



Inside the IIFA's 2007

A behind the scenes look at "The Bollywood Oscars"

Telecast to a worldwide audience of over 300 million people, The International Indian Film Academy Awards is one of the most prestigious and high profile events in the world. What started out as simply an awards ceremony has developed into a long weekend where the glitterati of the Indian film industry descended upon Yorkshire - bringing with them the glare of the world's media and an estimated 28,000 visitors. The tripartite alliance of Yorkshire Tourism, Yorkshire Culture and Yorkshire Forward paid a large sum for the coveted privilege of hosting the IIFA Awards 2007, but contractual ambiguities left many grey areas over who was responsible for such crucial areas as public safety and on the ground site and event coordination across the multiple Yorkshire venues. So whilst the event's tag line - "Love at First Sight" - implied an easy relationship between the Yorkshire hosts and IIFA - without some serious behind the scenes work from TAO Group - a leading UK based event management consultancy, it would not have been such a happy affair...



TAO's Andy Cotton with IIFA Awards Host Lara Dutta on the green carpet at Sheffield Hallam Arena.



Ben Price of TAO with Shilpa Shetty at The Aagrah

TAO - IIFA AWARDS WEEK 2007

THURSDAY 31st MAY

Email to TAO Group requesting "Help!" for Shilpa Shetty's birthday party.

FRIDAY 1st JUNE

11:00 Meeting at Leeds Victoria Quarter to discuss all aspects of the party including crowd management, production, security, catering and H&S.

15:00 WYP HQ - meeting with West Yorkshire ACC and his officers, Yorkshire Partners and IIFA Officials. Went into meeting with one job and came out with ten! (all for the same fee!!) after being requested to take on the role of public safety for the entire IIFA Week.

SATURDAY 2nd/SUNDAY 3rd JUNE

Preparation of detailed event management plans - incorporating crowd, traffic & pedestrian management, site coordination and safety and security.

MONDAY 4th JUNE

Meeting in Victoria Quarter Re: Shilpa's party with IIFA Managers, Venue Officials, Yorkshire Partners and Leeds City Council with their safety consultant Richard Limb.

15:00 Meeting at The Queen's Hotel, Leeds - the hotel for stars like Salman Khan and Ex Miss Universe Lara Dutta. Requested to undertake public protection of crowds, traffic management and VIP Movements.

TUESDAY 5th JUNE

Meetings held at IIFA HQ with IIFA and Wizcraft International Management. Site visits to National Media Museum and Cineworld, Bradford together with Cineworld, Castleford. Preparation and submission of event management plans to West Yorkshire Police for these three venues.

WEDNESDAY 6th JUNE

The stars arrive at The Queens Hotel, minus their bodyguards, who got left at Manchester Airport. Shilpa has a birthday lunch at the Aagrah, Leeds which Ben and Jon covered. Then she visits a house in Leeds of a competition winner; off we go again! Thank God for Sat Nav.

THURSDAY 7th JUNE

Queen's Hotel was busy with crowds and arrivals. An advance trip to Hallam Arena for rehearsals and H&S on the VIP Hospitality. Then in the evening off, to the IIFA World Premiere at Cineworld in Castleford; attended by Salman Khan, Gitta Basra, Kabir Bedi and Safi Ali Khan.

FRIDAY 8th JUNE

Covered Queen's Hotel; Bradford National Media Museum for visit of Aishwarya Rai; covered IIFA Film Premiere at Cineworld, Bradford for visit of Salman Khan & Aishwarya Rai (Ben got a parking ticket). Early evening we placed all the barriers at the Victoria Quarter for Shilpa Shetty's party which was starting at 10pm. Did all the H&S checks on the venue and production. Andy rugby tackled a job who tried to get to the stars: "was I a coiled spring or a floundering whale" he said but "I nicked him". At exactly this moment the ACC of West Yorkshire Police arrived and was talking to CI Williams who was saying how quiet it was as the youth ran passed, chased by security and police. He picked the wrong place to practice the 100m hurdles. Party finished at 2am.

SATURDAY 9th JUNE

Covered Queen's then off to Hallam Arena, Sheffield. Did all the H&S for the VIP hospitality, assisted by looking after Tessa Jowell MP, which we found in the Sheffield traffic thanks to South Yorkshire Police. We also ended looking after Shobna Gulati and Keith Vaz MP. IIFA ends, back home...great!



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Soundbites from the week....

"The event management plans you delivered with such short notice & timescales are a credit to you and your staff...Your input ensured public safety had been considered at all of the main venues. I am sure issues such as the 'Queens' ran a lot smoother because of your actions."

CI Williams - West Yorkshire Police. Re: TAO Group.

"You could see the colour drain from the man's face as you bore down on him."

Simon Miller - AP Security (North) Manager: Leeds Re: All 19 Stone of TAO's Andy Cotton bearing down on the one man stupid enough to jump the barriers - who was promptly accosted by what onlookers described as 'A Coiled Spring'.

"THANK YOU!It was excellent working with you guys; send me a profile of TAO Productions...I am sure we can use your services for work that we do in the Gulf"

Wimpey Arora - IIFA Security & Logistics Director. Re: TAO Group

"I'll be interested to see your risk assessments"

Richard Limb - Capita Symonds and Safety Consultant to Leeds City Council

"Well they should be good...we've all been on your course!"

Andy Cotton - TAO Group Director.

Exchange in meeting at The Victoria Quarter, Leeds 4th June 2007

"Hi Andy...I was impressed with your teams professionalism and dedication to the job in hand. You and your team all contributed to what the region sees as a successful event."

Chief Inspector David Fortune - IIFA 2007

"I warned him...and after he didn't comply I informed him of his destination and made his travel arrangements"

TAO's Jon Perry informing the rest of the team how he dispatched a ticket-less and pass-less Tre Azam from "The Apprentice" through the barriers outside of Shilpa Shetty's Birthday party.

"Your contribution to the event was huge and greatly appreciated by all concerned. We couldn't have done it without you and I know that you protected me both in H&S terms but also commercially. Plus you got Tessa Jowell and myself a motorcycle escort - which was great!.. Your a diamond"

Adam Pritchard - Senior Business Adviser: Culture & Major Events - Yorkshire Forward: Regional Development Agency for Yorkshire & The Humber.