

**What's hot in IT - A Perspective from India**  
**January 2021**

1. **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)

2. **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)

3. **Special events and Milestones**

- **Joe Biden** sworn in as **46<sup>th</sup> 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, 5<sup>th</sup> globally
  - India exports Covid-19 Vaccine to many countries

#### 4. 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)

#### 5. 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)

#### 6. Indian IT Companies

- **Indian IT majors** announce **3<sup>rd</sup> 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)

7. 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)

8. 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)

9. People

- **Joe Biden** sworn in as **46<sup>th</sup> President of USA**, **Kamala Harris** is the **49<sup>th</sup> 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)

10. 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)

11. Interesting Applications / Apps

- 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)

12. 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)

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