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| the times of india | | | | |
| ratan-tata-100708444-16x9_1.jpg (690×388)  Ratan Tata was sent to a company steel plant in Jamshedpur in eastern India where he spent a couple of years on the factory floor before becoming the technical assistant to the manager. In the early 70s, he took over two ailing group firms, one making radios and TVs and the other textiles. He managed to turn around the first, and had mixed results with the textile company.  In 1991, JRD Tata, who had led the group for over half a century, appointed Ratan Tata as his successor over senior company aspirants for that position. "If you were to find the publications of that time, the criticism was personal - JRD got clubbed with nepotism and I was branded as the wrong choice," Ratan Tata later said.  Peter Casey writes that under Ratan Tata's leadership, a "great but rather stodgy Indian manufa during the [British Raj](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_Raj), into a [Parsi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parsis" \o "Parsis) [Zoroastrian](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoroastrianism) family, on 28 December 1937.[[12]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-13) He was the son of [Naval Tata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Tata) (who was born in [Surat](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Surat) and later adopted into the Tata family), and Soo  Ratan-Tata-Award-758x505.jpg (758×505) |  | | **Ratan Naval Tata**[[a]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-3) (28 December 1937 – 9 October 2024) was an Indian industrialist and philanthropist. He served as the chairman of [Tata Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tata_Group) and [Tata Sons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tata_Sons) from 1991 to 2012 and he held the position of interim chairman from October 2016 to February 2017.[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-4)[[4]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-5) In 2000, he received the [Padma Bhushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Bhushan), the third highest civilian honour in India, followed by the [Padma Vibhushan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Padma_Vibhushan), the country's second highest civilian honour, in 2008.[[5]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-List_of_Fellows-6)  Ratan Tata was the son of [Naval Tata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naval_Tata), who was adopted by [Ratanji Tata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratanji_Tata" \o "Ratanji Tata), son of [Jamshedji Tata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jamshedji_Tata" \o "Jamshedji Tata), the founder of the [Tata Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tata_Group). He graduated from [Cornell University College of Architecture](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cornell_University_College_of_Architecture,_Art,_and_Planning) with a bachelor's degree in architecture.[[6]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-7) He had also attended the [Harvard Business School (HBS)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harvard_Business_School) Advanced Management program in 1975.[[7]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-8) He joined the Tata Group in 1962,[[8]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ratan_Tata#cite_note-9) starting on the shop floor of [Tata Steel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tata_Steel). He later succeeded [J. R. D. Tata](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._D._Tata) as chairman of Tata Sons upon the latter's retirement in 1991. During his tenure, the Tata Group acquired [Tetley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tetley), [Jaguar Land Rover](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaguar_Land_Rover), and [Corus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Corus_Group_plc), 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. | |
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| RATAN TATA’S BUSINESS STATEGY | | | | |

Back in 1955, teachers at Ratan Tata’s Riverdale Country School wrote in his yearbook, “Ratan’s charming and unassuming character is sure to bring him success. We are sure that if he continues to develop his charm and intelligence to the full, he will have a happy and useful life.” It sounds like Tata, who will turn 84 on 28 December, made quite an impression as a teenager, but surely even his teachers could not have imagined the enormous impact he would have on his home continent.

The recent welcoming of [Air India](https://www.tata.com/) back into the Tata fold certainly rounded and strengthened its transport portfolio. However, the return of the airline has deep significance for the Tata Sons Chairman Emeritus – as a way of honouring his forefathers, as it was founded by his uncle and mentor Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhoy Tata in 1932 as Tata Airlines.

Indeed, the first plane flown by the airline was piloted by JRD himself, a passion which is shared by Tata, who would regularly fly himself to meetings. After World War II, the airline became a public limited company, but since buying it for INR180 billion (US$2.4 billion), the fleet is back under the Tata name and plans to revive its [fortunes](https://www.forbes.com/profile/ratan-tata/?sh=54bea6b1027c) after it was hit by devastating losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic are in motion.

“Air India, under the leadership of Mr JRD Tata had, at one time, gained the reputation of being one of the most prestigious airlines in the world,” Tata said in a statement following the acquisition, adding it now has “the opportunity of regaining the image and reputation it enjoyed in earlier years”.

## **Humble beginnings**

Taking over and transforming companies has been a hallmark of Tata’s [business career](https://www.theceomagazine.com/business/finance/mukesh-ambani-lessons/) and something that, under his guidance, helped markedly increase the fortunes of the Tata Group. Jamsetji Tata began the family business in 1868 when he started a trading company. He then opened a textile mill and broke with the norm, offering workers pensions and paid accident compensation.

The Tata Group now operates in more than 100 countries across six continents, and has companies in every area of society, including energy, automotive, engineering and information technology. In 2020–21, the revenue of Tata companies was US$103 billion, with more than 800,000 employees. The 29 publicly listed Tata enterprises have a combined market capitalisation of US$242 billion.

Despite growing up in a luxurious home and with qualifications including a degree in architecture and structural engineering from Cornell University and the Harvard Advanced Management Program to his name, Tata began his career on the shop floor of Telco (now Tata Motors) in 1962 and then Tata Steel, where he shovelled limestone and was a team member in the blast furnaces.

*“Our grandmother taught us to retain dignity at all costs, a value that’s stayed with me until today.” – Ratan Tata*

By 1981 he was Chairman of Tata Industries and heir apparent to JRD, becoming Chairman of Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, from 1991 until his retirement in 2012. During his tenure, the Group’s revenues grew, totalling more than US$100 billion in 2011–12.

A visionary, under his guidance the company became known for its ‘reverse colonialism’ as it bought tea firm Tetley for US$407 million in 2000, Anglo-Dutch Corus Group for US$12 billion in 2007 and Jaguar Land Rover for US$2.3 billion in 2008. The company also bought up hotels, chemical companies, communications networks and energy providers around the world.

## **Single life**

When a career has been forged within a family business, the pressure to produce an heir to hand the reins over to is often great, but Tata has resisted the need to conform and remains a bachelor. Many have speculated on why he is single, often blaming his parents’ broken marriage, but he has revealed that a wedding was once on the cards.

“After college, I landed a job at an architecture firm in LA, where I worked for two years,” he wrote in a post for Facebook page ‘Humans of Bombay’. “I fell in love and almost got married. But at the same time, I had made the decision to move back [to India], at least temporarily, since I had been away from my grandmother who wasn’t keeping too well for almost seven years.

### ratan-tata-6.jpg (900×750) ratan_tata.jpg (600×450)

After completing his education, he joined the Tata Group in 1961. His early roles involved working in various Tata companies, gaining valuable experience in different sectors. Later he succeeded J.R.D. Tata as chairman of Tata Sons upon the latter's retirement in 1991. At the time, the Indian economy was undergoing significant liberalization, presenting both opportunities and challenges for Indian businesses. Under Ratan Tata's leadership, the Tata Group seized these opportunities and embarked on a period of rapid growth and diversification.