Ambani’s $1 bn vertical palace

A 27-storey ‘home for a family of four’

Critics decry Antilia as obscenely lavish but Ambani’s friends say it’s perfect for the family. THIS is the extravagant $830m (roughly £440m) home built by billionaire tycoon Mukesh Ambani to house his family of four on Mumbai’s Altamount road.

Named Antilia, after a mythical island in the Atlantic, the 27-storey building features a health club with a gym and dance studio, a ballroom, at least one swimming pool and a 50-seater cinema.

Towering above the Mumbai skyline, the 37,000 sq ft property is $750m high and also boasts three helipads on its roof, space for 160 vehicles on its lower floors, a swimming pool and nine lifts.

There are countless lounges and ballrooms throughout the building where fine rugs, crystal chandeliers and mirrors feature heavily. There is also a stage for entertainers and a kitchen which can serve hundreds of guests.

Ambani, 53, paid $44m (roughly £700 crore) to build his dream property, but the city’s astronomical property values mean it is now worth 15 times that amount.

He will employ 600 staff at the property and his family will live in the top floors, where they will enjoy views of the Arabian Sea.

Ambani has surprised many by constructing Antilia, as he built his business reputation as a private individual who avoided the flakiness of the ultra-rich.

Hamish McDonald, the author of a history of the family business, said: “Perhaps he’s too sure of himself. It’s so obscenely lavish.”

Ambani will hold a housewarming party at his new home on Friday — jointly organised by the LIC and the Tamil Nadu social welfare department (SWD).

R. Pervez, 23, one of the participants, expressed a desire to be treated like the others. “We do not like begging. We have no means of employment and we require that people trust us, and help us lead a normal life,” he said.

Some were hopeful of excelling in the field such as B. M. Jayalalitha. “Many of us have contacts with the police, shopkeepers. This will come in good stead to sell insurance products,” she said.

“This kind of self-employment opportunity will economically empower the trans- gendered people and will keep them from begging and the ordeal of being a commercial sex worker to make ends meet,” SWD director R. Vanuki said, describing the training camp as a progressive move.

Vice-chairman Santokh Banerjee said the training camp was primarily intended to tap into self employment avenues for the transgender community.

Those eligible would be given 50 hours of training for a week to enable them to appear for a written examination.

“Once they clear the exams, they would get a license issued by the insurance regulator,” Rekha Sinha, executive director of the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority and state commissioner said.

The corporation has plans to conduct similar training in other districts as well. Vanuki said the Tamil Nadu Transgenders Welfare Board has a membership of 3,000, of whom 2,700 have been issued identity cards.

“The creation to become an LIC agent is to have passed the matric/SSLC in the rural areas and senior secondary plus two in the urban centres,” she added.

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