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What's hot in IT - An Indian Perspective



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November 2019

Science & Technology

- **ISRO** (Indian Space Research Organization) launches **CARTOSAT-3** and 13 micro-satellites on November 27, 2019
- **Infosys Science Prizes** for 2019 were announced on November 7, 2019
 - Professor **Sunita Sarawagi** of **IIT Bombay** is the winner for **Engineering & Computer Science**
 - Professor **Manu Devadevan** of **IIT-Mandi** is the winner for **Humanities**
 - Professor **Manjula Reddy** of **CCMB (Center for Cellular and Molecular Biology), Hyderabad** is the winner for **Life Sciences**
 - Professor **Siddhartha Mishra** of **ETH-Zurich** is the winner for **Mathematical Sciences**
 - Professor **G Mugesh** of **IISc, Bangalore** is the winner for **Physical Sciences**
 - Professor **Anand Pandian** of **Johns Hopkins, USA** is the winner for **Social Sciences**

Policy

- **Department of Telecom** orders **payment of Rs 93,000 Crores** on November 14, 2019, as per **Supreme Court** ruling adding further blow to the ailing telecom companies; Government provides partial relief by way of 2-year moratorium on November 21, 2019
- **Finance Minister** announces **Rs 25,000 Crores fund** to help the **real estate** sector on November 7, 2019
- India decides to opt out of **RCEP** (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) on November 5, 2019, though it was very close to signing the agreement; steps towards bi-lateral agreement with USA are on

Special events and Milestones

- **Rajya Sabha** had its 250th Session on November 18, 2019
- **China** launches **5G services** on November 1, 2019 (second country after South Korea); India yet to announce the auction dates!
- **Supreme Court** makes history by deciding on the vexed **Ayodhya issue** on November 9, 2019
- **Jammu & Kashmir** and **Ladakh** form **new Union Territories** on November 1, 2019
- **Maharashtra Elections** results announced on October 24, 2019 but **Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray** was sworn in only on November 29, 2019 after lots of drama; **Jharkhand** Election dates announced on November 2, 2019 with results on December 23, 2019; **Karnataka** By-elections (whose results are crucial for the survival of the current Government) were also announced
- **Brexit** confusion continues with UK having Elections on December 12, 2019

Products

- **Google Nest Mini** launched on November 25, 2019 at Rs 4,499
- **Apple** starts selling **iPhone XR** units in India and even exports to other countries from Chennai plant owned by its supplier Foxconn

Markets

- **Aramco's historic IPO** (the largest ever IPO) oversubscribed marginally on **November 30, 2019**

- RPA (Robotic Process Automation) software **AutomationAnywhere** gets \$ 290 Million funding on November 21, 2019, taking its market cap to \$ 6.8 Billion
- **Google** buys wearables company **FitBit** for \$ 2.1 Billion on November 1, 2019

Indian IT Companies

- **TCS** bags \$ 2 Billion order from Europe's largest pension funds consolidator **Phoenix** group on November 12, 2019
- **Manthan Software** acquires US-based personalization start-up **RichRelevance** on **November 6, 2019**
- **TechMahindra** acquired the Indian unit of US-based media group **Born Commerce** (with \$ 50 million turnover) on November 6, 2019
- **CapGemini** India layoffs 500 employees in November 2019

MNC IT Companies in India

- Power major **Eaton** opens aerospace manufacturing facility in Bangalore in November 2019

People

- India-born **Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella** tops the list of 20 **Business Persons of the year 2019**
- **Wipro** founder **Azim Premji** gets **MMA Amalgamation Award 2019**
- **Sri Lanka** elects a new President on November 16, 2019; the new President **Gotabaya Rajapaksa** nominates his brother **Mahinda Rajapaksa** as Prime Minister on November 21, 2019
- **Sharad Arvind Bobde** takes over as **47th Chief Justice of India** on November 18, 2019
- **Sanjay Gupta** (earlier with Disney) appointed as the new **Google India Country Manager** on November 6, 2019
- **TVS Motors** Chairman **Venu Srinivasan** gets the Japanese **Deming Prize** on November 6, 2019 (for Quality Management); he is the first Indian industrial to get this coveted prize
- High-profile visitors to India in November include **German Chancellor Angela Meckel** (November 1-3)

Start-ups scene

- Mobile Ad biggie **InMobi** acquires Gurgaon-based video platform **Roposo** on November 27, 2019
- **PayTM** raised \$ **1 Billion** in end November 2019 taking its **valuation to \$ 16 Billion**
- **RazorPay** buys payroll management software **OpFin** on November 23, 2019
- Aztec founder **Govi** founded **Perfios** raises \$ **50 Million** funding on November 20, 2019
- Fresh capital infusion of \$ 150 Million into **Freshworks** (Chennai-based customer engagement company) on November 13, 2019 takes its **market cap to \$ 3.5 Billion**

Interesting Apps

- **FASTag** (RFID reader-based toll collection) becomes mandatory on all toll booths of NHAI (National Highway Authority of India) effective December 1, 2019, hopefully avoiding wasteful delays
- UPI-based mobile payment App **BHIM** goes global with its **Singapore launch** on November 14, 2019

Interesting numbers

- **GST collections** cross Rs 1,00,000 in November 2019
- India's stock market index **Sensex** touches 41,000 for the first time on November 26, 2019
- India's **Foreign Exchange reserves** cross \$ **449 Billion** for the first time in November 2019
- **Reliance market capitalization** touches Rs 10 Lakh Crores, the highest ever for any Indian company on November 29, 2019
- **Alibaba** creates history with \$ **38.4 Billion sales on a single day** on November 11, 2019
- Of the total 1.1 Million **foreign students** in **USA**, **Indian students'** population crosses 200,000 in 2019 (Open Doors Report dated November 19, 2019)
- **FlipKart** and **Amazon** clock **Rs 31,000 Crores sales** during the Indian festival season in November 2019

Universities

- Sponsored **Research grants** scale new heights in IIT's; **IIT-Madras** earns more than Rs 500 Crores in 2018-19; **IIT-Delhi** and **IIT-Bombay** are not far behind
- **IIT Council** announces in its October 16 meeting, several interesting options including inter-institutional faculty and student transfers
- **IIT-Delhi** starts a **Billion Dollar fund raising** campaign, the first such large-scale fund collection drive; FlipKart founders **Bansals** kick off the drive with **Rs 125 Crores** donation

Science & Technology

- Google claims quantum computing breakthrough on October 27, 2019 with its quantum computers beating the reported fastest computer
- The first-ever “**all female**” **space-walk** by Christina Koch and Jessica Meir on October 18, 2019 sets a new record
- **Nobel Prizes** for 2019 announced in October;
 - Announced on October 7, 2019, Nobel Prize in **Medicine 2019** went to **William Kaelin Jr** of **Harvard, USA**, **Sir Peter Ratcliffe** of **Oxford, UK** and **Gregg Semenza** of **Johns Hopkins, USA** for their contributions “how cells adapt to oxygen availability”
 - Announced on October 8, 2019, Nobel Prize in **Physics 2019** went to **James Peebles** of **Princeton, USA**, **Michael Mayor** of **Geneva, Switzerland**, **Didier Queloz** of **Cambridge, UK**
 - Announced on October 9, 2019, Nobel Prize in **Chemistry 2019** went to **John Goodenough** of **UT Austin, USA**, **Stanlet Whittingham** of **Binghamton, USA** and **Akira Yoshino** of **Meijo, Nagoya, Japan** for their work on “Lithium-ion batteries”
 - Announced on October 10, 2019 Nobel Prize for **Literature 2018** went to for Polish author **Olga Tokarzuk** and Nobel Prize for **Literature 2019** went to **Australian author Peter Handke**; 2018 and 2019 were announced together, for the first time!
 - Announced on October 11, 2019, Nobel **Peace** prize **2019** went to **Abiy Ahmed Ali, Ethiopian Prime Minister**
 - Announced on October 14, 2019 Nobel Prize in **Economics 2019** went to **Abhijit Banerjee & Esther Duflo** of **MIT USA** and Michael Kramer of **Harvard, USA**
 - Nobel had interesting **India connection** – the winners include Dr Abhijit Banerjee (who grew up in Kolkata and studied in Presidency College, Kolkata and JNU)
 - Nobel Prize 2019 had one of the oldest winners – **97 year old** John Goodenough, and a **couple** (Abhijit and Esther)
- India gets delivery of its **first Rafael Aircraft** from France on October 6, 2019 (Vijayadasami Day)

Policy

- Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcing a slew of measures to address the sagging economy in September 2019 is followed by “**IT returns going faceless**” (with minimum human intervention to avoid collusion from October 8, 2019 (Vijayadasami))

Special events and Milestones

- **Prime Minister Modi** hosts **Chinese Prime Minister Xi Jinping** at Mamallapuram in Tamil Nadu for a Summit during October 11-12, 2019
- **Reliance** quarterly **profits touch new high** of Rs 11,262 Crores for July – September 2019, the highest-ever for any private sector company in India (**Indian Oil** had the highest profit of Rs 14,512 Crores on 4Q2013). Similarly its **market capitalization** touches Rs 9 Lakh Crores, the highest ever for any Indian company (**TCS** mar-cap touched Rs 7.68 Lakh Crores in 2018)
- **Karnataka** in the **Top State** for Innovation as per NITI Aayog **National Innovation Index** launched on October 18, 2019
- **Maharashtra** and **Haryana Assembly Elections** on Oct 21, 2019; results on Oct 24, 2019. Haryana gets BJP government; Maharashtra is yet to get a new Government though BJP Shiv Sena win majority
- **PMC Bank** crisis in October causes misery to tens of thousands of its customers
- **Floods in Japan** leave a wave of destruction in October 2019 due to typhoon **Hagibis** on October 13, 2019
- **Brexit** confusion continues; the deadline of October 31, 2019 set by EU is revised to January 31, 2020; UK Prime Minister calls for Elections in December 2019! **Israel** continues its impasse on the choice of its Prime Minister; **Hong Kong** stir continues all of October 2019; **Japanese** royalty, **Thai** royalty see minor turbulence!

Products

- **Xiaomi** launches **Note 8** and **Note 8 Pro** in India on October 2019
- **Nokia** launched Nokia 6.2 and Nokia 7.2 in India in October 2019
- **Google** launches **Pixel 4 phone** on October 18, 2019 (not to be sold in India)
- 1,600 **Samsung Fold Phones** sold in 3 minutes in India!
- **Microsoft** launches its **Tablet** products on October 2, 2019; announces **Surface Foldable phone**, but products to reach consumer hands only in 2020 Festival season!
- **Apple** iPhone sales see 10% rise in October 2019

Markets

- **IRCTC IPO** on October 14, 2019 got oversubscribed 110 times! Stock price gained 29% on Day !
- **L&T Infotech** acquires **PowerUpCloud** for over Rs 100 Crores on October 16, 2019
- **Infosys** acquires Ireland-based 1,400-strong **BPO Eishtec** on October 8, 2019
- The over-hyped **WeWork** loses market cap steadily; misses IPO in October 2019
- **Amazon India** and **Flipkart Big Billion Days** Shopping Festival in September & October 2019 saw big increase in sales in an otherwise damp market condition

Indian IT Companies

- **TCS** has second quarter (July – September) top line of Rs 38,977 Crores and bottom line of Rs 8,042 Crores; with addition of 14,097 its headcount touches 4,50,738 on October 31, 2019
- **Infosys** has second quarter (July – September) top line of Rs 22,629 Crores and bottom line of Rs 4,019 Crores
- **Wipro** has second quarter (July – September) top line of Rs 15,130 Crores and bottom line of Rs 2,561 Crores
- **Bajaj** re-launches an Electric version of its historic “**Chetak**” scooter in October 2019

MNC IT Companies in India

- Cloud management & analytics company **Rubrik** opens its Bangalore R & D center on October 22, 2019
- **Microsoft India annual** revenue goes past \$ 1 Billion for the first time
- **Oracle** starts its first India data center in Mumbai on October 11, 2019; its second data center in Hyderabad will start soon in 2019-20
- **Johnson Controls Hitachi** Center starts operations in Kadi, Gujarat from October 2019
- **HP Inc.**, the printer major, announces its decision to cut 16% of its workforce (around 7,000), globally in October 2019

People

- Bangalore-born Prashant Chandrasekar is the CEO of **StackOverflow** – the largest and most trusted open source Q&A community - from October 1, 2019
- There were several high-profile visitors to India in October; 2-day visit by **Chinese Premier**; 3-day visit by **Bangladesh Prime Minister**, and 5-day visit **Dutch King & Queen** during October 2019

Interesting numbers

- India's stock market index **Sensex** touches 40,000 once gain (after significant losses) after 4 months on October 31, 2019
- India's **Foreign Exchange reserves** cross \$ **440 Billion** for the first time in October 2019
- Prime Minister **Modi** has 30 Million followers on **Instagram** – the highest for any leader – on October 14, 2019
- Government announces **5% Dearness Allowance hike** effective July 1, 2019 on October 12, 2019
- **RBI** cuts **Repo rate** by 25 bps on October 4, 2019
- Mobile payment platform **UPI** volume exceeds debit card volume on October 1, 2019; touches 1 Billion mark on October 25, 2019

Universities

- **IIT Council** announces several **sweeping changes** in its meeting held on September 28, 2019; **MTech fee** to see substantial **increase** and weak B Tech students to leave after 3 years with BSc degrees
- **IIT's** to add 4,320 seats in 2020-21; **IIIT's** to add 556 seats in the same period
- **Finance Minister** announces a policy change on September 20, 2019 that allows **CSR funding** to be used for R&D Funding in IIT's and Universities
- **SASTRA University** announces **Ramanujan Prize** for 2019 on September 20, 2019 to Dr **Adam Harper** of Warwick University, UK
- **Times Higher Education** ranking of September 14, 2019 leads to lots of confusion; 56 Indian Institutes in the Top 500 but none in Top 300 (for the first time after 2012); **IISc** that had been in the Top 300 for many years talks of "data error"; **other IIT's** join to take up "data errors" with the Agency; interestingly, **IIT-Ropar** and **IIT-Indore** take it to the Top 400!
- **IoE** (institutes of Eminence) list of September 5, 2019 gets **five new** additions – **IIT-Kharagpur, IIT-Madras, BHU, Delhi University and Central University of Hyderabad** - on September 5, 2019 (Teachers Day)
- **IIT-Kanpur, BITS-Pilani and La Trobe University** of Australia agree to collaborate in the area of "Smart Cities" on September 3, 2019

Science & Technology

- **ISRO** gets **approval** from the global standard body **3GPP** for its **home-grown GPS "NavIC"** on September 24, 2019
- **India's Moon Mission Chandrayaan II** (that created global attention of the Space scientists) Rover **Vikram** managed to reach all but 2.1 KM of the 4,00,000+ KM journey to the Moon on 6th September 2019 night, but "crash lands"; luckily, the **Orbiter** successfully keeps sending Lunar images and said to be in good health with nearly one full year of life.
- Amazon's AI-based voice assistant device **Alexa** starts to **speak and understand Hindi** in September 2019

Policy

- Expenditure Finance Secretary clears the ambitious **Rs 7,500 Cr AI Mission** on September 10, 2019
- **Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman** announces a slew of measures to address the sagging economy; IT returns goes "faceless" from October 7, 2019 (Vijayadasami); Public Sector consolidation on September 12, 2019; sops for the real estate sector on September 14, 2019; finally, corporate tax reduction on September 20, 2019 that led to nearly 2,000 point increase in Sensex (the highest single day gain in a decade)

Special events and Milestones

- **Prime Minister Modi** addresses **UN General Assembly** on September 29, 2019
- **Google turns 21** on September 27, 2019
- On September 27, 2019 Election Commission announces dates for **Maharashtra** and **Haryana Assembly Elections**; Oct 21 Election Day and Oct 24 Election results
- **Prime Minister Modi** and **President Trump** share the stage in a historic "Howdy Modi" event on September 22, 2019 in Houston, Texas
- **India Post Bank** turns 1 on September 10, 2019
- **Brexit** in deeper trouble with British Prime Minister Boris Johnson losing majority and deadline of October 1, 2019 is dangerously close!
- **Aramco** oil refinery in Saudi Arabia hit by Drones on September 14, 2019
- **Wikipedia** has a "blackout" for several hours on September 6, 2019
- **Hong Kong** stir continues all of September 2019

Products

- **Amazon** launches new **Echo devices** on September 25, 2019
- **OnePlus** launches its **TV's** globally in September 2019; launches immediately in India, including possible "Make in India" option soon!
- **Apple** launches **iPhone 11, Apple tv+, new iPad** versions on September 10, 2019
- **Android 10** is out in September 2019
- **Jio Fiber** rollout starts on September 5, 2019
- **Samsung** launches its **5G chipset Exynos 980** on September 5, 2019

Markets

- BSE Index **Sensex** has 1,800 point increase on September 20, 2019, following Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcement of corporate tax reduction (the highest single-day gain in a decade)
- **Amazon India** and **Flipkart** announce their **Big Billion Days** Shopping Festival starting September 29, 2019; post record sales on Day 1
- **Microsoft** buys cloud migration software company **Movere** on September 5, 2019

Indian IT Companies

- **ITI Ltd.**, announces a **cloud services** for **PSU** (Public Sector Undertakings) on September 27, 2019
- **Infosys** reaches **Top spot** (No 3) in **Forbes 2019 “World’s Best Regarded Companies”** on September 25, 2019
- **TCS** signs **\$ 700 Million contract** (over 5 years) with **General Motors** and absorbs 1,300 professionals on its payroll on September 19, 2019
- **Mindtree** starts European operations on September 16, 2019
- **Infosys** opens the **6th Tech Center in USA in Arizona** on September 14, 2019
- **Wipro** gets \$ 300 Million services contract from **ICICI Bank** on September 5, 2019
- **TechMahindra** gets \$ 1 Billion contract from **AT&T** on September 5, 2019

MNC IT Companies in India

- China’s **Thunder Software** to invest \$ 500 Million over 5 years in its Bangalore operations
- **Siemens Healthineers** starts a **medical device manufacturing facility** in Electronics City in Bangalore on September 19, 2019
- **Manhattan Associates** starts a second Tech Center in Bangalore on September 18, 2019
- **PepsiCo** sets up a Tech Center in Hyderabad on September 10, 2019 (with 3,80,000 square feet space) and plans to hire 2,500 professionals over the next 3 years
- **Airbus Industries** opens its new Bangalore Tech Center facility on September 3, 2019 and plans to house 500 professionals

People

- **Bhatnagar Prizes** announced on September 26, 2019; of the 12 recipients, **Dr Manik Varma** of Microsoft India Research gets the Award for Engineering Science
- **Prashanth Chandrasekar** (Bangalore born) is the new CEO of **Stack Overflow** (the first port of call for 50 million developers, globally)!
- **Google** announces the starting of **Google AI Research Lab in India** and named **IIIT-Bangalore Professor Manish Gupta** as the **Head** on September 19, 2019
- **Ramkumar Ramamoorthy** named **Cognizant India MD** on September 19, 2019
- **British Prime Minister** loses majority on September 3, 2019; Brexit in trouble!

Start-up Scene

- **Prime Minister Modi** hands over the awards for **India-Singapore Hackaton** winners during **IIT Madras Convocation** on September 30, 2019
- Hotel room-aggregator **Oyo** announces on September 23, 2019 its decision to **raise** another **\$ 1 Billion**
- **HCL Technologies** acquires Hubli-based semiconductor start-up **Sankalp Semiconductor** for Rs 180 Cr on September 10, 2019; **Tier 2 Cities are getting their act right!**
- Food delivery startup **Zomato** lays off 600 people on September 10, 2019
- Pune-based Clean-tech startup **75F** gets \$ 18 Million funding on September 6, 2019
- **Mahindra & Mahindra** acquires 55% stake in cab company **Meru** on September 1, 2019

Interesting numbers

- Mobile payment platform **UPI** volume exceeds debit card volume on September 1, 2019

Professor Sowmyanarayanan Sadagopan (ss@iiitb.ac.in) is the Director of IIIT-Bangalore. These are his personal views. He has been writing on “**What’s hot in IT**” from an Indian perspective continuously from 1997; Times of India, Financial Express and IT Magazine carried the monthly (and yearly columns) till 2016; IEEE India has been carrying the quarterly columns since 2017