What’s hot in IT - An Indian Perspective

Prof. S. Sadagopan
Director, IIIT-Bangalore
ss@iiitb.ac.in

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
October 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, Novel 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 Yoshima 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 Tokarzuck 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
September 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 a 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, 2010
- 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@iitb.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