

Carefree and intent, responsible and reckless, an all-in-one man

By Tarun Das

There are multiple dimensions to a tribute to Rahul Bajaj, capturing 46 years of personal associ-



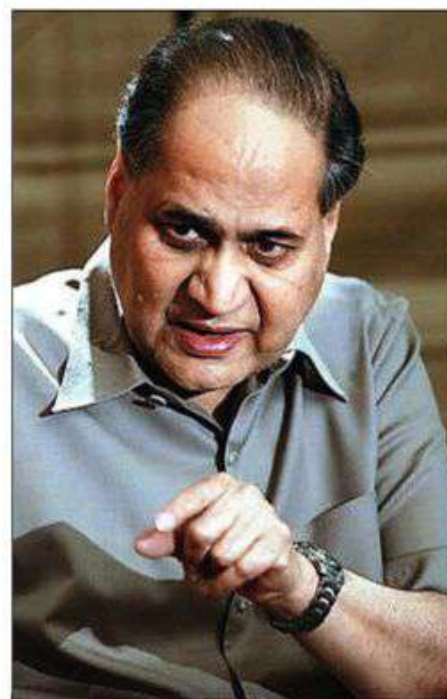
ation. But, let me focus on just four dimensions to this lion of a man who will remain a legend. In corporate India, there are no two leaders quite like him. Carefree and intent, responsible and reckless, serious and light-hearted—all-in-one man.

First, his passionate commitment to India and its industry. Belonging to a family with great history and tradition, Rahul was an Indian in every sense of the word and this extended to his determination that Indian industry should be strong, competitive and global. "I am a proud Indian" was a statement one

heard him say numerous times. Side by side, he believed Indian corporates must have a level-playing field to compete, grow and prosper. The energy, excitement and enthusiasm devoted to promoting and supporting country and corporates were unique.

Second, to lead a corporate of quality and integrity, with a clear conscience. Rahul was scrupulous in his policies and processes relating to his companies. The corporate sector is not always respected and applauded by society, but his rigorous application of business ethics earned him both envy and quiet applause. These strengths were deeply ingrained in him handed down by his father and grandfather. The times had changed but the man rigidly stuck to his values.

Third, institution-building. His deep involvement with CII since 1976 and as Founder Trustee of Ananta



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since 2006. He stood strong for adherence to best institutional practices and conventions but went beyond in his endowment of the unique Kamalnayan Bajaj Fellowship to develop values-based leaders, who contribute to society. He always made time to go into detail about the course followed by the institutions he

was involved with.

Fourth, and finally, giving back to society. Rahul led the CSR decision-making in his group and supported the livelihood and skills development of persons in leprosy colonies in Maharashtra, a little-known fact. And, multiple other institutions, especially so in Wardha. Commitment to education, health, children, and many other areas of great need received his personal attention, leading to the Jarnalal Bajaj Foundation. This entire area of work, contributing to society from the companies, the Foundation and the family was close to his heart.

Rahul Bajaj the Legend leaves behind a huge bank of goodwill, warmth and affection. A very humane person, extremely articulate, he will be long remembered as a lion of a man.

The author is former director general, CII