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Universities, R &D and S &T

- **QS India rank** is out in October 2018; **IIT Bombay** and **IISc** score real high
- **MIT** sets up **AI College** with \$ 1 Billion investment in October 2018
- **Atos** gets the Super Computer order worth hundreds of crores from National Supercomputer Mission on November 23, 2018
- **ISRO** puts G29 Satellite on November 14, 2018, a heavy duty satellite in orbit on December 5, 2018; communication satellite GSAT 7A on December 20, 2018; launches 29 satellites including HiSys on November 29, 2018;
- India's **Exseed Communications** satellite launched by SpaceX on December 4, 2018
- Gujarat creates history by **tele-robotic coronary intervention surgery** in Ahmedabad on December 5, 2018
- **Robots to manufacture Robots** in the ABB plant in China from October 2018
- **Algo Art** fetches \$ 430K on October 27, 2018 – a milestone for computer generated Art

Markets

- **Microsoft** becomes the **most valued company** with \$ 823.9 Billion on November 23, 2018; Apple at No 2 and Amazon at No 3 on that date; earlier, Apple and Amazon had gone past one trillion dollar mark (the first time ever in history)
- **IBM** acquires **Red Hat** on October 29, 2018 for a whopping \$ 43 Billion!
- **SAP** buys Seattle-based survey software company **Qualtrics**, for \$ 8 Billion on November 12, 2018
- \$ 24 Billion **Softbank IPO** was on as per plan on December 18, 2018; loses \$ 9 Billion on Day 1!

Products

- **Samsung** launches **foldable phone** on November 8, 2018
- **Microsoft** launches new models of **Surface Tablet** and **Surface Laptop** and MS Audio Headsets on October 2, 2018
- **Google** launches **Pixel 3 and Pixel 3 XL** phones in October 2018
- **Apple** announces new **iMac, MacBook, Mac Mini** on October 30, 2018

Indian IT Companies

- **HCL** creates history; decides to acquire **select IBM software products** for \$ 1.8 Billion in December 2018
- **TCS** makes its first digital acquisition of London-based **W12 Studios** on November 1, 2018; and its second acquisition of **BridgePoint**, a US-based consulting company specializing in retirement services, on November 28, 2018
- **Infosys** acquires 81% stake in Hitachi Procurement Services and forms a JV in Japan on December 14, 2018
- **Mphasis** buys Virginia, US based cloud technology services company **Stelligent Systems** for \$ 25 Million on November 8, 2018

MNC IT Companies in India

- **Facebook** signed up for 2,20,000 square feet space in Bangalore; with this the entire new generation IT biggies **FAAMG** (Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Microsoft, Google) are present in Bangalore
- **Xiaomi** starts 500 stores on a single day in rural India on October 29, 2018; plans to have 5,000 stores in India
- **OnePlus** India R&D Center starts operations in Hyderabad in December 2018
- Mobile manufacturer **Oppo** starts its **R & D enter** in Hyderabad on December 14, 2018
- **Qualcomm** announces its plan to set up its largest campus in Hyderabad on October 6, 2018
- **Ericsson** launches its **global accelerator program** in Bangalore in December 2018
- **Siemens Gamesa** starts India **R & D Center** in Bangalore on December 6, 2018

- **SAP** does ground-breaking for its 40-acre **second campus in Bangalore** on November 29, 2018
- **vmWare** to invest \$ 2 Billion in India in the next 5 years
- Chinese TV manufacturer **TCL** performs ground-breaking ceremony for a new **plant** in Tirupati on December 22, 2018
- **Elbit** of Israel and **Adani** commission their **Drone manufacturing facility** in Hyderabad on December 14, 2018

People

- **ISRO Infosys Science Prizes** get announced on November 13, 2018; Professor **Navakanta Bhat** of Indian Institute of Science for the **Engineering & Computer Science**; Professor **Kavita Singh** of JNU for **Humanities**; Professor **Roop Mallik** of TIFR for **Life Sciences**; Professor **Nalini Anantharaman** of Strasbourg for **Mathematical Sciences**; Professor **SK Sathesh** of Indian Institute of Science for **Physical Sciences** and Professor **Sendhil Mullainathan** of University of Chicago for **Social Sciences**
- **Wipro** Chairman **Premji** conferred “The **Legion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour)** – the highest French civilian award - on November 28, 2018
- **Thomas Kurien**, earlier with Oracle, takes charge as **Head of Cloud business for Google** on November 22, 2018
- India sees lots of changes in key person in economic management in December 2018; **Urjit Patel** resigns suddenly as Reserve Bank Governor on December 11, 2018; **Srikanth Das** takes over as the new RBI Governor within 24 hours; **Krishnamurthy Subramanian** is the new **Chief Economic Adviser** to the Government; **Sunil Arora** is the new **Chief Election Commissioner** and **AN Jha** is the new **Finance Secretary**
- Mysore-born **Dr Gita Gopinath** is **IMF Chief Economist** from October 2018
- **PV Sindhu** is the **first Indian to win Gold in BFW World Tour Finals** on December 15, 2018
- **Airtel CEO** and **Reliance Jio CEO** on the **GSMA**, the influential global GSM Body in November 2018
- **FedEx** names **Rajesh Subramaniam** as its new **CEO** on December 29, 2018
- **Huawei CFO** (daughter of CFO Founder) **arrest** in Canada in early December causes serious global implications
- **FlipKart** Founder **Binny Bansal** leaves the organization in November 2018 (after the completion of Wal-Mart acquisition)
- **Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen** passes away on October 15, 2018 at the age of 65

Start-up Scene

- **PayTM technology** powers Japan's **Pay Pay** starting October 2018
- **Wal-Mart Labs** acquires **Int.AI** in Bangalore on December 13, 2018
- **Google** acquires **Sigmoid** the owner of “where is my train” App on December 10, 2018
- **Softbank** to invest \$ 1 Billion in **Ola** in December 2018
- **Swiggy** gets \$ 1 Billion capital infusion in December 2018
- **Baiju** gets more investment; market value soars to \$ 3.6 Billion on December 10, 2018
- **Automation Anywhere** (Robotics Process Automation software leader) gets \$ 300 Million funding from Softbank Vision fund on November 15, 2018
- Hotel rooms aggregator **Oyo enter UAE** in October 2018
- **IDG Ventures** become **Ciruthe** on October 15, 2018

Interesting Applications & Apps

- **HDFC's new mobile App** behaves erratically and HDFC had to pull the App back on December 3, 2018

Interesting numbers

- Indian stock market index **Sensex** though turbulent, is the **best globally in 2018** with nearly 6% rise!
- **Kaiga nuclear plant** creates a world record with **941 days of continuous production** in December 11, 2018
- **FlipKart** sells 1 million smartphones in one hour on its Billion Days

General

- **Indian government** sticks to its deadline of October 15, 2018 for “**local storage**” of payment data
- **Supreme Court** upholds the **constitutional validity of GST Act** on October 4, 2018; **Data interception order** of the Government on December 23, 2018 causes lots of heartburn
- This quarter saw unprecedented **uncertainty**, - economically, politically and in general
 - Oil price fluctuation, Rupee weakening, RBI Governor change and global stock market fluctuation
 - BREXIT uncertainty in UK, protests in France and Government lock down in USA; and,
 - cyclone Gaja in South India, Californian fire in USA, and Indonesian Tsunami

About the author: 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, IT Magazine carried the monthly (and yearly columns) till 2016; IEEE India has been carrying the quarterly columns since 2017.