

**BILL GATES IS FORBES' BILLIONAIRE NUMBER ONE****Premji, Ambani among nine Asians to find place in world's richest list**

LONDON: The Indians have done it again.

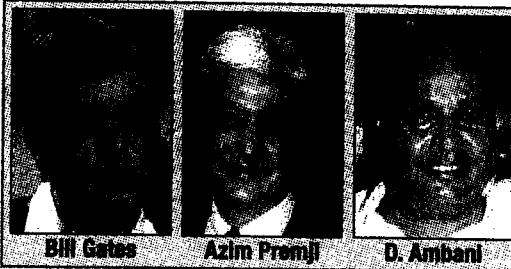
According to the *Forbes* billionaire list, 2000, two Indian families are among the 50 richest in the world. Wipro owner Azim Premji is placed 43rd, with a wealth of \$6.9 billion, while founder and chairman of the Reliance group, Dhirubhai Ambani, is two slots lower, in 45th place, with a \$6.6 billion fortune.

Microsoft chief Bill Gates, who was ranked as the richest man in 1999 with \$90 billion, has retained the numero uno position. However, his wealth has depreciated by 33.33 per cent, to \$60 billion, due to the global melt-down.

Both the Indians named have

posted extraordinary growth rates this year. The net worth of the Ambanis is \$6.6 billion, a 450 per cent growth from last year's \$1.2 billion. Similarly, in one year, Mr Premji's and his family's

ing on it. Europe has 13 representatives on the billionaire list—three each from Germany, France and Sweden, two from Switzerland and one each from Turkey and Italy.



Following Bill Gates at the top are Americans Lawrence Joseph Ellison (\$47 billion) and Paul Gardner Allen (\$28 billion). Rupert Murdoch, with a \$9.4 billion fortune, is ranked 23rd.

Asia accounts for nine billionaires. Besides Mr Premji and Mr Ambani, there are three each from

wealth has grown from \$2.8 billion to \$6.9 billion, a growth of 146 per cent.

The *Forbes* list is dominated by Americans, with 23 of them featur-

Japan and Hong Kong, while Taiwan and Saudi Arabia have one representative each. There is also a Mexican and a Brazilian on the *Forbes* list. (PTI)

WALTES RETURNS TO SPOT WITH \$60BN

# Premji, Ambani in Forbes list of 50 billionaires

London  
4 JANUARY

**T**WO Indian families are among the 50 most richest in the world, according to the Forbes billionaire list '00.

The pride of place goes to the families of Azim Premji and Dhirubhai Ambani. Mr Premji, owner of technology and IT major Wipro took the 43rd position with a wealth of \$6.9bn. Mr Ambani and his family of petrochemicals major Reliance Industries was ranked at the 45th position and accounted for a wealth of \$6.6bn.

Both the Indians have posted extraordinary growth rates during the year. Ambanis posted a 450 per cent growth and their net worth was ranked at \$6.6bn against \$1.2bn in the previous year.

Similarly, in one year, Mr Premji and family's wealth has grown from \$2.8bn to \$6.9bn, posting a growth of 146 per cent.

Microsoft chief Bill Gates who was ranked first in '99 with \$90bn

retained the top position in '00 also.

However, his wealth has depreciated by 33.33 per cent to \$60bn due to global meltdown. Second in the world's richest list was Lawrence Joseph Ellison of US (\$47bn) followed by another American Paul Gardner Allen (\$28bn).

Rupert Murdoch with a wealth of \$9.4bn was ranked 23rd.

The Forbes list is dominated by the Americans with 23 billionaires coming from the US. Europe includes 13 billionaires — three each from Germany, France, Sweden; two from Switzerland and one each from Turkey and Italy. Canada had one billion-



aire in the list.

Asia accounted for nine billionaires including two from India. Japan and Hong Kong had three billionaires each while Taiwan had one.

Latin America accounted for two billionaires — one each from Mexico and Brazil while Saudi Arabia accounted for two billionaires. — Agencies

**QUICKTAKES**

**Aziz Premji, Ambanis on Forbes list**

**NEW DELHI:** TWO Indian families — those of Wipro chairman Aziz Premji and Reliance chief Dhirubhai Ambani — figure in the top 50 of the Forbes World's Richest People for 2000. Premji and his family, who the magazine says are worth 6.9 billion dollars, are placed 43rd in the 14th annual list of the world's billionaires published by the magazine, while the Ambanis, worth 6.6 billion dollars, follow two places below.

**DETAILS ON PAGE 11**

**Premji, Ambani in world's top 50 billionaires list**

**AGENCIES**  
LONDON, JAN 4

TWO Indian families are among the 50 most richest in the world, according to the *Forbes* billionaire list 2000. The pride of place goes to the families of Azim Premji and Dhirubhai Ambani.

Premji, owner of technology and IT major Wipro Ltd took the 43rd position with a wealth of \$6.9 billion. Ambani and his family of petrochemicals major Reliance Industries Ltd was ranked at the 45th position and accounted for a wealth of \$6.6 billion. Microsoft chief Bill Gates who was ranked first in 1999 with \$90 billion retained the top position in 2000 also. However, his wealth has depreciated by 33.33 per cent to \$60 billion due to global meltdown.

Both the Indians have posted extra-ordinary growth rates during the year. Ambanis posted a 450 per cent growth and their networth was ranked at \$6.6 billion against \$1.2 billion in the previous year. Similarly, in one year, Premji and family's wealth has grown from \$2.8 billion to \$6.9 billion, posting a growth of 146 per cent.



**D.H. Ambani, Azim Premji**

The *Forbes* list is dominated by the Americans with 23 billionaires coming from the United States. Europe includes 13 billionaires - three each from Germany, France, Sweden; two from Switzerland and one each from Turkey and Italy. Canada had one billionaire in the list.

Second in the world's richest list was Oracle chief Lawrence Joseph Ellison of US (\$47 billion) followed by another American Paul Gardner Allen (\$28 billion).

Rupert Murdoch with a wealth of \$9.4 billion was ranked 23rd. Asia accounted for nine billionaires including two from India.

Japan and Hong Kong had three billionaires each while Taiwan had one. Latin America accounted for two billionaires - one each from Mexico and Brazil while Saudi Arabia accounted for two billionaires.

# Premji, Ambani in Forbes list, Gates retains top spot

Press Trust of India  
LONDON, 4 JANUARY

Two Indian families are among the 50 most richest in the world, according to the Forbes billionaire list 2000. The pride of place goes to the families of Azim Premji and Dhirubhai Ambani.

Premji, owner of technology and IT major Wipro Ltd, took the 43rd position with a wealth of \$6.9 billion. Ambani and his family of petrochemicals major Reliance Industries Ltd was ranked at the 45th position and accounted for a wealth of \$6.6 billion.

Microsoft chief Bill Gates who was ranked first in 1999 with \$90 billion retained the top position in



2000 also. However, his wealth has depreciated by 33.33 per cent to \$60 billion due to global meltdown.

Both the Indians have posted extra-ordinary growth rates during the year. Ambanis posted a 450 per cent growth and their networth was ranked at \$6.6 billion against \$1.2 billion in the previous year. Similarly, in one year, Premji and family's wealth has grown from \$2.8 billion to \$6.9 billion posting a growth of 146 per cent.

The Forbes list has 23 billionaires coming from the US. Europe includes 13 billionaires—three each from Germany, France, Sweden; two from Switzerland and one each from Turkey and Italy.

## DHIRUBHAI AMBANI

- A blessing in disguise for India

When the fury of fanaticism of the earstwhile dictator of Uganda, Idi Amin, crossed intolerable limits of inhumanity and broke all criteria of civility, many a settlers of Indian origin were obliged to flee the country with only the clothes they were in as the only escape from his barbarism. While many like Madhavani with their British passports went to the U. K. almost during the same time Shri Dhirubhai Ambani, his brother Ramnikbhai Ambani and family chose to return to India from Aden and what a blessing in disguise it proved to this country.

Ever since his return from Africa, he entered the textiles industry, appreciation, recognition and awards have conferred on him at regular intervals from the world of business and industry, chambers of commerce and, of course, authorities.

But, the latest honour of Wharton Medal Award is a unique feat and a feather in his cap. He is the first Indian to be so recognized by the internationally renowned business school of U. S. University. We can take

legitimate pride in the fact of his taking his place with so eminent and august luminaries as Secretary General Peter Sutherland of Gatt, Shrimon Pare, Foreign Minister of Israel, Fedel Ramos, Philippine President Reginald Jones, Chairman of General Electric and Kezun Ibudi, Mitsubishi Bank Chairman. What exclusive club of eminent persons, he belonged to by his sheer power of imagination and drive Ample proof of this is easily furnished by the diversification of fields Reliance has set its foot on !

May providence bring him further laurels and grant him healthy and active life to deserve them. We are sure the credit for his success stories should equally be given to Smt. Kokilaben Ambani, a pious, religious, noble, selfless soul behind him. We believe, what he has been doing for all these years is the dire need of the hour for our country. This should inspire many of our potential and resourceful young boys and girls to take India at par with G-8 Countries of the world.

Mother earth does not yield such gems and humanity very often or in plenty. It becomes the sacred duty of our countrymen and that of the govt. to properly nurture, nourish and seek the help of such rare genius in the service of the nation. Without being a member of our Planning Commission, he still can contribute a great deal in the upliftment of India. One can conclude without fear of slightest exaggeration or contradiction, that his contribution to the growth of Indian economy shall be recognised as comparable with that of late Shri Jamshedji Tata and Shri Ghanshyamdas Birla, in the annals of India's economic history.

**Ms. Malti Mehta**  
Council of Concerned Citizens

\* \* \*

## PERSONA/JAY DUBASHI

# The Dhirubhai I know

It's news to me that Dhirubhai Ambani is the richest man in India, or maybe Asia. Although I have known Dhirubhai for nearly two decades, I never think of him as a rich man, or even a rich businessman. When I first came to know him, long before anyone had even heard of a man called Ambani, he was not a rich man nor the No 1 businessman he has since become. To me, he has always been plain and simple Dhirubhai.

I hate talking business with businessmen. One knows so little about it, and they know so much, you always come away feeling slightly silly. I never discussed business with G D Birla, for instance, who once told me that he was not a businessman. I took the hint, and whenever we met - and there was a time we used to meet regularly - we avoided the very topic of business. At the height of a foreign exchange crisis when it looked as if the government in Delhi hung by a thread, we discussed through a leisurely lunch everything except the crisis - food, Mahatma Gandhi, Morarji Desai, everything under the sun, except the foreign exchange crisis.

Dhirubhai is a wizard at money, something, which, despite my reputation, I know little about. So, we never discuss money. I do not think I have ever discussed Reliance shares with him, firstly because I have no interest in his shares, and secondly because the man is far more interesting than his companies or his money. Nobody had heard of Reliance fifteen years ago when I first wrote about it, but I told him that he should not get inflated ideas about himself just because the company was now making a splash in national magazines.

Dhirubhai has never been much of a man to make a splash of himself. He is the same old man he used to be, although he must now be a billionaire ten times over.

When I happen to be in Bombay and saunter into his office for a quick bite at lunch time he is there as usual, in his dark trousers and white shirt, the uni-

form not of a tycoon but an up-and-coming executive in a Bombay firm.

"I have your favourite dish," he says.

Nothing in his office has changed as far as I can see over the last ten years. It's more of a work-room than the plush office of the chairman of India's largest company. The same white sofa set, the same ivory artifacts in glass cupboards, and a world football or a world cricket memento, I forget which. And, of course, a battery of white telephones.

"No calls," he mutters into one of the instruments. It's more a request than an order. Dhirubhai must be finding it very difficult to order anybody about.

"How will you have your



prawns?"

Actually, there is no choice. For years, we have had prawn curry and rice for lunch, tucking it in as only two old friends can, when they don't have much to talk about and couldn't care less what others say about them.

We talk about this and that, about monsoons and the groundnut crop in Kutch, the falling dollar and the rising rupee, whether any of his grandchildren is cutting teeth, and whether my son, now in the United States, is coming home for holidays.

No politics, no economics, no money talk. I don't even ask how his company is doing, but I remember Dhirubhai telling me six years ago that he would be

No.1 very soon. It has always been at the back of his mind, though he didn't say very much, and now that he is what he always wanted to be, he talks even less.

It was one those rare occasions when he let himself go and told me about himself. I have always been interested in the man, not the tycoon or the billionaire, just as in the case of GD. I was interested in GD the nationalist and political revolutionary, not GD the jute baron or cotton king, of which there are dime a dozen.

I once asked Dhirubhai how he knew so much about money. Was it something in his blood? No, he said, his father was a farmer and until he (Dhirubhai) had come to Bombay, he had not seen a hundred-rupee note in his life.

Do you do market research? Do you have companies telling you what to buy and what to sell? No, he said, I ask my driver. Your driver? Yes, I keep in touch with my drivers, my servants, everyone and anyone whom I meet. I ask them how much they make, how much they save, what they spend their money on, and what they put it into. I have been doing this for years.

Dhirubhai Ambani as one-man market research agency was news to me, but then everything about Ambani is news. The man has been making news every day for the last so many years, and is never really off the front page.

But that is not what makes Ambani tick. It is his humanness. The man is so simple and so dependable, he is the average Indian multiplied by a billion. He knows the country inside out and he knows his fellow-Indians inside out. He is on first-person terms with everyone, from his driver and his peon, to his managing directors. And he has not changed.

He does not attend seminars reading out the stuff his flunkys have written out for him, he goes to no club, he is member of no chamber of commerce. Ambani is Ambani. To call him a businessman or a billionaire is to belittle him.

**GANDHI, VIVEKANANDA & MANGESHKAR SHARE HONOURS**

# Dhirubhai Ambani voted as India's No 1 wealth creator

Our New Delhi Bureau  
5 JANUARY



WELCOME, Dhirubhai Ambani, to the century's most exclusive club. You, sir, have been voted by netizens as one of the top four Indians of the

'00s, along with Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda and Lata Mangeshkar, in the country's biggest and most comprehensive poll — the TOI-Online's 'Indians of the Century' poll.

A mind-boggling 881,772 votes were cast to decide the top Indians

## CHOICE OF THE TIMES

in the previous century. The categories were: 'Leaders & Politicians', 'Creators of Wealth', 'Artists & Entertainers', and 'Great Minds & Spiritual Lights'. The disparate choices reflected the diversity of Indian thought, and

the eventual winners, the wisdom of the Indian mind.

Dhirubhai, who ran a close race with JRD Tata, has scripted a rare rags-to-riches story. The man who crafted the equity cult in the Indian stock market — which has finally come of age — has nursed the mega dream of building a global Indian company. And realised it too. This has spurred Indian entrepreneurship to take on the world. This is not all. Dhirubhai Ambani's Reliance Industries has created wealth for millions of shareholders. This, in turn, attracted trillions to the bourses and broad-based the Indian capital market revolution.

■ Gandhi obvious choice: Pg 4

## Mahatma Gandhi was an obvious choice

From Page 1

The Mahatma was, of course, an obvious choice. He was a politician par excellence, and much more. Even today, his life and message transcends the generation gap. Though all of us have moved away in many ways from the core of his message, he remains the country's moral ballast as well as a powerful counter-point to a violence-hit world. "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

Swami Vivekananda once exhorted. And to this day the call remains the spiritual beacon of the young.

He explained Hinduism to the world, made it accessible, and made Indians themselves aware of their glorious spiritual wealth.

It's Vivekananda who gave India's spiritual traditions, especially Vedanta, a new lease of life and glory. Called the eighth wonder of the world, Lata Mangeshkar has enthralled all — from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Delhi to Dallas — with her songs. She has been the one timeless voice of the silver screen: Madhubala has lip-synched her songs as well as Madhuri Dixit.

And, Lata Mangeshkar continues to charm the '18-nothing' generation as she did

her grandmothers — in fact, the heart of India pulsates with her golden voice. A close look at the top four choices suggests several shared characteristics. All of them are self-made; they did not have the advantage of wealth, aristocracy or caste; they fought adversity and believed in action — 'karma yogis' in the true sense. They made India proud and gave the world new ideas, dreams and hopes.

# Four Indians who mattered most in the 20th century

By Jyotirmaya Sharma

NEW DELHI: What is common to Mahatma Gandhi, Dhirubhai Ambani, Lata Mangeshkar and Swami Vivekananda? You, the reader of *The Times of India*. Netizens voting in *The Times of India's* online 'Indians of the Century' poll — the biggest and the most comprehensive to be undertaken in this country — have given their verdict about the Indians who made a difference this century.

Voting under four categories — Leaders and Politicians, Creators of Wealth, Artists and Entertainers and Great Minds and Spiritual Lights — they polled a total of 8,81,772 votes. Their choice also tallied with the opinion of the editors of the paper.

A closer look at the top four names suggests several shared characteristics. All of them are self-made individuals; they did not have the advantage of wealth, aristocracy or caste; they fought adversity and believed in action — *karma yogis* in the true sense. They made India proud and gave the world new ideas, dreams and hopes.

The Mahatma was an obvious choice. Even today, his life and

message transcends the generation gap. Though India might have departed in many ways from the core of his message, he still remains a forceful icon among Indians — a touchstone of their moral pretensions. A poet rightly called him *yugshrishtha*, creator of an epoch and a *yugdrishtha*, an epochal visionary. Today, the Mahatma is hailed worldwide as the epitome of sainthood.

Dhirubhai Ambani, the man

## Indians of the Century

and mind behind the greatest business success story of the century, is clearly the 'Father of the Indian Stock Market'. He has imparted respectability to wealth creation and changed the face of corporate India. The Reliance group stands tall with an equity of Rs 50,000 crore.

He has made 'Think Indian, Act Global' the mantra of modern India. His personal and corporate philosophy hinges on a single, timeless concept: Trust. Dhirubhai can be truly regarded as the moving spirit behind India, Inc.

Called the eighth wonder of the world, 'a cultural phenomenon of our times', Lata Mangeshkar is

the voice of every actress who has made it to the silver screen. She continues to enthral the '18-nothing' generation with an equal panache as she did their grandmothers. From Madhubala to Preity Zinta, all Hindi film actresses have 'sung' their way into the hearts of the masses through Lata's voice. "*Dhadakta hai dil-e-Hindustan awaaz mein teri*" (the heart of India pulsates with your voice), said Naushad of Lata. India is where Lata's voice resonates.

"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached," exhorted Swami Vivekananda, who remains the spiritual icon of the young. His message still remains relevant, timeless and youth-oriented. He made Hinduism accessible, explained it to the West and made Indians themselves aware of their glorious spiritual wealth. He was the first of the 'modern' Indian gurus, combining intellect, charisma and simplicity in spreading his message. It is Swami Vivekananda who gave India's spiritual traditions, especially Vedanta, a new lease of life and glory.

► Details on Page 11

## Creator of shareholder wealth

If there is one business success story of the last century that towers over all others, it is the story of Dhirajlal Hirachand Ambani. He wasn't born rich, nor did anyone leave him a huge inheritance. He started from ground zero. Along the way, he made lots of enemies with his hard driving ways, but today, in the twilight of his life, there is no one, not even his bitterest rival, who will not acknowledge that Dhirubhai Ambani has changed the face of corporate India like no one else has. At a time when the old sprawling groups held sway over almost every little slice of the private sector, Dhirubhai proved that with guts and ambition, it was possible for a rank outsider to not only force his way in, but eventually to change the rules of the game.

More than the fact that he built India's largest private sector company from scratch, Ambani will perhaps be best remembered for revolutionising India's capital markets. From nothing at all, he generated \$12bn of wealth for those who put their faith and money in his enterprises. That too in a short period of two decades from when he first went public. His belief in enhancing shareholder value goes back to a time when the term was unfamiliar to the Indian public.

Over the period, he took his investors, all five millions, from being owners of a fledgling Rs. 20-30 lakh firm in the seventies to a situation where they own, in part, Rs. 44,000 crore worth of assets including one of the world's largest

petrochemical complexes and the largest grassroots refinery. One out of every four Indian investors has a Reliance company share in his portfolio. He has over the years raised more money than any other Indian company from markets at home and abroad. He was the first Indian to tap the international equity markets with a global depository receipts (GDR) issue of \$150 million in May 1992. More recently, he did the unthinkable -- raise 100 year bonds with apparently little difficulty.

A man who thought, and still thinks, big - world size and world class, has proved his point several times over. Dhirubhai built global scale petrochemical plants in quick succession at Patalganga and Hazira and later moved to Jamnagar for his most impressive, Rs. 24,000 crore creation: a 27 million tonne grassroots refinery. All this driven by a dream of complete self Reliance: of producing fabric from the most basic building material, crude oil.

The seeds of all this were sown in the arid soil

of Chorvad in Jamnagar where Dhirajlal Hirachand was born in December 1932 to distinctly lower middle class parents. Third son of a schoolteacher he was often referred to disparagingly as 'Dhiria' and forced to perform physical chores which others avoided.

Fed up of it all, he embarked on an entrepreneurial career by selling bhajias to pilgrims at Mount Girnar over weekends. From there - armed with only a matriculation degree he travelled to Aden in Yemen preparing in a sense for the day when he would go global.

More foreshadowing: he took up a job filling petrol in a Shell service station. "As I filled the cars up and watched the huge fuel tankers roll in, I became obsessed with the idea of owning my own petroleum company," he said years later. He finally returned to India with Rs. 50,000. His date with textiles began then with a material called chamak. It's been one huge home run since.

Anil Mehta & Sitaraman Shankar



**Dhirubhai Ambani**

# वे भारतीय, जिन्होंने शताब्दी पर अपनी छाप छोड़ी

ज्योतिर्मय शर्मा

महात्मा गांधी, धीरूभाई अंबानी, लता मंगेशकर और स्वामी विवेकानंद को जोड़ने वाली कड़ी कौन सी है? यह कड़ी है, टाइम्स पत्र समूह के वे पाठक जिन्होंने टाइम्स ऑफ इंडिया इंटरनेट मत सर्वेक्षण में हिस्सा लिया। यह सर्वेक्षण देश में अब तक के तमाम मत सर्वेक्षणों में सबसे बड़ा और व्यापक था। इसमें लोगों ने उन चुनिंदा भारतीयों के बारे में निर्णय दिया जिनकी कालजयी छवि से इस शताब्दी में देश को नयी दिशा मिली। मत सर्वेक्षण के लिए चार श्रेणियां रखी गयीं— नेता और उजनीतिज्ञ, धनोपार्जक, कलाकार व मनोरंजक तथा महान चिन्तक व दार्शनिक। इन चारों श्रेणियों के लिए कुल ८,८१,७७२ वोट पड़े। वोटों ने जिन व्यक्तियों का चयन किया, वही अखबार के संपादकों की भी राय थी।

जो चार शीर्षस्थ नाम उभरकर आये, उनके जीवन पर गहरी दृष्टि डालें तो कई समानताएं दिखायी दीं। मसलन, इन चारों ने इस ऊंचाई तक पहुंचने के लिए किसी दौलत, सत्ता और जाति का सहारा नहीं लिया। उन्होंने थपेड़े सहे लेकिन सिर्फ कर्म में विश्वास करना सीखा। वे वास्तविक अर्थ में कर्मयोगी थे। उन्होंने न केवल



भारत का गौरव बढ़ाया बल्कि विश्व को नयी आशा, नये विचार और नये सपने भी दिये।

मत सर्वेक्षण में महात्मा गांधी स्वाभाविक पसंद बनकर उभरे। उनका जीवन और संदेश कालजयी था। हालांकि देश आज गांधीजी के संदेशों से बहुत दूर भटक चुका है लेकिन करोड़ों भारतीयों के लिए वह श्रद्धा की मूर्ति बने हुए हैं। एक

काव्य ने उन्हें 'युगद्रष्टा' ठीक ही कहा है। आज गांधीजी को पूरा विश्व सच्चा संत मानता है।

धीरूभाई अंबानी शताब्दी की सबसे बड़ी व्यापारिक सफलता की कहानी के नायक हैं। वह वाकई भारतीय शेयर बाजार के शिखर पुरुष हैं। उन्होंने धनोपार्जन के क्षेत्र में भारी नाम कमाया और भारतीय कॉरपोरेट जगत की पूरी शक्ति बदल दी। उनकी कंपनी रिलायंस आज ५०,००० करोड़ रुपये की शेयर पूंजी के साथ खड़ी है। उन्होंने 'भारतीय दृष्टिकोण, वैश्विक कार्यक्षेत्र' को आधुनिक भारत का मंत्र बना दिया। उनका निजी और कॉरपोरेट दर्शन सिर्फ एक धुरी पर घूमता है और वह है— विश्वास, जो सर्वकालिक विचार है। उन्हें वस्तुतः वर्णिक भारत की धड़कन कहा जा सकता है।

(पृष्ठ ७ भी देखें)

दुनिया का आठवां आश्चर्य कहलाने वाली और हमारे समय की सांस्कृतिक पहचान लता मंगेशकर ने सिनेमा के पर्दे पर प्रत्येक अभिनेत्री को स्वर दिया। वह आज की युवा पीढ़ी से लेकर उनकी दादा—दादी वाली पीढ़ी तक समान रूप से लोकप्रिय हैं। मधुवाला से लेकर प्रीति

(शेष पृष्ठ २ पर)

## वे भारतीय....

(प्रथम पृष्ठ का शेष)

जिंटा तक सभी हिंदी सिने तारिकाओं ने लता

की आवाज में गाने गये हैं। नौशाद ने लता के बारे में कहा है— उनकी आवाज में हिंदुस्तान का दिल धड़कता है।

स्वामी विवेकानंद ने आह्वान किया था— उठो, जागो और जब तक लक्ष्य नहीं मिल जाता, रुको नहीं। वही विवेकानंद युवाओं के लिए अध्यात्म के प्रेरणास्रोत बने हुए हैं। उनकी शिक्षाएं आज भी छात्रों और सर्वकारों में हैं।

उन्होंने हिंदुत्व को ग्राह्य बनाया, पश्चिमी देशों में इसकी व्याख्या की और भारतीयों को उनके वैभवशाली आध्यात्मिक अतीत का अहसास कराया। वह आधुनिक भारत के गुरुओं में प्रथम गुरु थे जिन्होंने अतिशय विद्वता, सादगी और करिश्माई व्यक्तित्व से अपना संदेश फैलाया। यह विवेकानंद ही थे जिन्होंने भारत को आध्यात्मिक संस्कार दिये और खासकर वेदांत को नया जीवन व ख्याति दिलायी।

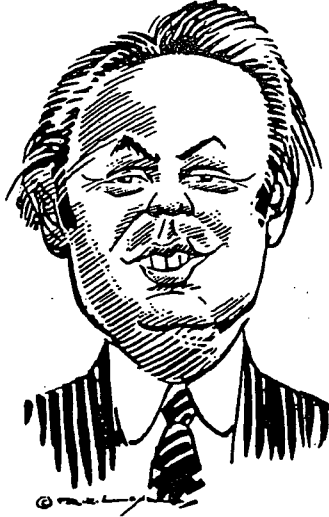
# शून्य से कुबेरपति बनने की एक गाथा

पिछली मदी में अगर सफलता की कोई ऐसी दास्तान है, जो दूसरों में कहीं बड़ी है, तो वह है धीरुलाल हीरचंद अंबानी की कहानी। कुछ लोगों को धन मिलता है। कुछ अपने ऐसे संकल्प और दृढ़ निश्चय से धन बनाते हैं कि दूसरे दांतों तले उंगली डबा लें। यह सवाल निरर्थक है कि अंबानी को इन दोनों श्रेणियों में से किन्हीं में गिना जाए, क्योंकि वह न तो जन्मजात अमीर थे और न ही उन्हें विपुल सम्पत्ति धरोहर में मिली थी। उन्होंने शुरुआत शून्य से की थी।

सफलता के कठिन रास्ते में उन्होंने अनेक दुश्मन भी बनाए, लेकिन आज उनके जीवन के मध्याकाल में उनके प्रबल प्रतिद्वंद्वी भी यह मानेंगे कि धीरुभाई अंबानी ने कारपोरेट भारत का चेहरा बदल दिया। एक समय जब कुछ बड़े घरानों ने निजी क्षेत्र के नगभग हर हिस्से पर कब्जा जमा रखा था, धीरुभाई ने साबित किया कि दम-खम और महत्वाकांक्षा से किसी बाहर वाले के लिए केवल अपना मार्ग प्रशस्त करना संभव है, बल्कि अंततः खेल के नियम-कानून बदलना भी।

उनका जीवनकाल मौल के पत्थरों से अटा पड़ा है। इस तथ्य पर कि उन्होंने शून्य से भारत को सबसे बड़ी प्राइवेट कम्पनी बना कर दी या उन्होंने आकार और क्षमता के लिहाज विश्व स्तर का एक उद्योग खड़ा कर दिया, धीरुभाई अंबानी को भारत के पूंजीपति का शक्ति बदल देने का श्रेय जाता है। दो शब्दों में कहा जाए, तो उन्होंने औसत निवेशक के मन में आकांक्षा भर दी। खाली हाथ से उन्होंने ५०,००० करोड़ रु. (१२ अरब डॉलर) की सम्पत्ति न लोगों के लिए खड़ी कर दी, जो अपना पैसा और विश्वास उनके उद्यमों में लगाते हैं। पूंजी बनार में जाने के दो दशकों की ग्रेटी अवधि में उन्होंने यह कमाल कर दिखाया।

इस अवधि में उन्होंने अपने निवेशकों को जिनकी संख्या अब चास लाख है, २०-३० लाख रुपए की फर्म से दुनिया के सबसे बड़े पेट्रोकेमिकल कॉम्प्लेक्स का मालिक बना दिया। आज हर



चौथे भारतीय निवेशक के पास रिलायंस कम्पनी के शेयर हैं। पिछले वर्षों में उन्होंने बाजार से जितना पैसा उगाहा, उतना किसी भारतीय या विदेशी कम्पनी ने नहीं। वह पहले भारतीय थे, जिन्होंने अन्तरराष्ट्रीय पूंजी इक्विटी मार्केट से मई १९९२ में १५ करोड़ डॉलर का जीडीआर इश्यू सफलतापूर्वक जारी किया था। हाल में तो उन्होंने असंभव को संभव कर दिखाया, बिना खास कठिनाई के उन्होंने १०० बरस के बांड जारी कर दिए।

एक आदमी ने जो हमेशा बड़ा (विश्व स्तर की) सोचता है, अपनी बात हमेशा मनवाई। आज रिलायंस कहती है कि वह विदेशों से बिना शुल्क मंगाई वस्तुओं से स्पर्धा करने की क्षमता

रखती है और उसने अपने तमाम संरक्षण हटा दिए हैं। बड़े पैमाने पर उत्पादन के अर्थशास्त्र की वजह से यह संभव हुआ है। धीरुभाई ने पातालगंगा और हजीर में विश्वस्तरीय पेट्रोकेमिकल संयंत्र एक के बाद एक स्थापित किए। बाद में उन्होंने जामनगर में पांव रखा, जहां उन्होंने २४,००० करोड़ रु. की लागत से २ करोड़ ७० लाख टन की जबरदस्त रिफाइनरी खड़ी की। उन्होंने एक सपना देखा था- पूर्ण आत्मनिर्भरता का, यह उसी का एक हिस्सा है।

पेट्रोकेमिकल में अपने तमाम लक्ष्य पूरे कर लेने के बाद धीरुभाई ने अब एक नई चुनौती पाल ली है- दूरसंचार। वह चाहते हैं कि रिलायंस ग्रुप निर्माण के दो महत्वपूर्ण क्षेत्रों- बुनियादी ढांचा और कृषि विकास में भी अग्रणी बने।

जुनागढ़ के चौरवाड़ में १९३२ के दिसम्बर महीने में जन्में धीरुलाल हीरचंद एक शिक्षक के पुत्र हैं। उन्होंने सिर्फ मैट्रिक तक की शिक्षा ली। गिरनार पर्वत पर तीर्थ यात्रियों को भजिया बेचने से लेकर यमन की उपधानी अमन तक उनकी यात्रा एक गाथा है। उन्होंने शेल के सर्विस स्टेशन में कारों में पेट्रोल भरने का भी काम किया और एक पेट्रोलियम कम्पनी खड़ी करने का इरादा ठाढ़ लिया। वह भारत ५०,००० रुपए लेकर लौटे। उन्होंने टेक्सटाइल् की दुनिया में 'चमक' नामक कपड़े से शुरुआत की। तब से आज तक यह सफलता की कहानी है। आज रिलायंस बिक्री, शुद्ध लाभ और एसेट के मामले में भारत की सबसे बड़ी निजी कम्पनी है। नई सदी के पहले वर्ष में रिलायंस समूह की बिक्री ३०,००० करोड़ रुपए तक पहुंच जाएगी।

धीरुभाई को एक के बाद एक सफलताएं क्यों मिलीं? इसके ढेर सारे कारण हैं, लेकिन इसमें सबसे बड़ा है अपने शेयरधारकों का विश्वास जोतना। भविष्य की नाव पर बैठ कर भी उन्होंने अपना अतीत कभी नहीं भुलाया।

अनिल मेहता और सीतारमन शंकर

## INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES AND FINANCE

## Redefining the boundaries of expansion

With dominance in chemicals cemented, the group is diversifying, writes Stefan Wagstyl

When the Indian prime minister Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao launched pro-market economic reforms three years ago, Reliance Industries, the country's largest company, was busy draining a 700-acre marsh on the coast north of Bombay. Today, workmen are building a Rs50bn (\$1.59bn) petrochemicals complex on the site India's largest single industrial investment and Indian industry's biggest act of faith in Mr Rao's policies.

Reliance, which this week reported record interim sales and profits for the six months to the end of September, has overtaken long-established groups such as Tata Iron and Steel, the leading privately-owned steelmaker, as India's biggest company.

Once its current expansion is complete, in about three years, it will rank among the world's largest chemicals groups.

With its output of petrochemical products from Hazira and an older complex at Patalganga, nearer Bombay, set to rise from 1.4m tonnes this year to 6m, Reliance estimates it will become one of the top 10 makers of polyester, a basic fibre for the artificial-textiles industry.

It also expects to be the second largest manufacturer of paraxylene, an intermediate chemical in making fibres, and the biggest producer of polyethylene terephthalate (PET), a plastic.

Reliance is already planning its next stage of development a Rs30bn (\$966.3m) investment in a third petrochemicals complex at Jamnagar, inland from Hazira, where Reliance Petro-

leum, a 21 per cent-owned affiliate company, is building a Rs76bn oil refinery.

The group is also diversifying from its core business in textiles and chemicals into oil and gas production, power, telecommunications and financial services.

The programme is particularly ambitious, given general caution about investing in India. Reliance, however, is confident. "We have faith in India's future," says Mr Anil Ambani, managing director.

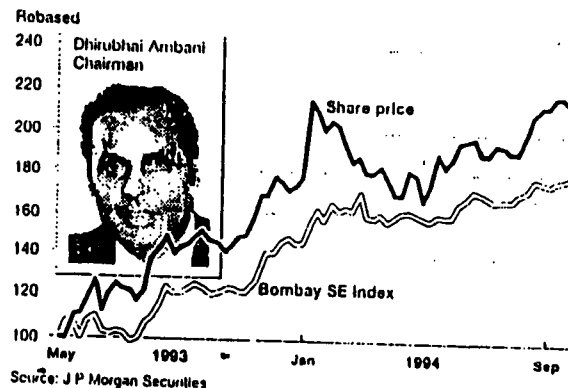
Reliance has already moved some way towards its target of raising turnover from Rs53.1bn last year to Rs120bn in three or four years. In the first six months of the current financial year, sales rose 33 per cent to Rs33.9bn, pushing net profits up 146 per cent to Rs5.1bn.

Reliance was founded in 1977 by Mr Dhirubhai Ambani, the chairman, who runs the company with his sons Mr Anil Ambani and Mr Mukesh Ambani, also a managing director. Mr Ambani's son, 22, started his working life as a petrol pump attendant before setting up a business trading textiles.

From his early days, Mr Ambani relied on raising funds from outside investors, tapping the stock market with repeated share offers and building a group of 2.4m shareholders. In 1992, Reliance became the first Indian company to tap the euromarkets, and has since made two further issues.

The group also holds the record for the largest domestic offering - a Rs21.7bn convertible bond issue for Reliance Petroleum, the associate company which is building

## Reliance Industries



the Jamnagar refinery

The raising and management of capital has become one of Reliance's greatest strengths, earning it a reputation for paying as much attention to financial operations as to its basic business. Along the way, it has occasionally embroiled itself in controversy.

Reliance was named in last year's parliamentary report into the Rs10bn Bombay securities market scandal. The company was accused of circumventing rules governing the amount of credit a borrower can raise from banks by discounting bills through non-bank finance companies to raise additional money. Reliance denied breaking any rules.

Rivals also alleged the company benefited from Mr Dhirubhai Ambani's friendship with politicians, including the late Mr Rajiv Gandhi, saying the relationship was exploited to help secure government

investment licences essential for business expansion in the controlled economy in the years before 1991.

Mr Anil Ambani says Reliance operated in the same environment as other groups. "People can say what they like. I don't think we gained any particular advantage." He says Reliance's growth after 1991, when liberalisation began and the need for licences diminished, has been even faster than before.

The Ambanis, who have retained a stake of about 30 per cent in Reliance Industries, have relied for technology mainly on multinationals such as ICI of the UK and Du Pont of the US. But maturity has bought its own expertise, particularly in project management. It is also planning to build a research and development centre near Bombay in partnership with an international group.

Mr Anil Ambani believes it is important for Reliance to

have up-to-date technology to keep costs down and quality high. If India's import barriers come down as expected, Reliance believes it will remain competitive with international groups.

Its success has been based on sticking to one industry, starting with textiles trading and integrating backwards into petrochemicals production. This single-mindedness has distinguished Reliance from most other large Indian groups, which have spread themselves over several industries. As a result, Reliance enjoys better economies of scale than most of its domestic rivals.

Nevertheless, Mr Ambani says it is time for the company to look outside its core business, because it already dominates production in that area, and there are limits to growth.

Reliance is the first private-sector Indian company to secure licences for the development of oil and gas fields; it is bidding to build and operate two power stations at a cost of Rs30bn, as well as developing captive power stations at its plants; and it is considering a Rs200bn investment in telecommunications.

The group is not worried by the thought venturing into telecommunications and power, as these are new fields for all entrepreneurs, having only recently been opened to private investment.

As Mr Dhirubhai Ambani told shareholders at the annual meeting this year: "Economic liberalisation has given your company unprecedented freedom to set new and even more ambitious goals and targets."