TAMIL NADU

- Tamil writer Cho Dharman - was named among the 23 writers chosen for the Sahitya Akademi Award 2019
  
  - Cho Dharman won the prestigious award for his third Tamil novel ‘Sool’
  - The novel portrays environmental and ecological disasters in Tamil Nadu, particularly at Urulaikudi, a remote village in Tuticorin district.
  - It depicts the life of ordinary people, traditional agricultural practices and water management.
  - A native of Kovilpatti, known as karisal (black soil) region, Dharman’s novels and short stories deals about the plight of dalits in the region
  - The novel ‘Sool’ has captured the destruction of the waterbody (kanmaai) in the language of the Karisal bhoomi (rain-fed areas) of Kovilpatti.
  - Dharman has published three novels and four short story collections among others
  - Dharman also wrote a monograph of noted villupaattu artiste Pitchaikutti.
  - His novel ‘Koogai’ received critical acclaim and he was conferred the Iyal Award of the Canada-based Tamil Literary Garden for the novel.

- The Greater Chennai police - have launched a dedicated WhatsApp number, to further ensure safety of women and children in the city
  
  - Police have requested public to share details of places, situations and people that are insecure for women, girls and children through WhatsApp on 75300 01100.
  - Special officers have been assigned for the purpose, who would routinely check the messages sent at the number and assign officials.
In case of any emergency situations, more police personnel would be posted in places where women feel insecure.

Apart from the phone number, police have also provided a Facebook Messenger ID, an e-mail id and a postal address to access through different platforms.

While the Facebook Messenger ID is Chennai City Police (www.facebook.com/chennai.police) the e-mail ID is ‘edccwc.chennai@gmail.com’.

People can also write their grievances to Deputy Commissioner of Police, Crime against Women and Children Wing, Greater Chennai Police, Greams Road (Thousand Light Police Station campus) Thousand Lights, Chennai-600 006

- **Police Commissioner A.K. Viswanathan - launched Smart Traffic Patrol scooters and the Women Traffic Squad in Chennai on December 18**

- Two vehicles were allotted for Marina beach and one for Besant Nagar beach
- The Smart Traffic Patrol scooters are two-wheeled, self-balancing personal transporters, which will be used on service roads and pavements.
- Each such scooter is fitted with a speaker, siren and boxes to keep the belongings of policemen.
- The four Women Traffic Squads are aimed at handling women traffic violators.
- It was launched in four police districts with each comprising of a sub-inspector and four constables.

- **Mallika Srinivasan, Chairman of Tractors and Farm Equipment Limited (TAFE) - has been appointed to the Global Board of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce’s US-India Business Council (USIBC).**

- With the appointment, she joins a prestigious list of global CEOs and executives on USIBC’s 35-member board.
The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) - restored Cyrus Pallonji Mistry to the position of Executive Chairman at Tata Sons

- Cyrus mistry was sacked unceremoniously in 2016 from his position and Ratan Tata returned as the interim Chairman of the group
- A two-judge tribunal also announced that the appointment of N Chandrasekaran as the new executive chairman was consequently illegal

However, it has given a time period of four weeks for his ‘reinstatement’, during which Tata Sons can exercise the option to challenge the tribunal’s verdict before the Supreme Court.

- It also declared as illegal the conversion of Tata Sons Limited from a ‘public company’ to a ‘private company’ by the Registrar of Companies
- NCLAT restored Mistry’s directorship in four Tata companies, including TCS.

Cyrus Mistry restored as Tata Sons Chairman
A TIMELINE

Oct 24, 2016
Cyrus Mistry ousted from the post of Chairman of Tata Sons. Ratan Tata named as Interim Chairman

Dec 19, 2016
Mistry resigns from all firms of Tata Group

Dec 20, 2016
Two Mistry family-backed investment firms, Cyrus Investments and Sterling Investments Corporation, move NCLT Mumbai alleging oppression

Apr 17, 2017
NCLT Mumbai rejects a plea by the two investment firms that sought a waiver in the 10% ownership criteria

Feb 20, 2017
N Chandrasekaran, former CEO of Tata Consultancy Services, takes over as Chairman of Tata Sons

Feb 6, 2017
Mistry removed from post as a director of Tata Sons

Jul 9, 2018
NCLT dismisses Cyrus Mistry’s pleas challenging his removal as chairman of Tata Sons

Aug 3, 2018
Cyrus Mistry approached the National Company Law Appellate Law Tribunal (NCLAT)

May 23, 2019
NCLAT reserves its order after completing hearing in the matter

Dec 18, 2019
Cyrus Mistry restored as Executive Chairman of Tata Sons. However, NCLAT suspended implementation of the order for four weeks so that Tatas can file an appeal
Cyrus Mistry of the Shapoorji Pallonji family—the single largest shareholder in Tata Sons with 18.4%—was appointed as the sixth chairman of Tata Sons in December 2012.

He was the first chairman of the group, who does not belong to the Tata family.

Mistry had joined the group in 2006 and was appointed deputy chairman in November 2011.

After his removal, Mistry had launched legal proceedings against the group.

His previous plea challenging the removal was rejected by the NCLT in July 2018.

Scientists from India and UK – to start exploring the Chennai coast to study micro plastics and their impact on the marine environment for the first time as part of an all-India project.

The results from the study will help frame the National Marine Litter Policy that is set to curb dumping of waste into oceans.

The results from the study are expected to come in early 2020.

The study will be conducted jointly by Chennai-based National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), an MoES lab, and Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), UK.

The study is likely to commence in January or February 2020 following the requisite approval from the Centre and signing of MoU between the two labs.

After Chennai, the project will be extended to other parts of the country in the next 4 years.

Samples will be collected from the Cooum river, a location within the core Chennai coast and near Nemmili to the south of Chennai.

To begin with, Researchers from the two laboratories will dive into a depth of 10km into sea and drill the seabed to collect sediment samples at about one metre using a special pump.

Using the plastic particles collected from the sediments, the history of plastic deposited on the seabed and the rate of deterioration will be analysed.

Earlier, in September 2019, NCCR conducted a cleanup of 34 beaches across the country and collected nearly 35 tonnes of waste in two hours.
More than 2000 kg of waste was collected from three Chennai beaches — Elliot, Thiruvanmiyur and Kovalam during the drive.
The major source for marine pollution includes recreation and tourism, fishing and other general waste that flow into the sea through estuaries.

**INTERNATIONAL**

- China – commissions its first entirely home-built aircraft carrier, Shandong, at a naval base near the city of Sanya.

- The Shandong is the second Chinese aircraft carrier to enter service
- The first aircraft carrier, the Liaoning, was originally purchased from Ukraine and entirely refurbished.
- The ceremony was attended by the Chinese Premier Xi Jinping, who spearheads the drive to turn China into a naval power to dominate the waters of South China Sea and beyond
- The naval base in the island province of Hainan opens onto the South China Sea, where China is engaged in disputes over territory and undersea oil and gas resources
- China is already undertaking the construction of man-made islands in the South China Sea region that are equipped with airfields and missile batteries.

**INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS**

- Pakistan - has changed the name of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK) from Azad Kashmir to Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Services (JKAS).
- On its western front, it has started the fencing along the Durand Line “long disputed by Afghanistan”
- Both the moves of Pakistan are aimed to strengthen its claim on territories it has occupied in Afghanistan and India
- Ethnic Pashtu people from Afghanistan live on both sides of the 2,640 km long Durand Line, which the British drew to separate Pakistan from Afghanistan in 1947
- The drawing of the line was disputed by Afghanistan ever since it was created
- The Durand Line goes through several areas which are not controlled by Pakistan or Afghanistan
- Militants, drug and weapon smugglers and refugees move freely through these regions easily.
In fact, the US and Pakistan used the same regions to provide arms and train Afghan militants to defeat the Soviets in Afghanistan.

In the eastern front, Pakistan is now considering the option of integrating PoK with Pakistan as the fifth province of the country.

On the Indian side, Gilgit Baltistan, a part of Jammu and Kashmir, was already converted into a separate administrative unit by Pakistan in 1970.


The reorganization, also extended to Pakistan occupied Kashmir, includes Gilgit Baltistan and Aksai Chin

PERSONALITIES

- Donald Trump, the 45th President of America - has become the third President in the history of USA to be impeached.

The House of Representatives passed the motion by 229 votes against 197 on charges of misuse of power and obstruction in Congress.

If two-third members of Senate votes in the favor of impeachment, then the President can be removed from his office.

Trump is alleged to have illegally sought help from Ukraine to tarnish the image of his domestic rivals, including potential rival Joe Biden during the presidential election.

Before Trump, the impeachment process was held against Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton in 1998, but both leaders managed to save their seats.

Apart from these three Presidents, Richard Nixon resigned before the commencement of the impeachment proceedings in 1974 in the Watergate scandal

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- A newly incorporated star in the Solar System, HD 86081 - now known as ‘Bibha’ - gets a Bengali name which means ‘bright beam of light’.

Its accompanying exo-planet, HD86081b, also got an Indian name — Santamasa, which means ‘Clouded’ in Sanskrit.

The planet, similar to Jupiter, has the same massive size and is composed mostly of gas.

However, unlike Jupiter, Santamasa is the only planet circling the parent star.

It’s also much closer to its star than Jupiter is to the Sun — which makes it hot enough to melt iron and gold.

The new names were unveiled by the International Astronomical Union (IAU) on their 100th year anniversary as part of ‘Name ExoWorlds’ contest.
Countries around the world chose to allocate names to various planets and stars located outside the Solar System.
While Santamasa and Bibha were named by India, there was one other star that also got an Indian name.
WASP-72, named by Mauritius, will now be known as Diya — or an Oil lamp

**ECONOMY**

For the first time since inception, the 38th GST Council - switched to voting to decide on an issue on December 18, deviating from its tradition of taking decisions by consensus

Following a 21-7 vote, the panel of ministers, headed by FM Nirmala Sitharaman, decided on a 28% levy on all lotteries
With regard to lotteries, there is a dual rate regime at present, with state-run lotteries taxed at 12%, while state-authorised lotteries (run by private players) attracting a 28% tax rate.
Maharashtra and Puducherry were among the States who opposed the proposal for a uniform Tax, along with Kerala, as they are concerned about losses to state revenue
There were no proposals or discussion regarding overall GST rate changes at the meeting, with the focus on ‘revenue augmentation’ by the States and Centre
The other decisions were, however, taken through consensus
It includes the decision to exempt upfront payment for long-term lease of industrial or financial infrastructure plots by an entity with 20% or more government ownership.
Currently, the exemption is available to an entity with majority government ownership.
While this change will be effective January, the uniform levy on lotteries will be applicable from March 1, 2020
Besides, the council decided to tighten the norms for companies misusing tax refund or input tax credit provisions, while seeking to improve compliance
A one-time facility has been opened for entities that have not filed GSTR1 returns from July 2017 to November 2019 to submit their returns without paying penalty.
Those who do not comply even during the special window, which will be open till January 10, 2020, will not be able to issue e-way bills required for moving goods valued at over ₹50,000
AWARDS

- Writer, politician and diplomat Shashi Tharoor, Tamil writer Cho Dharman, and playwright Nand Kishore Acharya - were among 23 writers chosen for the Sahitya Akademi Award 2019

- Congress MP, Tharoor won the award for his book “An Era of Darkness: The British Empire in India” in the creative non-fiction section in English category.

- Tharoor’s book was published in 2016.
- Its British edition, titled “Inglorious Empire: What the British Did to India”, was published a year later.
- Overall, seven books of poetry, four novels, six short story collections and three essays and one each of non-fiction, autobiography and biography have won the awards this year.
- Seven books of poetry by Phukan Ch. Basumatary (Bodo), Nand Kishore Acharya (Hindi), Nilba A Khandekar (Konkani), Kumar Manish Arvind (Maithili), V Madhusoodanan Nair (Malayalam), Anuradha Patil (Marathi) and Penna Madhusudan (Sanskrit) have bagged the coveted award.
- Four novelists— Joysree Goswami Mahanta (Assamese), L Birmangol Singh (Beryl Thanga) (Manipuri), Cho Dharman (Tamil) and Bandi Narayana Swamy (Telugu)—also feature in the list.
- Awards have also been given to six books of short stories penned by Abdul Ahad Hajini (Kashmiri), Tarun Kanti Mishra (Odia), Kirpal Kazak (Punjabi), Ramsawroop Kisan (Rajasthani), Kali Charan Hembram (Santali) and Ishwar Moorjani (Sindhi).
- Vijaya (Kannada) and Shafey Kidwai (Urdu) have been cited for an autobiography and a biography. Three essayists, Chinmoy Guha (Bengali), Om Sharma Jandriari (Dogri) and Ratilal Borisagar (Gujarati), also feature in the list of awardees.
- The award winning books must have been published during the five years immediately preceding the year of award— between the period January 1, 2013 and December 31, 2017 – for this year’s award.
- The award in the form of a casket containing an engraved copper plaque, a shawl and ₹1 lakh
The award will be presented to the winners at a function in New Delhi on February 25, 2020 during the Akademi’s Festival of Letters.

Sahitya Akademi Awards is one of the highest literary awards in the country. It was instituted by Sahitya Akademi—India’s National Academy of Letters. The awards commemorate the exemplary works of literary merit published in any of the major Indian languages i.e. 24 languages, of which 22 are listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, along with English and Rajasthani.

**SPORTS**

- Indian spinner Kuldeep Yadav - has become the first Indian bowler to take two ODI hat-tricks in the second ODI against West Indies in Visakhapatnam on December 18, 2019.

- The 25-year-old took his first international hat-trick in 2017 against Australia.
- He is the fourth Indian to pick up an international hat-trick in 2019, after Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah and Deepak Chahar.
- Overall, Kuldeep Yadav’s recent record is the fifth instance of an Indian bowler delivering a hat-trick in One Day Internationals.
- Chetan Sharma was the first Indian bowler to pick up a hat-trick in ODIs, followed by Kapil Dev, Kuldeep Yadav and Mohammed Shami.
- Of these players - Chetan Sharma and Mohammed Shami - have picked up a hat-trick for India during the Cricket World Cup.
- With the second hat-trick, Kuldeep joins the elite list of bowlers- Wasim Akram, Saqlain Mushtaq, Chaminda Vaas, Lasith Malinga and Trent Boult- who have picked up more than one hat-trick in One Day Internationals.
- Malinga is the only bowler among them to have picked up three 3 ODI hat-tricks, whereas others have picked up 2 ODI hat-tricks each.
- A hat-trick is when a bowler picks up three wickets in three consecutive deliveries.
# THE TATAS COURTROOM BATTLE OVER CYRUS MISTRY – A REPORT

## BOARDROOM TO COURTROOM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept 1, 2006</td>
<td>Cyrus Mistry joins Tata Sons board as director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov 2011</td>
<td>Mistry named as next Tata Sons executive chairman, takes charge in Dec 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct 24, 2016</td>
<td>Tata Sons removes Mistry as its chairman</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec 20</td>
<td>Cyrus Investments and Sterling Investment, companies owned by the Mistry family, move NCLT-Mumbai — on complaint of minority shareholder oppression and mismanagement — against Tata Sons, Ratan Tata &amp; 20 others, including directors of Tata Sons and trustees of Tata Trusts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 3, 2017</td>
<td>Tata Trusts calls a meeting of shareholders on Feb 6 to remove Mistry as its director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan 12</td>
<td>N Chandrasekaran appointed Tata Sons chairman, to take charge from Feb 21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan 23</td>
<td>Mistry files</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept 15</td>
<td>Tata Sons calls meeting of shareholders on Sept 21 to convert itself from a deemed public co to a pvt ltd co. The move will place restrictions on Mistry cos from selling stake to external investors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 17</td>
<td>NCLT denies waiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apr 21</td>
<td>Petitioners appeal to NCLT against waiver denial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept 21</td>
<td>A majority of Tata Sons' shareholders approve the resolution. The proposal also requires nod from NCLT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb 6</td>
<td>Tata Sons removes Mistry as its director</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>NCLT says original complaint not maintainable as petitioners don't have requisite shareholding of 10% to file plea under Companies Act. Though they own equity shares (18.4%) of Tata Sons, their holding falls below 10% when preference shares are taken into account. Mistry firms seek waiver of eligibility criterion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sep 3</td>
<td>Petitioners amend plea to include Tata Sons' move of becoming a pvt ltd co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 2, 2018</td>
<td>Hearing at NCLT concludes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 9</td>
<td>NCLT dismisses Cyrus Mistry's lawsuit against Tata Sons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 3</td>
<td>Mistry moves appellate authority NCLT against Tata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aug 24</td>
<td>NCLT says Tata can't force Mistry to sell stake, but doesn't stay conversion to pvt co</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec 18, 2019</td>
<td>NCLAT restores Mistry as executive chairman of Tata Sons, but suspends implementation for 4 weeks in order to provide time for Tatas to appeal to the Supreme Court</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
'CHANGE FROM PUBLIC TO PVT CO UNLAWFUL, REVERSE IT'

NCLAT said “the manner in which Mistry was suddenly and hastily removed without any reason and in absence of any discussion at Tata Sons board’s Oct 24, 2016 meeting and his subsequent removal as a director in group companies” amounted to a “clear case of prejudicial and oppressive action by company, Ratan Tata, Nitin Nohria and N A Soonawala and other nominee directors”

- While he has to wait 4 weeks, or for an SC order, before his reinstatement as exec chairman of Tata Sons, he has to immediately reinstated as director of four Tata companies — Tata Sons, Tata Industries, TCS and Tata Steel
- Ratan Tata and Tata Trusts nominees on the board of the holding co “shall desist from taking any decision in advance that requires a majority decision of the board of directors or in AGM”
- Tata Sons, its board & shareholders barred from exercising power under Article 75 of co’s articles of association — empowering it to force a shareholder to sell out – against Mistry firms & other minority members
- Decision to change Tata Sons from ‘public co’ to ‘private co’ declared illegal and set aside. It had been taken to block a minority shareholder, which is what the Mistrys are in the group holding co with a stake of 18.4%, from selling to a third party
- NCLAT called certain observations made by NCLT against Mistry “undesirable and based on extraneously sourced material not on record”

Cyrus Mistry leaves his office in Colaba while Ratan Tata exits Bombay House on Wednesday

HOW THE TWO SIDES BUILT THEIR CASE

THE MISTRY CAMP

- The main theme of Tata Sons’ conduct is the consistent and steady squeezing out of Cyrus Mistry and his firm's rights in a manner lacking probity
- Mistry’s sudden removal as chairman must be seen in the context of his effort to remedy past acts of mismanagement inherent and opening embarrassing issues and instituting formal governance to regulate role of Tata Trusts, said counsels C A Sundaram and Janak Dwarkadas
- Ratan Tata & N A Soonawala kept interfering in affairs of Tata Sons
- Attempt was made to convert Tata Sons into a pvt ltd co when these proceedings were sub judice, in a marked departure from long legacy of its being a public ltd co having revenue in excess of $100bn and control of over 100 operating cos, including 29 listed and public cos
- Consistent conduct expropriating the rights and interests of the appellants in every manner and form has given ground to a legitimate apprehension of expropriation of the appellants’ shareholding by abuse of Article 75

THE TATA CAMP

- Ratan Tata’s counsel Harish Salve denied allegations against him. Salve and Tata Sons counsel A M Singhvi said allegations of removal of Mistry are in nature of ‘director complaints’ which cannot be raised in a petition under section 241 of the Companies Act
- Actions of Tata Sons are as per provisions of Articles of Association, Companies Act
- Mistry’s was a purely professional appointment as chairman. It is not an entrenched right. His removal was not on account of some personal ill-will against him and cannot be canvassed as case of oppression or prejudice
- His removal did not impinge on any right enjoyed by him as shareholder of Tata Sons
- Singhvi said there are no provisions in the articles which entitles Mistry to participate in management of Tata Sons or nominate any directors to the board. Tata Sons is not quasi-partnership, by any stretch of imagination
WHAT IS NCLT & NCLAT?

NCLT: First stage for disputes & Company Law
- Issues related to a co's functioning, corporate governance & management are taken to a special quasi-judicial body called the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)
- The Centre in June 2016 set up NCLTs in several regions across India to provide a simpler, swifter mechanism for accessible dispute resolution
- There are 16 NCLT benches, with the principal one in New Delhi and a regional bench each at Ahmedabad, Allahabad, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai, Cuttack, Jaipur, Kochi, Amravati and Indore
- NCLT has powers to consider disputes relating to solvency of a co, amalgamation, demergers, restructuring, etc. NCLT can grant moratorium from payment of debts and appoint interim resolution professionals (officers, usually CAs, who take over running of a co in liquidation)

NCLAT: The second stage
- Any appeal against an NCLT order has to be filed with the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), which is headquartered in New Delhi
- It is headed by a retired Supreme Court judge. At present, Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya is the chairman of NCLAT

Supreme Court: The final stage
- An appeal against the NCLAT's judgment and orders can be filed before the SC. Such an appeal can be filed within 45 days