a remote) and **Google Nest Audio** (30 Sep 2020)
- **Samsung** launched **Galaxy Tablet S7+**, **Galaxy Fans Edition Phone** (26 Sep 2020)
- **Apple**
 - Launch of Apple **Watch Series 6** (\$ 499) and 8th Generation **iPad** (\$ 329) and **iPad Air** (\$ 599) (Sep 2020)

IT in India

- **iOS 14** rolled out to users (18 Sep 2020)
- India's largest watch manufacturer **Titan** and the largest Bank **SBI launch** launch **Titan Pay** – a smart watch-based contact-less payment system (15 Sep 2020)
- **YouTube** launches **YouTube Shorts** (Tik-Tok clone) (15 Sep 2020)
- **Android 11** (18th version of Android) released on 8 Sep 2020
- **Intel** announces its 11th generation microprocessor “Tiger Lake” for laptop computers (2 Sep 2020)

Indian IT Companies

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- **Wipro** sets up **digital innovation lab** in **Dusseldorf** in Germany to serve European customers (11 Sep 2020)
- **Infosys** buys Czech-based enterprise software **GuideVision** for Euro 30 Million (14 Sep 2020); earlier, it bought US-based product design company **Kaleidoscope** (founded by Matt Kornau) for \$ 42 Million (4 Sep 2020)

MNC Companies in India

- **Apple** opens its **India online stores**, sees record footfalls on Day 1 (23 Sep 2020);
- Global leader in rail equipment **Wabtec** opens **Bangalore** center (4 Sep 2020); in 2019 it launched its Engineering Center in Bangalore

Telecom

- **Vodafone-Idea** is **Vi** from now onwards (7 Sep 2020); planning to raise Rs 25,000 Crores (7 Sep 2020); **wins** the case of Rs 22,000 Cr **retrospective tax** in International Court in The Hague against Indian Government (26 Sep 2020)
- **Supreme Court** gives 10 year time for Telco's to pay their **AGR dues** (3 Sep 2020)

Startup scene

- With SoftBank funding of \$ 150 Million, Bangalore-based **Unacademy** becomes Unicorn with \$ 1.45 Billion valuation (3 Sep 2020); buys Vimal Singh Rathore founded UPSC Test Preparation company **Coursavy** (26 Sep 2020)
- **Airtel** buys Kerala-based start-up **Waybeo** that focuses on analytics for telcos (26 Sep 2020)
- **Byjus** sees lot of traction; **acquires LabInApp** (17 Sep), gets more funds infusion from Silver Lake and **valuation soars** to \$ 11 Billion (25 Sep 2020)
- **Tencent** invests \$ 63 Million in **FlipKart** (17 Sep 2020)

- **DPIIT** announces **start-up ranking of States** of India; Gujarat is in No 1 position, Karnataka and Kerala in the next position (11 Sep 2020)

People

- **Yoshihide Suga** is the new Japanese Prime Minister (16 Sep 2020)
- India-born **statistician Prof CR Rao** (of Cramer-Rao inequality fame) turns 100 (10 Sep 2020)
- PD **Vaghela** to take charge as **TRAI** (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) **Chairman** from R A Sharma who retires on 30 Sep 2020

- **Byju** founder **Raveendran** in **Fortune “40 under 40” list** (Sep 2020)
- Many **loss of lives** in Sep 2020 include
 - Former Union External Affairs & Finance Minister **Jaswant Singh** passed away on 26 Sep 2020 after very prolonged illness
 - Indian musical genius **SPB** after 51 days of hospital stay (25 Sep 2020)
 - **Union Minister** of State for Railways and a Member of the Parliament **Suresh Angadi**, succumbs to Covid-19 (23 Sep 2020)
 - Renowned Indian **astronomer Dr Govind Swarup** famous for Ooty Radio Telescope and GMRT (Giant Meter-wave Radio Telescope) (7 Sep 2020)
 - **Swami Kesavananda Bharati** famous for his historic case against Kerala Government that was finally decided by Supreme Court in 1973 dealing with the basic structure of India’s constitution (6 Sep 2020)

Interesting Applications / Apps

- **SBI’s** Mobile App **Yono** becomes independent entity; **other Banks** may use Yono using its API-based services (28 Sep 2020)
- **Uber App** starts integrates real time **public transport info** (Bus & Metro) in Hyderabad in Sep 2020; in Oct 2019, it was implemented in Delhi
- **RelJio Telco** offers in-flight service on select International flights starting Sep 2020; earlier Vistaara Airlines started offering in India-London flights
- **EduRide** Portal started by IITD Alumni to help JEE (Mains) and JEE (Advanced) aspirants in Sep 2020

Interesting numbers

- **US budget deficit** crosses \$ 3 Trillion (12 Sep 2020)
- India’s **forex reserves** touch all time high of \$ 545 Billion (26 Sep 2020)
- **India’s GDP** contracted by 23.8% over Apr-Jun 2020; it was 21.7% for UK

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