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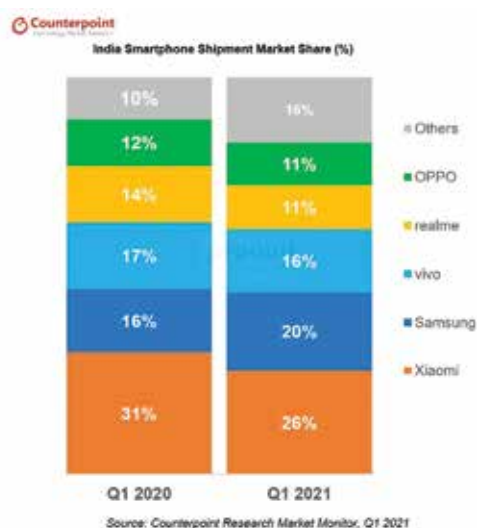
India Smartphone Shipments See Record Q1 in 2021; New COVID-19 Wave Likely to Dampen Consumer Sentiment

India's smartphone shipments grew 23% YoY to reach over 38 million units in Q1 2021, according to the latest research from Counterpoint's Market Monitor service. These were the highest ever first-quarter shipments. New product launches, promotions and financial schemes, as well as pent-up demand coming from 2020, drove the smartphone market in Q1 2021.

Commenting on the market dynamics, Senior Research Analyst Prachir Singh said, "Continuing with its stellar run, India's smartphone market registered a third consecutive quarter of record shipments in Q1 2021, riding on pent-up demand. Consumer confidence also increased due to the beginning of a vaccination drive in the country. But these numbers should be taken with caution as a second and more virulent wave of COVID-19 is currently on in the country and is likely to impact the coming quarters. The consumer demand will take a hit due to the ongoing COVID-19 wave and subsequent lockdowns."

Commenting on the competitive landscape and brand strategies, Research Analyst Shilpi Jain said, "The Chinese brands held a 75% share in the March-ended quarter. Xiaomi led the market with a 26% share, followed by Samsung, vivo, realme and OPPO. Xiaomi has recently expanded its manufacturing capabilities with new EMS partners, which helped the brand maintain strong shipments during the quarter. All the major brands are focusing on new product launches to drive consumer demand. Samsung maintained a high number of new product launches in its Galaxy M-series, Galaxy F-series as well as the Galaxy S21 series during the quarter. Besides, realme launched its 8 series, OnePlus announced its 9 series and Xiaomi launched its Redmi Note 10 series that has started well. Brands are also focusing on promotions and financial schemes to increase consumer demand."

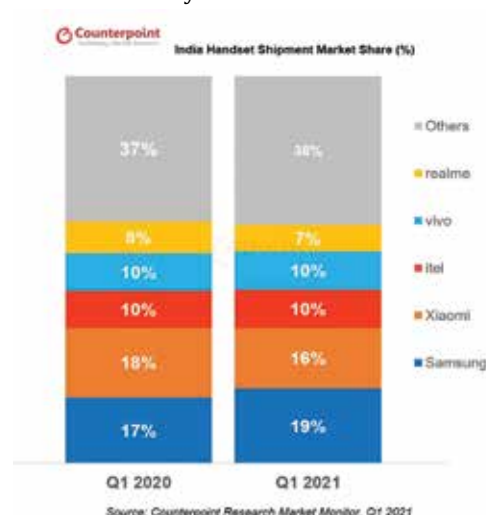
Exhibit 1: India Smartphone Market Share, Q1 2021



India's mobile handset market grew 19% YoY in Q1 2021 due to the strong performance of both fea-

ture phone and smartphone segments. The feature phone market registered a 14% YoY growth during the quarter driven by strong shipments of JioPhone under its new model and subsequent promotions. However, itel led the feature phone market in Q1 2021 with a 21% market share.

Exhibit 2: India Handset Market Share, Q1 2021 Market Summary:



- Xiaomi retained the top position in the Indian smartphone market with 4% YoY growth in Q1 2021 driven by the Redmi 9 series. The Redmi 9A was the best-selling model during the quarter. The brand reentered the upper mid-tier segment (INR 20,000 – INR 30,000) (~\$280-\$420) almost after 1.5 years with its latest 5G offering, the Mi 10i 5G, which performed strongly in this segment. The recently launched Redmi Note 10 series has received a good response from consumers. The models primarily focused on OLED display, design and camera (108 MP). To cope up with the strong demand, the brand expanded its manufacturing base by partnering with more EMS partners like BYD and DBG.

- Samsung remains the second-largest brand in India's smartphone shipments with 52% YoY growth driven by its focus on the budget segment with the new M02 series and multiple other launches. It refreshed its A-series with the A32, A52 and A72, and the M-series with the M12. It also launched its latest flagship Galaxy S21 series earlier than its normal launch period. After being aggressive on online channels in 2020, the brand attempted to gain share offline. Samsung made its online exclusive F-series available across offline channels and is now launching new products across both channels. Samsung's online portal is doing quite well and has increased its contribution within Samsung's channel, driven by the Galaxy S21 series and other flagships.

- vivo grew 16% YoY and held the third position in Q1 2021. With the recovery in offline channels in Q1 2021 following an improvement in the COVID-19 situation, vivo continued to be the leading smartphone player in the offline segment. The brand launched its latest flagship X60 series with advanced camera capabilities. The

initial consumer response has been robust, thus continuing the momentum of the previous X50 series. X-series has generated a positive mind share for vivo in the premium segment.

- realme declined 4% YoY in Q1 2021 but managed to maintain its fourth position in the market. realme is bringing the 5G smartphones to lower price points with its newly launched Narzo series and realme X series. The Narzo 30 Pro 5G was the cheapest 5G smartphone offering in the country during the quarter. Additionally, the brand is expanding its reach in offline channels.

- OPPO grew 12% YoY and had an 11% market share in Q1 2021. OPPO made its 5G debut in Q1 2021 with the OPPO Reno 5 Pro 5G, which held a 3% market share in India's 5G smartphone shipments. It also revamped its F-series with the F19 series, and with the F19 Pro Plus, the brand entered the 5G segment in the upper mid-tier segment. The consumer response to the F19 series has been positive.

- POCO was the fastest-growing brand registering 558% YoY growth driven by its strong demand in the budget segment. It refreshed its portfolio with the M3 in the budget segment and with the X3 Pro in the mid segment.

- Transsion Group brands (itel, Infinix and TECNO) registered 81% YoY growth, capturing 7% share collectively and climbing to the second position in the overall India handset market. itel became the No.1 brand in the sub-INR 6,000 tier driven by the A48 and A23. TECNO's cumulative smartphone shipments crossed the 10-million mark since its entry into the Indian smartphone market.

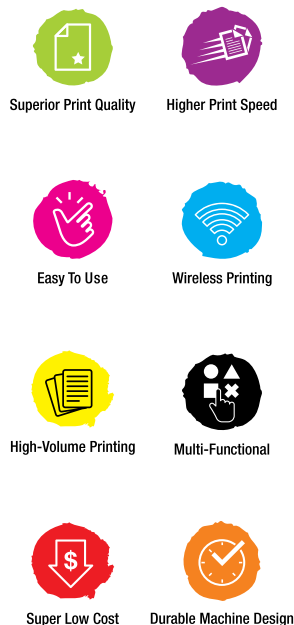
- Apple continued to carry forward its momentum from Q4 2020. It witnessed 207% YoY growth in Q1 2021. The brand maintained its leading position in the premium segment (>INR 30,000 or ~\$400) with almost 48% share. Strong demand for the iPhone 11 coupled with aggressive offers on the iPhone SE 2020 and expansion in 'Make in India' capabilities are the driving factors in this growth. Apple also registered more than 1 million shipments for two consecutive quarters for the first time.

- OnePlus grew more than 300% YoY for Q1 2021 driven by the OnePlus Nord and OnePlus 8T shipments. OnePlus was the top 5G smartphone brand in the country in Q1 2021. It recently launched the OnePlus 9 series with revamped camera capabilities in partnership with Hasselblad. OnePlus Nord was the best-selling 5G smartphone model during the quarter.

The comprehensive and in-depth Q1 2021 Market Monitor is available for subscribing clients. Feel free to contact us at [press\(at\)counterpointresearch.com](mailto:press(at)counterpointresearch.com) for questions regarding our latest research and insights.

The Market Monitor research relies on sell-in (shipments) estimates based on vendor's IR results and vendor polling, triangulated with sell-through (sales), supply chain checks and secondary research.

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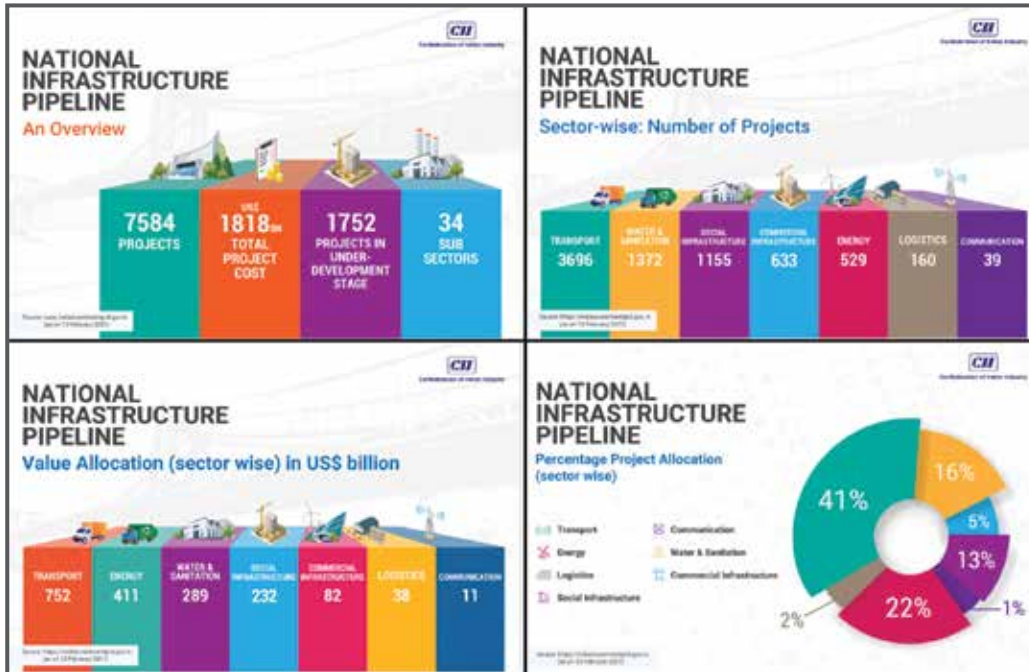


Aggarwalcomputronix

Indian Infrastructure Sector: Key to Atmanirbhar Bharat

Paul Krugman in the aftermath of the 2008 great recession wrote, "The usual argument against public works as economic stimulus is that they take too long: by the time you get around to repairing

- Revive the demand cycle.
- Fast-track awarding and implementation of projects.
- Attract long-term financing for infrastructure.



that bridge and upgrading that rail line, the slump is over and the stimulus isn't needed. Well, that argument has no force now....So let's get those projects rolling."

The Union Budget 2021 was historic in the aftermath of the unforeseen pandemic and economic slump. It recognized the need to boost the infrastructure sector, which in turn would have a multiplier effect on the entire economy.

To increase the CAPEX, the National Infrastructure Plan was launched in December 2019 with 6835 projects, and this is now expanded to 7,584 projects with an estimated project cost of USD 1818.05 billion. 217 projects worth INR 1.10 lakh crore are already completed. A Development Finance Institution (DFI) with a lending portfolio of INR 20,000 crores has also been announced.

A slew of other measures like the National Monetization Pipeline, privatization of airports in tier 2 & 3 cities, and debt financing of Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvITs), among others, will increase the efficiency and generate revenues.

CII has recommended some measures to further boost the infrastructure sector. Some of these recommendations include:

Infrastructure

- Re-invigorating the Public-Private Participation (PPP).
- Issues related to land acquisition, environmental clearances, rehabilitation and resettlement, removal of encroachment, shifting of utilities, and availability of linkages to be given special focus while preparing projects.
- Accelerate dispute resolution.

Aviation

- Bring Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) under the ambit of GST.
- Fully flexible use of airspace for Airlines.
- Increase window of operations for civil aviation at all defence airfields.
- Full liberalisation of code sharing.
- GST Input Tax Credit allowability/availability of Works Contract, Goods and Services on Construction of Immovable Property.
- Exemption of royalty charges on MRO services and infrastructure at airports.

Shipping

- Port-wise maritime master plan to provide a directional view on infrastructure requirements based on cargo forecast and shipping dynamics.
- Encourage port-led industrialization.
- Prioritize cost reduction – process optimisation/simplification and process automation; Vessel Related Charges, among others.
- Enhance attractiveness for transshipment cargo.
- Rejuvenate the PPP approach.
- Increase digitization.

Railways

- PPP in all composite and civil projects should be allowed.
- Attractive incentives should be provided to the private sector to invest in public utilities with a balance of risk-sharing between Railways and developers.
- Redesign procurement contracts to address issues through one-time calibration of its com-

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mercial contracts and terms by Indian Railways.

- Time should be fixed for the release of payment after delivery/receipt of material.
- Online billing process needs to be improved.
- To make Railways the preferred choice for transportation, Railways should assure transit time.
- Innovative way to operate more load of goods at lesser cost and time.
- Common user terminal policy.

Real Estate

- The input tax credit about works contract service incurred during construction period where the said immovable property is rented/leased/licensed, to be allowed.
- GST "Time of Supply" to be realigned to receipt of consideration. Section 12 and Section 13 of the CGST Act be amended to determine the 'Time of Supply' based on 'receipt of pay-



ment/consideration'.

- Holding period for units of Business Trust to qualify as a long-term capital asset should be reduced to 12 months from 36 months [Section 2(42A).
- Set off – of House Property Losses against income under the other head to be restricted to INR 2 lakhs.

The youngest demography in the world needs heightened infrastructure spend and swift implementation. The realization of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' is through the holistic development of the infrastructure sector. The journey has begun.

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Flipkart announced the proposed acquisition of Cleartrip

Flipkart, India's homegrown e-commerce marketplace announced the proposed acquisition of Cleartrip, an online travel technology company.



Flipkart will acquire 100 per cent of Cleartrip's shareholding, as the company further enhances its investments to strengthen its digital commerce offerings.

Under the terms of the agreement, Cleartrip will continue to operate as a separate brand, retaining all employees while working closely with Flipkart to further develop technology solutions to

make travel simple for customers.

Kalyan Krishnamurthy, CEO, Flipkart Group, said that the Flipkart Group is committed to transforming customer experiences through digital commerce, Cleartrip is synonymous with travel for many customers, and as the firm diversify and look at new areas of growth, this investment will help to strengthen wide range of offerings for customers.

"We welcome the Cleartrip team with their deep industry knowledge and technology capabilities to the Flipkart Group and look forward to providing deeper value and travel experiences for customers together," remarked Krishnamurthy.

E-commerce major Amazon announced a \$250 million fund

E-commerce major Amazon announced a \$250 million fund — Amazon Smbhav Venture Fund — to invest in startups and entrepreneurs focusing on technology innovations in SMB digitisation, agriculture and healthcare.



The fund was announced in the opening session of Amazon India's flagship event Smbhav. A company

said that the venture fund will invest in technology-led startups that are passionate about unlocking possibilities of a digital India.

The fund will specifically focus on encouraging the best ideas to digitise SMBs (small & medium businesses), and drive technology-led innovation in agriculture to improve farmer productivity.

Additionally, Amazon announced plans to digitally empower and bring 1 million offline retail-

ers and neighbourhood stores online, on the Amazon India marketplace, by 2025 through the 'Local Shops on Amazon' programme.

At the same event, Amazon also launched the 'Spotlight North East' initiative to bring 50,000 artisans, weavers and small businesses online from the eight states in the north-eastern region of India by 2025 and to boost exports of key commodities like tea, spices and honey from the region.

In his address at Smbhav 2021, Amit Agarwal, Global Senior VP and Country Head, Amazon India said: "In 2020, we pledged to digitise 10 million SMBs, enable \$10 billion in exports, and create 1 million jobs by 2025. Through our initiatives, we are committed to be a catalyst and a partner in unlocking the possibilities for a Digital India, and realise the vision of an Aatmanirbhar Bharat as put forth by the PM."

ArcelorMittal and Infosys Announce Strategic Collaboration for Digital Transformation

Infosys, a global leader in next-generation digital services and consulting, announced a strategic long-term collaboration with ArcelorMittal,



the world's leading steel and mining company. ArcelorMittal has chosen Infosys to help accelerate the company's digital transformation journey and enable next-generation application management and business process management (BPM) services for ArcelorMittal Europe.

Through this engagement, Infosys will work with ArcelorMittal Europe, share best practices around next-generation application management services to optimize, stabilize, and transform ArcelorMittal's IT landscape. Infosys will also establish a robust, state-of-the-art Business Process Management (BPM) service in ArcelorMittal Europe's

Business Center of Excellence (BCoE) shared services center. The collaboration will further strengthen Infosys' presence in Europe and will enable Infosys to maximise synergies across the ArcelorMittal Group worldwide.

Jasmeet Singh, Executive Vice President and Global Head of Manufacturing, Infosys, said, "The need to accelerate digital transformation has never been more urgent in the manufacturing sector. We are pleased to partner with ArcelorMittal and help them stay one step ahead of disruption. Leveraging our global delivery model, right shoring, and robust BPM offerings, we are committed to driving efficiency, bolstering operational excellence, and establishing future-ready services in line with ArcelorMittal's growth strategies. We look forward to a long, fruitful partnership with the group and are excited to help them navigate the next."

Trend Micro appoints Vijendra Katiyar as Country Manager, India & SAARC

Trend Micro has announced the appointment



of Vijendra Katiyar as the Country Manager for India & SAARC. The appointment is with immediate effect. Based in Mumbai, Vijendra Katiyar will be leading Trend Micro's India and SAARC operations,

focusing on steering customer and business growth and increasing the company's overall market share across India. His remit will also include strengthening engagement with channel partners to help deepen customer engagement and success. His experience spans diverse portfolios ranging from sales and thought leadership in cybersecurity to technical consulting across industries. Under his well-versed leadership skills, Trend Micro India's existing customers will continue to receive the same level of service and commitment they have come to expect from Trend Micro.

Vijendra has had a long and successful journey with Trend Micro. In his nine-year stint at the company that began in 2012, he held different positions, from Regional Account Manager to National Sales Manager – India & SAARC and led the mandate of growing the cloud security business for Trend Micro. Before his new role, he served as the Director – Enterprise Business, India & SAARC. He has driven strategic business decisions with effective tools and processes, translating to 100% revenue growth in the last four years.

Vertiv India Announces 'Summer Bumper 2021 Offer' Program

Vertiv has announced the 'Summer Bumper 2021' program, reported by SMEchannels. This program will offer Network Solution Partners (NSP) and Value



Added Resellers (VAR) channel partners in India the opportunity to earn redeemable PAYBACK loyalty program points for sales of Vertiv™ Liebert® small and micro uninterruptible power supply (UPS) up to 20 kVA. It offers channel partners the chance to redeem PAYBACK points for multiple slabs ranging between INR. 25,000 to INR. 25,00,000. This program is valid for a time period of three months from April 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021.

Vertiv's association with PAYBACK, India's largest multi-brand loyalty program, presents a great opportunity for NSPs and VARs to enhance their earnings driven by a surge in the demand in the new calendar year. The program is valid for sales through Vertiv's national distributors: Compugate, Ingram Micro, and Savex. To redeem points, partners login to www.PAYBACK.in with the PAYBACK number provided to them by Vertiv after registering themselves at www.partners.vertiv.com/English/.

Commenting on the offer, Gopakumar Ambujakshan, director, product management (small and micro UPS), Vertiv in India said, "We're constantly introducing programs to keep our channel partners motivated and engaged. Now, with work from home and remote operations, the need for reliable power solutions has become critical to every business. Hence, through such initiatives, we extend our continuous support to our partners and reward them for their excellent work during these challenging times."



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Panasonic India launches smart home business unit

Panasonic India launched a new Spatial Solutions division as part of its strategic expansion plans for Smart Home solutions, which will be headed by **Dinesh Aggarwal, Joint Managing Director, Panasonic Life Solutions** will lead the new division.

In his new role, Aggarwal will directly report to Manish Sharma, President & CEO, Panasonic India, and South Asia. The Spatial Solutions division, will combine

expertise in Consumer Appliances and Life Solutions to promote the adoption of Smart Home Living Solutions including Miraie and Panasonic's IoT and AI-enabled Connected Living Platform. In the last year, Panasonic had introduced IoT & AI enabled Connected Living platform—Miraie in February 2020; with the launch of connected AC as the first product, and has gradually added new products within Miraie including connected Refrigerator, Washing Machine, WiFi Fan, Smart Digital Switches, and Smart WiFi controlled Plugs.

Beetel and FLiX Rope in Ravi-chandran Ashwin as its Brand Ambassador

Beetel Landline and FLiX, one of the fastest growing smart accessories brand, announced the appointment of the World's no.1 Test bowler and



the finest Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin as its brand ambassador for its wide range of Products across categories. Ashwin will endorse the company's products and services through advertising campaigns and several other promotional programs.

Speaking on the announcement Puneet Gupta, Flix says, "We are really excited about joining hands with the very diversified bowler and cricket Champion – R. Ashwin. He is a legend in the field of cricket and is well known among the millennials for his vigor, mettle and conviction which complements our brand's core values too. Just like our brands, Ashwin too has achieved several milestones & marked his presence, in a short span of time, we see this partnership being tremendously successful – #ItsMATCH"

We Founder Circle, the startup investment platform, leads USD 75K seed round in Avni- menstrual care startup

We Founder Circle (WFC) – a startup investment platform, in continuation of its mission

to seed fund early-stage startups, has invested in Avni, a startup focussed on conscious and holistic menstrual care. The brand offers a wide range of menstrual care products including – Avni reusable cloth pads, Avni organic cotton pads and Avni menstrual cups.

Due to lack of organic and natural products, a lot of women are left with no choice but to use chemical based sanitary products that cause skin challenges. To address the same, Avni started working on alternatives and introduced tested, innovative products, made with carefully selected ingredients. The startup further identified that there is a lack of aware-

ness among women users towards reusable menstrual products and to help them with the queries it also launched a 24X7 support period helpline.

"Currently, what we see in the market is a lot of chemical based products that cause serious vaginal diseases and skin problems. This turns out to be a bigger challenge for women with sensitive skin. We are trying to provide natural and reusable solutions so that women do not have to compromise by using plastic and chemical based products. We started with anti-microbial reusable and organic cotton sanitary pads as 80 % of the market share of feminine products is dominated by the pads. Gradually, we moved on to launch more products in the menstrual care category. Until now we have already served over 5000 women," said Ms. **Sujata Pawar- Co-Founder- Avni.**

Razorpay Raises \$160 Mn led by Sequoia Capital and GIC; Triples its Valuation to \$3 Bn in 6 Months

After being crowned a Unicorn a few months ago in October 2020, Razorpay, India's leading



Payments and Business Banking platform, today announced its Series E fundraise of \$160 Million. This financing round has tripled the company's valuation to \$3 Billion in less than six months, signalling one of the fastest increases in valuation for an Indian Unicorn.

This round was co-led by Sequoia Capital and GIC, Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, along with participation from Ribbit Capital and Matrix Partners. Razorpay plans to infuse the freshly raised capital to scale up its Business Banking suite, invest in new Acquisitions and launch in International markets such as South-

East Asian countries. The Fintech Unicorn is already hiring more than 600 employees to fuel its growth plans.

Razorpay helps small businesses and large enterprises modernise their financial infrastructure by providing intelligent automated payment and business banking solutions to manage their money flow end-to-end, so that it frees up entrepreneurs, heads of business, technology & finance functions, and enables them to concentrate on cultivating their niche, no matter how small or big. The new funding gives Razorpay a total of \$366.5 Million in investments since its inception in 2014, that includes its recent raise, a \$100 Million in Series D in 2020.

Made-in-India VideoMeet brings AI in Video Conferencing



Made-in-India video conferencing solution, VideoMeet developed and created by Jaipur based startup VideoMeet Pvt. Ltd has an integrated advanced Artificial Intelligence system. The feature will boost the application for their users in terms

of the variety of tasks that can be performed on the application simultaneously. Interestingly the entire AI module works within the browser and there is nothing to install on the computer.

Since its inception, VideoMeet has always been the go-to option for video conferencing for its large and committed user base.

Corporates, Schools and other institutions use the Made-in-India application due to its ease of logging in the meeting and other user-friendly features.

VideoMeet comes with an intelligent system to detect and auto increase/decrease the bandwidth requirement of video call as per the quality of

internet available on endpoints. The virtual backgrounds get automatically applied and adjusted according to the user/host preference and provide an almost live experience to all the participants. This is very useful considering people are having meeting from all kind of places and background need to be more professional looking. Captioning being one of the resourceful features, help to build smoother communication between people from diverse backgrounds. VideoMeet is the only application to roll out this feature with Hindi and English captions and plans to introduce all Indian regional languages with future app updates.

Telecom Department Approves Telcos' Applications for 5G Trials



The Department of Telecom on Tuesday approved applications of telecom companies – Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and MTNL – for conducting 5G trials but none of them will be using technologies of Chinese entities.

The list of telecom gear makers approved for trials include Ericsson, Nokia, Samsung, C-DOT and Reliance Jio's indigenously developed technologies.

"The trials will reduce the time gap between 5G spectrum auction and roll out of the networks. In the past, trials happened after auction, however, now we will be gaining time and telecom operators will be prepared in advance for the 5G network. They will be able to choose their vendors, technology and type of equipment," Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash told PTI.

The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) approved applications of 5G technology. The applicant TSPs (Telecom Service Providers) include Bharti Airtel Ltd, Reliance JioInfocomm Ltd, Vodafone Idea Ltd and MTNL.

"BSNL will conduct trials separately. Their applications will come soon," Prakash said.

DoT has approved trials of 5G with Ericsson,

Nokia, Samsung and C-DOT. In addition, Reliance JioInfocomm Ltd will be conducting trials using its own indigenous technology.

Initially, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea had submitted proposals to carry out trials using technology of China's Huawei. Later, they submitted separate applications to conduct trials without partnering with any Chinese vendors but did not withdraw their old applications for the trials.

A DoT official said DoT approved options that were given by the telecom operators and evaluation of Vodafone Idea proposal to conduct trial in partnership with Mavenir is still under evaluation.

Vodafone Idea had submitted three applications for trials.

Email query sent to Huawei did not elicit any reply.

The latest development also indicates that the government may bar Chinese companies from participating in rolling out of the 5G services in the country.

According to DoT, 5G technology is expected to deliver ten times better download speed than that of 4G and up to three times greater spectrum efficiency.

"Applications of 5G in Indian settings will get tested. Tele-medicine, tele-education and drone-based agriculture monitoring etc. 5G phones and devices can also be tested," Prakash said.

The telecom firms have been given permission to use experimental spectrum in various bands, including the mid-band (3.2 GHz to 3.67 GHz), millimetre wave band (24.25 GHz to 28.5 GHz)

and in sub-gigahertz band (700 GHz).

Telecom operators will also be permitted to use their existing spectrum (800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz and 2500 MHz) for conducting the 5G trials.

"The duration of the trials, at present, is for a period of 6 months. This includes a time period of 2 months for procurement and setting up of the equipment," DoT said in a statement.

The permission letters specify that each TSP will have to conduct trials in rural and semi-urban settings in addition to urban settings so that the benefit of the 5G technology proliferates across the country and is not confined only to urban areas, the statement said.

DoT has specified that the trials will be isolated and not connected with the existing networks of the telecom operators. Trials will be on a non-commercial basis. The data generated during the trials shall be stored in India.

"Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) are also expected to facilitate the testing of the indigenously developed use cases and equipment as part of the trials," the statement said.

Nokia India said the decision of the government to conduct trials, including in rural and semi-urban areas, aligned with the long-term vision of a Digital India.

"We are confident of our readiness to support our customers in implementing 5G strategy with the advantage of our technology leadership, our experience in serving customers globally, and our initiatives in India, including 5G manufacturing in Chennai," a Nokia spokesperson said.

Fossil Brings the Retail Store to Your Phone

Fossil announces new M-commerce initiatives to provide its customers with an array of collaborative and convenient shop from home options via mobile phones. In line with the changing times, Fossil reinvents the way it engages with its customers to redefine shopping sessions like never before. Using the all-



new 'Fossil WhatsApp Chabot' tool, the customers can now immerse themselves in the retail store experience from the comfort of their homes.

All set to provide a unique shopping experience to Fossil fans as well as customers who would like to learn more about the brand's lifestyle products, Fossil brings the store to their fingertips. Commenting on these developments, Johnson Verghese – Managing Director, Fossil

India said, "The launch of M-Commerce services makes our entire range of lifestyle products readily accessible to our customers. With options such as catalogue shopping, same day delivery, booking a store appointment, a home appointment and assistance via video calls among others, we are well equipped to provide our customers with safe, convenient and personalized shopping experiences."

Amazon India will engage with more Indian OEMs, lending strength to 'Make in India' and Atma Nirbhar Bharat to achieve its goal of 10,000 EVs by 2025.



Amazon India reaffirmed its commitment towards the electrification of its last mile delivery fleet to reduce its dependence on non-renewable resources at a virtual event with Shri Nitin Gadkari, leaders from Amazon India and CEOs of leading OEMs. Amazon India recently announced

that it is working with Mahindra Electric to add more electric vehicles (EV) in its delivery fleet. Today, Hero Electric as well as start-ups such as EVage are engaging with Amazon India to expand the company's fleet of EVs to enable sustainable deliveries of customer orders. Amazon India's Delivery Service Partners are already operating EVs of multiple formats in over 20 cities in India including Delhi NCR, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Bhopal, Indore and Coimbatore to name a few.

The collaborative effort strengthens Amazon India's commitment to include 10,000 EVs as part of its delivery fleet by 2025. These EVs are in addition to the company's global commitment

of 100,000 electric vehicles in its delivery fleet by 2030 announced in the Climate Pledge signed by Amazon. Amazon India's Delivery Service Partner fleet of EVs now includes 2-wheeler, 3-wheeler and 4-wheeler vehicles, which are designed and made in India and will be deployed across the company's delivery partner network."

I am really happy to know that Amazon India has pledged to adopt 10,000 EVs in their delivery fleet by 2025. Collaboration between Amazon and Indian OEMs like Mahindra Electric, Hero Electric and EVage is a welcome step, which reaffirms India's significant progress in the e-mobile industry.

Savex Technologies makes strategic investment in Inflow Technologies

Mumbai-based Savex Technologies Private Limited, the 3rd largest IT distributor in the country with a revenue of USD 2.5 billion has entered into definitive agreements to make a strategic investment in Bangalore based Inflow Technologies Private Limited, a leading value-added distributor that provides a host of products and services around Cyber Security, Networking, Unified Communications & Collaboration, AIDC & POS, Electronic Security, Server, Storage & Software and related fields in South Asia.

Inflow will continue to operate independently under the leadership of their Group MD, Byju Pillai and its current management team. Savex will add value to Inflow's business at the Board level. Inflow can leverage on key strengths of Savex, which



includes operational excellence, financial strength & larger geographical reach. This provides the right platform for Inflow to scale its business to greater heights in the next 3 to 5 years. Inflow's vendors and channel partners will significantly benefit by this planned growth and its greater financial strength.

"The investment in Inflow supports our strategic plan to be a full-service IT distributor and underscores our commitment towards digital transformation and new age technologies. This will strengthen our Enterprise Product portfolio and enable us to deliver higher value to our clients and channel partners. It will augment our presence in the Security, Storage, and Networking space. Inflow has a strong platform that will accelerate our diversification and South Asia expansion plans. We are thrilled to welcome Inflow to the Savex family, and we look forward to supporting Byju and all his team on what

promises to be an exciting journey." stated **Anil Jagasia, Chairman of Savex Technologies.**



Byju Pillai, Group Managing Director of Inflow Technologies said, "This transaction represents a significant milestone in Inflow's growth story, and we are delighted to move forward in this partnership with Savex. With the combined synergies and resources, we can deliver higher value to our vendors and customers globally."

Both, Savex and Inflow, are established names in the industry and have been trusted partners to world's leading technology companies. Despite the pandemic, both companies have maintained their growth trajectory and emerged stronger. The transaction closing is subject to regulatory approval.

How Partners Are Coping Up with the 2nd Wave of COVID-19 Pandemic

The second wave of COVID-19 pandemic has taken India by storm, where the number of active cases is making new records every day. The current crisis has once again dragged the country in a lockdown like condition and different State Governments have laid strict restrictions on physical movement and social gatherings. This has hampered businesses across the verticals and the IT channel business has also severely affected due to the situation. It is indeed a hard time for every stakeholder in the channel business, however, channel partners are trying hard to ensure business continuity. At the same time, they have come forward to offer their help to fight the pandemic.

"The coronavirus crisis has created a practical and ethical imperative for us to do more work that matters. In the first phase, we witnessed a spike in demand for IT-related products, however, we are not expecting the same in the second phase. Since it is difficult to gauge how long this phase will last, we have put variable expenditures like hiring, marketing, travel, etc. on halt for the next three months. It has helped us to save on the cost. However, if the crisis continues for 9 months to a year, we will have to reconfigure our business strategy to reduce the variable expenses, renegotiate fixed expenses (rent, salaries, equipment lease payments, etc.), and focus only on the survival", said Mr.



Arun Kumar Rungta, Director of Patna based Digital Equipments Pvt Ltd.



Endorsing similar views, **Mr. Ashok Poddar, Director of Everrise Infosolution Pvt Ltd.** said, "The situation is pathetic and it is becoming very difficult for us to manage the business. As the cases are surging at an unimaginable rate, there is a sense of panic among people. Hence, it has affected their spending preferences. We are not seeing much demand or enquiries and that has made the condition more challenging this time. Whole families are getting the corona infections and we all should help each other in this panic situation."

As the physical movement has been restricted, partners are betting on the digital means to generate business inquiries and conduct business. They are leveraging tools such as WhatsApp Business to communicate various deals, schemes and offers to end customers along with the conventional communication mediums such as video calls, emails, social media posts etc.

"We use WhatsApp Business to generate inquiries and communicate with customers. Through this we can do business within city limits without any physical contact", said Mr. Debasish Dutta, CEO of Durgapur based Door Computech (P) LTD. While ensuring smooth business, partners are also adhering to the COVID-19 compliances and are strictly following the safety measures laid by the government. They insist customers for Digital payments and contactless delivery for safety.

"We are following the safety precautions without such as Temperature Measure / Sanitizer usage / NO ENTRY without MASK any compromise. We have changed the showroom timing as per the Government guidelines and we ensure social distancing in the shop with utmost care", said Mr. Mahesh Soni, Director of Puducherry based Auro Enterprises, adding, "We offer home delivery and after-sales service support upon customer's confirmation. Every bill or invoice is closed in store. We also provide complimentary 3Ply masks with the product to promote STAY SAFE, STAY HEALTHY measures."

Despite business challenges and future uncertainty, partners have come forward to help the needy and vulnerable people. They have joined various volunteering groups to provide urgent medical assistance and food to poor patients and their relatives.

"Helping to needed through charity is the critical response to disasters such as COVID-19, and we are all geared up to assist acquaintances in case of emergency. We have associated ourselves with other volunteer groups to create a pool of oxygen cylinders, sanitisers and masks and donate to needy people", Mr. Arun Kumar Rungta.

Partners say the current situation is tough and is taking a toll on everyone's patience. However, it is important to keep hope and help each other to overcome the challenges. RP tech India, which had launched several schemes to support channel partners with their business in 2020 said it would continue to support partners in every possible manner during these challenging times.

Honeywell Demonstrates Support For India's Covid Relief Efforts

Honeywell issued the following statement of support for India's relief efforts in response to the ongoing Covid pandemic:

"We are deeply saddened and distressed by the scale of the humanitarian crisis in India and are working closely with government, industry, and NGO partners to assist in a number of critical areas. Since the start of the pandemic, Honeywell has committed over US\$3 million in Covid relief for India.

"Our newest initiative is the establishment of Covid critical care centers across five cities that will be equipped with beds, oxygen, personal protective equipment kits, and basic medical infrastructure. Honeywell will provide funding for our NGO partners to build these centers in consultation with state governments in Maharashtra, Telangana, Karnataka, Haryana, and Tamil Nadu. Honeywell will also fund the donation of over 1,000 oxygen concentrators and 10,000 N95 respirators to these facilities. In addition, Honeywell

will donate 50 ventilators to government and private hospitals across the country. Last year, Honeywell donated over 9 million meals and over 12,000 hygiene kits to underprivileged communities.

"Honeywell has been working toward meeting critical healthcare needs in India throughout the pandemic, including adding N95 respirator production in Pune that can produce 2 million N95 face masks per month. We are currently working to supply our UOP OXY-SIV™ molecular sieve adsorbents (essential components of medical oxygen concentrators) to the licensees of the Defence Research and Development Organisation and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-Indian Institute of Petroleum.

"We are also supporting our employees through this difficult time. We continue to offer them expanded insurance coverage, free Covid testing, and access to company-provided medical support and vaccinations, among other support services.

Microsoft mobilizing resources to help Covid response in India



Across the world, we have seen the harrowing images of Covid-19's impact in India. The entire country is reeling under the devastating impact of the pandemic. Our thoughts are with the millions who are impacted including their relatives living abroad. Microsoft has had a presence in India for nearly three decades and our teams in the country play an important role for the company that stretches well beyond India's borders. We have several thousand employees across 11 locations in India, and many more employees in other countries with families in India.

As we witness the impact on friends, co-workers and the broader community, it is clear we can and must help. We are focused on using our technology, skills, resources and voice to assist in the global response.

We are working to ensure we are doing everything we can to take care of our employees in India and stepping up to help address urgent needs in the broader community. This includes daily crisis management team meetings in Redmond and India with teams across the company. These calls allow us to quickly identify areas where Microsoft can help and ensure we can move quickly to respond. Over the past month, Microsoft Philanthropies has been in close contact with nonprofit partners and government organizations leading the relief efforts in India to understand how we can best assist in the response. We believe a coordinated approach is the best way to help and we are working in partnership with humanitarian organizations and others in the private sector.

Iris Global decides to help in distribution of Medical healthcare products

The Delhi based national IT distribution and integration group Iris Global has decided to help in distribution of Medical healthcare products seeing the aggravating Corona virus situation in the country. With an aim of aiding this rapid rise in demands of healthcare products, with their experience in logistics, Iris Global has commenced offering these products.

"The humanitarian value in this sector is immense, at least for the next 2 years", said Sanjiv Krishen, Founder & CMD, Iris Global. In this regard the company has signed an agreement with Maharashtra based Suumaya Group for all India sales distribution of PPE kits and other healthcare products, he added.

Sanjiv Krishen said that initially they will be confined to masks, gloves, hand sanitisers and personal protection equipments (PPE) kits as this market segment is expect to grow at 40 per cent or more annually. Sanjiv Krishen added that the company anticipates a business to the tune of around Rs 1,000 Crore in these products over the next two years.

He further disclosed that because of Iris Global's vast dealer network spread all over the country they have been contacted to further diversify into some of the core medical equipment that includes ventilators and digital X-ray machines. Iris Global has also tied up with a Hyderabad based ventilator manufacturer who sells under the brand name of Apollo. Their promoter has experience of working with Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) previously.

RP tech India Launches All India COVID-19 Vaccination Drive for Channel Partners

RP tech India, the country's leading B2B technology solutions company has announced the launch



of All India COVID-19 Vaccination Drive for its channel partners. Under the drive, partners will get rewards for vaccination. The objective of the vaccination drive is to encourage RP tech partners to take the COVID-19 vaccine and protect themselves and their

loved ones from the deadly coronavirus infection. Launching the initiative, Rajesh Goenka, Director, Sales & Marketing, RP tech India, said, "The second wave of corona pandemic is more severe and deadly. The cases are rising at an exponential rate across the country. We care for our partners and as a responsible organization, want to make sure that our channel ecosystem stays safe and healthy. The vaccination drive aims to encourage partners to secure their vaccine shot and help the government and healthcare system in the battle against the COVID-19 pandemic."

The scheme is valid from 7th May till 31st May for the first 1000 partners. Partners who get the first dose of vaccination will receive an RP tech Gift voucher worth Rs 500/-, whereas partners who secure the second dose will be rewarded with RP tech Gift voucher worth Rs 1000/-

Partners can claim the reward by sending their May Invoice along with the vaccination certificate and/or their photo of taking vaccine on WhatsApp +91 8657915088 or Email on partnervaccination-drive@rptechindia.com. All claims must reach to RP tech on or before 7th June 2021.

Earlier, RP tech India had rolled out free vaccination drive for its employees and their family members. The initiative received an overwhelming response from the beneficiaries. The latest drive is also expected to get an excellent response from the channel partners.

Tech Mahindra to Cover COVID-19 Vaccination Cost for Employees Globally

Tech Mahindra Ltd., a leading provider of digital transformation, consulting and business re-engineering services and solutions, announced that it will cover the COVID-19 vaccination cost for all its associates globally.



Tech Mahindra has urged all its associates to register themselves for vaccination through the government app – CoWIN/Aarogya Setu, and follow the mandated process. Currently, Tech Mahindra has over with 121,900 professionals across 90 countries.

Speaking on the initiative, Harshvendra Soin, Global Chief People Officer and Head – Marketing, Tech Mahindra, said, "I am delighted to announce that as part of our associate well-being program, we at Tech Mahindra, will reimburse the vaccine cost for all our associates globally. This is to reiterate our belief in 'Wellness before Business', and underscore our commitment towards our employees' health and safety."

Mindtree reports robust revenue growth of 5.2% q-o-q in USD

Mindtree, a global technology services and digital transformation company guiding its clients to achieve faster business outcomes, announced its consolidated results today for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2021, as approved by its board of directors.

"We are proud to deliver another strong quarter, driven by significant traction in our client portfolio globally, leading to revenue growth of 5.2%, EBITDA of 21.9%, and an order book of \$375 M at the end of Q4. Our journey of profitable growth and seamless delivery during the pandemic year has been made possible by the

resilience of Mindtree Minds, the commitment of our leadership team, and above all, the continued support of our clients," said Debashis Chatterjee, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, Mindtree. "The final dividend of ₹17.5 per share announced today reinforces Mindtree's commitment to enhance shareholder value. For the year, we delivered revenues of \$1,076.5 M and margin expansion of 680 bps, while increasing our order book by 12.3%. As we enter FY22, we are confident that continued client demand for our transformative services, a strong order book, and our strategic investments position us well to deliver double digit growth and sustain EBITDA above 20%."



Tata Communications delivers strong fiscal Profit, highest in 11 years

A.S Lakshminarayanan, MD and CEO, Tata Communications said, "FY21 has been a great year;



making excellent progress on our well-defined strategy. Execution on financial fitness is yielding good results and the shifts from products to platforms, deeper customer engagements are a work in progress and we anticipate continued progress on these strategic levers to achieve our goals. Our teams have gone the extra mile in delivering benchmark level Net Promoter Score (NPS) in a difficult year and are committed on execution to deliver on our strategy."

Commenting on the results, Kabir Ahmed Sha-
kir, Chief Financial Officer, Tata Communications, said, "Our focus on right operating structure and cost efficiencies have started to show results during the year. There



has been significant improvement in profitability making our business fit to compete effectively. Profit and cash flow generation has improved dramatically. We now have a stronger balance sheet providing us the flexibility to invest for future growth of business." An investor fact sheet providing detailed analysis of the results for the quarter ended March 31st, 2021 has been uploaded on the Tata Communications website and can be accessed here.

TCS Closes FY 21 on Strong Note: Looks at Growth and Transformation to Power the Future

Tata Consultancy Services, the leading global IT services, consulting and business solutions organization, reported its consolidated financial results according to Ind AS and IFRS, for the quarter ending March 31, 2021.



Rajesh Gopinathan, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director, said: "Our investments over the last decade in building newer capabilities, and in research and innovation, position us

well for the multi-year technology services opportunity ahead. While we continue to dominate in our traditional areas of strength, we are making good progress in gaining share in the growth and transformation opportunity. Our focus going

into FY 22 will be to engage with clients in their growth agenda, propelled by innovation and leverage of collective knowledge."

N Ganapathy Subramaniam, Chief Operating Officer & Executive Director,



said: "I am pleased to note that in FY 21, leading organizations partnered with TCS in their growth and transformation journeys. Many of them benefited from our refreshingly different consultative approach to shaping, contracting, executing, and measuring the success of transformation programs, always holding ourselves accountable for the results."

Coforge Q4 FY'21 Revenue up 7.1% Q-on-Q to \$172 Mn

COFORGE, a leading global IT solutions organization today announced a robust financial and operating performance for the quarter and year ended March 31, 2021.

The firm has reported continued growth-led momentum, with consolidated revenue growing by 7.1% in dollar terms to \$172.1 million during Q4FY'21. In constant currency terms, revenue grew 5.1% over the preceding quarter. In rupee terms, revenue was up by 6.0% sequentially and up by 13.7% year-on-year to Rs 12,615 million during Q4FY'21. EBITDA margin (before ESOPs and acquisition related costs) for the quarter under review was stable at 18.0%, as growth-driven operating leverage was able to offset the impact of a one-time bonus payout during the quarter to a majority of employees who provided extraordinary support to the firm's operations and business during the pandemic. Coforge recently announced the acquisition of a controlling interest in SLK Global Solutions, and expenses related to that transaction are

partly reflected in Q4FY'21. PAT for the quarter increased 17.0% year-on-year to Rs 1,330 million.

"The strong business performance in FY'21 is a testament to the resolve and the commitment displayed by all members of Team Coforge. We are exiting FY'21 with a sequential dollar-term growth of 7.1% in the fourth quarter, which forms a very strong ramp for growth and margin expansion in FY'22. Our capabilities, platforms and partnerships in the product engineering, automation, integration and cloud services realm are designed to drive convergence and aid transformation. They are now at scale and are clear differentiators for the firm. With a significantly expanded roster of Fortune 500 clients to work with, we remain committed to delivering impact at the intersection of process and tech knowledge" said **Sudhir Singh, Chief Executive Officer, Coforge Ltd.**



Apple Revenue Up 54 Percent To New March Quarter Record Services and Mac Revenue Reach New All-Time High

Apple announced financial results for its fiscal 2021 second quarter ended March 27, 2021. The Company posted a March quarter record revenue of \$89.6 billion, up 54 percent year over year, and quarterly earnings per diluted share of \$1.40. International sales accounted for 67 percent of the quarter's revenue.

"This quarter reflects both the enduring ways our products have helped our users meet this moment in their own lives, as well as the optimism consumers seem to feel about better days ahead for all of us," said **Tim Cook, Apple's CEO.**



"Apple is in a period of sweeping innovation across our product lineup, and we're keeping focus on how we can help our teams and the communities where we work emerge from this pandemic into a better world. That certainly begins with products like the all-new iMac and iPad Pro, but it extends to efforts like the 8 gigawatts of new clean energy we'll help bring onto the grid and our \$430 billion investment in the United States over the next 5 years."

"We are proud of our March quarter performance, which included revenue records in each of our geographic segments and strong double-digit growth in each of our product categories, driving our installed base of active devices to an all-time high," said **Luca Maestri, Apple's CFO.**



ASIRT Requests CM of Maharashtra to Disallow e-Commerce Platforms To Sell IT Goods To Non-Essential Customers

ASIRT sends letter requesting the Chief Minister of Maharashtra – Shri Uddhav Thackeray for disallowing online stores to sell IT goods to non-essential customers.



In this letter Tushar Parekh, Chairman, ASIRT first thanked CM of Maharashtra for taking prompt action listening to the previous request sent on 5th April 2021 on including "IT Services" in essential services list.

In the letter, Tushar said, "We sincerely appreciate your understanding and consideration in this matter. This has helped the association members, other IT service providers and the essential service providers in the fight against Covid-19. Government's decision to impose strictest measures to curb the Covid-19 pandemic's second wave is bearing the results and the numbers have gone down considerably. Of course, we understand that the fight is not yet over and will take considerable efforts from everyone involved. We at ASIRT are fully committed to this and extend our full support to you in this endeavour."

I take this opportunity to bring to your notice an important issue which needs your immediate attention and to be addressed on urgent basis. Recently, since last 2-3 days, we have observed that Online stores (OLS)/e-commerce platform like Amazon has started delivering IT goods to non-essential customers including individual customers.



We hereby bring to your notice that:

1. This is completely against the notification and guidelines issued by Government of Maharashtra.
2. Our fight against Covid-19 is compromised as more people will go out to deliver and more people will be exposed to infection of Covid-19.

3. Our members and all IT suppliers across the state of Maharashtra are impacted very badly. We as law-abiding citizens and businesses, we are refraining from selling or servicing non-essential customers. But if OLS platforms starts selling to non-essential customers, it hurts their interest. And it will create a situation where even these IT vendors will be forced to sell to non-essential customers. Which in turn again will defeat the purpose of lockdown.

Hence, we hereby request to stop online stores/e-commerce platforms like Amazon etc. from selling IT goods to non-essential customers.

On behalf of ASIRT, our members and all the IT suppliers, we again thank you and we are hoping that yourself will take appropriate and immediate action in the above matter. I am attaching our previous letter dated 5th April 2021 for your reference.

We are all law-abiding citizens and have been following all the norms put down by government from time-to-time and will continue to follow the same. We are with the government in the fight against Covid-19 and extend our full support in this endeavour".

Tushar Parekh, Chairman, ASIRT

President CII urges industry for voluntary measures to break the chain of transmission

Re-iterating 'safeguarding lives' as the highest collective national priority amidst the virulent COVID surge, and the urgent need to heed to the advice of experts on containing the spread, Mr Uday Kotak, President CII urged industry, "to curtail all non-essential economic activity requiring physical presence of employees at the workplace, for the next two weeks. This is necessary to break the chain of transmission. Industry should review operations and minimise the use of in person manpower, limiting it to only critical operations or activities required by law. All responsible corporates should strive to protect their employees and ensure that their employee balance sheet remains healthy."



CII and industry, are working shoulder to shoulder with the Government, in tackling the massive tsunami of COVID infections that has hit India, causing much suffering. Industry is lending a helping hand augmenting the critical oxygen supplies and bed capacities. Production capacities of medicines and

other medical supplies are being ramped up. CII has been putting its head together with the Government and medical experts, to work out the best possible way to steer through this crisis.

"However, inspite of all efforts the overall numbers continue to rise. The healthcare system and medical personnel are stretched to the limit and exhausted. Measures to break the chain of transmission are of paramount importance to mitigate human tragedy and loss of lives, alongside augmenting health infrastructure and medical supplies", said Mr Kotak in conclusion.

CII suggests the following voluntary measures for industry:

Minimise all economic activity that requires in person presence at the work premises for the next two weeks.

Many auto majors, such as Maruti Suzuki, Hero MotoCorp, JCB India, MG Motor, Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India, have taken the lead halting production temporarily or advancing maintenance schedules in the interest of the safety of their employees.

Many service sector organisations such as Kotak

Mahindra Bank, TCS, Infosys have adopted work from home.

Review all critical operations and re-design the workflow to the extent possible to minimise the requirement of physical presence of employees. Strict observance of all COVID appropriate safety protocols should be ensured for the essential employees at the workplace.

Make testing available for employees whose presence at the workplace is necessary for critical operations. Make quarantining facilities available for infected employees.

Make all employees aware of the personal prevention strategies and the importance of staying at home, unless emergent to step out. In addition, educate employees on self-monitoring and identifying early signs of the infection. Further alert employees on the dos and don'ts for treatment once infected.

Similar awareness drives can be carried out in communities around, through panchayats and other local bodies and citizens of local influence.

Ramp up vaccination of employees and as vaccine availability improves extend vaccination drives to neighbouring communities.

Key Imperatives to Make it a Successful Decade of AI

We have been talking about the potential and promise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for a long time. One of the most significant aspects, which has put AI at the center of all business and social conversations is our ability to harness data and apply AI to drive crucial insights. We can leverage



the potential of AI and use it to solve some of the most complex problems faced by the world today.

Several sectors across retail, finance, healthcare and e-commerce are already deploying AI to increase efficiency and productivity, enhance customer service, and build a stronger security cover. These digital transformation journeys have further accelerated in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

Today AI is everywhere, and it is all pervasive. It won't be incorrect to call this as the 'Decade of AI' as it is supporting several human and business functions as not just artificial but augmented intelligence. Farmers are using AI for crop planning; AI chatbots acted as the first responder to COVID-19 queries; AI is supporting supply chains, helping build the future talent pipeline and also accelerating drug discovery.

However, irrespective of the nature or size of the organization, there are some key imperatives to be taken into consideration to leverage the true potential of AI and scale it to ensure organizational and national growth:

Need to have a strong information architecture
Using and exploiting AI is a goal for many enterprises around the world, but before you can begin working with AI, a number of steps have to be taken. For example, AI requires machine learning and machine learning requires analytics. To work

with AI, machine learning or analytics effectively, we need a simple, elegant data, or, Information architecture (IA). In other words, there is no AI without IA. It is extremely important to have the right architectural investments and build the right platforms for AI. The platforms enable collecting, organizing and transforming the data that fuels the AI for every organization. Monitoring data and AI models and having the right governance in place is key for scaling AI and finally being able to automate the AI lifecycle itself ensures that the power of data and AI is harnessed and the outcomes from the investments are tangible and clear to everyone.

Promote trust and transparency in AI models

Trust is a key factor that could tilt the scale for adoption of AI as AI learns from data which is often generated from human workflows. More than 180 human biases have been defined which can affect decision making. Without the right guardrails and framework for trust, these biases could find its way into our AI models. Therefore, instilling confidence in data and AI models is paramount. To capitalize AI to the fullest, it needs to be democratized, trusted, explainable, secure and open. Governance lifecycle of AI is highly important, and companies have to trust it knowing that even after using AI they will have full ownership and protection of their data and insights. Bias in AI systems could erode trust between humans and machines that learn. AI systems that will tackle bias will be the most successful.

Need for a strong partner ecosystem

For organizations or nations to implement AI at scale, take a lead in AI innovation and draw important insights, one needs advanced platforms, services and a strong technology partner to fully harness the power of exponential data they produce. Today, we are thriving in vast ecosystems that are broad by nature, potentially spanning across multiple geographies and indus-

tries, including public and private institutions, as well as consumers. As a result, one needs to continuously deal with challenges related to culture, ethics, bias and strategic imperatives. A strong partner is one who not only has the ability to broaden the use of AI across a company, but also has the knowledge to do it the right way. Leveraging the partner's expertise in these specific areas becomes absolutely critical to making AI work effectively.

Upskill and reskill to boost AI productivity

Successful data science teams in high-growth companies need to be diverse. No one person is likely to be an expert in the multiple fields of AI, including computation, data management, applied math, business use cases, decision science and so on. AI requires teams of people with different skill sets and perspectives to collaborate and this is a global ask. Given the background, the Indian skills ecosystem needs to look at broadening the talent base capable of creating and executing AI solutions to keep pace with global AI leaders. I believe the industry is equally responsible for providing talent, technology and platforms to support this talent mandate.

So, when we look at furthering the national growth agenda, it is impossible to ignore what we may be able to achieve with implementation of AI. AI is an area where skepticism may be high, its adaptation methodology and investments might be argued, but smartly targeted AI and machine learning tools, with well-deployed algorithms fueled by huge data sets, can drive lasting improvements across various social delivery applications of governments.

AI, together with hybrid cloud and, in the not so distant future, with quantum computing, will have a profound impact on virtually every sector of society. This will be the new natural differentiator to retain competitive parity.

Andhra Pradesh Electronics Policy 2021-24 Approved by the Cabinet



The Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP) approved the Andhra Pradesh Electronics Policy 2021-24, which facilitates the creation of world-class Electronics manufacturing infrastructure, improves the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) considerably through various process reforms, and offers a host of incentives aimed at reducing the cost of doing business in the state. The policy is envisioned to transform the state of Andhra Pradesh into a global hub for Electronics manufacturing, by focusing on the entire manufacturing value chain – assembly operations, Electronics components manufacturing, Research and Development(R&D), semiconductor and display

fabrication. The Electronics manufacturing industry is among the fastest growing sectors domestically, with the market size expected to reach USD 400 Billion from the present USD 104 Billion, by 2025. The new Policy envisages tapping a majority of new investments in the sector flowing to India and other South East Asian countries, into the state of Andhra Pradesh and thereby develop the state into a mature Electronics manufacturing ecosystem.

The salient features of the policy framework include the promotion of a world-class greenfield Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) namely YSR EMC being developed in Koppa, Kadapa. Introduction of a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme in the green field clusters which dovetails with Government of India's schemes and incentivizes Electronics manufacturers who expand their operations in Andhra Pradesh and increase their production which also leads to higher employment generation in the state.

The state of Andhra Pradesh expects to benefit greatly from this first-of-its-kind incentive scheme

at a State Government level and envisions creating at least 39,000 direct jobs in the Electronics manufacturing sector. A majority of those jobs are expected to be women workforce as has been seen in the Electronics industry in the past, and hence the policy will also aid in empowerment of women through financial independence.

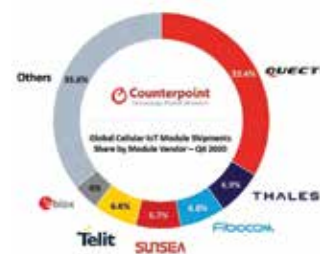
The IT,E&C department is currently engaging with several major Electronics manufacturers for establishing their facilities in the state, with a potential of generating upwards of 20,000 direct jobs.

The policy framework is a major milestone in the journey of Andhra Pradesh to become a preferred investment destination for Electronics manufacturing industry and is a testament to the investor friendliness of the Government led by the young and dynamic Hon'ble Chief Minister Sri. Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. The department is confident that the release of the Andhra Pradesh Electronics Policy 2021-24 will expedite the grounding of investments and provide employment opportunities to the citizens of Andhra Pradesh.

Global Cellular IoT Module Shipments Declined 6% YoY in Q4 2020

Global cellular IoT module shipments increased 9% QoQ but decreased 6% YoY during Q4 2020, according to the latest research by Counterpoint's Global Cellular IoT Module, Chipset and Application Tracker. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed down the cellular IoT module demand across mobility sectors but saw an increased adoption among other industry verticals, such as healthcare and gateways. Only Japan and South Korea witnessed an increase in shipments on a YoY basis. The total cellular IoT module shipments for 2020 ended at 265 million units. A fresh wave of COVID-19 and semiconductor shortages stopped the cellular IoT module market from recovering fully. Commenting on the market dynamics, Research Analyst Soumen Mandal said, "Quectel continued to lead global cellular IoT module vendors in terms of shipment volumes and revenues. However, it lost market share in successive quarters due to the rise of longtail module vendors, especially in China. There has been an intense competition for the second spot between the incumbent Thales, Sierra Wireless and the fast-growing Fibocom. The negative impact of COVID-19 forced Thales to surrender the second spot to Fibocom in Q2 2020. However, Thales recaptured it in Q3 2020, retaining it through the end of the year. The improved performance in Europe, North America and Japan helped Thales regain its position. Fibocom is trying to increase its global presence and improve service support to increase its share in the global cellular IoT module market."

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Sierra Wireless slipped out of the top five module vendor rankings with the divestment of its automotive business to a consortium led by Fibocom Wireless to form an independent company, Rolling Wireless. Among large module vendors in China, only Fibocom and Meig experienced positive quarterly and yearly growth during Q4 2020 in terms of shipments."

Exhibit 1: Global Cellular IoT Module Shipments Share by Module Vendor, Q4 2020

Mandal added, "The 4G LTE modules continued to dominate, contributing to nearly half of the global cellular IoT module shipment volumes. The demand for 4G Cat-1 modules is poised to grow significantly this year. The demand for NB-IoT modules remains healthy, contributing to a third of the cellular IoT module shipment volumes in Q4 2020. Smart meters, telematics and utilities are the top applications for NB-IoT technology. The 3GPP Release 14 spec-based NB-IoT (Cat NB2)

modules gain location capabilities among others, expanding the spectrum of use cases to the broader mobility, tracking and telematics applications. The demand for 5G IoT modules during the quarter was limited to the router/CPE market and other industrial applications. However, the majority of launched 5G modules are expected to enter mainstream production in the second half of 2021. The demand will also begin to take off with improving 5G coverage in many key markets such as China, North America and parts of Europe."



Exhibit 2: Global Cellular IoT Module Shipments Share by Chipset Brand, Q4 2020

Commenting on the cellular IoT module chipset supplier landscape, Vice-President Research Neil Shah noted, "Qualcomm further increased its share in the global cellular IoT chipset market to nearly half in Q4 2020, riding on the growing demand for 4G and LPWA modules. As the top-tier Chinese module vendors look to expand their presence beyond China, Qualcomm and other suppliers such as Sony (Altair Semi) and Sequans seem to be major beneficiaries going forward."

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