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Anil, Mukesh bid for Mumbai Metro pie

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THE Ambani brothers are in the race for the second phase of the ambitious Mumbai Metro Rail project. Companies representing the two have submitted prequalification bids for the project. The Mukesh Ambani-controlled Reliance Industries (RIL) is bidding for the project jointly with Siemens and **Gammon**. While Anil Ambani-controlled Reliance Energy, which has bagged the contract for the Metro phase one, has joined hands with Canadian firm SNC Lavalin for the second stretch. The non-compete agreement signed by the two brothers is silent on railway and other new projects.

Seven consortia had put in pre-qualification bids for the second phase on Monday — the last day for submission of bids. These were GE India — L&T-CA-IDPL, Tata power-Mitsubishi-Tata Realty's Pioneer Infrastructure, GVK-Bombardier-Malaysia-based YTL, IL&FS-Soma Constructions-Punj Lloyd and Essar-Alstom consortium are in the fray along with RIL and REL," sources close to the process said.

The bids were submitted to the project implementing authority MMRDA. When contacted, T Chandrashekhar, commissioner of MMRDA, refused to divulge any details.

The Rs 19,525-crore project will be implemented in three phases over a period of 15 years. The second phase will connect Mahim and Mankhurd (12.8 km), Charkop-Dahisar (7.5 km) and Ghatkopar-Mulund (12.4 km) and will be completed by 2016. The masterplan envisages a 146.5-kilometre-long rail network, of which about 32.5 km will be underground while 114 km will be elevated. The Mumbai Metro is the third such system after Kolkata and capital, New Delhi.

To launch off, phase one will connect Colaba (Backbay), Mahim and Charkop (36 km), and Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar (15 km). The first phase of the project, spanning three corridors, is targeted to be completed by 2011. In the third phase, the Metro line will connect Bandra-Kurla complex to Kanjur Marg via the airport (19.5 km), Andheri (East)-Dahisar (East) (18 km), Hutatma Chowk to Ghatkopar (21.8 km) and Sewri-Prabhadevi (3.5 km). The third phase would be fully functional by 2021.

The project was flagged-off by the Prime Minister in June last year. The MMRDA proposal is significant in that at least four of the total eight Metro corridors are connected to the central business district. At an estimated frequency of a train every four minutes, the Mumbai Metro Rail Project when completed is expected to reduce travelling time for the Mumbaikars. The train will have a capacity of 60,000 persons per hour and the travel time between Versova to Ghatkopar will come down from 70 to 21 minutes. The proposed fare structure is Rs 6 up to 3 km, Rs 8 for 3-8 km and Rs 10 for over 8 km.