

What's hot in IT An Indian Perspective – Jan 2021

Science & Technology, Innovation & Policy

- 2021 marks a **century of Robotics** – started with Czech writer **Karel Capek** in “R.U.R.” (Rossum’s Universal Robots), a science fiction play that introduced the word “Robot” to English language in 1921
- Nikhil Srivastava of UC Berkeley gets **Michael & Sheila Held Prize** for his contribution to Linear Algebra, Graph Theory and Polynomials in the form of Ramanujan Graphs and Kadison-Singer problem (26 Jan 2021)
- **Airtel** successfully completes **5G trials** in Hyderabad (20 Jan 2021)
- **Google** decides to shut down “**Project Loon**” – Internet based on balloons (20 Jan 2021)
- India’s **patent office** had issued **17,000 patents** during Jan to Nov 2020 (1 Jan 2021)
- **Karnataka** tops NITI Aayog’s **India Innovation Index 2020** (20 Jan 2021)
- **Bengaluru** is the **fastest growing Tech Hub** in the planet! **London** is No 2 (Jan 2021)
- **WhatsApp** policy of sharing information with parent company **Facebook** creates ripples; forced to push date of implementation from February to **May 2021**! Suddenly **Signal** (messaging App create by WhatsApp Founder and as a non-profit) sees millions of users moving to it; **Zoho** creates **Arattai** – an interesting competitor to WhatsApp - all in **Jan 2021**!
- **Twitter, YouTube** suspend **US President Trump’s** account (Jan 2021)
- **RBI** launches **Digital Payment Index** (5 Jan 2021)



Higher Education

- Government announces **CBSE Exam dates – 4 May to 10 June 2021**; **JEE (Mains)** in the year 2021 to be held on the following dates - Feb (23-26), Mar (15-18), Apr (27-30) & May (24-28); **JEE (Advanced)** exams to be held on **3 Jul 2021**; **GATE exam on 6/7/13/14 Feb, 2021**
- **CAT** (Common Admission Test) – entrance exam for admission to IIM’s – **results were out**; 190,144 candidates gave the exam on 9 Nov 2020 in 430 centers located across 159 cities (2 Jan 2021)
- **STIP** (Science & Technology and Innovation Policy) **Draft document** put out for comments by **DST**, has many interesting ideas including “One Nation, One Subscription” based free access (with Government paying out nearly Rs 2,000 Cr direct to publishers) to 3000+ Scopus-indexed Journals to all Higher Education Institutions by (1 Jan 2021)

Startup scene

- **GUMTI App** is able to let any store set up a storefront and receive / supply real orders in minutes (Jan 2021)
- **Digit** is the first **Unicorn** of 2021 from India (Jan 2021)
- Online exam coach service **Byju’s** acquired coaching major **Akash Tutorial** for Rs 100 Cr (15 Jan 2021)
- **Vehant Technologies** start supply of **baggage X-ray machines** (15 Jan 2021)
- **Aman Gupta** and **Sameet Mehta** founded **Made-In-India boAt** (trendy, personal audio product manufacturer) \$ **100 Million** from **Warburg Pincus** (5 Jan 2021)
- **ICICIBank** invests in Hyderabad-based **MyClassBoard** (1 Jan 2021)

Telecom / Infrastructure

- **New Parliament Building** construction starts in **Jan 2021**
- **Namma Metro** in Bangalore commissions another 6 KM - taking the total to 140 KM (14 Jan 2021)
- **Telecom spectrum auction** to start (1 Mar 2021)

Markets

- **Sensex touches 50,000** (21 Jan 2021)
- **Salesforce Venture fund** makes its maiden India investment; invests \$ 15 Million in Hyderabad-based HR start-up **DarwinBox** (21 Jan 2021)
- **TCS** buys out **GE’s** stake in **Saudi JV** (12 Jan 2021)
- **Genpact** acquires Analytics start-up **Enquero** (5 Jan 2021)
- **ATOS DXC merger** story going around (Jan 2021)



People

- **Joe Biden** sworn in as **46th President of USA**, **Kamala Harris** is the **49th Vice President** (20 Jan 2021)
- **Pat Gelsinger** (earlier Intel CTO) is back in **Intel** as CEO (12 Jan 2021)
- **Ravi Kumar IAS** is the new Chief Secretary of **Karnataka** (1 Jan 2021)



MNC Companies in India

- With 1.5 Million **iPhones** sold in **Oct-Dec 2020**, Apple has the best quarter in India! Globally, it sold 90 Million phones in that quarter
- **Tesla** starts **India office** with 3 executives starting work out of Bengaluru (12 Jan 2021)
- **Ola** and **Siemens** announce Rs 2,400 Cr investment in Chennai for Electric Vehicle plant (20 Jan 2021)
- **Amazon Academy** is into **JEE coaching**! (13 Jan 2021)



Products

- **SaReGaMa** adds to its product portfolio - **Caravan** has a display option for **Karaoke** lovers (Jan 2021)
- **Zoho** launches **Arattai** – an alternative to **WhatsApp** (Jan 2021)
- **Kavin Bharti Mittal** founded **Hike Messenger** shuts down (Jan 2021)

Professor **Sowmyanarayanan Sadagopan** is the **Director** of IIIT-Bangalore. These are his personal views. He can be reached at ss@iiitb.ac.in. 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.

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Special events and Milestones

- **Joe Biden** sworn in as **46th President of USA** on **20 Jan 2021**; **Vice President Kamala Harris** creates history, the **first Black**, the **first Asian American** and the **very first female** to occupy this exalted office; with her **India connection** and Tamil Nadu collection there was special interest in India! Unfortunately, there were riots with 5 deaths on **9 Jan 2021**; the outgoing President **Trump** creates another history by becoming the first US President to be **impeached twice!**
- UK's **Brexit** is final on **1 Jan 2021**
- **India** begins its 2-year **UNSC Membership** (**Jan 2021**)
- **CES 2021** went virtual; Concept cars, foldable displays, next generation mini-LED displays & TVs, Razor's Project Hazel were the attractions of this year's premier annual show (**11 – 14 Jan 2021**); **World Economic Forum** went virtual too (**25-29 Jan 2021**)
- Government & farmers stand-off continues; Supreme Court puts Government's farm laws on hold; farmers show protest during Republic Day (**26 Jan 2021**)
- **All-women team** of five flew AI 176 **SFO-BLR flight over North Pole** (the longest flight for Air India) on **Jan 12, 2021**
- **India wins** the series against **Australia** in an unusual match in **Jan 2021**
- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) updates
 - In India Covid-19 slowed down considerably in January 2021, though global cases went past 100 Million on **Jan 26, 2021** (it took 11 months to cross 50 Million but just 3 months to reach the next 50 Million!)
 - On **31 Jan 2021**, cases/deaths stood at
 - ❖ Global: 102 Million and 2.22 Million
 - ❖ India: 10,757,610 and 154,392
 - ❖ USA: 25,817,939 and 436,051
- **Lot of action on vaccine front**;
 - ❖ Govt approves Vaccine (**3 Jan 2021**)
 - ❖ 3.7 Million vaccinated by **31 Jan 2021**, 5th globally
 - ❖ India exports Covid-19 Vaccine to many countries



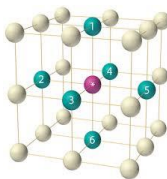
Indian IT Companies

- **Indian IT majors** announce **3rd quarter** (Oct to Dec) results; it was the best quarterly result for Infosys & Wipro in 9 years!
 - ❖ **TCS** reported Rs 42,015 Cr revenue and Rs 8,727 Cr profit (**10 Jan 2021**)
 - ❖ **Infosys** reported Rs 25,727 Cr revenue and Rs 5,197 Cr profit (**14 Jan 2021**)
 - ❖ **Wipro** reported Rs 15,670 Cr revenue and Rs 2,970 Cr profit (**14 Jan 2021**)
 - ❖ **HCL** reported Rs 19,302 Cr revenue and Rs 3,982 Cr profit (**15 Jan 2021**)
 - ❖ **Tech Mahindra** reported Rs 9,647 Cr revenue and Rs 1,310 Cr profit (**29 Jan 2021**)
- **TCS** market capitalization touches \$ 169 Billion (**IBM** at \$ 105 Billion, **Infosys** at \$ 77 Billion, Cognizant at \$ 42 Billion and **Wipro** at \$ 33 Billion; with Rs 12,34,609 Cr Vs **Reliance** market capitalization of Rs 12,29,661 Cr, **TCS** is also the **most valued Indian company** (**21 Jan 2021**); **Three UK** selects **TCS** to implement 5G rollout (20 Jan 2021); the company also completes the **acquisition of Postbank Systems** (Deutsche Bank subsidiary) in **Jan 2021**
- **Tech Mahindra** market capitalization crosses **Rs 1 Lakh Cr** (TCS, Infosys, HCL, Wipro had crossed this milestone earlier) (**9 Jan 2021**)



Interesting numbers

- **PhonePe** with 900 Million transactions **beats** Google Pay with 850 Million transactions in **December 2020**
- **UPI** (Unified Payment Interface) took 3 years to cross the first billion transactions; it took only 14 months to cross the 2 Billion mark (Rs 400,000 Crores value) (**4 Jan 2021**)
- **WhatsApp** users made **1.4 Billion Voice & Video calls** on New Year 2021 eve (nearly 50% higher than the figure for the previous year) (**1 Jan 2021**)
- **GST** collection for **January 2021** touch Rs 1.2 Lakh Crores, the highest so far (**1 Jan 2021**)



Interesting Apps & Applications

- Cloud retail analytics company **Manthan** and personalization company **Rich Relevance** merge to form **Algonomy** (**20 Jan 2021**)
- **Defence Canteens** embrace e-Commerce (**go online**) benefiting 45 Lakh customer (**Jan 2021**)
- **RBI** forces dozens of **Instant Loan Apps** to shut down, after several rogue sites did surface recently (**Jan 2021**)
- **The Community Library Project** (TCLP), that provides free Library access to community members since **2010**, sees online extension in the form of **Duniya Sabki** that distributed content thru WhatsApp three times a week during Covid-10 (**Apr to Dec 2020**)
- **IRCTC** updates **web-site**; significant improvement in user experience for train ticket booking that uses AI/ML to power the site (**1 Jan 2021**)

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