

## What's hot in IT - A Perspective from India March 2021

### 1. 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)

### 2. 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 IIMAIt uses International Students Ratio, International Faculty Ratio, Faculty Students Ratio, Citations per faculty, Academic reputation and Employer reputation as indicators of quality

### 3. Special events and Milestones

- “Just setting up my Twtr” – **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)

### 4. 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**

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- 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 Euors (15 Mar)
  - **Wipro** pays \$ 1.5 Billion to **acquire** London-based BFSI consulting company **Capco** (5 Mar 2021)
5. **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)
6. **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)
7. **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)
8. **People**
- **Prime Minister Modi visits Dhaka** and participates in **Bangladesh's 50<sup>th</sup> 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)
9. **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)
10. **Interesting Apps / Application**

## IT in India

- **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)

### 11. 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)

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Professor Sowmyanarayanan **Sadagopan** 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 Newsletter** has been carrying the quarterly columns since 2016. He can be reached at [s.sadagopan@gmail.com](mailto:s.sadagopan@gmail.com)