

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

1. Science & Technology, Innovation & Policy

- **Turing Award**, the “Nobel Prize of Computing” with \$ 1 Million Prize money, for the year 2020, goes to **Columbia** University Professor **Alfred Aho** and **Stanford** University Professor **Jeffrey Ullaman** for fundamental theory and algorithms behind programming languages and their very influential textbooks that had benefited generations of CS students (1 Apr 2021)
- **Tvashta**, an IITM-incubated start-up builds an independent **house in 4 days using 3-D technology**; launched by **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** in Chennai (30 Apr)
- The first **electric tractor** is being tested in Central Farm Machinery Training & Testing Institute, Budni, MP Lab (30 Apr)
- **OneWeb** launches 36 more satellites (26 Apr)

2. Higher Education

- **UGC NET** exam postponed (21 Apr 2021)
- **JEE (Mains)** – the most sought after competitive exam in the country for admission to IIT's and other technical colleges in the country - planned to be offered in Feb, Mar, Apr & May with Feb & Mar editions completed – had to **postpone** the third time offering indefinitely (18 Apr 2021)
- **NEET Exam** (for admission to medical colleges) **postponed** (16 Apr 2021)
- **CBSE cancels 10th Class Examinations** and **postpones 12th Class Examinations** for all students across the country following CBSE pattern (14 Apr 2021)
- **IBM** global CEO **Arvind Krishna** is the **Chief Guest** of the 46th **IIM Bangalore Convocation** (16 Apr 2021); earlier, Arvind Krishna was the Chief Guest of the **53rd Convocation of IIT Kanpur** (22 Oct 2020); Covid-19 opens up possibilities of global CEO's giving Convocation speeches of Indian Institutes!
- **OP Jindal University** starts University Administrative Service, akin to Indian Administrative Service (13 Apr 2021)
- **Hero** launches “Hero Vired” – EduTech solution (13 Apr 2021)
- **SATHAQ** (Students And Teachers Holistic Advancement Through Quality Education) – plan of action for **NEP implementation** unveiled by Government of India (8 Apr 2021)
- **Central Universities Admission Test** to take off from 2021 (1 Apr 2021)

3. Special events and Milestones

- **US President Biden** completes 100 days in office; manages to get 200 Million vaccinated! announces **50% reduction in emissions** by 2030 (30 Apr)
- **Ola** plans 100,000 high-speed (50% charge in 18 Min with 75 Km range) across 400 cities in India; coupled with its plant in Tamil Nadu, near Hosur, EV scooters will disrupt the Indian 2-wheeler industry (29 Apr)
- **US Supreme Court** rules in favour of **Google** against **Oracle claim** of use of Java in Android violated its copyright (5 Apr 2021)
- **Kumbh Mela** at Haridwar takes off on 14 Apr 2021; after Covid-19 surge the mood ebbs though
- **Elections to State Assemblies of Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry and West Bengal** held during 6 Apr to 29 Apr; results on 2 May
- **LG** exits smartphones (5 Apr 2021)
- **Coronavirus Disease** (officially **Covid-19**) updates
 - April sees Covid-19 incidents crossing 400,000 in India on 30 April; deaths cross 3,000 for 5 days in a row ; total India death count crosses 200,000 (30 Apr)
 - On 30 Apr 2021, cases/deaths stood at
 - Global: 15,01,21,139 and 27,87,593
 - India: 1,86,72,976 and 2,08,330
 - USA: 3,18,89,171 and 5,68,836
 - Lot of action on vaccine front
 - India decides to vaccinate 45+ from 1 April and 18+ from 1 May
 - **Vaccination** numbers Global (1.12 Billion) and **India** (156 Million) (2 May 2021)

4. Products

- **Apple** announced new **iMac**, new **iPad Pro's** powered by its M1 Chip powered and a new **Apple TV 4K** (20 Apr 2021)
- **Hero** launches “Hero Vired” – EduTech solution (18 Apr 2021)

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- **Zoho** launches **Qntrl**, a no-code workflow solution targeting SME sector (14 Apr 2021)

5. Markets

- **Pharমেasy, Meesho, Cred, Groww, Gupshup and Sharechat** were the six Unicorns from India in just 4 days (12 Apr 2021)
- **Microsoft** buys speech processing / AI major with focus on healthcare **Nuance Communications** for \$ 19.7 Billion (13 Apr 2021)
- **Hitachi** buys US software company **GlobalLogic** for \$ 9.6 Billion, that has large presence in India (50% of its 20,000 workforce in India) (1 Apr 2021)
- **Blackstone** to acquire majority in **Mphasis** for \$ 2.8 Billion (27 Apr)
- **TechMahindra** acquires **DigitalOnUs** for \$ 120 Million (21 Apr 2021)
- **Accenture** acquires Durham, North Carolina based cloud Analytics services firm **Code Complete** (7 Apr 2021)
- **upGrad** raises \$ 120 Million from **Temasek** and \$ 60 Million from **IFC, World Bank** (29 Apr)
- **Druva** raises \$ 147 Million (21 Apr 2021)
- **UiPath** raises \$ 1.2 Billion on **IPO; lists on NYSE** (21 Apr 2021)
- **22 IPO's** worth \$ 2.5 Billion in Jan -Mar 2021!
- **Rupee** suffers its worst **loss** in 20 months (7 Apr 2021)

6. Indian IT Companies

- **TCS** Headcount was 4,88,649 on 31 Mar 2021; **will cross 5,00,000 soon!**
- **TCS** has a new tag-line – “**Building on Belief**” – that replaces “Experience Certainty” (1 Apr 2021)
- **Indian IT majors** announce results; top-line/bottom-line figures for the **4th quarter** (Jan to Mar) are as follows
 - **TCS** reported Rs 43,705 Cr revenue and Rs 9,246 Cr profit (12 Apr 2021)
 - **Infosys** reported Rs 26,311 Cr revenue and Rs 5,076 Cr profit (13 Apr 2021)
 - **Wipro** reported Rs 16,245 Cr revenue and Rs 2,972 Cr profit (14 Apr 2021)
 - **HCL** reported Rs 19,302 Cr revenue and Rs 3,982 Cr profit (15 Apr 2021)
 - **Tech Mahindra** reported Rs 9,730 Cr revenue and Rs 1,081 Cr profit (17 Apr 2021)
- **Year long** (Apr 2020 to Mar 2021) figures are interesting too
 - **TCS** reported Rs 1,67,311 Cr revenue and Rs 32,430 Cr profit (12 Apr 2021)
 - **Infosys** reported Rs 1,00,472 revenue (**Crossed Rs 1 Lakh Cr the first time**) and Rs 5,197 Cr profit (13 Apr 2021)
 - **Wipro** reported Rs 61,940 Cr revenue and Rs 10,790 Cr profit (14 Apr 2021)
 - **HCL** reported Rs 76,306 Cr revenue and Rs 11,927 Cr profit (15 Apr 2021)
- **TechMahindra** acquires **DigitalOnUs** for \$ 120 Million (21 Apr 2021)
- **Wipro** acquires **Amphion** for \$ 117 Million (5 Apr 2021)

7. MNC Companies in India

- **Apple, Amazon, Facebook** and **Google** announce **record quarterly results** for Jan to Mar quarter (30 Apr)
- **Amazon India** launches \$ 250 Million Start-up fund (18 Apr 2021)
- **IBM** names its cloud subsidiary **Kyndryl**; **Martin Schroeter** is the inaugural CEO (15 Apr 2021)
- **Citi** exits **Indian consumer market** (18 Apr 2021)

8. Startup scene

- **upGrad** raises \$ 120 Million from **Temasek** and \$ 60 Million from **IFC, World Bank** (29 Apr)
- **ChargeBee** is the 11th Unicorn in Apr 2021!
- **Pharমেasy, Meesho, Cred, Groww, Gupshup and Sharechat** were the six Unicorns from India in just 4 days (12 Apr 2021)
- **Druva** raises \$ 147 Million (21 Apr 2021)
- **FlipKart** acquires **ClearTrip** in a distress sale (18 Apr 2021)
- **Pine Lab** acquires **Fave** for \$ 45 Million (18 Apr 2021)
- **Neha Satak** founded IISc start-up **Astrome** launches **GigaMesh**, a wireless backhaul product that promises high-speed Internet at fiber-like speed (1 Apr 2021)

9. People

- **NASA** helicopter flight from Mars surface has India connection; the key engineer **Balaram** is a product of Rishi Valley School and IITM!

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- **Subroto Bagchi** donates **Rs 320 Cr** to fund a **Cancer hospital** in Odisha (17 Apr 2021)
- **Ashok Soota** launches **Rs 200 Cr fund** for **Brain Research** at IISc / St Johns (7 Apr 2021)

- **Rekha Menon** is **NASSCOM Chief**, the first woman (28 Apr)
- Justice **Ramana** is the 48th **Chief Justice of India** (24 Apr 2021)
- **Sushil Chandra** is the new **Chief Election Commissioner** (12 Apr 2021)
- **Atal Innovation Fund** gets a new Chief; Dr Chintan Vaishnav (PhD from MIT); R Ramanan completes his term (6 Apr 2021)

- **Wipro** appoints **Subha Tataavarti** ex Wal-Mart executive as CTO (1 Apr)

- **Covid-19 casualties** include Hindustani Music celebrity **Rajan Mishra** (24 Apr), Bihar Chief Secretary **AN Singh, IAS**, Attorney General **Soli Sorabjee** (30 Apr)
- **Adobe** founder **Charles Geschke**, whose work at PARC led to Portable Document format, passed away (19 Apr 2021);
- **Prince Philip**, aged 98, husband of Queen Elizabeth, the longest living monarch of Britain, passed away (4 Apr 2021)

10. Telecom / Infrastructure

- 96-KM long **Delhi Meerut expressway** is commissioned after 16 years (1 Apr 2021)

11. Interesting Apps / Application

- **Spice Board of India** pilots a **Blockchain** project to guarantee traceability involving 3000 farmers across the supply chain thru UNDP project (5 Apr 2021)

12. Interesting numbers

- **Sensex** had **gained** 20,040 points during 1 Apr 2021 to 31 Mar 2021 (29,468 to 49,505)
- **Covid-19 Vaccination** picks up speed in India; fastest to reach 100 Million in 85 days (USA 89 days, China 103 days); crosses 150 Million (29 Apr 2021)

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. Past items are available in www.profsadagopan.com He can be reached at s.sadagopan@gmail.com