

# Hail the state capitalism

The Governance Now PSU Awards 2015 concluded at a glittering ceremony in New Delhi

## GN Bureau

**I**t was a night with a difference. December 17 saw who-is-who of public sector enterprises joining Governance Now and the two central ministers – Ram Vilas Paswan, minister of consumer affairs, food and public distribution and Manoj Sinha, minister for Railways – to celebrate the success of PSUs in India.

The award ceremony was preceded by a high-powered panel discussion moderated by Vikas Aggarwal, executive director of Ernst & Young. The key speakers at the panel discussion included: Anil Swarup, secretary, ministry of coal; S N Tripathi, additional secretary, ministry of small and medium enterprises; and Ashishkumar Chauhan, managing director and CEO, Bombay Stock Exchange. The panel focused on



the issue of how PSUs can unlock their potential for India's economic and social development (see report: The five Cs that scare the PSUs).

Speaking on the occasion Paswan said that the country will soon have a single, simplified standard for quality across the country for all products. He further stated that the move will give a push to the manufacturing sector and make the quality Indian products available in the international market. "The ISI mark will be simplified and the Bureau of Indian Standards is working on

it," he said.

"The role of PSUs will only increase. Each time the government has had a problem, it has turned to PSUs for help," he said. The minister said PSUs have to be strong to compete with the private sector.

Minister of state for Railways Manoj Sinha praised the PSUs for generating jobs at a fast rate. He, however, expressed concern at the quality of education in India. "Every year, India produces 30 lakh engineers but 15 lakh of them remain unemployed," he said. Also, he said, India does not figure in international rankings of top engineering universities.

Sinha said as in future there will be "only talent-based competition and survival of the quality," India needs to work on improving its education system. However, he also hoped that in the next 10 years, the Modi government's major flagship programmes will make the youths more employment worthy and create jobs.

Speaking on the rule of PSUs, Paswan claimed to have given the name Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited to the public telecom company. Later during his tenure as telecommunication minister, Paswan said, with a slight push from the government the telecom had

entered the mobile phone market and brought the call rates down from Rs 16 to Rs 2.5.

The government's motive cannot be fixed on profits; public sector plays an important role in making India a welfare state, Paswan said.

Paswan called the public sector to have a multi-dimensional perspective of its CSR activities. "An adivasi, on whose land mines are operating, does not care about a highway or a big university. He needs a primary school and a village path. CSR plays a big role in these kinds of areas," he said.

Paswan and Sinha gave away the awards to the winners in 14 categories. These included strategic performance, asset utilisation, employee productivity, consistent growth and adaptation, strategic investments, technology adoption, research and innovation, value growth and ITC, green, CSR and HR initiatives. Special awards were also given under best overall as well as financial performance. ■

