

What's hot in IT - An Indian Perspective July 2020

Science & Technology

- **NASA Mars Rover** Perseverance takes off at 7:50 am EDT on 30 Jul 2020 and expected to launch on Mars on 18 Feb 2021
- Five **Rafale** Jet Aircraft with mid-air refueling capability join the Indian Air Force on 29 Jul 2020

Higher Education

- **GATE** exam will be open (2021 onwards) to HSS students as well - economics, English literature, linguistics, sociology, psychology and philosophy – to start with (25 Jul 2020)
- **IIM** Bangalore gets a **new Director** in **Dr Rishikesh Krishnan** with **Dr G Raghuram** retiring (20 Jul 2020)
- **CBSE Class 12 & Class 10 results** declared; **Delhi Government Schools create history** – a record 98% pass! (12/14 July 2020)
- **IIT's** not to insist on 75% or top 20% percentile in Class 12 exam from IIT aspirants in 2020 (8 Jul 2020)
- **JEE Main** (Sep 1-6) & **JEE Advanced** (Sep 27) examination dates announced (1 Jul 2020)
- **IIT- Mandi** gets a new Director in **Dr Ajit Chaturvedi**; Founder Director (2010-2020) **Dr Timothy Gonsalves** completes his tenure on 30 June 2020
- **AICTE** decides to make MCA Program duration to 2 years (from existing 3 years) from academic year 2020-21
- **IITM** announces **BSc in Programming & Data Science** on July 1, 2020

Policy

- With Cabinet approval, **National Education Policy 2020** (creation of a Committee headed by Dr K Kasturirangan set up in June 2017) becomes real on 29 Jul 2020; has many transformational features that include
 - Increase **GER** (Gross Enrolment Ratio) from 26 to 50%
 - Increase Government **spending on education** from 1.7% of GDP to 6% of GDP
 - **National Research Foundation** to fund research with Rs 20,000 Cr / per year grant
 - RTE (Right-to-education) from **Age 3 to 18 (5+3+3+4)** in place of Age 6 to 18 (10+2)
 - Ministry of Human Resource Development name gives way to **Ministry of Education**
- **Kashmir Saffron** gets **GI tag** (Jul 2020)
- **European Union** announces **\$ 857 Billion stimulus package** (23 Jul 2020)
- Government allows Tech industry to allow staff to **work from home** till 31 Dec 2020
- **US Government** goes thru a flip-flop in **immigration policy**; talks of no Visas for students of those Universities that have planned "online only" Fall Semester, leading to lots of confusion; MIT & Harvard sue US Government (8 Jul) and finally US Government rescinds the order (16 Jul 2020)
- **TCS** talks of 1% of its employees working in offices during lockdown; 5% to work in offices soon; and, 25% of its staff in offices in steady state (15 Jul)
- **Karnataka Government** announces **investor-friendly policies** - online, self-certification processes for new businesses announced (5 Jul)
- **Karnataka government** announces the dissolution of **Karnataka Knowledge Commission** (created in 2008 with Dr Kasturirangan as Chairman) (1 Jul)

Special events and Milestones

- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) continues to cause havoc throughout the month of July and the number of cases cross 17 Million globally and the death toll crosses 668,000 (31 Jul)

- Several **vaccines** enter trial phase; **Oxford University** team and Pune-based **Serum Institute** that is to make the vaccines talk of good progress; ICMR allows human trials in India and **Bharat Biotech** has “Made in India” vaccines
- India’s case fatality is down to 2% (31 July 2020)
- **MP Chief Minister Chauhan** tests Covid-19 Positive (25 Jul 2020)
- Lockdown Un-lock 2 started 1 July; several cities including Bengaluru had another short lockdown (15 to 22 Jul); Un-Lock 3 starting Aug 1 announced (29 Jul)
- On July 31, 2020, cases / deaths stood at
 - Global: More than 17 Million and more than 668,000
 - India : More than 1.6 Million and more than 35,000
 - USA: More than 4.3 Million and more than 150,000
- Death count growth
 - India 1 (Mar 13), crossed 100 (6 Apr), 500 (19 Apr), 1,000 (29 Apr), 2,000 (10 May), 4,000 (25 May), 8,000 (11 June), 10,000 (16 Jun), 15,000 (26 Jun), 20,000 (6 Jul), 25,000 (17 Jul), 35,747 (31 Jul)
 - USA 1 (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), 150,054 (31 Jul)
 - Global 1 (Jan 15), crossed 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), 500,000 (30 Jun), 673,038 (31 Jul)
- **Maruti** posts loss for the Apr to June quarter, the first time since 2003 (31 Jul 2020)
- **Amarnath Yatra cancelled** due to Covid-19 (23 Jul 2020)
- **Asia’s largest solar plant** inaugurated by Prime Minister Modi (10 Jul 2020)
- **India China border** tensions subside a bit as both sides start withdrawal (7 Jul)
- **India bans 59 Chinese Apps** including *Tik Tok* (July 1)

Markets

- **Cognizant** to acquire **New Signature** (US-based cloud-Advisory services built over Microsoft technologies) (28 Jul 2020)
- **Wipro** acquires UK-based **4C** (Salesforce implementation partner) for \$ 68 Million (24 Jul 2020) and Brazil-based **IVIA Servicos** (specialized services provider for financial services) for \$ 22 Million (14 Jul 2020)
- Online tutoring platform **Vedantu** raises \$ 100 Million (17 Jul 2020)
- **Google** buys 7.7% of **Reliance Jio** for \$ 4.5 Billion (17 Jul 2020)
- **HPE Aruba** acquires SD-WAN leader **Silver Peak** for \$ 925 Million (17 Jul 2020)
- **Wal-Mart** invests \$ 1.2 Billion in **FlipKart** (16 Jul 2020)
- RPA major **UiPath** gets Rs 1,692 Cr investment for expansion (11 Jul 2020)
- **Analog Devices** acquires **Maxim** for \$ 21 Billion with a focus on Automotive and 5G (10 Jul 2020)

Products

- **Airtel** announces **Bluejeans** video conferencing product (15 Jul 2020)
- **Reliance Jio** attempts to make **JioChat** a WhatsApp killer (5 Jul 2020) and **JioMeet** a Zoom killer (1 Jul 2020)

Indian IT Companies

- **HCL** has a smooth transition of its head; **Roshni Nadar Malhotra** is the **new Chief**; takes charge from her father and HCL Founder **Shiv Nadar** (1 Jul 2020)

IT in India

- **TCS** to hire 40,000 freshers in India in 2020-21; Infosys talks of 20,000; HCL talks of 10,000; however, for the first time in ten years, the **headcount of TCS, Infosys, Wipro fell** by more than 10,000 in the 1Q2020-21
- **TCS, Cognizant, Infosys, HCL and Wipro** announce quarterly results; against the backdrop of Covid-19 they have announced a “not very negative” set of numbers!
 - **TCS** had sales of Rs 38,3122 Cr (\$ 5.06 Billion) and profit of Rs 7008 Cr (\$ 925 Million)
 - **Cognizant** had turnover of \$ 4 Billion and profit of \$ 361 Million
 - **Infosys** had turnover of Rs 23,665 Cr (\$ 3.12 Billion) and profit of Rs 4,233 Cr (\$ 564 Million)
 - **HCL** had turnover of Rs 17,841 Cr (\$ 2.4 Billion) and profit of Rs 2,925Cr (\$ 386 Million)
 - **Wipro** had turnover of Rs 14,910 Cr (\$ 2 Billion) and profit of Rs 2,390 Cr (\$ 316 Million)

MNC Companies

- **Apple, Amazon, Google & Facebook** face anti-trust hearing from US Law-makers (29 Jul 2020)
- **Apple iPhone11** getting assembled in Foxconn factory in **Chennai** (Jul 2020)
- **Zoom** starts recruiting for its **new Tech Center** in **Bengaluru** (23 Jul 2020)
- **Google** announces \$ 10 Billion investment in India (10 Jul 2020)
- **Oracle** launching its second development center in Hyderabad (1 Jul)
- **Microsoft** announces its decision to start a 4,000-seater facility in NOIDA; UP Chief Minister's plan to attract investment to his State seems to be working (1 Jul)

Telecom

- **Mobile** telephony is **25 years** old in India (31 Jul 2020)
- **TRAI** blocks **Airtel Premium** plans (10 Jul)
- **Yotta data center (Level 4)** starts operations in Navi Mumbai; the largest in Asia (7 Jul)
- **Reliance Jio** launches **JioMeet** (Zoom killer) and attempts to make **JioChat** WhatsApp killer (5 Jul 2020)
- **Intel** follows many other companies and decides to invest in **Reliance Jio** (1 Jul)

People

- **IIM Bangalore** gets a **new Director** in **Dr Rishikesh Krishnan** with **Dr G Raghuram** retiring (20 Jul 2020)
- **IIT- Mandi** gets a new Director in **Dr Ajit Chaturvedi**; Founder Director (2010-2020) **Dr Timothy Gonsalves** completes his tenure on 30 June 2020
- **Twitter** a/c of Barack Obama, Bill Gates, Jeff Bezos and several **celebrities** got **hacked** (16 Jul 2020)
- **Prime Minister Modi** e-meets **Google CEO Sundar Pichai** and **IBM CEO Arvind Krishna** during Indo-US Ideas Summit (22 Jul 2020)
- **UK High Commissioner** to India **Dominic Asquith** moves back; **Philip Barton** takes charge, has India connection (his mother was born in Shimla) (8 Jul)
- **University of California** appoints the first-ever Black President (8 Jul)
- **IITK** CSE faculty member **Dr Pramod Subramanian** had unnatural death (8 Jul)
- **Wipro CEO Delaporte** starts his term on 5 July 2020
- **Infosys** brings 206 employees stranded in USA by a chartered flight (4 Jul)
- **Cognizant** India Chairman **Ramkumar Ramamurthy** steps down on 1 July 2020

Interesting numbers

- **Apple market capitalization** at \$ 1.86 Trillion is **higher than Aramco** at \$ 1.76 Trillion (31 Jul 2020)
- **US economy shrinks** by 33% while **European economy shrinks** by 12% in the Apr to June 2020 quarter due to Covid-19 (31 Jul 2020)
- **India's forex reserves** see a jump of \$ 5 Billion in July to touch **\$ 523 Billion** (31 Jul 2020)

IT in India

- Indian **Rupee** at 74.90 against 1 **USD** (31 Jul 2020)
- **Modi followers** on **Twitter** cross **60 Million** (17 Jul 2020)
- India sees trade surplus in June 2020 - the first time in eighteen years

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