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.

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

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

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

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

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.

WIPRO

Formally changes name to Wipro Products.

Enters the fledgling IT industry.

It changes its name to Wipro.

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

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

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

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.

Given the Padma Vibhushan.