

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

Science & Technology, Innovation & Policy

- **OneWeb** (UK Government & India's Airtel owned consortium) sent 36 more satellites into space, taking the number to 146 of the 648 satellites planned, to offer high-speed Internet connection to remote areas (26 Mar 2021)
- **ISRO** makes **quantum communications breakthrough** by way of free space communications over 300 m (23 Mar 2021)
- **Listing norms for Start-ups** eased by **SEBI** (27 Mar 2021)
- **Karnataka** Government announces **Engineering R & D Policy** that promises 50,00 new jobs (2 Mar 2021)



Higher Education

- **UGC** gives **PG Status** to **Chartered Accountancy Course** offered by **ICAI**, **Company Secretaryship Course** offered by **ICSI** and **Cost and Work Accountancy Course** offered by **ICWAI** (20 Mar 2021)
 - **Micky & Vinita Pant** endowment of \$ 2.5 Million – donated by **Mukesh Pant**, a 1976 Chemical Engineering Graduate from **IITK** – would help **IIT Kanpur** to create the **School of Medical Technology Research** (27 Mar 2021)
 - **IIM's in Gaya, Ranchi & Jammu** to start **5-year Integrated MBA Programs** (post High School) from 2021; **IIM Indore** and **Rohtak** already offer such a program (15 Mar 2021)
 - **Director of IIM Calcutta** **Anju Seth** (the first ever woman Director of any IIM) quits after a protracted fight between faculty, Director and the Board (23 Mar 2021); **Ashoka University** saw Professors **BP Mehta** and **Aravind Subramanian** resigning suddenly (18 Mar 2021)
 - **Times Higher Education Rankings** are out (10 Mar 2021)
 - 3 Indian Institutes - **IISc** (14), **IIT Ropar** (71) and **IIT Indore** (79) – make it to the Top 100 in different fields; 5 of the old IIT's did NOT participate
 - **QS World Rankings** are out (3 Mar 2021)
It has
 - ❖ **Overall 8 Institutes in Top 500** – **IITB** (172), **IISc** (185), **IITD** (193), **IITM** (275), **IITKGP** (314), **IITK** (350), **IITR** (383) and **IITH** (470) (5 Mar 2021)
 - ❖ **Subject-wise 12 Institutes are in Top 100** – they include **IITB**, **IITD**, **IITM**, **IITG**, **IITKGP**, **IISc**, **Anna University**, **JNU**, **OP Jindal**, **Delhi University**, **IIMB** and **IIMA**
- It uses International Students Ratio, International Faculty Ratio, Faculty Students Ratio, Citations per faculty, Academic reputation and Employer reputation as indicators of quality

Markets

- Stock markets go thru a roller coaster ride in March; **Sensex** down by 2500 points in a week (14-19 March 2021)
- **Many IPO's in March 2021**
 - ❖ Casual Dining Chain **Barbeque Nation** IPO subscribed 5.98 times (26 Mar 2021)
 - ❖ Gaming company **Nazaara** IPO subscribed 175 times (19 Mar)
 - ❖ **Kalyan Jewellers** IPO subscribed 2.7 times (19 Mar)
 - ❖ **Suryodaya Bank** IPO subscribed 2.37 times (19 Mar)
 - ❖ Travel portal **EasyTrip** IPO subscribed 159 times (10 Mar)
 - ❖ Hyderabad-based precision engineering manufacturer **MTAR** with defence and clean-energy focus IPO subscribed 201 times (5 Mar 2021)
- **TechMahindra** buys 70% of Ireland-based healthcare supply chain company **Perigold** for 21 Million Euros (15 Mar)
- **Wipro** pays \$ 1.5 Billion to **acquire** London-based BFSI consulting company **Capco** (5 Mar 2021)



People

- **Prime Minister Modi** visits **Dhaka** and participates in **Bangladesh's 50th Independence Day**, the first travel in 13 months post Covid-19 (28 Mar 2021)
- **Gandhi Peace Prize** goes to Bangladesh founder **Mujibur Rehman** (20 Mar 2021)
- **US Defence Secretary Austin** visits **India** (3 Mar 2021)
- **PSA** (Principal Scientific Adviser) to the Government of India **K Vijay Raghavan's** term extended by another year (29 Mar 2021)
- Justice **Ramana** announced as the **next Chief Justice of India** (23 Mar 2021)
- **GP Samatha** takes over as **Chief Statistician** of the country (16 Mar)
- **Director of IIM Calcutta** **Anju Seth** (the first ever woman Director of any IIM) quits after a protracted fight between faculty, Director and the Board (23 Mar 2021); **Ashoka University** saw Professors **BP Mehta** and **Aravind Subramanian** resigning suddenly (18 Mar 2021)
- **Tableau CEO Adam Selipsky** announced as the next Head of **AWS** CEO (28 Mar 2021)
- India-born Intel veteran **Randhir Thakur** to head **Intel's** newly formed **Foundry** business (23 Mar 2021)
- **Caeser Sengupta** currently heading **Google Payments** moves out of Google after 15 years (21 Mar 2021)
- Former **Deputy Governor of RBI** **Dr KC Chakrabarty** passed away (26 Mar 2021)
- Former **SEBI Chairman** **GV Ramakrishna** is no more (20 Mar 2021)



Professor **Sowmyanarayanan Sadagopan** is the **Director** of **IIIT-Bangalore**. These are his personal views. He can be reached at s.sadagopan@gmail.com. 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

- “Just setting up my Twtrr” – **the first ever Tweet** by Twitter Founder Jack Dorsey - turned 15 (**20 Mar 2021**)
- Cyber warfare is getting to be real; several Indian power stations had cyberattacks, luckily no damage done; Microsoft Exchange vulnerabilities spotted in USA (**5 Mar 2021**)
- **Supreme Court upholds Tatas decision to sack** Cyrus Mistry as **Chairman** of Tata Sons in 2016 leading to the end of uncertainty in India's largest corporate empire (**26 Mar 2021**)
- Indian Parliament approves the creation of **NBFID** (National Bank for Financing Infrastructure & Development) (**25 Mar**)
- **Suez Canal** has traffic jam! “Evergreen” ship got stuck for 5 **days (24 to 29 Mar)**; led to bottleneck in global trade!
- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) updates
 - On **31 Mar 2021**, cases/deaths stood at
 - ❖ Global: 12,73,49,248 and 27,87,593
 - ❖ India: 1,20,95,855 and 1,62,114
 - ❖ USA: 2,99,68,464 and 5,44,430
 - Lot of action on vaccine front
 - ❖ **Prime Minister Modi** takes **Covid-19 vaccine**, that too India-designed and India-made vaccine Bharat Biotech's **Covaxin (1 Mar 2021)**
 - ❖ India exports Covid-19 Vaccine to many countries
 - ❖ India decides to vaccinate 45+ from **1 April (26 Mar 2021)**
 - ❖ India recommends a gap of 4-8 weeks between the first and the second shot for Covishield vaccine (**22 Mar 2021**)
 - ❖ **Top 3 countries** for Vaccination **USA** (145 Million), **China** 111 Million and **India** 61 Million (**30 Mar 2021**)



Interesting numbers

- Indian Government e-Commerce platform **GEM** crosses another milestone; **Rs 1 Lakh Crores** (1 Trillion) in value on **30 Mar 2021** (it crossed Rs 50,000 Crores last year) since it started in **2016**
- **NHAI** sets a new world record of completing **25.54 Km of road in just 18 hours!** (in Vijaypur Solapur sector of NH 52)(**1 Mar 2021**)
- **Sensex** down by 2500 points over the week (**15 to 19 Mar**)
- **Covid-19 Vaccination** picks up speed in India; 3 Million vaccinated in a day (**16 Mar**)
- **GST** collection for Feb 2021 crosses Rs 1.13 Lakh Cr (**1 Mar 2021**)

Startup scene

- **KhataBook** buys **Biz Analyst** for \$ 10 Million (**26 Mar 2021**)
- Harsh Jain & Vhavish Sheth founded fantasy sports company **Dream 11** raises \$ 400 Million funding (**23 Mar 2021**)
- Valley-based short video platform **Firework** with strong India focus closes \$ **55 Million** in Series A funding (**23 Mar 2021**)
- Workflow automation major **ServicesNow** acquires Hyderabad-based RPA start-up **InteliBot (23 Mar 2021)**
- Online education major **Unacademy** takes over online tutoring start-up **Handa Ka Funda** focused on CAT aspirants (**23 Mar 2021**)

Indian IT Companies

- **TCS** announces pay hike for its entire 470,000 staff from April; there was a pay hike just 6 months back! (**19 Mar**)
- **Wipro** pays \$ 1.5 Billion to **acquire** London-based BFSI consulting company **Capco (4 Mar 2021)**
- **Infosys** gets \$ **500 Million** all-digital customer experience support **contract** from Google (**3 Mar 2021**)



MNC Companies in India

- Opensource biggie **GitHub** talks of India being the fastest growing developer community with 5.8 Million developers today (with 1.8 Million registered in the last year alone)! Finally Opensource takes off in India!! (**30 Mar 2021**)
- **OnePlus** announces **Rs 100 Cr investment** in retail stores in India in 2021 (**23 Mar 2021**)
- **NOKIA laying off** 10,000 across the globe, 1,500 in India over the next 18 months (**19 Mar**)
- **Apple** Starts assembling **iPhone 12** in India (**15 Mar**)



Telecom / Infrastructure

- **Spectrum auction** leads to Rs 78,000 Cr collection for the Government from **Jio** (488 MHz), **Airtel** (355 MHz) and **Vodafone Idea** (12 MHz); however, 700 MHz and 2,5000 MHz had no takers!
- Airtel & Jio might start 5G trials with limited 800 and 900 MHz spectrum they have purchased (**1 Mar 2021**)

Interesting Apps/Application

- **Garware** leads in the global **technical textiles** market (**20 Mar 2021**)
- Meditation App **ThinkRight & MindHouse** see 20 Million downloads during pandemic (**15 Mar**)
- **Axis Bank** launches “wear N pay” device that costs just Rs 750 for debit card authentication on any PoS (**10 Mar**)