

# Asia's richest man takes global rich to the zoo

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Online Desk :

Top global celebrities will don “jungle fever” outfits in India for a trip to the zoo on Saturday as part of a party thrown by Asia's richest man. Pop icon Rihanna, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg and Donald Trump's daughter Ivanka are among the rich and famous guests who jetted in for a three-day gala celebration hosted by billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani. This weekend's party is an elaborate pre-wedding ceremony for younger son Anant and fiancée Radhika Merchant, the daughter of wealthy pharmaceutical moguls. The three-day gala — which saw “Umbrella” singer Rihanna perform on Friday for the first time since last year's Superbowl — will continue Saturday with a trip to an “animal rescue centre” housing exotic animals. The facility is a pet project of Anant's built in his family's hometown Jamnagar in western Gujarat state, where the weekend party is taking place. Indian media reports said the family will on Saturday host a “Walk on the Wildside”, an event held outdoors in the Ambani's animal rescue centre.

“Jungle fever” is the suggested dress code, and guests have been advised to wear comfortable shoes and clothing, reports said. In the evening, reports added, guests will ditch their safari-themed outfits for more elegant wear for an evening party celebrating Indian culture. Mukesh Ambani, 66, is chairman of Reliance Industries — India's biggest company by market capitalisation — and the world's 10th-richest person, according to the Forbes billionaires list, worth more than \$116 billion. He inherited a thriving industrial enterprise spanning oil, gas and petrochemicals from his father and grew it into a commercial behemoth with lucrative interests in retail, telecommunications and an Indian Premier League cricket team.

Reliance's partnerships with storied fashion brands such as Burberry, Armani and Jimmy Choo have helped the conglomerate cater to the growing appetite for luxury goods among India's middle class. Ambani's family home — a 27-floor skyscraper dubbed Antilia that reportedly cost more than \$1 billion to build and has a permanent staff of 600 servants — is one of Mumbai's most prominent landmarks. It was criticised after its 2010 completion by author Arundhati Roy and others for starkly illustrating the wide gulf between India's business elite and its poor multitudes. Ambani held the most expensive wedding in India to date for his daughter in 2018, which reportedly cost \$100 million and saw US pop megastar Beyonce perform.

Younger son Anant, 28 — who also serves as a director on the boards of several Reliance-owned firms — is expected to marry Merchant, 29, later this year. This time around, the guest list includes Disney chief Bob Iger, following a deal agreed Wednesday between Reliance Industries and Walt Disney to merge their Indian media businesses. The merger will create an \$8.5 billion entertainment giant in the world's most populous nation and fifth-largest economy. Bollywood stars Amitabh Bachchan and Shah Rukh Khan, cricket icons Sachin Tendulkar and M.S. Dhoni, and industry titan Gautam Adani are also invited in a who's-who of India's super-rich.