



Big foray into consumer finance, brokerage

Birla plans \$10-b financial services

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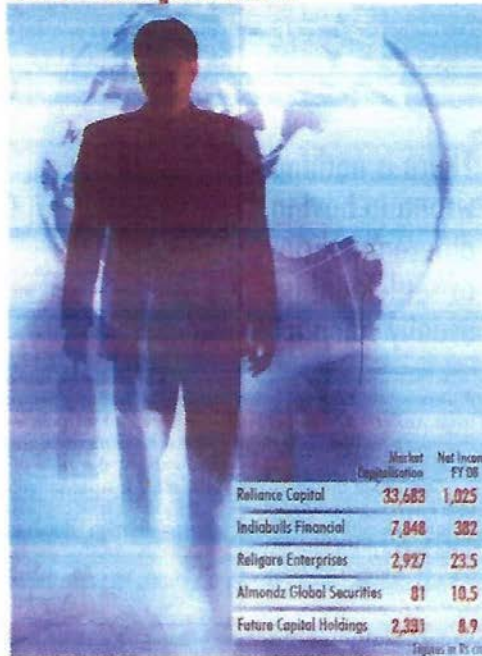
THE Aditya Birla group wants to build a \$10 billion integrated financial service business, spanning everything from stock broking and consumer finance to life and non-life insurance.

"We want to build a business that's at least worth \$10 billion for the group in this vertical," said Ajay Srinivasan, chief executive for financial services and director for corporate strategy and business development at Aditya Birla Management Corporation, the group's management company. "The vertical could perhaps be more valuable than... Hindalco or Idea Cellular in market value over the next five years," he said.

The group is ready to re-enter stock broking, which it exited a few years ago, and strengthen the existing consumer finance business. It will also make a debut in private equity and general insurance. It has drafted a Rs 2,000 crore plan for both organic growth and acquisitions.

"There's a big profit pool available in this market that's large, attractive and growing," said Srinivasan. He has already put together a crack team for the pu-

The Competition



Kakar, chief marketing officer for financial services, who came from Reliance Capital; Pankaj Razdan, deputy CEO for financial services, who moved from ICICI Pru Asset Management; A Dhananjaya, chief compliance and risk officer for financial services, and G V Gopalakrishnan, COO for financial ser-

HDFC Bank. In life insurance, Birla Sun Life is "putting the foot on the accelerator" by beefing up the direct agency sales force and the branch network. "In March 2007, we had 137 branches. The number is almost 600 now and will rise to 1,000 next year," said Srinivasan.

Pankaj Paul