

Premji, an IT Giant and a Pioneer Donor

As Azim Premji turned 70 on Friday, ET chronicles the life and times of India's foremost philanthropist and IT business tycoon

Azim Premji is born in what was then Bombay, in an undivided India. The same year, his father Mohamed Hasham Premji incorporated Western Indian Vegetable Products

Mohammed Ali Jinnah invited Premji's father to move to Pakistan. He turned down the request. Otherwise, Azim Premji's life could have taken a different path

1945 Premji's company pioneers the use of single-use consumer packaging technology for oil to expand into rural markets

1947 Premji is informed of his father's death. With one term left for his degree, he drops out to run the family business

1947 Premji is admitted to Stanford. He begins an engineering course

1963 Enters the fledgling IT industry

1966 Formally changes name to Wipro Products

1971 The company diversifies into soaps and baby care products, and hydraulic and pneumatic cylinders

1975 Premji begins taking correspondence classes to complete the credits he needed to earn his engineering degree from Stanford. He graduates from Stanford, 30 years after having to drop out

1977 Establishes software products and exports subsidiary, Wipro Systems

1981 It changes its name to Wipro

1982 Given the Padma Bhushan for outstanding work in trade and commerce

1983 He founds the Azim Premji Foundation, a nonprofit organization that is trying to make quality universal education available in India

1995 Listed on the NYSE. The company had been listed on Indian stock exchanges in 1945

2000 Premji becomes the first Indian to sign the Giving Pledge. As of July this year, he has given away 39% of his stake in Wipro to fund his philanthropy

2001 Given the Padma Vibhushan

2011 Given the Padma Vibhushan

2013