

India's Ambanis ink \$2.1b telecoms deal

AFP, Mumbai

India's billionaire Ambani brothers announced yesterday a \$2.1-billion deal to share telecom tower infrastructure, cementing a reconciliation between the once-warring siblings.

The agreement is the another tangible sign that the two are patching up relations since their bitter fight for control of Reliance erupted after their rags-to-riches father, Dhirubhai, died in 2002 without leaving a will.

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 long-awaited high-speed fourth generation (4G) telecom services, the companies said.

The aggregate value of the deal is more than 120 billion rupees (\$2.1 billion) 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 signed a \$220 million deal to share their fibre-optic communications networks.

The latest agreement also allows the two companies to

jointly build more towers at new locations, they said.

"The deal is positive for RCom, to help it reduce its debt over a longer-term," Ankita Somani, analyst at Mumbai's Angel Broking, told AFP.

RCom has been staggering under a debt of more than \$6 billion.

Reliance rose 0.55 percent to 796.65 rupees while RCom was down 1.1 percent at 116.75 rupees, after a sharp recent rally Friday.

The brothers have been increasing their corporate collaboration since they publicly signalled the end of their dispute with a joint appearance in December 2011 to dedicate a memorial to their late father in his home town of Chorwad, in western Gujarat state.

Girl raped

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captivity, law enforcers rescued her on May 30, 55 days after the abduction, from a remote house in Konabari of Cox's Bazar's Chakaria upazila.

She told a magistrate later that her neighbour Manik, his younger brother Javed, cousins Faruk and Kaiser, and uncle Harun-ur-Rashid abducted her when she was returning home from school on April 6, said Sub-Inspector Abdul Aziz of Tongi Police Station.

Aziz said, "Manik 'married' her calling in a kazi [marriage registrar]. She was forced to sign a paper where she was renamed Ayesha."

The five along with Harun's wife had leased two rooms next to the victim's home one and a half months before the kidnap and they disappeared on April 6, said neighbours.

They said the youths called themselves fish traders but Sub-Inspector Aziz claimed that they were members of a gang of thieves.

Officer-in-Charge Ranjit Barua of Chakaria Police Station in Cox's Bazar said they had found only the girl and Manik's ailing mother in the remote house she was confined to and that was why they could not arrest anyone.

The girl secured A+ in the recent Primary Education Terminal Exams.

Taxmen

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approval from the commissioners.

In addition, the government has brought big partnership firms under the tax net for the first time in a bid to increase the tax base and prevent tax evasion.

Firms with Tk 50 lakh or above in gross turnover or receipts will have to pay tax at a rate of 0.5 percent.

"These firms are not registered as companies but run on a partnership basis. We have included these types of entities to increase the tax net," said the NBR official.

To bring more professionals like doctors, lawyers and architects under the net, the revenue authority will tax professionals with no taxpayer's identification number (TIN) at 15 percent on commission or fees. But those who have a TIN will continue to pay 10 percent on commission or fees.

In the first move of its kind, the tax authority is going to tax people with more than one car; the owner, either individually or in joint ownership, will face an additional tax of 50 percent.

Finance Minister AMA Muhith also hiked the surcharge on people with net assets in excess of Tk 10 crore; they will have to bear an additional 15 percent on tax payable. The 10 percent surcharge on tax payable for people with net wealth worth of Tk 2 crore and above will continue.

Muhith also increased the package VAT for small traders, wholesalers and shopkeepers, in bids to reach the revenue target set at Tk 136,090 crore for the next fiscal year.

For salaried persons and small businesses, the revenue department has eased the process of filing for tax returns. They may find it less cumbersome to fill out 2 pages instead of 8 pages at present.

Service holders will be allowed to adjust the advance taxes paid for personal vehicles or others with the payable tax.

The government has also started establishing a data centre at the Central Tax Survey Zone, Muhith said in his budget speech.

Information from Bangladesh Road Transport Authority, the registration offices, city development authority and other offices would be stored in the data centre.

"This will enable a tax officer sitting in his/her office to know the details of a taxpayer just by using his/her name and TIN," he said.

Dismal progress in e-governance

ABDULLAH MAMUN and SHAMIM ASHRAF

Bangladesh is on track to be e-governed by 2014, said Finance Minister AMA Muhith. However, with a year and a half to go, only Jessore has been declared digital so far.

The minister on Thursday proposed establishing an e-governance ICT Skill Trust Fund. He increased the ICT ministry's development budget to Tk 530 crore from the last fiscal year's Tk 137 crore.

Jessore became a model by enabling the e-governance tools. Different public offices and institutions there are connected through internet and services are delivered through electronic means. People even can even place queries and get appointments with officials via e-mail or text. The deputy commissioner's office can provide land related documents within a week.

E-governance is the application of Information and Communication Technology for delivering government services. Through e-governance, government services are made available to the citizens in a convenient, efficient and transparent manner. Using e-governance tools the government interacts with citizens, businesses and even its bodies.

The government's vision of Digital Bangladesh by 2021 has brought about a number of significant changes in the last four years, such as taking information services to the grassroots, digitising financial transactions and automation of many institutions.

But several initiatives, like introducing 3G technology commercially, digitalisation of land offices, establishing high-tech and software technology parks, were not quite seen through to implement.

Several institutions, the Bangladesh Association of Software and Information Services (BASIS) for instance, had offered to help but the government did not show any interest even though 83-87 percent of court cases were related to land disputes.

Urging the opposition

Mustafa Jabbar, an ICT expert, said, "The main barrier is the mentality of the bureaucrats. The secretariat could not be transformed at all. Money is no problem but the problem is with the attitude of top officials."

Projects like low-cost Doel laptops and purchase of train tickets via mobile and internet turned out to be flops due to the government's lack of preparedness and planning.

Jabbar said, "Creating digitisation awareness among people remains the foremost achievement of the government and Digital Bangladesh vision is still the focus of the budget lecture, which is positive."

Experts, however, said the government stumbled in the matter of achieving targets over the years due to improper direction and planning. As such, how the government will establish e-governance by 2014 remains a big question.

Even though there had been some headway made towards the digital dream, notably Information and Service Centres in around 4,500 union parishads, online tendering system, mobile banking, getting 80 percent of the remittance through digital legal means, half-hearted moves let the government down in many areas.

The digitalisation of land offices in the country is one of the areas facing massive delays in implementation. Some projects are finally on their way but the pace remains slow.

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Retroreflective number plates and radio frequency identification tags for vehicles were introduced last year but the authorities are yet to set up any back-end system for monitoring.

Two years into allowing mobile phone users to buy train tickets via text messages, the government last December introduced online ticket sale.

But none of the options allows passengers to board trains without getting a printout of the ticket from the stations, which makes buying tickets online rather pointless.

According to the telecom regulator, the number of internet users has risen to more than 3 crore from 6 lakh four years ago and 95 percent of them use mobile internet. But slow Internet speed remains an issue.

The government was supposed to provide 3G licence to carriers to boost internet speed. The carriers are ready for 3G but the government is yet to hold the auction for frequency allocation.

The rise in number mobile phone users from 4.46 crore in 2008 to 10 crore now shows tremendous growth in the mobile telecommunications industry.

Around 60 lakh people use mobile banking since its introduction in 2011, evident that the private sector has moved ahead but the government's pace is slow.

Iftekharuzzaman, executive director of Transparency International Bangladesh, said, "Being the government's flagship agenda, the Digital Bangladesh project could not fulfil public expectations due to lack of strategic direction. It remains a political agenda."

Munir Hasan, general secretary of Bangladesh Open Source Network, described the digital dream as a "half-hearted move".

Cambodia

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Sokha, deputy head of the Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP), saying the Tuol Sleng prison was run by Vietnamese soldiers who ousted the Khmer Rouge rather than the regime.

Around 15,000 men, women and children were tortured and executed at the prison, also known as S-21, in central Phnom Penh.

Kem Sokha has admitted it is his voice on the recording but alleges it was edited to say the contentious comments, a claim backed by the CNRP which alleges the tape was aired "to cause political trouble" ahead of a general election in July.

Lawmakers, mostly from the ruling party, unanimously approved the law -- which has only five articles -- after around an hour of debate on Friday.

The law will prosecute anyone who "does not acknowledge, denies or diminishes... crimes committed under the Democratic Kampuchea", the draft said, referring to the brutal regime's official name.

Lawmaker Cheam Yeap told parliament that denial of the crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge was "a serious insult to the souls" of those who died under its rule.

The CNRP said it was "very disappointed" that the ruling party and parliament had rushed through the legislation, adding the law should also ban former Khmer Rouge leaders from senior office.

Hun Sen and several other top officials were Khmer Rouge cadres.

Critics also say the law may jeopardise painstaking efforts to heal the country.

"You don't need the law to protect the truth of what happened during the Khmer Rouge," Youk Chhang, director of the Documentation Centre of Cambodia which researches Khmer Rouge atrocities, told AFP.

Hun Sen has repeatedly warned that the country risks civil war and even a return to the ruthless regime if the opposition wins polls.

"Chaos will surely happen if they really win.... I would like to send a message out that Pol Pot's regime will return," he said last month.

The CNRP has only a slim chance of gaining enough votes to oust Hun Sen, who has ruled the country since 1985.

Led by "Brother Number One" Pol Pot, who died in 1998, the Khmer Rouge from 1975-79 wiped out nearly a quarter of Cambodia's population through starvation, overwork or execution in a bid to create an agrarian utopia.

London asked

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measures to honour the Bangladeshi court's order.

Sources at the foreign ministry told The Daily Star that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was completely mum about Tarique.

A diplomat of the British High Commission in Dhaka

on condition of anonymity said Tarique had recently travelled to Saudi Arabia.

Foreign Minister Dipu Moni on June 4 described Tarique Rahman as a fugitive private citizen and a non-political person. She said the Bangladesh government had informed the UK government and the

Interpol about the warrant of arrest for Tarique.

Without mentioning Tarique's name, she also told a press conference that the BNP leader had gone abroad by giving up his political post and signing an undertaking that he would not get involved in politics anymore.

4 policemen

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Amin Sarkar with Savar Police Station around 11:30pm the same day, said Mostafa Kamal, officer-in-charge of the station.

Inspector Aminur Rahman sought seven days' remand for each of the four after producing them before the court.

Another accused, assistant sub-inspector Akidul Islam, who had been absconding, got arrested from Gabtoli last night, police say.

Shamim, a 30-year-old land broker, was tortured after plain-clothes cops from Ashulia and Savar police stations picked him up along with his nephew Sohul, 28, at Hemayetpur around 10:30 pm Wednesday, his family members said.

Police demanded Tk 2 lakh for his release and threatened to implicate him in serious crimes if the money was not paid, they alleged.

Around 6:00am on Thursday, some police-

men, who also were in plainclothes, took Shamim to Mitford Hospital in Old Dhaka and left the scene hurriedly, sources say. Doctors declared him dead after he was taken to the emergency unit.

The magistrate's inquest report has found injury marks on different parts of his body, including his eyes, hands and legs while Sir Salimullah Medical College morgue sources said Shamim was beaten to death.

Quoting Sohul, Amin said police tortured the duo confining them to separate but adjacent rooms at a police outpost of Hemayetpur. Sohul heard Shamim shouting, "I am begging for my life. I will arrange your money."

Meanwhile, police have formed two three-member committees to investigate the incident, Dhaka Superintendent of Police Habibur Rahman told The Daily Star yesterday.

One probe body is headed by Additional DIG of Dhaka Range Mizanur Rahman and another by Additional SP Faruque Hossain.

The SP said the five cops and sub-inspector Sajjad Hossain of Savar Police station have been suspended in this connection.

Also yesterday, after namaz-e-janaza of Shamim at Hemayetpur bus stand, family members and locals demonstrated and staged a human chain on Dhaka-Aricha highway, suspending traffic for more than 15 minutes.

Attending the namaz-e-janaza around 10:30am, State Minister for Law Quamrul Islam assured the family that those responsible for Shamim's death would be given exemplary punishment.

The death of Shamim, son of Abdul Halim Sarkar, comes only about two weeks after the custodial death of a youth in Sonargaon upazila in Narayanganj.

Muhith terms it

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has gone through a debacle. That is why we took the initiative. Besides, the housing sector is not an unproductive sector. The land could be an unproductive sector."

Muhith said the developed world fuel their economic growth by improving the housing sector. "Our housing sector does not contribute much to our growth. It will not be bad if our housing sector contributes more."

He said the government has devised a system to legalise undisclosed money. "Any individual ... can legalise their undisclosed money by paying fines."

Muhith also said undisclosed money could not be recovered through raids. "Different economic strategies need to be adopted."

In Bangladesh, undisclosed money accounts for between 40 and 62 percent of the gross domestic product, according to the finance minister.

He said Bangladesh would have to introduce taxpayer-friendly policies, plug loopholes and cut corruption to prevent people from keeping their wealth undisclosed.

Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) came down heavily on the government for allowing legalisation of


undisclosed money in the proposed budget.

The think-tank said the amnesty for buying flats and plots of land would act against the growth of industries as prices of land, which is already high, might skyrocket.

"The scope for whitening black money is morally unacceptable and economic benefits remain questionable," the CPD said in its budget analysis.

"The opportunity benefits only some particular sectors," it said.

Debarpriya Bhattacharya, distinguished fellow of CPD, was surprised to see the amnesty was given to the unproductive sector.



Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF)
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Invitation for Bid (IFB) for Providing Security Services at Office Bhaban and Premises situated at Agargaon and Shamoli, Dhaka

- Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) was established by the Government of Bangladesh for poverty alleviation through employment generation. PKSF now invites sealed bids from reputed firms for providing security services at Office Bhaban and Premises of PKSF situated at Agargaon and Shamoli, Dhaka-1207, for the FY 2013-2014.
- Interested firms are requested to collect the bid documents from the reception, PKSF, Agargaon, Dhaka upon payment of a non-refundable fee of Tk.500/- (five hundred) in cash before **4:00 pm** on any working day by **June 12, 2013**.
- Bid documents must be delivered to the office of the undersigned on or before **3:00 pm** on **June 13, 2013**.
- Bid documents will be opened in presence of the bidders or representatives of the bidders who might choose to attend at 3:15 pm on June 13, 2013 at the office of PKSF. PKSF reserves all rights to accept or reject any or all the bid document(s) without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Deputy Managing Director (Admin & Finance)



ESSENTIAL DRUGS COMPANY LIMITED
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INTERNATIONAL TENDER NOTICE

EDCL invites International Tender for Supply of Pharmaceutical Raw and Packing Material on C&F© Chittagong By Sea and Dhaka By Air basis :-

S/L No.	Tender No. Date	Name of the Item	Cost of Tender Schedule	Last date of Closing & opening
01.	IMP / R&PM / SEM / 72 / 2012-2013 dated 05/06/2013	Pharmaceutical Raw and Packing Materials: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cefixime Trihydrate (Compacted) USP Cefixime Trihydrate (Micronised) USP Fluconazole USP Cetirizin HCL Domperidone Maleate BP Sodium Chloride BP (Pyrozen Free) Thiamine HCl BP Peppermint Oil BP Unprinted Alu. Alu Blister (Bottom) Foil Width: 238 mm. Unprinted Alu. Alu Blister (Bottom) Foil Width: 200 mm. 	Tk. 1,500.00/set Equivalent to US\$ 19.00 Non-refundable	Closing : 27/06/2013 at 3.00 PM Opening : 27/06/2013 at 3.15 PM

Tender schedule will be sold from the Accounts Department of **Essential Drugs Company Limited, Dhaka** on payment as stated above during office hours on all working days (except Friday, Saturday and Govt. Holidays). No tender schedule will be sold on the opening date of the tender.

EDCL authority reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever.

N.B: This Information is also available at our Website : www.edcl.gov.bd

Dy. General Manager
Planning & Procurement
For : Managing Director.