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Anil Ambani does a Hollywood deal

Ties up with production houses of Julia Roberts, Brett Ratner

BIG SCREEN AMBITIONS

Vajir Singh
Mumbai, February 6

MOVE OVER recession. Anil Ambani's Reliance Big Entertainment (RBE) has big plans up its sleeves.

After buying the rights for filmmaker Rakesh Roshan's ambitious venture *Kites* for a reported eyebrow-raising Rs 150 crore, the company has got into a co-venture deal with Hollywood star Julia Roberts' production house Red Om Films and director Brett Ratner's Rat Entertainment. Ratner has directed films like *Rush Hour 3* (2007), *X-Men: The*

Last Stand (2006), *Rush Hour 2* (2000) and *Red Dragon* (2002).

RBE will create a development silo for each of the production entities and has the option to co-finance resulting projects. It will also retain Indian rights to the films it co-finances, and hopes to attract some productions to shoot in India.

Speaking to *Hindustan Times* from Berlin, Rajesh Sawhney, president of RBE, said, "The deal has been signed and currently we're in the process of developing a few projects." He explained that in Hollywood every film went

through two stages, development and production.

"We're currently into the development process and in a few months we'll be able to take a call on which film we can go ahead with."

Earlier, RBE had established creative partnerships with several other Hollywood notables: Nicolas Cage's Saturn Productions, Jim Carrey's JC 23 Entertainment, George Clooney's Smokehouse Productions, Chris Columbus' 1492 Pictures, Tom Hanks' Playtone Productions, Brad Pitt's Plan B Entertainment and Jay Roach's Everyman

Pictures. Sawhney and RBE chairman Amit Khanna announced these deals at the last Cannes Film Festival.

Accordingly, the first few projects are expected to go into production before the end of the year. "One or two projects will go for production in the second half of this year," Sawhney said.

Was there a possibility of Indian actors cast in Hollywood ventures? "These are Hollywood projects and Hindi actors may or may not be a part of these films," he said.

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