

Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries said to mull India power storage with BP

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Reliance Industries Ltd, owned by Mukesh Ambani, is considering entering the power-storage business with its partner BP Plc. to expand into the country's growing renewable energy sector, according to two people with knowledge of the plan.

The companies are considering a plan to set up energy-storage projects near solar- and wind-energy installations, the people said, asking not to be identified, citing company policy. A decision on investment and implementation will be taken by December, they said.

Reliance didn't respond to requests for comment. BP declined to comment.

The push into power storage dovetails with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's efforts to boost the country's reliance on renewable power and set it on track to sell only electric cars by 2030.

Global oil majors such as Royal Dutch Shell Plc., Total SA and Exxon Mobil Corp. are investing in new-energy technologies to improve electricity grids and develop fuels from renewable resources. Reliance has been seeking to enter the business since 2009, when it first announced plans for alternative-energy businesses.

Reliance and BP in June said they were extending their partnership to sell conventional fuels as well as explore opportunities in clean energy. Last month, Mint reported that Reliance is planning to sell liquefied natural gas at its fuel-retailing outlets and set up charging stations for electric vehicles.

India Renewables

LNG and electric-vehicle charging would be an extension of Reliance's current retail fuel business, though the company hasn't firmed up a business plan as the market is at a nascent stage, one of the people said.

India's solar-power capacity has surged fourfold since December 2014 to about 13 gigawatts. Wind installations reached almost 33 gigawatts from 22.5 gigawatts over the same period. Modi's government is seeking an additional 87 gigawatts of solar and 28 gigawatts of wind power by 2022 to expand India's total renewable capacity to 175 gigawatts.

In addition to fuel retailing, Reliance and BP are already partners in oil and natural-gas exploration and gas-marketing in India. The Indian refiner runs more than 1,250 fuel pumps in India, while BP has secured licenses to open as many as 3,500 stations in the country.