What's hot in IT - A Perspective from India
Aug 2020

Science & Technology

- **IIT-Delhi** to set up a "smog tower" at Connaught Place in New Delhi in the next 10 months
- Covid-19 vaccine discovery makes further progress; **Gates Foundation** makes $ 150 Million grant to Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, for Pune-based **Serum Institute** to make available up to 100 Million doses (7 Aug 2020)

Higher Education

- In a historic judgement **Supreme Court** imposes a symbolic **Rs 1 fine** on **Prashant Bhushan** for contempt of court thru his tweets (31 Aug 2020)
- **Supreme Court** upholds UGC view of insisting on examinations for Grades for University Course (29 Aug 2020)
- **Many Institutes** go for e-Convocation; **IITB** uses Virtual Reality in its 58th Convocation where digital"avatar" of students received the degree certidicates from digital Avatar of IITB Director (23 Aug 2020)
- **Atal Innovation Rankings** announced; IITM in Top position; 7 of the Top 10 positions held by IIT's (18 Aug 2020)
- **Supreme Court** rejects appeals to postpone **JEE / NEET** exam for Engineering / Medical Admissions (16 Aug 2020)

Policy

- **Indore** is the cleanest city (4th year in a row) (21 Aug 2020)
- **Government of India** sets up a **National Recruitment Agency** to conduct Common Entrance Test (CET) for recruitment to non-gazetted officers posts in Government and Public Sector(19 Aug 2020)
- **Government of India** announced a **National Health Authority** to administer **Health ID** (15 Aug 2020)
- **Government of India** announces tax reforms that include a **Taxpayer's Charter** (15 Aug 2020)
- **RBI (Res**erve Bank of India) keeps key rates unchanged (7 Aug 2020)
- India bans Chinese App **Tik Tok** (4 Aug 2020); **USA** follows (7 Aug 2020)
- US President **Trump** signs executive orders limiting companies from employing **H1-B Visa holders** in federal projects (4 Aug)

Special events and Milestones

- **Apple** creates history; its **mar-cap** (market capitalization) **exceeds $2 Trillion**, the first-ever for any publicly listed company (19 Aug 2020)

- **Israel – UAE** sign a historic **agreement** (15 Aug 2020)

- Boeing 737 plane on **Air India flight** Dubai Kozhikode **crash-lands at** 741 PM; of the 91 passengers more than 60 people have a miraculous escape while the plane broke into 2 pieces; the Pilot tried hard to save lives though he lost his life (7 Aug 2020); **Beirut blast** (6 Aug 2020); **Kerala landslide** in Idukki (13 Aug 2020), **Srisailam power plant accident** (21 Aug 2020) were other unfortunate developments in August

- History was made on 5 Aug 2020 with PM Modi laying the foundation for a grand **new temple for Lord Rama in Ayodhya** ending a dispute that has been running for centuries (5 Aug 2020)

- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) continues to cause havoc throughout August and the number of cases crosses 25 Million globally and the death toll crosses 840,000 (31 Aug); Russia announces the

first COVID vaccine (11 Aug); many other vaccine trials are on globally. BEL & DRDO in India manufacture 3,000 Ventilators in record time (Aug 2020); Aug 15 saw unusually high deaths (12,000+)

- o **Oxford University** team and Pune-based **Serum Institute** talk of good progress;
- o India's case fatality is down to 1.78% (31 Aug 2020)
- o **Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Karnataka Chief Minister Yeddiyuraapa** test Covid-19 Positive (4 Aug 2020)
- o Lockdown Un-lock 3 started 1 July; several cities including Bengaluru had another short lockdown (15 to 22 Jul); Un-Lock 3 starting Aug 1 announced (29 Jul)
- o On August 31, 2020, cases/deaths stood at
    - ▪ Global: More than 25 Million and more than 840,000
    - ▪ India: More than 3.6 Million and more than 64,000
    - ▪ USA: More than 5.8 Million and more than 181,000
- o Death count
    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), 35,000 (31 Jul), 40,000 (6 Aug), 49,036 (15 Aug), 60,472 (21 Aug) and 64,469 (31 Aug)
    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), 175,000 (24 Aug) and 181,989 (31 Aug)
    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), 755,441 (15 Aug), 843,927 (31 Aug)

Markets

- **Reliance** buys Kishore Biyani founded **Future Group** ("Big Bazaar" fame) (29 Aug 2020)
- **Baiju** acquires **WhiteHat Jr** for $ 300 Million (7 Aug 2020)
- **Siemens Healthineers** to buy US-based Cancer specialist **Varian** for $ 16 Billion (2 Aug 2020)
- **Microsoft** to complete **Tik-Tok** acquisition in 45 days, as per President Trump (4 Aug 2020)

Products

- **Samsung Note 20 Ultra 5 G** launched in India (7 Aug 2020)
- **Microsoft** launches **Surface Duo** (phone cum tablet with foldable screens) (11 Aug); pre-order starts the same day and shipments from 10 Sep 2020; priced at $ 1300 it is a risky bet on what could potentially be a game-changer

Telecom

- **Bharti Airtel** to test out LEO (Low Earth Orbit) based **OneWeb** for broadband access in rural areas (20 Aug 2020)
- 2,313 Km long **Submarine** cable costing Rs 1,224 Cr connecting **Chennai** and **Andamans** commissioned (10 Aug 2020)

People

- **Japanese Prime Minister Abe** steps down suddenly citing health reasons (28 Aug 2020)
- Supreme Court holds **Prashant Bhushan** guilty of contempt for his tweets (15 Aug 2020)
- 90-year old Indian classical vocalist **Pandit Jasraj** is no more (17 Aug 2020)
- **Kamala Devi Harris,** born to India-born parents, is announced as the Democratic US vice-Presidential candidate (14 Aug)
- **Rajapaksa** brothers rule **Sri Lanka**; older brother Is the **President** and the younger brother is now the newly elected **Prime Minister** and his Party wins with 2/3rd majority (5 Aug 2020)

IT in India

- **Murumu,** the former **Kashmir Lt Governor** is the new **CAG** (Controller & Auditor General of India) (5 Aug 2020)
- **Kashmir** has a new **Lt Governor** in Manoj Sinha, the former Telecom Minister (1 Aug 2020

Interesting Applications / Apps

- **EduRide** portal to help students in reaching their exam centers for JEE exam scheduled from Sep 3, 2020
- GIS-enabled **land bank system** (4,75,000 hectares spread across 28 States / UT's) launched by Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal (29 Aug 2020)
- **Google** saw outage of its **GMail** and other Business Suite software (10 Aug 2020)
- **Delhi Government** launches an **Employment App** (20 Aug 2020)
- **Google** launches **Kormo Job App** in India (25 Aug 2020)
- With many Chinese Apps including Tik-Tok getting banned in India "home-grown" Apps like **BharatScanner** & **VCONSOL** App (that won Rs 1 Cr App challenge) start to show up (Aug 2020)

Interesting numbers

- **The US** sees phenomenal growth of e-Commerce during May, June July 2020; the **growth** in past **3 months** is **comparable** to the growth in the **immediate past ten years**! (29 Aug 2020)
- **Sensex** (India's BSE Stock Market Index) back to 39,000 after six months (25 Aug 2020)
- **Amazon Prime Day** saw record sale (more than 2019 Diwali sales); of the 91,000 SMEs participated, 209 saw sales of more than Rs 1 Cr, and 4,000 saw sales of more than Rs 10 L (7-8 Aug 2020)
- **160 Million** viewers for Ayodhya Ram temple Bhoomi Puja (5 Aug 2020)

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