

Q & A with Nino Gruettke (Executive Director, ITB Asia)

Kamal Gill

Q: How is ITB Asia 2010 different from last year?

A: It is different in two ways. First, we have really increased the show's MICE profile. We did this through introducing Association Day 20-21 October. It is a specialist workshop analysing the trends, challenges and opportunities for companies and destinations seeking to attract association meetings – specifically, large conventions, usually of medical professionals, insurance executives or pharmaceutical specialists, that really spend a lot of money in a destination.

One upshot of this is that our MICE buyers at ITB Asia this year have increased from 32 per cent of all buyers to 43 per cent.

Second, we've made a strategic commitment to focus on the quality of the buyers attending, more than the quantity. Of course, there will still be hundreds of buyers this year, but the quality will be better. By quality, we mean that the buyer will have a strong track record of purchasing. He or she will have been recommended by an exhibitor or will have been endorsed by a fellow buyer who has a history of quality buyer-seller interactions at ITB Asia.

Q: What are the factors which have resulted in increased registration for this year?

A: Registration is up incrementally, by high single digits. We won't know the final figures for sure until the show opens. However, we believe there is good, word-of-mouth communication in the travel industry. Specifically, the industry appreciates that we do not just sell the same old product every year, but always innovate the show with new elements. Additionally, the solidity of having the event in Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre for many years gives our partners planning reliability. Singapore is easy to get to. The infrastructure and the business culture is conducive to good business.

Q: What new developments in the global travel industry are being reflected/highlighted at ITB Asia this year?

A: The continued shift to online, the power of social media and mobile gadgets that empower travellers – all this is being discussed at Web in Travel during ITB Asia. Web in Travel is, in effect, the thoughts and ideas component of ITB Asia – with a distinct

emphasis on marketing, distribution and technology. In fact, Web in Travel will attract the largest, most diverse and the highest level gathering of travel industry professionals in the Asian travel distribution, marketing and technology sector, this year. One-price tickets give access to both Web in Travel and ITB Asia.



Nino Gruettke

Q: What are the new initiatives taken by ITB Asia to help the travel trade?

A: The best way that ITB Asia can contribute to the travel trade is help it become the best, most efficient, B2B, face-to-face travel industry event in Asia. So, no matter which niche of the travel industry you occupy, you will advance your business objectives strongly by participating in ITB Asia. That is why we position ourselves as 'The Trade Show for the Asian Travel Industry.'

Holiday Merchants ties up with Blue Ocean Cruises

Holiday Merchants has been appointed as a distributor for a premier Cruise Line Company – Blue Ocean Cruises.

Blue Ocean is open for bookings and will start sailing from 25 October 2010, until 31 May 2011.

Vikas Khanduri, CEO, Holiday Merchants is excited about this new tie-up. His thrust remains as that of the company's tag line, 'making business a pleasure' and stands committed in working with the B2B segment of the trade. "I have spent more than 22 years in this fine industry. It has given me some of my best moments, dearest friends and finest memories. I want to make a humble contribution in my capacity by providing solutions and packages to our B2B partners'. Blue Ocean Cruises is a fine opportunity for those who want to experience the luxury of a cruise and the satisfaction of budget travel," said Khanduri.



Vikas Khanduri

CII's tourism conclave concludes successfully

Tourism along with telecommunication, healthcare, and education is the next big thing as it provides employment to maximum number of people and helps the economy grow. The livelihood of an average 18 million Indians has been positively affected by tourism sector directly, over the past five years. These were some of the trends discussed in the recently held Tourism Conclave 'Integrating Tourism into Mainstream Development & Medical Value Travel', organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).

The conclave also discussed about tourism products, which can become successful global tourism niches. Addressing the conclave Sudha Pillai, Member Secretary, Planning Commission, said that the niche products that can be focussed on are cuisine and rural tourism, along with medical, wellness, adventure, tourism, where the foreign traveller gets to experience rural hospitality by staying with them.

Pillai also added that the Ministry of Health is making changes in skill development for medical profession as more and better trained medical professionals are required in all the strata of the pyramid. She informed that the Planning Commission will also focus on



the infrastructure development for the tourist to have a wholesome experience of Incredible India.

Sanjay Kothari, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, said that the extension of validity of Medical

visas (M-Visa) is already in operation, and also announced that a separate queue for Indian Passport holders at the new T-3 terminal at the new International Airport at Delhi has started. This facility though available in other countries was not available in India.

The speakers agreed that medical tourism has a huge potential as it is likely to grow at a CAGR of over 27 per cent, 2009-12, generating revenues worth US\$ 2.4 billion by 2012. Medical tourists are anticipated to grow at CAGR of over 19 per cent, to reach 1.1 million by 2012. India's share in global medical tourism industry will climb to 2.4 per cent by the end of 2012.

Nasir Aslam Wani, Minister of State, Tourism, Government of Jammu & Kashmir, said that J & K is going to have a golf circuit and is planning to develop two more world-

class golf courses to cater to the high-end traveller who wants to experience India in all its flavours. The state has formed 20 new development agencies to support tourism as tourism development has to be in sync with the fragile environment of the state, he added.

Nakul Anand, Chairman, CII National Committee on Tourism & Divisional Chief Executive, ITC Ltd, Hotels Division, said that given the potential of medical tourism, it can provide vigour to the Indian economy as it is a huge employment provider. India's goal through tourism must be to garner 16 million tourists by 2020, which is just about 1 per cent WTO forecast of 1.6 billion worldwide tourists. Medical tourism is expected to bring in revenues close to Rs 9,500 crore by 2015.

Dr Naresh Trehan, Chairman, CII National Committee on Healthcare & CMD Medanta – The Medicity, said that India is a huge powerhouse and medical tourism has huge potential. "Though it has been a missed opportunity so far, but now India is ready to maximise it. Interdisciplinary synergy will lead to huge employment creation and it will be a multilayered opportunity," said Trehan.

PATA's 60th anniversary website

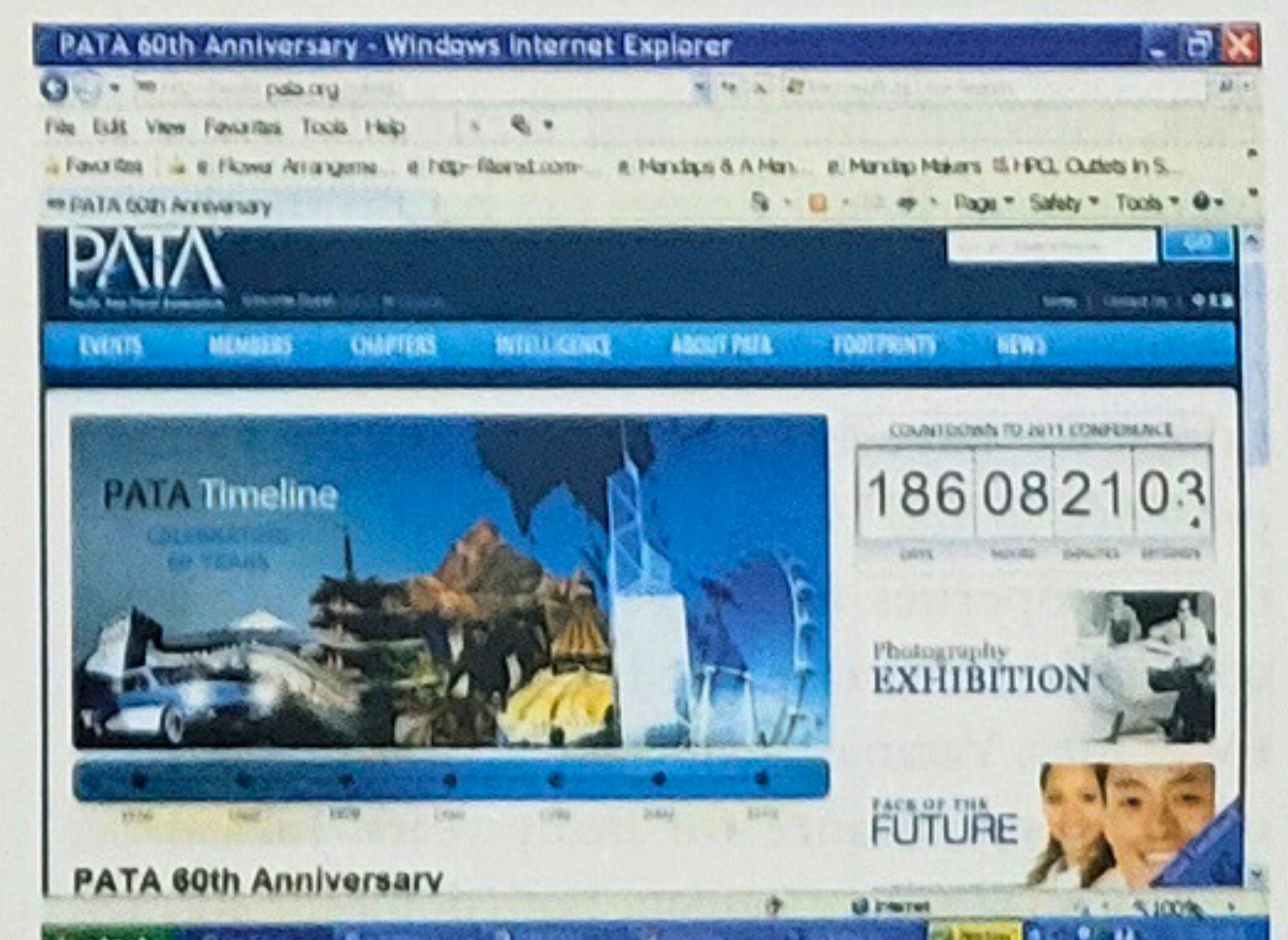
PATA has launched a dedicated website for its 60th anniversary year. The site, www.pata60.org, is home to a variety of competitions, activities and events built around the 60th anniversary theme: 'Building Tourism: Past. Present. Progressive'. The 60th anniversary road show will kick off from Hawaii with an Executive Board meeting on 18 February, 2011. Charting key events in PATA's history, the interactive timeline is a reminder of some of the many achievements and successes of the association over the past six decades. From its early days in Hawaii to the Chiang Mai taskforce of the 1970s, and the efforts to re-invigorate

travel and tourism in the early 2000s with Project Phoenix, the timeline encapsulates what has shaped PATA since its inception in 1951.

Also taking a retrospective theme, the online photography exhibition offers a glimpse into the faces and personalities who have shaped PATA from the 1950s right through to the present. Chapter meetings, Annual Conferences, Travel Marts and social occasions are all there, grouped by decade. New faces are the focus for the first of the competition pages. To coincide with the 60th anniversary celebrations, the annual 'Face of the Future' competition has been brought to the forefront by putting the power of the vote in the

hands of PATA members. Profiles and images of the nominated candidates are already online and members can vote for candidates between now and October 29, 2010.

The 'Tomorrow's Tourism' competition invites students from PATA member educational establishments to submit a five-minute video presentation with their ideas for a more sustainable model of tourism development. After the first round closing date of 15 December, students' videos will be uploaded to the Tomorrow's Tourism section of the PATA60 site.



Celebrating today's success stories, the 'Zero Footprint Challenge' will seek to highlight examples of environmentally responsible tourism.

PATA Travel Mart 2010 a success

Arjun Gill & Ruchika Gill

The PATA Travel Mart 2010 opened for business with almost 1,000 buyers, sellers and media attending the event at the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, Macau SAR. PATA chairman Hiran Cooray presided over the official opening ceremony at the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel, supported by an impressive list of VIPs and distinguished guests. Said Cooray, "It gives me much pleasure to welcome all PTM delegates this year to the colourful and culturally rich city of Macau, SAR. I am happy to see that we have a positive response from the industry for PTM2010. We are also looking ahead to the coming year, which will be a grand celebration for PATA, to celebrate our 60th year of glory and success. Highlights of the events will be PATA Adventure Travel and Responsible Tourism Conference and Mart, 7-11 February, Pokhara, Nepal; PATA's 60th Anniversary and Conference, 9-12 April, Beijing, China; and PATA Travel Mart 2011, 6-9 September, New Delhi, India. We have and as always, your participation and involvement will add infinite value."

PATA Travel Mart is Asia Pacific's most important and influential travel-and-tourism industry networking and contracting event. This year, industry and media delegates (including 530-sellers from 295-organisations and 38-source markets; 303-buyers from 269-organisations and 53-source markets and 152-media delegates from 13-countries) attended the event. PTM2010 welcomed 31 per cent of first-time buyers and 23 per cent of first-time sellers.

Highlights of the programme included the welcome dinner reception hosted by Macau SAR Government at Macau Fisherman's Wharf; PATA Gold Awards luncheon and presentation sponsored by the Macau Government Tourist

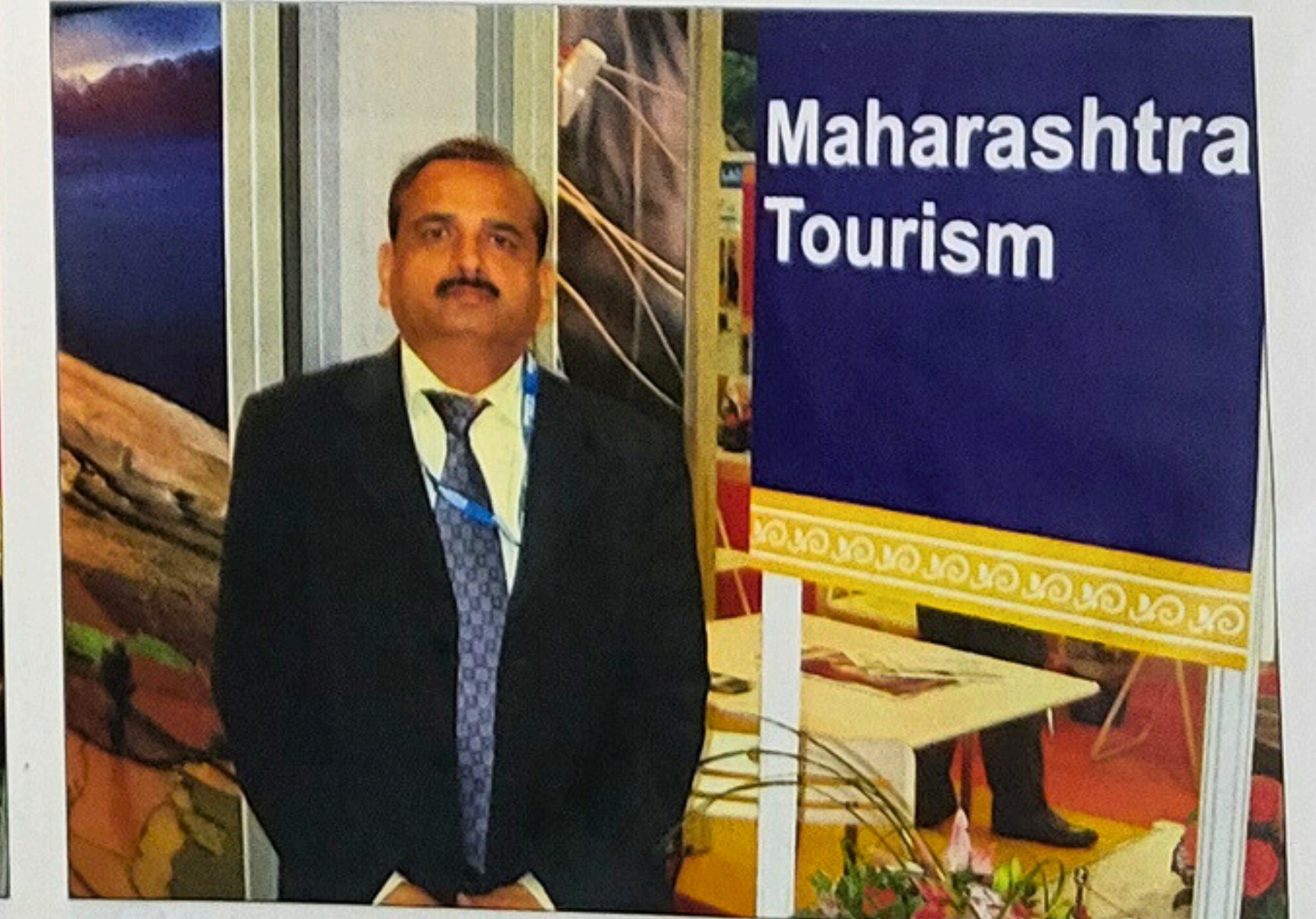
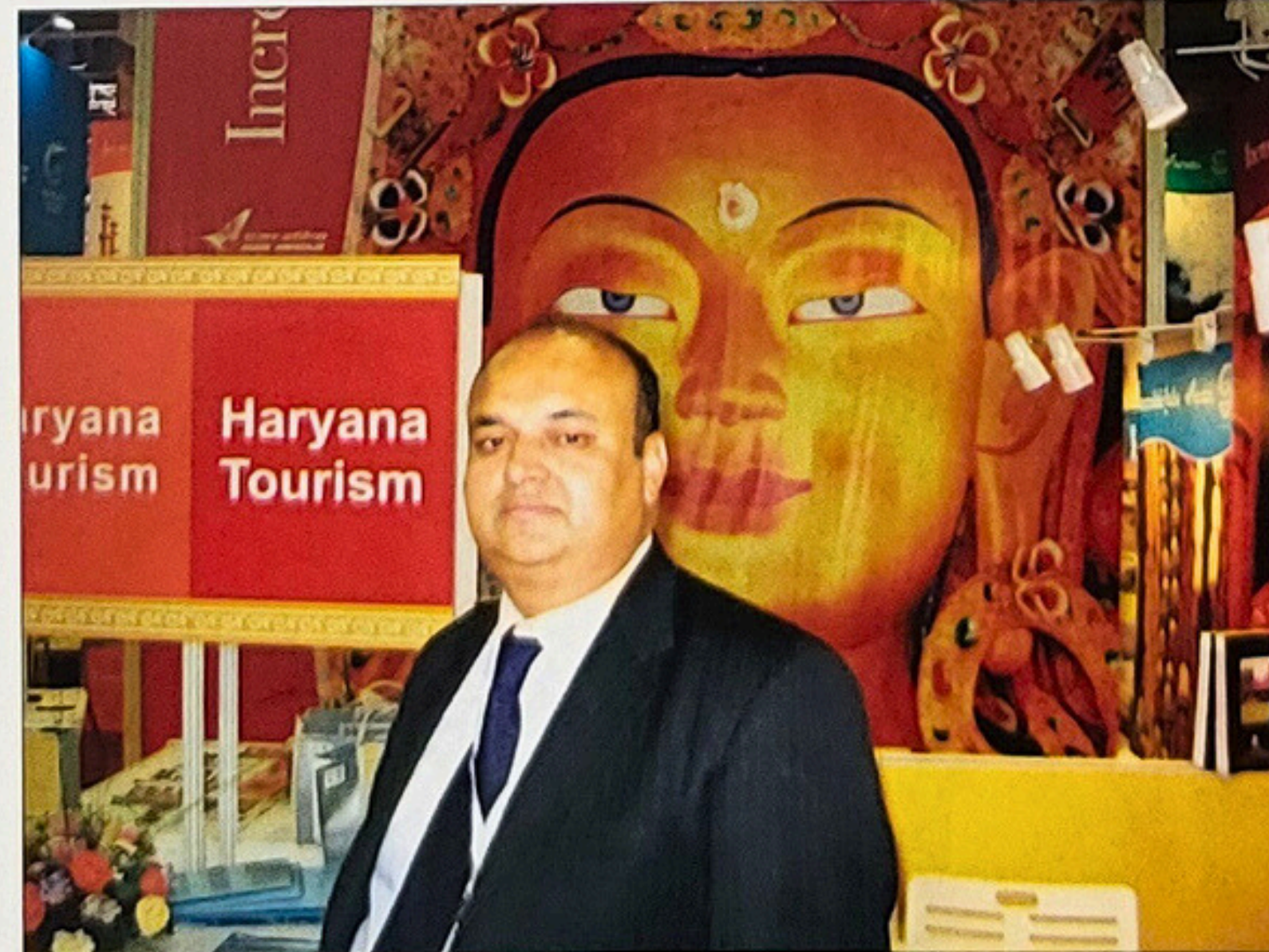
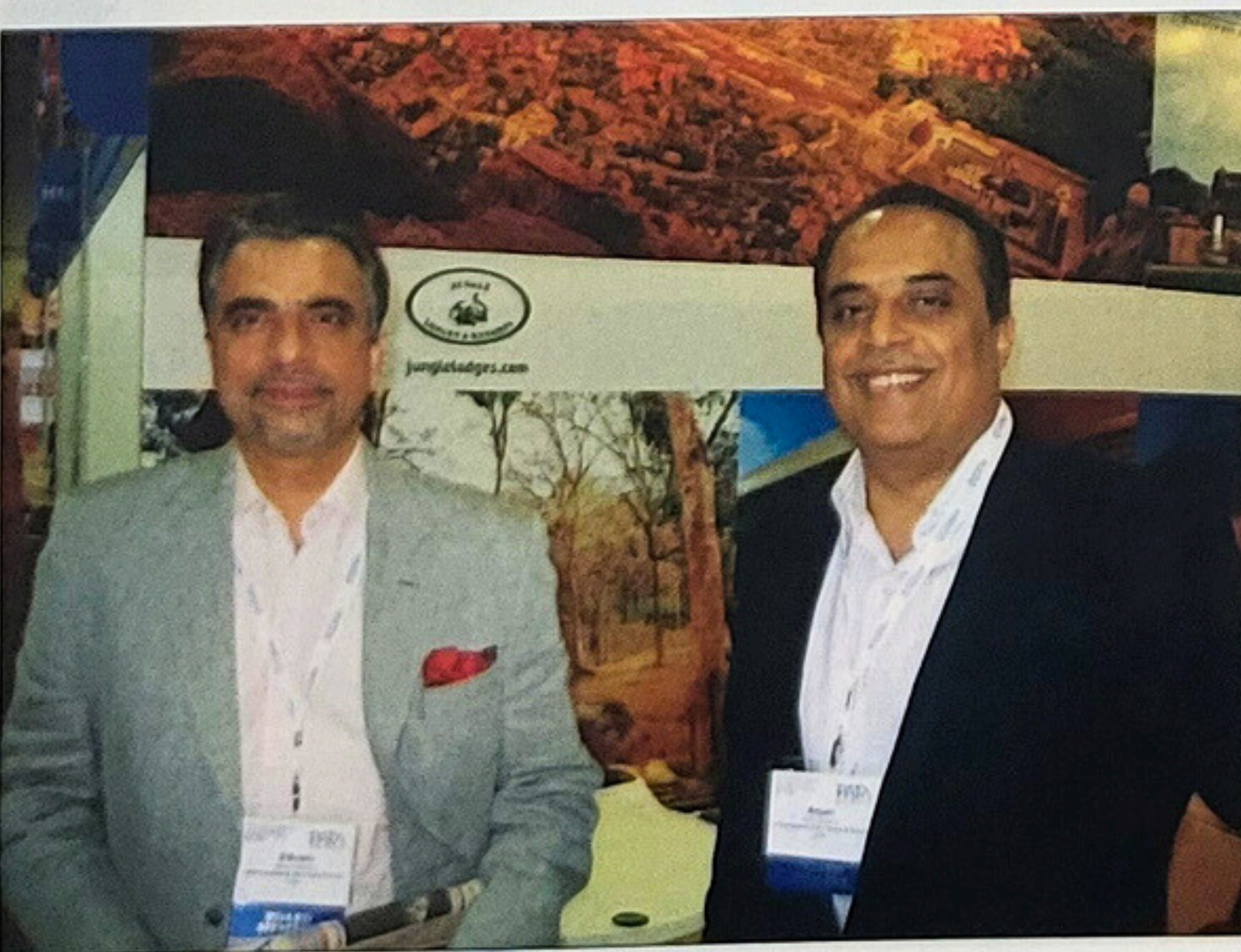
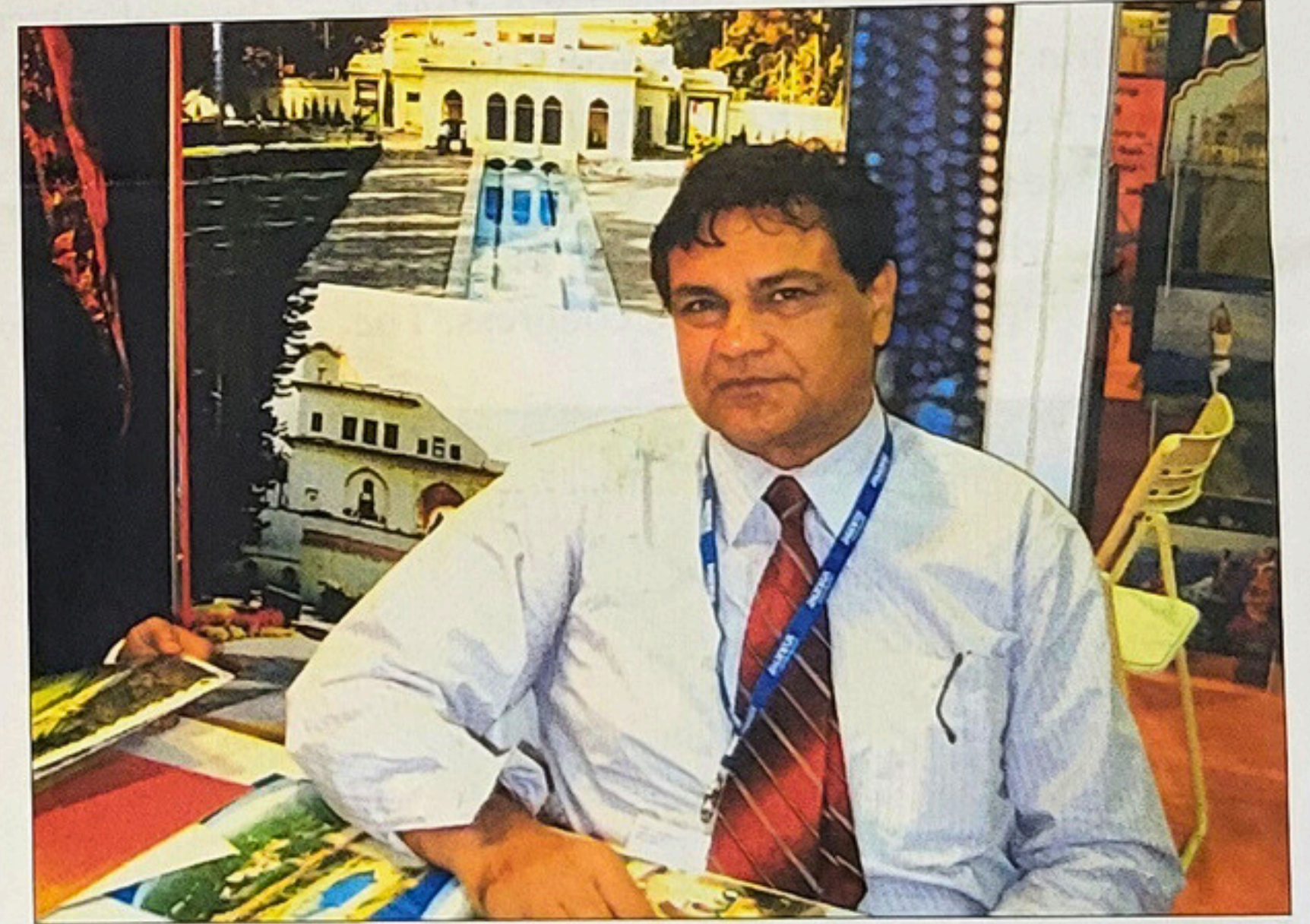
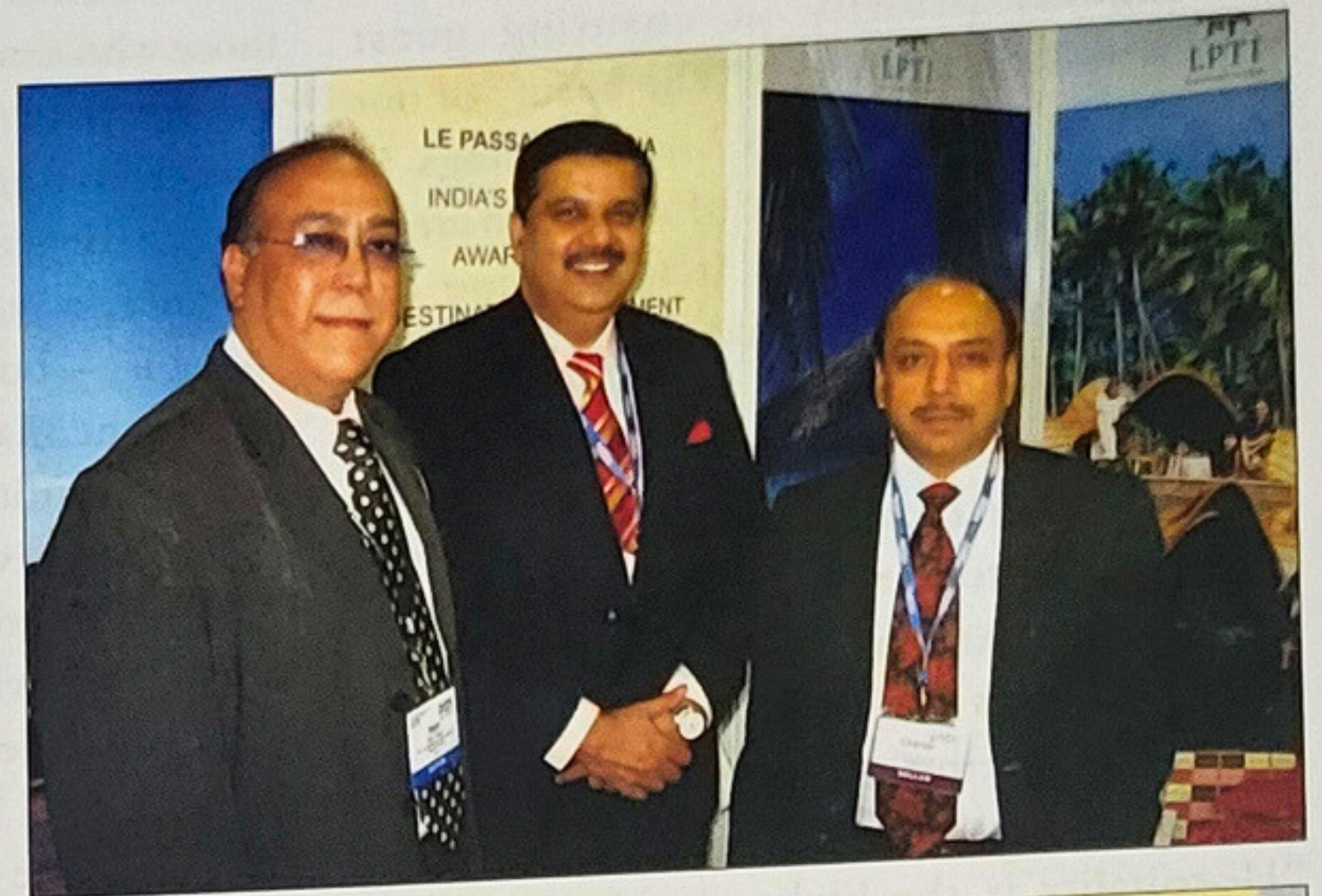
Office; dinner reception hosted by Ministry of Tourism, Government of India; and The House of Dancing Water, only at the City of Dreams. Directed by Franco Dragone, US\$250-million was spent on creating and producing this show; PTM delegates got to see a preview of the show.

The first educational session of the Mart, PTM2010 Seminar: HR Challenges in Tourism and Hospitality, Promoting Industry-Academia Collaboration, took place on September 14 at the Institute For Tourism Studies (IFT). Jointly organised by The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) School of Hotel and Tourism Management and the Institute For Tourism Studies, the seminar attracted over 160 students and travel-and-tourism professionals. Other educational elements of the Mart will be on 'Designing Dream Experiences' and 'CSR for Travel and Tourism'.

Corporate Social Responsibility is a rising phenomenon in travel today. This was the topic of discussion on the second day of the PATA Travel Mart 2010's luncheon workshop at the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel. A panel of industry leaders discussed on how community involvement and social and environmental responsibility are now becoming key factors in the decision-making process of today's travellers – and why we need to address them. Far from a passing fad, CSR is increasingly influencing how and where people choose to travel, the creation of new travel opportunities and products, and increasing tourism's role as a force for good.

PATA Grand and Gold Awards winners celebrated their achievements at the PATA Gold Awards luncheon on the last day of PATA Travel Mart 2010 at the Venetian Macao Resort Hotel. Sponsored by the Macau Government Tourist Office, the award presentation attracted over 1,000 travel trade professionals, including buyers, sellers and media persons. This

year, the awards recognised the achievements of 24 separate organisations and individuals.



26th IATO Convention

The 26th Annual Convention of Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) concluded successfully with fanfare at Hotel Inder Residency, Udaipur. The Convention was inaugurated by RH Khwaja, Secretary Tourism, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. Also present at the occasion were Devesh Chaturvedi, Additional Director General Tourism, Government of India, and Usha Sharma, Commissioner cum Principal Secretary Tourism, Government of Rajasthan. More than 1,500 delegates were present during the inaugural function, which included senior officials from the centre and state government, professionals of the tourism, hospitality and other alliance of the tourism, members of the press and media and their spouses.

Vijay Thakur, President, IATO, in his presidential speech talked in detail about the initiatives that were taken by the Ministry of Tourism to boost the sluggish tourism scene due to global economic recession and other reasons that negatively impacted the tourism business.

Thereafter, in his presentation, he submitted some

recommendations on behalf of IATO, which can ensure 20 million tourist arrivals by 2020, and pleaded for the Ministry of Tourism support in getting these recommendations implemented in the interest of national tourism.

RH Khwaja, who was the Chief Guest, expressed his pleasure to be with the industry stalwarts and said that while most of the initiatives of the Ministry have already been enumerated by the Additional Director General Tourism and President IATO, the action has in some way already been initiated in many of the issues and there will be sincere efforts to bring positive outcome of all these suggestions.

