

# Honouring Asian excellence

*What the judges say – Alpesh Patel, Founding Principal of Praefinium Partners Ltd*

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Launched in 2010, the Asian Awards in partnership with Lebara were created to celebrate the highest calibre of individuals from the South Asian community across all spheres of activity. With categories ranging from Business Leader, Philanthropist and Public Servant of the Year to Outstanding Achievement in Music, The Arts & Design, Sport, Cinema, Science & Technology and Television, the Asian Awards honour pioneering individuals who are an inspiration to people all over the world.

Earlier this year, Alpesh Patel, Founding Principal of Praefinium Partners Ltd, author and UK financial commentator, joined a panel of 20 accomplished judges to choose a winner in categories including Outstanding Achievement in Sport, Outstanding Achievement in Science & Technology, Social Entrepreneur of the Year and Public Servant of the Year.

As the Asian Awards 2011 are now fully underway, Mr Patel is keen to share his thoughts on why the Awards are so important, on a national and global scale, and which qualities in business and in life make a true winner.

"It's all about inspiring the next generation and to reward those who serve to inspire," says Patel. This comes from a man that is quick to admit that the person that has inspired him the most throughout his own career and in life is his father. "My father worked 18 hours a day to provide me with the best education in the world and the opportunity to make a difference," he adds. When asked what makes the Asian Awards stand out from other Awards programmes, his answer is characteristically simple and humble: "SCALE, execution, the people involved. It's

all A-list - with the exception of myself!" We have to disagree with the latter observation, as there are plenty of initiatives to shout about.

One of Mr Patel's many projects is the TyE, where he mentors young aspiring entrepreneurs. The Young Entrepreneurs is part of the TiE, a non-profit global network of entrepreneurs and professionals, established to foster entrepreneurship and nurture entrepreneurs. "The clue is to always remember where you came from," he explains. "As a mentor I make a point of telling the story as it is. I tell these young professionals that when I used to clean toilets I was the best toilet cleaner. Whatever you do in life make it remarkable; whatever the activity your prayers will be answered, not by giving you wealth but the OPPORTUNITY to gain wealth – those are the qualities that make a true winner."

Mr Patel recently also launched BATrustmarkets.com, a platform where online trading meets fundraising. In brief, the initiative was developed and launched with Worldspreads Group plc to help traders make charitable donations to the British Asian Trust. BATrustmarkets.com calculates the value between the bid and selling price and then donates 20 per cent of that figure. "This is another way of ensuring that a fair percentage of calculated good fortunes are reinvested in South Asia with a focus on education, health and livelihoods - it's a really important cause", adds Mr Patel.

Picking up on that last point, what key characteristics are required to become a successful Philanthropist? "It's a realisation and recognition of what wealth really is - irrespective of money, culture, religion, education and geography," he explains. "Add to that the drive to make a difference to the lives of those less fortunate right now. It is also a



sense of obligation and duty. For me, the saying; 'Let duty be done, though the heavens fall', sums it all up."

When asked about the core qualities of successful South Asian Business leaders, Mr. Patel makes a point of wanting to speak for himself only before he goes on to say: "Family is key. We work for our families. It makes us more resilient. We don't say 'cousin' we say brother or sister, we don't call them 'extended' families – we just call it family; it keeps us grounded and it inspires us to do better." In fact, if Mr Patel could choose anyone in the world to walk down the red carpet with him at the Asian Awards in October, it would be... "My late grandmother – she, like

so many Indian women, had a strength of character which built not just India but made British Indians punch way above their weight economically".

Having judged the Social Entrepreneur of the Year award with Intel's Graham Palmer; Journalist & Author Mihir Bose; Jaguar's Daljit Jagait; and Mitie CEO Ruby McGregor-Smith in April this year, we have to ask one last question. What core criteria were you looking for and what made the winner stand out this year for you? "Innovation - something which through intellect creates a real step change," says Mr. Patel. "And execution; ideas are cheap, so the ability to get off your ass and achieve is gold. That's what made this year's winner."

The Asian Awards was an ambitious idea conceived by Paul Sagoo, founder of Lemon Group, and realised by co-founder Caroline Jackson Levy, Managing Director of UBM Awards. "Our goal was to celebrate the highest calibre of individuals from the Asian community across all spheres of activity," said Sagoo. "Last year's inaugural event was spectacular, and set the bar high for 2011. This year, we will take it a notch higher," added Jackson Levy.

*Winners of the 2011 Asian Awards will be announced at a glittering awards ceremony at The Grosvenor House on Park Lane, London on 18th October - and it promises to be a spectacular occasion. With some of the world's most high profile trailblazers honoured in 2010, excitement is already building around who the recipients might be for 2011.*

*Visit [www.theasianawards.com/videos-2011.php](http://www.theasianawards.com/videos-2011.php) to watch interviews with the 2011 judges or [www.theasianawards.com](http://www.theasianawards.com) for information on how to book tickets to the 2011 Awards.*

## Blue Oval to double investment in India with £500 million factory

Ford Motor Co plans to build a £500 million production plant in India, doubling its investment in the country, as the U.S. carmaker seeks to catch up with rivals in the second-fastest growing auto market in the world.

Foreign car makers have been ramping up investment in a price-conscious Indian market, where small cars are the biggest sellers and domestic operators have long dominated the market.

Ford's planned factory in Sanand, in the business-friendly state of Gujarat, will be running by 2014 and employ 5,000 people, it said. Tata Motors makes the Nano, billed as the world's cheapest car, in the same city.

With initial annual ca-

capacity of 240,000 vehicles, the plant will bring Ford's total capacity in India to 600,000. It will reduce the cost of getting vehicles to domestic market and give the company access to west coast ports for exports. Ford has another plant in Chennai.

Foreign firms, most significantly South Korea's Hyundai Motor, the country's No. 2 seller, have been making inroads into the local market and are increasingly using India as a hub to make and export small cars.

Ford, which plans to raise the volume of its global sales by 50 percent to about 8 million vehicles a year by the middle of the decade, began exporting its compact Figo model from India in August.

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