

# Ratan Tata

**Ratan Naval Tata**<sup>[a]</sup> (28 December 1937 – 9 October 2024) was an Indian industrialist and philanthropist. He served as the chairman of Tata Group and Tata Sons from 1991 to 2012 and he held the position of interim chairman from October 2016 to February 2017.<sup>[2][3]</sup> In 2000, he received the Padma Bhushan, the third highest civilian honour in India, followed by the Padma Vibhushan, the country's second highest civilian honour, in 2008.<sup>[4]</sup>

Ratan Tata was the son of Naval Tata, who was adopted by Ratanji Tata, son of Jamshedji Tata, the founder of the Tata Group. He graduated from Cornell University College of Architecture with a bachelor's degree in architecture.<sup>[5]</sup> He joined the Tata Group in 1962,<sup>[6]</sup> starting on the shop floor of Tata Steel. He later succeeded J. R. D. Tata as chairman of Tata Sons upon the latter's retirement in 1991. During his tenure, the Tata Group acquired Tetley, Jaguar Land Rover, and Corus, in an attempt to turn Tata from a largely India-centric group into a global business.

Throughout his life, Tata invested in over 40 start-ups, primarily in a personal capacity, with additional investments through his firm, RNT Capital Advisors.<sup>[7][8][9]</sup>

## Early life and education

Ratan Tata was born in Bombay (now Mumbai), during the British Raj, into a Parsi Zoroastrian family, on 28 December 1937.<sup>[10]</sup> He was the son of Naval Tata (who was born in Surat and later adopted into the Tata family), and Soonoo Tata (the niece of Tata group founder Jamsetji Tata). Tata's biological grandfather, Hormusji Tata was a member of the Tata family by blood. In 1948, when Tata was 10, his parents

Ratan Tata



Tata in 2011

<b>Born</b>	<div>Ratan Naval Tata</div> <div>28 December 1937</div> <div><div><span></span></div><div>Bombay, Bombay Province, British India</div></div>
<b>Died</b>	<div>9 October 2024 (aged 86)</div> <div><div><span></span></div><div>Mumbai, Maharashtra, India</div></div>
<b>Alma mater</b>	<div>Cornell University (BArch)</div>
<b>Occupations</b>	<div>Industrialist<span> </span>•<span> </span>Philanthropist</div>
<b>Title</b>	<div>Chairman Emeritus, Tata Sons and Tata Group<sup>[1]</sup></div>
<b>Term</b>	<div>1991–2012</div> <div>2016–2017</div>
<b>Predecessor</b>	<div>J. R. D. Tata</div>
<b>Successor</b>	<div>Cyrus Mistry (2012–2016)</div> <div>Natarajan Chandrasekaran (2017–present)</div>
<b>Parents</b>	<div>Naval Tata (father)</div> <div>Sooni Commissariat (mother)</div>
<b>Relatives</b>	<div>Tata family</div>
<b>Awards</b>	<div>Order of Australia (2023)</div>

separated, and he was subsequently raised and adopted by Navajbai Tata, his grandmother and widow of Ratanji Tata.<sup>[11]</sup> He had a younger brother Jimmy Tata<sup>[12]</sup> and a half-brother, Noel Tata, from Naval Tata's second marriage to his stepmother Simone Tata.

Tata studied at the Campion School, Mumbai until 8th grade. He then continued his studies at the Cathedral and John Connon School in Mumbai, the Bishop Cotton School in Shimla, and the Riverdale Country School in New York City, from which he graduated in 1955.<sup>[13][14][15]</sup> After high school, Tata enrolled in Cornell University, from which he graduated with a bachelor's degree in architecture in 1962.<sup>[16][17]</sup> While at Cornell, Tata became a member of the Alpha Sigma Phi Fraternity. In 2008, Tata gifted Cornell \$50 million, becoming the largest international donor in the university's history.<sup>[18][19]</sup>

Assam Baibhav (2021)

Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (2014)

Padma Vibhushan (2008)

Maharashtra Bhushan (2006)

Padma Bhushan (2000)

## Career

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### Early years

In 1961 Tata met architect A. Quincy Jones who spent three weeks as architecture design critic at Cornell. After completing Cornell, Tata briefly joined Jones at his firm Jones & Emmons in Los Angeles.<sup>[20]</sup> While Tata was planning to settle in Los Angeles, he was called back to India by his grandmother.<sup>[21]</sup>

### Later years

In the 1970s, Ratan Tata was given a managerial position in the Tata group. He achieved initial success by turning the subsidiary National Radio and Electronics (NELCO) around, only to see it collapse during an economic slowdown.<sup>[22][23]</sup> In 1991, J. R. D. Tata stepped down as chairman of Tata Sons, naming him his successor. Initially, Tata faced stiff resistance from the heads of various subsidiaries, who had a large amount of operational freedom under the senior Tata's tenure. In response, Tata implemented a number of policies designed to consolidate power, including the implementation of a retirement age, having subsidiaries report directly to the group office, and requiring subsidiaries to contribute their profit to building the Tata group brand. Tata prioritised innovation and delegated many responsibilities to younger talent.<sup>[24]</sup> Under his leadership, overlapping operations between subsidiaries were streamlined into company-wide operations, with the group exiting unrelated businesses to take on globalisation.<sup>[25]</sup>

During the 21 years Tata led the Tata Group, revenue grew over 40 times, and profit over 50 times.<sup>[22]</sup> When he took over the company, sales overwhelmingly comprised commodity sales, but at the end of his tenure, the majority of sales came from brands.<sup>[26][27]</sup> He had Tata Tea acquire Tetley, Tata Motors acquire Jaguar Land Rover, and Tata Steel acquire Corus. These acquisitions repositioned Tata from a largely India-centric group into a global business, with over 65% of revenues coming from operations and sales internationally.<sup>[22]</sup>



Ratan meets union minister Anand Sharma in 2011

He also conceptualised and spearheaded the development of the Tata Nano car after the grand success of Diesel Tata Indica, which helped put cars at a price-point within reach of the average Indian consumer.<sup>[28][24]</sup> Tata Motors has since rolled out the first batch of Tigor Electric Vehicles from its Sanand Plant in Gujarat, which Tata has described as to "fast-forward India's electric dream."<sup>[29]</sup>

Upon turning 75, Ratan Tata resigned his executive powers in the Tata group on 28 December 2012. An ensuing leadership crisis over his succession drew intense media scrutiny.<sup>[30]</sup> The board of directors of the company appointed his successor, Cyrus Mistry, a relative of Tata and the son of Pallonji Mistry of the Shapoorji Pallonji Group, which was the largest individual shareholder of the Tata group.<sup>[31][32]</sup> On 24 October 2016, Cyrus Mistry was removed as chairman of Tata Sons, and Ratan Tata was made interim chairman. A selection committee, which included Tata as a member, was formed to find a successor.<sup>[33]</sup> On 12 January 2017, Natarajan Chandrasekaran was named as the chairman of Tata Sons, a role he assumed in February 2017. In February 2017, Mistry was removed as a director for Tata Sons.<sup>[34]</sup> The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal later found in December 2019 that the removal of Cyrus Mistry as the chairman of Tata Sons was illegal, and ordered that he be reinstated.<sup>[34]</sup> On appeal, India's Supreme Court upheld the dismissal of Cyrus Mistry.<sup>[35]</sup>

Tata had also invested in multiple companies with his own wealth. He had invested in Snapdeal – one of India's leading e-commerce websites. In January 2016, he invested in Teabox, an online premium Indian Tea seller,<sup>[36]</sup> and CashKaro.com, a discount coupons and cash-back website.<sup>[37]</sup> He had made small investments in both early and late stage companies in India, such as INR 0.95 Cr in Ola Cabs.<sup>[38]</sup> In April 2015, it was reported that Tata had acquired a stake in Chinese smartphone startup Xiaomi.<sup>[39]</sup> In 2016, he invested in Nestaway an online real-estate portal that later acquired Zenify to start the online real-estate and pet-care portal, *Dogspot*.<sup>[40][41][42][43]</sup> Tata also launched a companionship startup for senior citizens named *Goodfellows*, to encourage intergenerational friendships.<sup>[44]</sup>

## Philanthropy

Tata was a supporter of education, medicine and rural development, and considered a leading philanthropist in India. Ratan Tata was the highest international donor to the Cornell University<sup>[45][46][47]</sup>

## 1984 Anti-Sikh Pogrom victims

In the aftermath of the 1984 Sikh genocide, Tata extended his support to affected Sikh survivors by donating trucks through Tata Motors. This enabled Sikh truck drivers who had lost their vehicles during the violence to regain their livelihoods. His charitable donation enabled many Sikh victims rebuild their lives and businesses. Following this act, Sikh drivers in Punjab and other parts of India continue to remain loyal customers of Tata trucks.<sup>[48]</sup>

## University of New South Wales

Tata supported University of New South Wales Faculty of Engineering to develop capacitive deionisation to provide improved water for challenged areas.<sup>[49][50]</sup>

## University of California

Tata Hall at the University of California, San Diego (UC San Diego) is a state-of-the-art research facility that was opened in November 2018. The building is named after the Tata Trusts, who donated \$70 million to UC San Diego in 2016 to establish the Tata Institute for Genetics and Society (TIGS), which is housed within the building. The Tata Institute for Genetics and Society at UC San Diego is a joint initiative between the Tata Trusts and UC San Diego. It aims to address some of the world's most pressing problems, such as the spread of infectious diseases and the need for sustainable food sources. The research conducted at the institute focuses on a range of topics, including gene editing, stem cell therapy, and disease control.<sup>[51]</sup> Tata Hall at the UC San Diego is a 4-storey building that is spread over 128,000 square feet and houses research facilities for the biological and physical sciences. The building has laboratories, offices, and meeting spaces that are designed to foster collaboration and innovation among researchers. It is a LEED-certified building; designed to be environmentally sustainable and energy-efficient.<sup>[51]</sup>



Ratan with a Japan delegate

## Tata Education and Development Trust

Tata Education and Development Trust, a philanthropic affiliate of Tata Group, endowed a \$28 million Tata Scholarship Fund that will allow Cornell University to provide financial aid to undergraduate students from India. The scholarship fund will support approximately 20 scholars at any given time and will ensure that the very best Indian students have access to Cornell, regardless of their financial circumstances. The scholarship will be awarded annually; recipients will receive it for the duration of their undergraduate study at Cornell.<sup>[52]</sup>

## Executive center at Harvard Business School

In 2010 Tata Group companies and Tata charities donated \$50 million for the construction of an executive center at Harvard Business School (HBS).<sup>[53]</sup> The executive center has been named Tata Hall, after Ratan Tata.<sup>[54]</sup> The total construction costs have been estimated at \$100 million.<sup>[55]</sup> Tata Hall is located in the northeast corner of the HBS campus, and is devoted to the Harvard Business



School's mid-career executive education program. It is seven stories tall, and about 155,000 gross square feet. It houses approximately 180 bedrooms, in addition to academic and multi-purpose spaces.<sup>[56]</sup>

## Tata Innovation Center at Cornell Tech

The Tata Innovation Center at Cornell Tech is named after Ratan Tata, and mixes academics and industry in a building on the Roosevelt Island campus. The seven-floor structure is meant primarily as a business incubator for students, faculty, and staff, with 70% of the building being commercially leased and 30% devoted to academic space. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is a tenant in the space.<sup>[57]</sup>

## Indian Institute of Technology

In 2014, Tata Group endowed the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay with ₹950 million and formed the Tata Centre for Technology and Design (TCTD) to develop design and engineering principles suited to the needs of people and communities with limited resources.<sup>[58][59]</sup>



Ratan with Indian prime minister Narendra Modi at the Platinum Jubilee Milestone book launch

## Indian Centre for Neuroscience

Tata Trusts under the chairmanship of Ratan Tata provided a grant of ₹750 million to the Centre for Neuroscience, Indian Institute of Science to study mechanisms underlying the cause of Alzheimer's disease and to evolve methods for its early diagnosis and treatment. This grant was to be spread over 5 years starting in 2014.<sup>[60][61]</sup>

## MIT Tata Center of Technology and Design

Tata Group, under the leadership of Ratan Tata formed the MIT Tata Center of Technology and Design at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) with a mission to address the challenges of resource-constrained communities, with an initial focus on India.<sup>[62]</sup>

## Cornell University

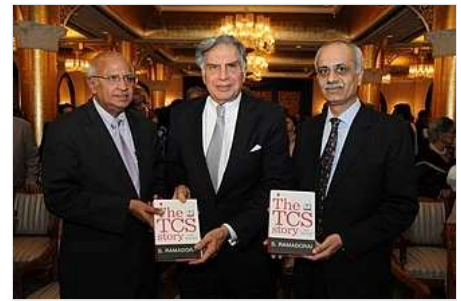
Ratan Tata was the highest international donor to the Cornell University <sup>[45][46][47]</sup> Cornell University paid tribute to its alumnus Ratan Tata, honouring his visionary leadership, philanthropy, and contributions to education and research, particularly through the Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition. <sup>[63]</sup>

## Board memberships and affiliations

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Ratan Tata was the interim chairman of Tata Sons. He headed the main two Tata trusts Sir Dorabji Tata and Allied Trusts and Sir Ratan Tata Trust and their allied trusts, with a combined stake of 66% in Tata Sons, Tata group's holding company.<sup>[64]</sup>

He served in various capacities in organisations in India and abroad. He was a member of Prime Minister's 'Council on Trade and Industry' and the 'National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council'. He was on the jury panel of Pritzker Architecture Prize<sup>[65]</sup> – considered to be one of the world's premier architecture prizes.



Ratan at TCS Story Launch

Over the years, Tata had served on the Cornell University Board of Trustees, personally advising the school's administration in matters of international involvement, particularly regarding projects connected to India. More broadly, Tata had served on the board's Academic Affairs, Student Life, and Development Committees. In 2013 he was named Cornell Entrepreneur of the Year.<sup>[66]</sup>

He was a director on the boards of Alcoa Inc., Mondelez International<sup>[67]</sup> and Board of Governors of the East–West Center. He was also a member of the board of trustees of University of Southern California, Harvard Business School Board of Dean's Advisors, X Prize<sup>[68]</sup> and Cornell University. He was a member on the board of International Advisory Council at Bocconi University.<sup>[69]</sup>

He was on the advisory board of Hakluyt & Co, an international consultancy company.<sup>[70]</sup>

In 2013, he was appointed to the board of trustees of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.<sup>[71]</sup>

In February 2015, Ratan took an advisory role at Kalari Capital, a venture capital firm founded by Vani Kola.<sup>[72]</sup>

In October 2016, Tata Sons removed Cyrus Mistry as its chairman, nearly 4 years after he took over the reins of the over \$100 billion conglomerate, Ratan Tata made a comeback, taking over the company's interim boss for 4 months.<sup>[73]</sup> On 12 January 2017, Natarajan Chandrasekaran was named as the chairman of Tata Sons, a role he assumed in February 2017.<sup>[74]</sup>

## Personal life and death

Tata never married and had no children. In 2011, he stated, "I came close to getting married four times and each time I backed off in fear or for one reason or another."<sup>[75]</sup>

Tata was admitted to Breach Candy Hospital in critical condition and was under intensive care.<sup>[76]</sup> He died there at 23:30 IST on 9 October 2024, at the age of 86 due to age-related issues.<sup>[77][78]</sup> Following his death, the Government of Maharashtra and the Government of Jharkhand announced a day of mourning.

On 10 October, Tata was given a state funeral.<sup>[79]</sup> His last rites were conducted at the parisi crematorium at Worli. He was accorded with military and 21-gun salute during his final rites.<sup>[79][80]</sup> Mumbai Police delivered a ceremonial guard of honour and his body was wrapped in the Indian flag.<sup>[81]</sup>

## Honours and awards

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Ratan Tata received the Padma Bhushan in 2000 and Padma Vibhushan in 2008, the third and second highest civilian honours awarded by the Government of India.<sup>[82]</sup> Tata also received various state civilian honours such as 'Maharashtra Bhushan' in 2006 for his work in the public administration in Maharashtra and 'Assam Baibhav' in 2021 for his contribution towards furthering cancer care in Assam.<sup>[83]</sup>

Other awards include:



President Pratibha Patil presenting the Padma Vibhushan to Ratan Tata, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, in 2008

Year	Name	Awarding organisation	Ref.
2001	Honorary <u>Doctor of Business Administration</u>	<u>Ohio State University</u>	[84]
2004	<u>Medal of the Oriental Republic of Uruguay</u>	<u>Government of Uruguay</u>	[85]
	Honorary <u>Doctor of Technology</u>	<u>Asian Institute of Technology.</u>	[86]
2005	International Distinguished Achievement Award	<u>B'nai B'rith International</u>	[87]
	Honorary <u>Doctor of Science</u>	<u>University of Warwick.</u>	[88]
2006	Honorary Doctor of Science	<u>Indian Institute of Technology Madras</u>	[89]
	Responsible Capitalism Award	<u>For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST)</u>	[90]
2007	<u>Honorary Fellowship</u>	<u>The London School of Economics and Political Science</u>	[91]
	<u>Carnegie Medal of Philanthropy</u>	<u>Carnegie Endowment for International Peace</u>	[92]
2008	Honorary <u>Doctor of Law</u>	<u>University of Cambridge</u>	[93]
	Honorary Doctor of Science	<u>Indian Institute of Technology Bombay</u>	[94]
	Honorary Doctor of Science	<u>Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur</u>	[95]
	<u>Honorary Citizen Award</u>	<u>Government of Singapore</u>	[96][97]
	Honorary Fellowship	<u>The Institution of Engineering and Technology</u>	[98]
	Inspired Leadership Award	The Performance Theatre	[99]
2009	<u>Honorary Knight Commander of the Order of the British Empire (KBE)</u>	<u>Queen Elizabeth II</u>	[100]
	Life Time Contribution Award in Engineering for 2008	<u>Indian National Academy of Engineering</u>	[101]
	<u>Grand Officer of the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic</u>	<u>Government of Italy</u>	[102]
2010	Honorary Doctor of Law	<u>University of Cambridge</u>	[103]
	Hadrian Award	<u>World Monuments Fund</u>	[104]
	Oslo Business for Peace award	<u>Business for Peace Foundation</u>	[105]
	Legend in Leadership Award	<u>Yale University</u>	[106]
	Honorary Doctor of Laws	<u>Pepperdine University</u>	[107]
	Business for Peace Award	<u>Business for Peace Foundation</u>	[108]
	Business Leader of the Year	<u>The Asian Awards.</u>	[109]
2012	<u>Honorary Fellow</u> <sup>[4]</sup>	<u>The Royal Academy of Engineering</u> <sup>[4]</sup>	[110]
	Doctor of Business <i>honoris causa</i>	<u>University of New South Wales</u>	[111]



	Grand Cordon of the <u>Order of the Rising Sun</u>	<u>Government of Japan</u>	<sup>[112]</sup>
	Lifetime Achievement Award	<u>Rockefeller Foundation</u>	<sup>[113]</sup>
2013	International Member	U.S. National Academy of Engineering	<sup>[114]</sup>
	Transformational Leader of the Decade	Indian Affairs India Leadership Conclave 2013	<sup>[115]</sup>
	Ernst and Young Entrepreneur of the Year – Lifetime Achievement	<u>Ernst &amp; Young</u>	<sup>[116]</sup>
	Honorary Doctor of Business Practice	<u>Carnegie Mellon University</u>	<sup>[117]</sup>
2014	Honorary Doctor of Business	<u>Singapore Management University</u>	<sup>[118]</sup>
	<u>Sayaji Ratna Award</u>	<u>Baroda Management Association</u>	<sup>[119]</sup>
	Honorary Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the British Empire (GBE)	<u>Queen Elizabeth II</u>	<sup>[120]</sup> <sup>[121]</sup>
	Honorary <u>Doctor of Laws</u>	<u>York University, Canada</u>	<sup>[122]</sup>
2015	Honorary Doctor of Automotive Engineering	<u>Clemson University</u>	<sup>[123]</sup>
	<u>Sayaji Ratna Award</u>	Baroda Management Association, Honoris Causa, <u>HEC Paris</u>	<sup>[124]</sup>
2016	<u>Commander of the Legion of Honour</u>	<u>Government of France</u>	<sup>[125]</sup>
2018	Honorary <u>Doctor in Engineering</u>	<u>Swansea University</u>	<sup>[126]</sup> <sup>[127]</sup>
2022	Honorary <u>Doctor of Literature</u>	<u>HSNC University</u>	<sup>[128]</sup> <sup>[129]</sup>
2023	<u>Honorary Officer of the Order of Australia (AO)</u>	<u>King Charles III</u>	<sup>[130]</sup>
2023	Maharashtra Udyog Ratna	<u>Government of Maharashtra</u>	<sup>[131]</sup>

## In popular culture

*Mega Icons* (2018–2020), an Indian documentary television series on National Geographic about prominent Indian personalities, dedicated an episode to Ratan Tata's contributions.<sup>[132]</sup>

## See also

- Jamsetji Tata
- List of entities associated with Tata Group