



From left: M.D. Mallya, CMD, Bank of Baroda; R.S. Reddy, CMD, Andhra Bank; Aroon Purie, Editor-in-Chief, India Today Group; Jaideep Iyer, Deputy CFO, YES Bank; Vijit Yadav, Head (Technology & Operations), DBS India; M. Venugopalan, MD & CEO, Federal Bank; Amitabh Chaturvedi, MD & CEO, Dhanalakshmi Bank; Shikha Sharma, MD & CEO, Axis Bank; Ashok Chawla, Finance Secretary; Anil Valluri, VP & MD, India GEM, Sun Microsystems; Anil Nair, MD, Avaya Global Connect; P.T. Kuppuswamy, MD & CEO, Karur Vysya Bank; Rajeev Bhargava, India Head (Global Product Delivery), BOA; Munish Sapra, Country Head, Scotiabank

# BANKERS' DAY OUT

The *BT-KPMG Best Banks Awards* ceremony captured the best efforts of Indian bankers in a challenging year.

The *crème de la crème* of banking world came together to honour and reward the best performers on November 26 at ITC Grand Central, Mumbai. The event kicked off with commemoration of those who died in the last year's terrorist attacks in the city. Bankers couldn't help but talk about how responsible they felt to get an award on the day which marked the anniversary of a ghastly act. Shikha Sharma, MD & CEO of Axis Bank, adjudged to be the best bank this year, said: "It's the strongest reminder of our responsibility to provide banking to every citizen in the country." She iterated the message thrice as the bank won award across three categories.

Aroon Purie, Editor-in-Chief of India Today Group, kicked off the award ceremony by talking about resilience of Indian banking system amidst these tough times. That's why KPMG's Executive Director Ravi Trivedy added that the survey laid more emphasis on the strength of the banks than growth. Purie also called for rating the banks on the basis of customer-friendliness and satisfaction.

The bankers got a dose of sane advice from the chief guest for the occasion and the Finance Secretary in the Union government, Ashok Chawla. While giving startling statistics about India's unbanked population in India, he reminded bankers about this hidden opportunity and the

need for Indian banks to scale up their operations. The last issue was bound to get a volley of questions from the audience. A banker asked: "Doesn't scalability result in too-big-to-fail kind of banks?" The Finance Secretary clarified that banks need to be of optimum size to be able to take India's growth to the next level. He also cleared the air about the years-old debate of a super regulator for financial markets. "It's not in the zone of our consideration" he said, thereby putting to rest all the speculation around the issue. He was also quizzed about the routine dilemma he faces when corporates complain about not getting enough

funds from banks even as bankers point out to the lack of quality borrowers.

As the event progressed, bankers waited eagerly for the final results. Some like YES Bank's MD & CEO Rana Kapoor let the younger blood in the organisation step onto the stage and take away the honours. And as goes the saying that bankers never leave an opportunity to sell a loan or bank account, Amitabh Chaturvedi, Managing Director of Dhanalakshmi Bank, gave an open invitation to corporates who were unable to get finance from the big boys in the banking circle. Turning around to the Finance Secretary after collecting his award for the best mid-sized bank on the growth parameter, he quipped: "If any corporate complains to you that banks are not lending, please refer them to us." It was then time to celebrate the victory with champagne, wine and delicious Indian traditional food.

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## THE WINNERS' STRENGTH

Award	Large banks	Mid-size banks	Small banks
Overall Winner	Axis Bank	YES Bank	DBS Bank
Growth	Axis Bank	Dhanalakshmi Bank	DBS Bank
Quality of Assets	Andhra Bank	The Nainital Bank*	Scotiabank & BOA*
Productivity & Efficiency	Federal Bank	Karur Vysya Bank	JPMorgan Chase
Consistent Performer	Axis Bank		

\*The Nainital Bank is the subsidiary of Bank of Baroda; BOA: Bank of America