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# Mukesh Ambani: from a textile mill to oil, telecom and retail

Mukesh Ambani took Reliance Industries from the textile business his father founded into refining, then remade India's telecom market with Jio.

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Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries. (Photo: World Economic Forum / Wikimedia Commons, CC BY-SA 2.0)

### In 60 seconds

1. Joined his father Dhirubhai Ambani's Reliance in 1981, leaving an MBA at Stanford.
2. Built the Jamnagar refinery, among the world's largest refining complexes.
3. Jio, launched in 2016, triggered a data revolution and became India's largest telecom operator.
4. Has brought his children Akash, Isha and Anant into leadership roles.

Mukesh Ambani was born in 1957 in Aden, Yemen, where his father Dhirubhai Ambani was working at the time. Dhirubhai returned to India and built Reliance, starting with trading and textiles. Mukesh studied chemical engineering in Mumbai and began an MBA at Stanford, but left in 1980 to join the family business.

## Building backwards

At Reliance, Mukesh led the company's move upstream, from making textiles to making the raw materials behind them: polyester, petrochemicals and eventually refined fuels. The biggest project was the refinery at Jamnagar in Gujarat, commissioned in 1999 and expanded over the years into one of the largest refining complexes in the world.

## After Dhirubhai

Dhirubhai Ambani died in 2002, and in 2005 the family's businesses were divided between Mukesh and his younger brother Anil. Mukesh kept Reliance Industries, the flagship company.

## The Jio revolution

In September 2016, Reliance launched Jio, offering free voice calls and very cheap mobile data. It transformed how Indians use the internet and pushed the whole industry to cut prices. Jio quickly became India's largest telecom operator. In 2020, Jio Platforms raised large investments from global companies including Facebook and Google.

> *Jio showed how a single bold launch can change the habits of an entire country.*

## Retail and new energy

Reliance Retail has grown into India's biggest retailer, spanning groceries, fashion and electronics. The company is also building a large new-energy complex at Jamnagar for solar equipment, batteries and green hydrogen.

## The next generation

Ambani has gradually brought his children into leadership: Akash Ambani chairs Reliance Jio, Isha Ambani leads the retail business, and Anant Ambani is closely involved in the new-energy push. Ambani remains chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries, and his journey shows how a family business can be reinvented again and again for a new era.