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India Trade Conference Discusses 'New India Markets'



The 3rd Annual India Trade Conference focused on new Indian markets, particularly green and social entrepreneurship, being addressed by R. Sampath, director of India Strategy for Quanta Consulting, Inc. (Parimal Rohit photo)

By **PARIMAL M. ROHIT**
Special to **India-West**

IRWINDALE, Calif. — About 200 key corporate executives gathered at the Edison Conference Center here July 29 to discuss the future of doing business in India during the 3rd Annual India Trade Conference hosted by the Port of Los Angeles, Southern California Edison, Network of Indian Professionals and Quanta Consulting, Inc.

The all-day conference, "Destination India 2010: Green and Social Entrepreneurship," which focused on accessing "New India Markets," addressed several issues facing today's executives seeking to do large-scale business in the South Asian region.

Among the topics discussed included the keys to doing successful business in India, green

and social entrepreneurship opportunities in the region, trends affecting the "New India Environment," risk mitigation and funding for business growth.

"One big thing is opportunities in these areas," R. Sampath, director of India Strategy for Quanta Consulting, Inc., told **India-West**, referring to the prospects of doing business in South Asia's largest country and the conference he helped organize.

"For example, in the green space, there is a lot of opportunity for companies within India and abroad. The Government of India has deployed huge amounts of money to development of green programs."

In addition to a series of panels, the conference included opening remarks from top-level executives and officials from Southern Cali-

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fornia Edison, Qualcomm, and the U.S. Department of Commerce. The speakers then spoke about India's growth opportunities in electricity, communications and investments.

India "will jump into these (mobile) devices, which will be standard issue. It will be the mobile Internet that will be the first connection with the Internet in India," Peggy Johnson, Qualcomm's executive vice president of Americas and India, said in regard to the rapid expansion of cell phones and mobile devices in India, which is making personal computers irrelevant in the country. "It's transforming lives."

Looking forward, Johnson added that she expects India's mobile data traffic to grow 346-fold between 2009 and 2014.

Speaking on behalf of the United States government, Holly Vineyard, in her capacity as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of South Asia for the Department of Commerce, spoke of investment opportunities in India.

Claiming that India is the most emerging market in her jurisdiction, Vineyard talked about her department's Growth Initiative, which promotes foreign investors doing business in metro areas beyond Mumbai and Delhi.

Since India is on the verge of having as many as 68 cities with

one million or more residents, Vineyard said there are many opportunities to invest in various local markets throughout India.

She also stated there were pitfalls to investing in India, such as weak protection of intellectual property, high tariffs, and difficulty of land acquisition, among other issues.

Providing a keynote address as well as John Fielder, president of Southern California Edison, who spoke about optimization of electricity usage in India.

The India Trade Conference also featured four topic-specific panels and a special session on fashion and entertainment in India. The panel sessions focused on logistics and operations of India's international trading industry, financial investments and risks, and social entrepreneurship and green opportunities.

Among the featured panelists for each breakout session were key figures from WindStream Technologies, Comerica Bank, EXIM Bank, Greenwala, Inc., the U.S. Commercial Service and the University of Southern California's Marshall School of Business, who provided valuable insight on the prospects of doing business in India.

Sampath said the overall value

of the conference was its exploration of a nexus between government, social entrepreneurship and rural populations while searching for solutions to problems through education and the formations of coalitions.

"One big thing is basic level awareness about India," Sampath told **India-West**, adding that while the India Trade Conference will remain an annual event, he plans eventually to organize a series of monthly business-themed events focusing on investment opportunities in India.

"People come in and learn about the trend of where India is headed. At the end of the conference, we give an overview of what to take away. It's Business 101 on how to do business with India," he said.



One of the booths at the India Trade Conference. (Parimal Rohit photo)



Keynote speakers and R. Sampath (right) at the conference.