



# Delhi Policy Group

Advancing India's Rise as a Leading Power



## DPG Cyber Review

Volume 1, Issue 4

MAY 2020



Delhi Policy Group

Core 5A, 1st Floor, India Habitat Centre, Lodhi Road, New Delhi- 110003

[www.delhipolicygroup.org](http://www.delhipolicygroup.org)



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## DPG Cyber Review, Vol. 1, Issue 4 May 2020

### ABOUT US

Founded in 1994, the Delhi Policy Group (DPG) is among India's oldest think tanks with its primary focus on international and strategic issues of critical national interest. DPG is a non-partisan institution and is independently funded by a non-profit Trust. Over past decades, DPG has established itself in both domestic and international circles and is widely recognised today among the top security think tanks of India and of Asia's major powers.

Since 2016, in keeping with India's increasing global profile, DPG has expanded its focus areas to include India's regional and global role and its policies in the Indo-Pacific. In a realist environment, DPG remains mindful of the need to align India's ambitions with matching strategies and capabilities, from diplomatic initiatives to military modernisation.

At a time of disruptive change in the global order, DPG aims to deliver research based, relevant, reliable and realist policy perspectives to an actively engaged public, both at home and abroad. DPG is deeply committed to the growth of India's national power and purpose, the security and prosperity of the people of India and India's contributions to the global public good. We remain firmly anchored to these foundational principles which have defined DPG since its inception.

### DPG Cyber Review

DPG Cyber Review is compiled by our research team from publicly available information and open source media to provide an overview of significant developments related to cyber and digital technology domains during the month. Your comments and feedback can be addressed to Brig. Abhimanyu Ghosh (Retd.), Senior Fellow at [abhi.ghosh@dpg.org.in](mailto:abhi.ghosh@dpg.org.in)

### Cover Photographs:

*The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi participating in the online Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group to discuss response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic crisis, in New Delhi on May 04, 2020.*

*Source: <https://www.pmindia.gov.in/en/image-gallery/>*

*Union Minister for Electronics and IT, Law and Justice and Communications launched India's national Artificial Intelligence Portal on May 30, 2020. Source: <http://ddnews.gov.in/national/it-minister-launches-national-ai-portal-india>*

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## National Developments

### Cyber Space

#### *Government makes Aarogya Setu open-source; announces bug bounty*

On May 26, 2020, the Government released the Android source code of its Covid-19 contact tracing app, Aarogya Setu, on software development platform GitHub, in line with India's policy on Open Source Software. On May 21, 2020, India's Information Technology ministry announced that it had rolled out a version of its Bluetooth contact-tracking app for 5 million KaiOS-based feature phones like the JioPhones, the internet-enabled devices sold by Reliance Industries' telecoms unit.<sup>1</sup> The app is also available for iPhone iOS. The iOS and KaiOS source code will be released soon. The Government has also launched a Bug Bounty Programme so that security researchers are incentivised, and the Indian developer community can test the effectiveness of Aarogya Setu to improve or enhance its security as well as build user trust.<sup>2</sup> One French ethical hacker had flagged the security issues of the App to India's Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT) and the National Informatics Centre (NIC) in early May.<sup>3</sup>

#### *COVID-19 apps used by states not properly tested: National Cyber Security Coordinator*

Many states are using its own set of apps for various [COVID-19 related] purposes - for tracking or for keeping an account. These apps have not gone through necessary security testing, etc. which is a cause of concern, India's National Cyber Security Coordinator Lt Gen. (Dr) Rajesh Pant stated during an online event on May 16, 2020, organised by UN Women on "Cyber Crime Trends and Digital Safety amidst COVID-19 Pandemic."<sup>4</sup>

#### *Govt bans file-sharing site 'WeTransfer' citing national security*

It was reported on May 30, 2020, that Amsterdam, Netherlands-headquartered file transfer service provider 'WeTransfer' has been banned by the Indian Department of Telecommunications, citing public interest and national security. One of the most used file-sharing platforms, particularly during the

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<sup>1</sup> Reuters May 14, 2020

<sup>2</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/software/government-makes-aarogya-setu-open-source-launches-bun-bounty-programme/articleshow/76011332.cms>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.financialexpress.com/industry/technology/government-of-india-just-made-aarogya-setu-app-open-source-here-is-what-it-means/1971446/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.medianama.com/2020/05/223-covid19-apps-states-not-properly-tested-rajesh-pant/>

Covid-19 Lockdown, 'WeTransfer', allows users to share large files of almost every format. With the free service, users can share files with sizes up to 2GB. A traditional email attachment takes in not more than 20MB. The service can reportedly be misused for exchange of sensitive content.<sup>5</sup>

### *CBI sends out alerts based on INTERPOL Warning*

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has sent alerts to all the States, Union Territories and the Central agencies on a malicious software threat that uses an update related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The alert related to banking Trojan 'Cerberus' has been sent on the basis of inputs received from the INTERPOL. It is primarily used to steal financial data, such as credit card numbers. "This malicious software takes advantage of COVID-19 pandemic to impersonate and send SMS using the lure of COVID-19 related content to download the embedded malicious link. It deploys its malicious application usually spread via phishing campaigns to trick users into installing it on their smartphones," said the agency.<sup>6</sup>

### *Petition filed against Zoom Video Conferencing Application in Indian Supreme Court*

A petition was filed in the Supreme Court on May 20, 2020, seeking a ban on the usage of video conferencing application Zoom by Indian citizens, claiming the app breaches privacy. The petition asks that the Government do a security audit of the app as it points to an April advisory by the Home Ministry for government officials not to use the app, and for normal users to take certain precautions while doing so. The petition said that the Zoom app does not have end-to-end encryption and is violating the Information Technology Act, 2000, and Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Interception, Monitoring and Decryption of Information) Rules, 2009. It asked for legislation to be put in place in order to effectuate a standard regulation to safeguard the rights of citizens.<sup>7</sup> The Supreme Court issued a notice to the Government on May 22 on the writ petition. The next hearing is tentatively listed for July 7, 2020.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.timesnownews.com/technology-science/article/telecom-department-bans-wetransfer-citing-public-interest-national-security-report/599152>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/sci-tech/technology/cbi-issues-alert-to-states-on-banking-phishing-software-on-basis-of-interpol-input-officials/article31624989.ece>

<sup>7</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/plea-in-sc-seeks-to-ban-zoom-video-conferencing-app-claiming-it-breaches-privacy/75852700>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.medianama.com/2020/05/223-supreme-court-zoom-india-ban/>

## Digital Technologies

### *Communication Technologies*

#### *Airtel builds 5G-ready telco network cloud to support core operations*

On May 11, 2020, ET Telecom reported that Bharti Airtel had selected IBM and Red Hat to build its new 5G-ready telco network cloud to support core operations and to monetise the telco's pan-India 4G network which will help with new services and be more competitive. The pandemic has propelled the need for telcos to reconfigure their networks in India, even as the world goes digital. This will help reduce latency, improve bandwidth availability and automation, thereby strengthening the overall quality of the network.<sup>9</sup>

### *Artificial Intelligence*

#### *Union Telecom and IT Minister flags issues of ethics, conscience, accountability and responsibility for deployment of AI and technology*

Union Telecom and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on May 25, 2020, that the coronavirus-hit world needs to adopt technology and artificial intelligence even more strongly and these efforts are required in areas such as agriculture, healthcare, education and innovation. He said if there are concerns around privacy while using technology, the data protection bill – which is still in the works – would tackle it. Also, there are issues of ethics, conscience, accountability and responsibility when it comes to larger deployment of AI and technology.<sup>10</sup>

#### *India's national Artificial Intelligence Portal launched*

India's National Artificial Intelligence Portal called [www.ai.gov.in](http://www.ai.gov.in) was launched on May 30, 2020. The platform will act as a one-stop digital platform for AI-related developments in India, including sharing of resources, details of start-ups, investment funds in AI, and companies and educational institutions related to AI in India.<sup>11</sup> It has been jointly developed by the Ministry of Electronics and IT and IT industry body NASSCOM.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/airtel-selects-ibm-and-red-hat-to-build-5g-ready-open-hybrid-cloud-network/75674557>

<sup>10</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/need-to-adopt-ai-aggressively-to-ensure-inclusive-development-in-corona-hit-world-ravi-shankar-prasad/75976120>

<sup>11</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/ravi-shankar-prasad-launches-ai-portal-programme-for-youth-to-build-the-skills/articleshow/76110518.cms>

## 5G Technology

### *Vestaspace to launch 35 satellites for pan-India 5G connectivity*

On May 26, 2020, it was reported that Commercial space-tech company Vestaspace Technology would launch 35+ 5G satellites this September for a pilot project to build 5G speed network connections and IoT functionalities for industries. In a statement, the company said it would release a beta version of satellite constellations pan-India in September and fully-operational version early next year into Low-Earth-Orbit or Geosynchronous Equatorial Orbit. "The company plans to replace traditional fibre networks with satellite constellations and to provide high-speed 5G network connections pan India with its unmanned Software Data processing," it said.<sup>12</sup>

### *5G Spectrum auction postponed by DOT*

On May 11, 2020, it was announced that the Digital Communications Commission, DoT's highest decision-making body, plans to split the next telecom spectrum auction by offering 4G spectrum before October 2020, and 5G probably in 2021. DoT is also preparing a Cabinet note to seek approval for the auction which does not include spectrum in the frequency range of 3,300 -3,600 Mhz band that was proposed to be used for 5G services. The planned auction will put around 8000 Mhz of the spectrum, in several Frequency bands under the hammer, cumulatively valued at around Rs 3 lakh crore (\$39.7 Billion).<sup>13</sup>

### *COAI urges DoT to form key 5G panel ahead of ITU Meeting in June*

On May 15, 2020, Rajan Mathews, director-general of the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), urged "DoT to create a National Preparatory Committee (NPC) and the relevant National Study Groups (NSGs) on the deployment of various (5G) bands, including millimetre wave bands identified at ITU's World Radio Communications-2019 conference in November 2019". India's position on 5G needs to be communicated to ITU at the global regulatory agency's upcoming meeting on June 23, but this can happen only after NPC has formalised India's stand.<sup>14</sup> The move comes after telcos recently urged the Government to allot sub-3500 MHz 5G spectra free of cost for 5G

<sup>12</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/vestaspace-to-launch-35-satellites-for-pan-india-5g-connectivity/76001420>

<sup>13</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/spectrum-auction-likely-to-be-held-before-october-without-5g-radiowaves/75802870>

<sup>14</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/telcos-push-dot-to-form-key-5g-panel-ahead-of-itu-meeting-next-month/75969530>



fixed wireless services to augment 4G networks capacities, during the Covid-19 lockdowns.

### *Blockchain Technology*

#### *RBI clarifies rules regarding Banking by Crypto firms.*

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a statement on May 22, 2020, that India's commercial banks can indeed provide banking services to traders and firms dealing in cryptocurrencies. This was in response to a query filed by B.V. Harish, co-founder of the cryptocurrency exchange Unocoin, under the Right to Information (RTI) Act on April 25, 2020, seeking clarification on whether banks were still prohibited from providing services to cryptocurrency traders and service providers, despite a recent ruling by the Supreme Court to the contrary on March 04, 2020.<sup>15</sup>

### **Government Initiatives**

#### *Strategy/ Policy/Regulation*

#### *BIF urges the Government to implement NDCP 2018*

In a letter dated May 06, 2020, Telecom think-tank Broadband India Forum has urged the Government to implement the National Digital Communications Policy (NDCP) 2018. BIF also requested Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash to take action on at least 13 of the 31 recommendations made by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) that would be helpful for the sector. NDCP was approved in a cabinet meeting on September 26, 2018, and was also gazette notified by October 31, 2018.<sup>16</sup>

#### *Budgetary Support*

#### *MeitY fast-tracks work on Rs 5,000-cr funds for software products*

On May 29, 2020, it was reported that the Ministry of Information Technology (MeitY) is fast-tracking a Rs 5,000-crore fund-of-funds targeted at deploying domestic capital with a detailed proposal for the Software Product Development Fund (SPDF), as the Government looks to reopen the economy in a phased manner after a two-month lockdown due to Covid-19. The SPDF was

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<sup>15</sup> <https://www.coindesk.com/india-banks-cryptocurrencies-rbi-central-bank>

<sup>16</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/broadband-india-forum-writes-to-govt-for-implementing-pending-telecom-policy-trai-suggestions/75639500>

first announced in the National Policy on Software Products (NPSP), approved by the Union cabinet in February 2019.<sup>17</sup>

### *Government selects companies to Build Video Conference Platform*

On May 25, 2020, the Government of India shortlisted ten companies for developing a made-in-India video conferencing solution. These companies will receive INR 5 Lakh (\$6618) each from the Government to develop a prototype of a product similar to Zoom, Google Hangouts, Microsoft Teams and other products. It may be recalled that on April 14, 2020, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) announced an Innovation Challenge for Video Conferencing Solution to provide indigenous alternatives to address security and privacy issues of global Video Conference platforms. Meanwhile, the Government is also separately building its own video-conferencing platform. The Government has given the responsibility to develop a secure video conferencing platform to Centre for Development of Telematics (C-DoT) to be used by government officials, the judiciary and the public.<sup>18</sup>

### *Capability Building*

#### *ITI to set up 200-acre electronic manufacturing cluster*

On May 26, 2020, it was reported that the state-owned Indian Telephone Industry (ITI) is setting up a 200-acre electronic manufacturing cluster (EMC) under the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) modified scheme in Bangalore and has sought approval from the administrative ministry for a long-term lease. The Government's modified scheme has for the first time allowed public-run companies to set up manufacturing clusters and avail prevalent benefits, including financial assistance.<sup>19</sup>

#### *Karnataka launches incubators for cybersecurity start-ups in India*

On May 16, 2020, Karnataka launched its first cyber security-specific accelerator programme 'H.A.C. K' for start-ups. This programme will support mature Indian start-ups to achieve higher self-reliance in the critical domain of cybersecurity through an innovative incubation eco-system and marquee mentorship, giving impetus to 'Atma-Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan'. The accelerator

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<sup>17</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/meity-fast-tracks-work-on-5k-cr-fund-of-funds/76082729>

<sup>18</sup> <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/hcl-peoplelink-zoho-among-10-cos-in-zoom-rival-race/articleshow/75955326.cms>

<sup>19</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/meity-iti-team-up-to-set-up-electronic-manufacturing-cluster/75969151>

programme already has 21 start-ups on board. The programme is implemented by CySecK, which is state's Centre of Excellence in Cyber Security meant for creating a cyber-safe environment for industry collaboration. It is housed at the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> <https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/karnataka/2020/may/19/karnataka-launches-incubator-for-cyber-security-startups-in-india-2145092.html>

## International Developments

### Cyber Space

#### *US President signs executive order regulating Social Media platforms*

On May 28, 2020, US President Donald Trump signed an Executive Order aimed at increasing the ability of the Government to regulate Social Media platforms. The order came two days after Twitter labelled two of Trump's tweets as potentially misleading.<sup>21</sup> "I am today signing executive order to uphold the free speech and rights of American people. My executive order calls for new regulations under Section 230 of Communications Decency Act, to provide that a social media company that engages in censoring on any political content will not be able to keep their liability shield," said the US President.<sup>22</sup>

#### *US DHS and FBI officially warns China for launching cyberattacks*

The U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) has issued a public service announcement on May 13, 2020, warning against Chinese attacks on intellectual property and public health data to steal coronavirus data related to vaccines and treatments from US research institutions and pharmaceutical companies, calling it a "significant threat". The FBI and CISA (Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency) of DHS, have urged all organisations conducting research in these areas to maintain dedicated cyber-security and insider threat practices to prevent surreptitious review or theft of COVID-19 related material.<sup>23</sup>

#### *Russian hackers target German Politicians*

German Chancellor Angela Merkel voiced frustration on May 13, 2020, that Russia was targeting her in hacking actions, saying she had concrete proof of the "outrageous" spying attempts, and added that improving ties with Moscow is challenging following these hacking attempts. Germany's intelligence service has repeatedly called out attempts by Russian hackers to spy on German legislators or leading politicians.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> <https://www.business-standard.com/topic/social-media>

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.aninews.in/videos/world/president-trump-signs-executive-order-aimed-regulating-social-media-platforms/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/news/pressrel/press-releases/fbi-and-cisa-warn-against-chinese-targeting-of-covid-19-research-organizations>

<sup>24</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/merkel-cites-hard-evidence-russian-hackers-targeted-200513133948591.html>

### *Cyber conflict between Israel and Iran escalates*

The cyber conflict between Israel and Iran has escalated dramatically in recent days. As a reaction to the alleged Iranian attack on critical water infrastructure in April 2020, Israel carried out a sophisticated cyber-attack on Iran's Shahid Rajaei port on May 09, 2020, causing widespread chaos and confusion.<sup>25</sup> Meanwhile, in a series of attacks, 300 Israeli websites have been defaced with a clip of Tel Aviv burning on May 21, 2020.<sup>26</sup>

### *Google reports cyber-attacks on WHO from Iran-linked hackers*

Google's Threat Analysis Group (TAG) on state-sponsored hacking and disinformation campaigns reported on May 27, 2020, that it continues to see attacks launched by the Iran-linked threat group named 'Charming Kitten' against medical and healthcare professionals, including employees of the World Health Organization (WHO). Google regularly shares information on state-sponsored hacking operations, and it sent out 1,755 alerts in April.<sup>27</sup>

### *Cyber espionage by hacker group 'Naikon' in the Asia Pacific*

A China-based hacking group, 'Naikon', has been carrying out a five-year cyber espionage campaign against governments in the Asia Pacific region, a report by Check Point on May 07, 2020, indicated. The collective has targeted countries including Australia, Indonesia, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar and Brunei. The Chinese group attempts to infiltrate a government body and then uses the information it acquires to attack other departments.<sup>28</sup>

### *France gives online firms one hour to pull 'terrorist' content*

On May 14, 2020, the French parliament passed a new law that Social Media and other websites will have just one hour to delete offending content that French authorities consider being related to terrorism or child sexual abuse. Failing to act could result in fines of up to 4% of global revenue, which run into billions of euros for the largest online firms. Critics of the law warn that it could restrict freedom of expression.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>25</sup> <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/05/israel-cyberattack-caused-total-disarray-iran-port-report-200519163117789.html>

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.timesofisrael.com/israeli-websites-hacked-in-cyberattack-be-ready-for-a-big-surprise/>

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.securityweek.com/google-says-iran-linked-hackers-targeted-who>

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/05/07/chinese-hacking-group-naikon-reportedly-spying-on-asia-governments.html>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-52664609>

## Digital Technologies

### *Communication Technologies*

#### *US President extends U.S. telecom supply chain Executive Order*

President Donald Trump on May 13, 2020, extended for another year an executive order signed in May 2019 declaring a national emergency and barring U.S. companies from using telecommunications equipment made by firms posing a national security risk. The order invoked the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, which gives the president the authority to regulate commerce in response to a national emergency that threatens the United States.<sup>30</sup>

#### *New rule bars using American Technologies for several Entities*

On May 22, 2020, the US imposed controls on access to American technology for 24 companies and government-linked entities, including Huawei Technologies India Private Limited, who might be involved in obtaining goods with potential military uses. The move appears aimed at inflicting further damage on Huawei, which continues to rely on American-made machinery and software designs to make the chips for its smartphones and tablets, as do the companies that supply it.<sup>31</sup> China demanded on May 25, 2020, that Washington withdraw export sanctions imposed on Chinese companies over technology, security and human rights. China's fledgeling tech industries are developing their processor chips, software and other products, but need the US, European and Japanese components and technology for smartphones and other devices, as well as for manufacturing processes.<sup>32</sup>

#### *US DoJ asks for Encryption Backdoors of iPhones for investigation*

The U.S. Department of Justice announced on May 18, 2020, that the FBI managed to gain access to the data stored on two iPhones belonging to an individual who launched a terrorist attack on the Naval Air Station Pensacola in Florida in 2019 that killed and wounded several people. The information in the phones established his significant ties to Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP). The Department of Justice (DOJ) has been asking tech companies to implement encryption backdoors that would make it easier to investigate

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<sup>30</sup> <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trade-china-trump/trump-extends-us-telecom-supply-chain-order-aimed-at-huawei-zte-idUSKBN22P2KG>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/15/business/economy/commerce-department-huawei.html>

<sup>32</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/china-demands-us-withdraw-sanctions-on-tech-suppliers/75973147>

crimes. However, security and privacy experts argue that such backdoors could be abused, including by the cybercriminals that they are meant to protect users against.<sup>33</sup>

## *Artificial Intelligence*

### *US joins the G-7 artificial intelligence group to counter China*

The US has joined an international panel for setting ethical guidelines for the use of artificial intelligence. White House's Chief Technology Officer, Michael Kratsios, stated on May 28, 2020, that it is important to establish shared democratic principles as a counter to China's record of "twisting technology" in ways that threaten civil liberties. "Chinese technology companies are attempting to shape international standards on facial recognition and surveillance at the United Nations," he said.<sup>34</sup> Earlier, the G-7 formed a group to guide the responsible adoption of AI-based on shared principles of human rights, inclusion, diversity, innovation and economic growth.

## *Blockchain Technology*

### *Facebook renames its 'Calibra' cryptocurrency wallet as 'Novi'*

Facebook's virtual wallet, which was named 'Calibra' for the yet-to-be-minted Libra cryptocurrency, was renamed "Novi" on May 27, 2020. Free Novi digital wallet promises eventually to give Facebook opportunities to build financial services and expand e-commerce offerings. Novi will work as a separate app for smartphones and also be woven into Facebook-owned communication services Messenger and WhatsApp. Backers of Libra argue it can help people outside the banking system by lowering costs for many kinds of payments and transactions; critics say it could disrupt the global monetary system and currency markets.<sup>35</sup>

## *5G Technologies*

### *Rakuten Mobile delays 5G launch due to global Covid-19 pandemic*

Japanese telecom operator Rakuten Mobile said that it had delayed the launch of its 5th generation mobile communications systems (5G) service by three

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<sup>33</sup> <https://www.securityweek.com/doj-again-asks-encryption-backdoors-after-hacking-us-naval-base-shooters-iphones>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/us-joins-g7-artificial-intelligence-group-to-counter-china/article31700508.ece>

<sup>35</sup> <https://tech.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/technology/facebook-renames-its-calibra-cryptocurrency-wallet-as-novi/76023190>

months due to the global impact of COVID-19. The pandemic, which has slowed down global economies, has also caused delays in the plans of mobile network operators to launch the fifth-generation network technology and 5G-ready devices. For instance, the 5G spectrum auction in India might be deferred to 2021 by the Government.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> <https://telecom.economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/rakuten-mobile-delays-5g-launch-by-three-months/75753845>



## International Cooperation

### *Britain plans new 5G club of democracies (G7+3) including India*

On May 29, 2020, Britain sought to forge an alliance of ten democracies to create alternative suppliers of 5G equipment and other technologies to avoid relying on China. London has approached Washington about the plan for a "D10" club of democratic partners, based on the G7 plus Australia, South Korea and India. One option would see the club channel investment to technology companies based within its member states. Nokia and Ericsson are the only European suppliers of 5G infrastructure, and experts say that they cannot provide 5G kit as quickly or as cheaply as Huawei.<sup>37</sup>

### *UN Security Council condemns attacks against Health Organisations*

In an informal meeting of the UN Security Council on May 22, 2020, UN disarmament chief Izumi Nakamitsu said that the coronavirus crisis is moving the world toward increased technological innovation and online collaboration. But there have also been worrying reports of (cyber) attacks against health organisations. Estonia's Prime Minister Juri Ratas, whose country holds the Security Council presidency, condemned cyberattacks targeting hospitals, medical research facilities and other infrastructure, especially during the pandemic, and said that it would be important to hold the offenders responsible for their behaviour.<sup>38</sup>

### *Virtual G-20 Digital Economy Ministers' meeting held*

An Extraordinary Virtual G-20 Digital Economy Ministers meeting was convened on April 30, 2020, to discuss the Covid-19 pandemic. India was represented by the Union Minister for Electronics & IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad. The G-20 Digital Economy Task Force COVID-19 Ministerial statement calls for a coordinated global digital response to fight the pandemic, adopting measures to strengthen communications infrastructure and network connectivity, ensuring non-personal data exchange in a secured manner, use of Digital Solutions for Healthcare, a cyber secured world and measures to strengthen the resilience of businesses. India emphasised the responsibility of G-20 nations to focus on forging inclusive and sustainable economies and societies.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/downing-street-plans-new-5g-club-of-democracies-bfnd5wj57>

<sup>38</sup> <https://www.outlookindia.com/newscroll/un-disarmament-chief-cyber-crimes-on-the-rise-during-pandemic/1843782>

<sup>39</sup> <https://pib.gov.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=202704>



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