



Tycoon Arif hopes to catch Tiger by the tail

multi-millionaire who built a fashion empire from equipment bought from a bankrupt business is among 18 Preston nominees for a top Asian business awards.

Arif Patel, 37, who founded manufacturer Faisaltex Ltd on Fletcher Road, Deepdale, is a finalist for the Business Personality Award at the Asian Business Federation's (ABF) Tiger Awards.

He is joined among the nominees by entrepreneur Ishaq Ali, who runs Vision Natural Stone in Frenchwood, Zabir Patel of Avenham-based Tile Mart and Nadeem Ayub, of Shazan Foods,

Fulwood.



Tycoon: Arif Patel

Judge Raj Ruia, a director at linen firm Richard Howarth Ltd, said there was "quite a debate" to decide the winners of each category, which will be announced at a ceremony this month.

Fellow judge Nighat Alwan, of the Shere Khan restaurant chain, said: "It was

an awesome experience to be part of the judging."

Fulwood-based Arif Patel founded Faisaltex when he and his brothers, Munaf and Faisal, bought machines from a bankrupt Bolton firm in 1987 and turned it into a business worth more than £40m, producing nightwear for high street retailers.

The Patel family, which includes Arif's son and Preston North End shareholder Hussein, is estimated to have a fortune worth £105m, including a property portfolio covering most of Preston city centre.

First annual ABF Tiger Awards hailed a success

Arif Patel of Preston-based Faisaltex was awarded the EMBF Business Personality of the Year award. Along with his brothers Munaf and Faisal, Arif formed Faisaltex in 1987. It has since become one of the largest sock manufacturers in the UK. The family are also heavily involved in charity work, and since 1994 Arif has been a consul general for the Republic of Libe-

ria, a role in which he helps improve the standard of living for people in Liberia.

The awards judges included Nighat Awan OBE, Mukhtar Hussain QC (head of Lincoln House Chambers) and Gerry Yeung OBE (founder of Yang Sing Ltd).

Mukhtar Hussain QC commented: "Some of this year's applicants were very young, and it's encouraging to see such enthusiasm and entrepreneurial strength amongst young people, and there are definitely some businesses and individuals to watch."



Faisaltex receive their award from Nighat Awan OBE of the Shere Khan Group