

# India's Ambani brothers sign US\$2.1bn telecoms deal

MUMBAI, INDIA: India's billionaire Ambani brothers announced on Friday a US\$2.1 billion agreement to share telecom tower infrastructure, cementing a reconciliation in the once-warring family.

Reliance Jio Infocomm, the telecom unit of Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries, signed the agreement with Reliance Communications, the flagship firm of the Anil Ambani group, to share the latter's telecom tower equipment, a joint statement said.

The move will help Reliance Industries to accelerate the roll-out of its high-speed fourth generation (4G) telecom services, the companies said.

The aggregate value of the deal is over 120bn rupees (US\$2.1bn) for the duration of the agreement, which was not specified, the statement added.

"Under the terms of the agreement, Reliance Jio Infocomm will utilise up to 45,000 ground and rooftop-based towers across RCom's nation-wide network for accelerated roll-out of its state-of-the-art 4G services," the firms said.

In April, the two firms had signed a US\$220m deal to share their fibre-optic communications networks.

The latest agreement also allows the two companies to build more towers jointly at new locations, they said.

There have been increasing signs of warming ties between the brothers since their fight for control of Reliance erupted after their rags-to-riches father, Dhirubhai, died in 2002 without leaving a will.

The pair ended up splitting the Reliance group, which was India's most valuable listed company.

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge