

Billionaires in Industries

Which industries have the most wealthy?

IT, of course. But promoters of pharmaceutical companies are fast catching up



BS Research Bureau

If you want to be a billionaire, which industry should you be in? We look here at the sectoral breeding grounds of the BS Billionaire Club, with a view to providing the answer to that question. Rather surprisingly, in spite of the carnage in the technology sector, the information technology (IT) segment continues to produce more billionaires than any other industry in India.

But don't lose heart if you can't distinguish between a bit and a byte - the pharmaceutical sector is in fast forward mode, rapidly closing the gap in the number of billionaires manufactured in its labs, while the "diversified" category of business groups is also becoming a major wealth creating force.

The number of IT billionaires this year remained at 24 - fully 13 of them being minor promoters of one company, Infosys Technologies. This would be the moment to pause and take one's topi off to this amazing company that has given birth to so many billionaires and realised so many dreams.

IT billionaires were, at the last count, sitting pretty on Rs 31,630 crore worth of assets at the end of July this year. But the solid numbers belie the queasy feeling in the stomachs of all IT billionaires - they have lost Rs 15,111 crore since last December, bringing down their share in the BS Billionaire Club from 42.9 per cent to 26.2 per cent. How have the mighty fallen. The 13 Infosys shareholders, whose wealth aggregated Rs 5,490 crore, lost Rs 1,532 crore. B Ramalinga Raju (net worth of Rs 1,333 crore) lost Rs 600 crore and Shiv Nadar & associates (with wealth worth Rs 4,298 crore) lost Rs 277 crore. Our deepest sympathies on behalf of the Billionaire Club to these unfortunate people.

In sharp contrast, the pharmaceutical industry billionaires have discovered the magic potion that grows their money fast. Twenty pharma billionaires increased their wealth by Rs 6,578 crore to a cool Rs 20,224 crore, accounting for 16.7 per cent of the total wealth of the club. The major boost for pharmaceutical stocks came from the investments in research and development activities by Indian companies.

They're making gold from dross in Indian pharmaceutical labs these days. Also, growing exports, accounting for 65 per cent of their total sales, signalled the global coming of age of the Indian pharmaceutical industry, and naturally increased their valuation.

In the pharmaceutical sector, Malvinder Singh and Shivinder Singh (net worth Rs 5,086 crore) of Ranbaxy, Dilip Shanghvi (Rs 3,027 crore) of Sun Pharmaceuticals, K Anji Reddy (Rs 2,132 crore) of Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Y K Hamied of Cipla (Rs 2,083 crore), H F Khorakiwala (Rs 1,331 crore) of Wockhardt and Pankaj R Patel (Rs 1,297 crore) of Cadila Healthcare are leading members of the Billionaire Club.