Sudhir Chowdhary

Amazon cloud attracts start-ups, SMBs

Amazon Web Services, the $13-billion cloud subsidiary of Amazon, sharpens its focus on Indian enterprises looking to make their businesses smart and agile

■ *Practo is a fast growing Indian start-up in the healthcare space that connects more than 60 million users with 200,000 doctors and 10,000 hospitals. Thanks to Amazon cloud, it has scaled by a factor of 60x and reduced new product deployment time from many months to a few weeks. More than 40 million appointments are now booked each year via Practo, which also offers online consultations and home deliveries of medicine.*

■ *Nearbuy (Groupon India) has migrated its entire production workload to a niche Amazon cloud service called Amazon EC2 Container Service. Nearbuy is India's first hyper-local online platform that enables customers and local merchants to discover and engage with each other. Amazon Web Services' (AWS) highly scalable container management service has helped Nearbuy go from 350 instances to around 120 instances in just four weeks.*

■ *AWS has helped Craftsvilla.com to identify various cost optimisation opportunities, which helped it to bring down its AWS bills by 30% in two months. Craftsvilla.com is a marketplace to discover unique Indian products including handmade, vintage, ethnic, organic and natural products.*

IT'S fairly evident that cloud isn't a fancy new buzzword anymore; it represents a significant change in the market for computing infrastructure, services and applications. Capitalising on this opportunity is Amazon Web Services, a subsidiary of Amazon and the world's leading cloud computing platform. Now 10 years old, it has over 1 million users, growing at 55% year-on-year and clocking nearly $13 billion in annual sales. Today, AWS offers more than 70 services for compute, storage, databases, analytics, mobile, Internet of Things (IoT), and enterprise applications.

It's not just big enterprises such as Adobe, Capital One, GE, Siemens, Novartis, Netflix and Pinterest that use the Amazon cloud infrastructure; many fast-growing startups such as Airbnb, Spotify and Shazam have built online businesses with Amazon's data centres and services providing the back-end infrastructure.

While AWS faces strong competition today from the likes of Google and Microsoft, it is far ahead of other cloud services

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> **ANDY JASSY,** CEO, Amazon Web Services

providers. "Gartner estimates that our business is several times the size of the next largest 14 cloud businesses combined," said Andy Jassy, CEO, Amazon Web Services. "That said, there's trillions of dollars in our market, and there won't be one company that captures it all. There will be several successful players—not 30, a smaller handful. But we are optimistic we'll continue to be a strong leader. AWS is used by more than 1 million people from organisations of every size across nearly every industry."

Can AWS be a $50-billion or a $100-billion business? "Our consumer business (Amazon) is a $100-billion-plus business and still growing at a good clip, so it'll take several years for that to happen, but we are optimistic," said Jassy.

Focus on India

AWS cloud services' customers in India range from developers, start-ups, small-to-mid size companies, enterprises and education institutions. "India is a very important market for AWS. Indian start-ups and enterprises have been using AWS for many years with most Indian tech start-ups building their entire businesses on AWS, and numerous enterprises running mission-critical, core applications on AWS," Jassy told *FE* at the fifth edition of AWS re:Invent, an annual
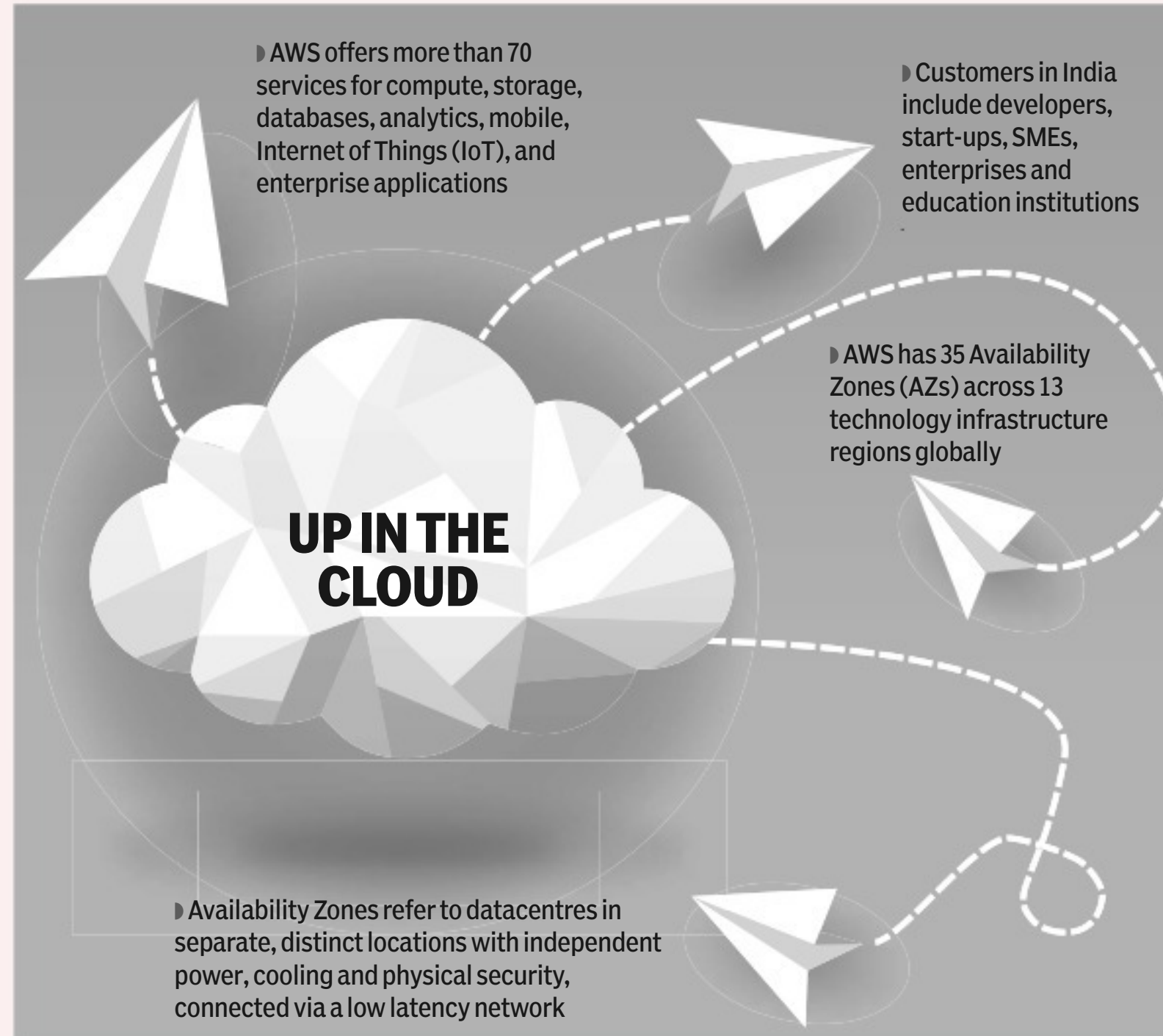
customer and industry partner conference held recently in Las Vegas. "We are very optimistic on our cloud business in India and will significantly expand our operations in the coming years."

Naveen Chhabra, senior analyst at Forrester Research, said, "AWS is seeking a position of strength and to be a one-stop shop for firms that can tie multiple cloud services and develop innovative new-age digital services for their businesses. Innovation is the key to any firm's growth and AWS is all out to support that. However, clients' education about these services is of utmost importance and AWS India has scaled up its team to

address this."

In June this year, AWS expanded its global infrastructure footprint with a new Asia Pacific (Mumbai) Region, providing Indian customers a local choice to build their businesses and run their applications in the cloud. With the Mumbai rollout, AWS now provides 35 Availability Zones across 13 technology infrastructure regions globally. AWS Mumbai Region consists of two Availability Zones. Availability Zones refer to datacentres in separate, distinct locations within a single region that are engineered to be operationally independent of other Availability Zones, with in-

dependent power, cooling, and physical security connected via a low latency network.

"AWS customers focused on high availability can architect their applications to run in multiple Availability Zones to achieve even higher fault-tolerance," said Stephen Orban, global head of enterprise strategy at AWS. "There had been a strong demand from some 75,000 Indian customers, along with others, for an AWS India Region so they can move their applications that require low latency and data sovereignty."

Customers on cloud nine

Jagdish Belwal, CIO of Tata Mo-

tors, said, "We have been working with AWS since 2012, steadily moving workloads to the cloud, such as test and development environments for our core enterprise systems. We run one of the largest CRM based Dealer Management implementations in the world—more than 90 Tata digital properties in production are on AWS, and many other applications."

Tata Motors has seen 40% savings by running its digital properties at scale, benefiting from the good agility made possible by AWS. "One of the key priorities we had was around how AWS could save us costs on traditional workloads. With an AWS Region in India, AWS has allowed our IT teams to focus on innovation and become more nimble to the business demands. Environments that used to take weeks to setup can now be done in days or hours," said Belwal.

Similarly cab aggregator Ola is building its business on AWS. Ankit Bhati, co-founder and CTO, Ola, said, "Technology is a key enabler, where we use AWS cloud to drive a superior customer experience, and innovate faster on new features and services for our customers. This has helped us reach more than 100 cities and 550,000 driver partners across India."

Novi Digital, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Star India, uses AWS to run Hotstar, an over-the-top (OTT) broadcasting platform for delivering movies and live sporting events via the internet. Hotstar has been downloaded by more than 68 million users throughout the world and has attracted followers on the back of a highly evolved video streaming technology, with high praise from customers on the quality of experience across devices and platforms. The reliability of the highly scalable AWS cloud infrastructure has been a contributor to Hotstar's ability to build and deliver a compelling streaming service for its customers.

Dorothy Copeland, general manager, global partner ecosystem at AWS, said, "We have a large and vibrant channel partner ecosystem in India that is helping customers to migrate to the cloud, and develop innovative solutions on AWS platform to serve not only the domestic market, but also the global market."

Without doubt, cloud is the new normal and AWS is thriving in this niche market.

(The writer was in Las Vegas at the invitation of Amazon Web Services)

UP IN THE CLOUD

▶ AWS offers more than 70 services for compute, storage, databases, analytics, mobile, Internet of Things (IoT), and enterprise applications

▶ Customers in India include developers, start-ups, SMEs, enterprises and education institutions

▶ AWS has 35 Availability Zones (AZs) across 13 technology infrastructure regions globally

▶ Availability Zones refer to datacentres in separate, distinct locations with independent power, cooling and physical security, connected via a low latency network