



**Toasting their success:** Winners of the second edition of the *BT-YES Bank Emerging Companies Excellence Awards* with chief guest Ram Vilas Paswan, Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (11th from left); Ashish Bagga, Group CEO, India Today Group (extreme right); and Aditya Sanghi, Group President and Senior Managing Director, Investment Banking, YES Bank (third from left)

PHOTOGRAPHS BY SHEKHAR GHOSH

# READY FOR A GIANT LEAP

*Business Today* celebrates the success of some promising companies that could make it to the big league tomorrow at the second Emerging Companies Excellence Awards. By TEAM BT

**T**he stage is set for India to take its next big leap forward. The Narendra Modi-led government has already begun the

process of unleashing the second phase of economic reforms that will not only pull the country out of the economic slowdown but also put it back on the world map. Historically, economic reforms have spawned several large corporations globally.

In India, for instance, the economic reforms in the past two decades gave birth to giants such as Infosys, Bharti Airtel, Wipro, TCS, ICICI Bank, Maruti Suzuki, among others. The time has come for India to recognise the need to build a whole new breed

of companies that can grow as big as, or even bigger than, the large corporations in the country.

*Business Today's* Emerging Companies Excellence Awards was an attempt to unravel some of these promising companies in the corporate world. The second edition of the event was held at the scenic Nandiya Gardens of New Delhi's ITC Maurya hotel on November 7. The chief guest for the evening was Ram Vilas Paswan, Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

The event kicked off with *BT*

Editor Prosenjit Datta sharing his thoughts. "In the business space, the biggest publicly listed companies get a disproportionate share of



attention. The emerging companies – small- and medium-sized firms – that form bulk of the industrial universe often get lesser share of the limelight," he said. Datta then explained the rigorous three-phased process that *BT* followed in choosing this year's winners with help from knowledge partner YES Bank and procedure review partner PwC.

Amit Kumar, Group President and Country Head (Corporate and Commercial Banking), YES Bank, said that the inaugural edition of Emerging Companies Excellence





**Rooting for the underdogs:** Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan addressing BT's Emerging Companies event in New Delhi

awards, launched in 2013 after two years of hard work and extensive research, had received an encouraging response. "For the second edition, based on the constructive feedback received from various stakeholders in the previous edition, we expanded the horizon and categorised the awards into two turnover criteria – companies with ₹200 crore to ₹500 crore turnover, and companies with ₹500 to ₹1,500 crore turnover. We fine-tuned our focus on new-age companies," he said.

Sharing his thoughts on emerging companies, Paswan said that these firms are the nation's backbone. He also said that small and medium enterprises provide employment to more than one crore people in the country.

Paswan explained the challenges that emerging companies face by citing his own example. "When we were young, we never saw brands. We would usually buy products which were sold at low prices. Today, the situation is different. Many people go after brands. Even today's kids are conscious about brands," he said. This brand-consciousness, he said, poses a big challenge for small enterprises. "We know that you have to struggle. You

have shortage of funds. You invest money somehow to build a business and then have to compete with big companies," the minister said.

Highlighting the importance of Prime Minister Modi's "Make in India" programme to boost the manufacturing sector, Paswan said that despite the challenges, emerging companies have to keep competing not just within India, but globally too. "Our image is terrible. We make the best products but we are not able to market it properly due to perception issues. China and we were at the same level. I don't think China can make better products than us. But their marketing and

product finishing are excellent. They are good at finding out the right markets to sell [their] products. We don't know whether China has Diwali-like festival, but in the last Diwali, even the fireworks came from China," he said. "The reason China has been able to capture our market is because it has a cheap labour force. We also have cheap labour and we can utilise it. We should have a vision."

Paswan was hopeful that small- and medium-sized companies have the capabilities to perform well. "You are dealing with a lot of difficulties in this era of cut-throat competition. You don't have enough money at your end in order to raise money from banks. The bank loan rates are very high. Now that inflation is going down, there will be pressure on the Reserve Bank of India. It is possible that interest rates will go down. I still think you have the capabilities and a huge market to serve. Except India, all other countries have older population. We have 60 per cent youth population. India has a huge market where you can sell," he said.

The minister also talked about the huge difference in the way private and public sector operate. "I have seen the difference between the public and private sector closely. In the public sector, people work for eight hours and their job is done. On the other hand, private sector entrepreneurs work for even 20 hours."

The event concluded with the minister felicitating 14 winners across 15 categories. Among the prominent winners were Rajkot-based Balaji Wafers, which got overall best emerging company award in the ₹500 crore to ₹1,500 crore turnover category, and Shri Lakshmi Metal Udyog, which was given two awards – overall best emerging company and excellence in performance and business scalability – in the ₹200 crore to ₹500 crore category. ♦

