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HUNDRED DRAWS ASIAN INVESTORS

Wealthy US and India businesses buy stakes in ECB franchises

INDIAN billionaires and Indian American tech tycoons are among new owners of franchises in the Hundred cricket league.

Mukesh Ambani, Nikesh Arora and Sanjiv Goenka have in recent days invested in English cricket by acquiring a minority share in some of the Hundred teams.

The Hundred is a 100-ball cricket competition featuring world-class players. Eight city-based teams, created specifically for the tournament, will compete over five weeks every summer.

English cricket chiefs are aiming to bring in private money to attract the world's top players in a competitive global market.

The owners of the Indian Premier League (IPL), the Mumbai Indians - the wealthiest cricket league franchise in the world - won the auction last week to buy a 49 per cent stake in Oval Invincibles, the champions in the men's category last year.

Ambani-owned Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) secured the minority stake in a virtual auction, worth approximately £60 million, reports said.

Reliance will now enter a period of exclusivity during which they will negotiate with Surrey



TOP PRIZE: The Oval Invincibles, now co-owned by Mukesh Ambani, are two-time defending champions in the men's 100-ball competition; (inset) Ambani with wife Nita



County Cricket Club and the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

The Invincibles, based at Surrey's London home ground, the Oval, are two-time defending champions in the men's 100-ball competition, while Mumbai Indians are viewed as

the most powerful IPL franchise. US-based Arora joined hands with Satya Nadella, Shantanu Narayen, and Sundar Pichai - the chief executives of Microsoft, Adobe, and Google, respectively - to acquire a stake in the London Spirit team, which won last year's women's title, for a reported fee of £145m. The deal valued the franchise at £295m.

Marylebone Cricket Club, the owners

of the historic Lord's ground in north London and the custodian of the laws of the game, will now enter into an eight-week period of negotiations with the consortium to determine the precise details of the deal.

"It is with great pleasure that I am able to announce that Cricket Investor Holdings Limited, a consortium led by Nikesh

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