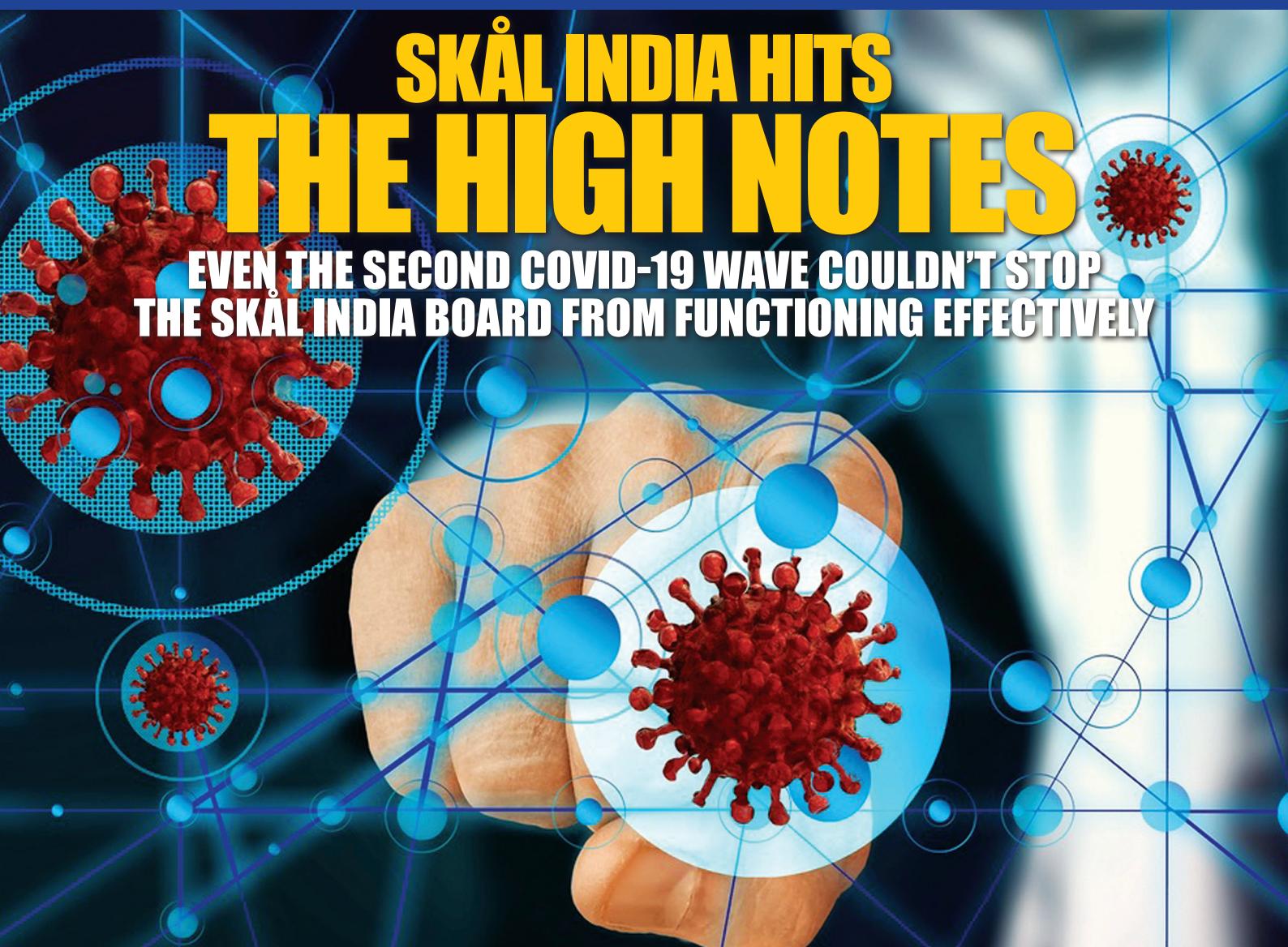


# KOTIN

KEEPING OURSELVES TOGETHER - INDIA

## SKÅL INDIA HITS **THE HIGH NOTES**

EVEN THE SECOND COVID-19 WAVE COULDN'T STOP  
THE SKÅL INDIA BOARD FROM FUNCTIONING EFFECTIVELY



### PROJECT E-VOLUTION

Skål India's CSR initiative is determined to help children make the leap from classroom to digital



### EXPO 2020 DUBAI

Expect six months of fun, education, and innovation at the world's largest exhibition gets underway in Dubai



### PHOTO FEATURE: NCM

Skål India's 2nd NCM in New Delhi witnesses a full house.

“Truly Heritage...  
Truly Mahabalipuram”

# Chariot



Beach Resort, Mahabalipuram.

Venpurusam Village Road, Mahabalipuram, Chennai - 603104. INDIA.

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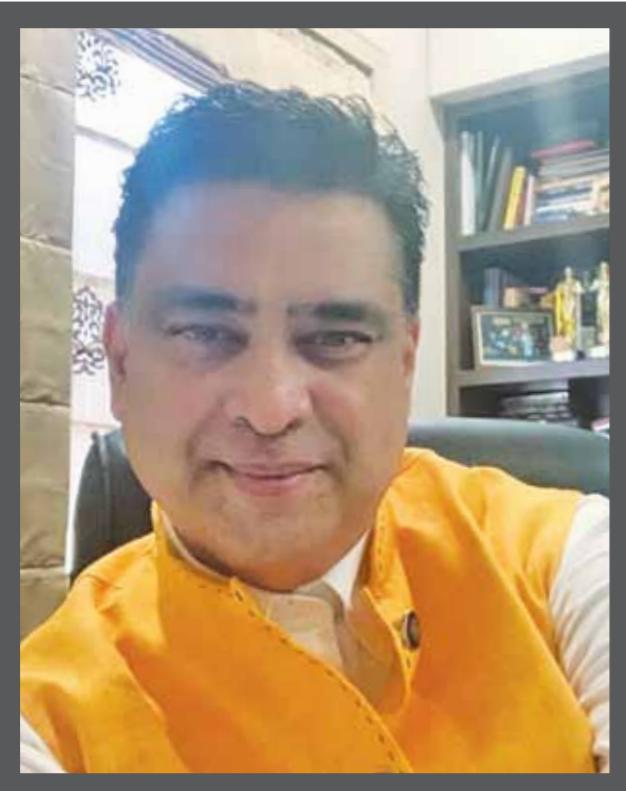
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Printed in India

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**My dear Skålleagues,**

After the national lockdown and State-wise restart program, it's unfortunately been a continued year of start-up followed by a pause in repeated cycles owing to the 'so-called' waves. Each of us has endured and persevered since March of 2020 despite having to pause and mourn fallen heroes from our industry who succumbed to this dreaded virus. As I pen the September 2021 issue of my Presidential message, I am humbled by our collective resilience in the face of so many adversities during the last eighteen months.

I once chanced upon a quote by author Daniel H. Pink: "Control leads to compliance. Autonomy leads to engagement." These thoughts echoed in my mind as I requested our National Treasurer Sk. Ranjit Vig to coordinate Skål India's first internal audit to be conducted by then internal auditors – Sr. Auditor Sk. Burjis Mehta and Jr. Auditor Sk. A.R. Suresh. It was another defining moment for this team as the auditors went about their work with unfettered access through all of Skål India's fiscal accounting for the financial year 2020–2021.

The details of this team's performance reports and the brief of the internal auditors' report were thereafter shared with your respective Club Presidents or leadership team members who attended the 2nd National Committee meet in New Delhi, rather Noida, on the 25th of March at the side-lines of SATTE 2021. This issue covers a throwback to our 2nd National Committee Meeting, although a few months out, as we had to pause KOTIN for five months due to the 2nd wave!

KOTIN has been presented to several Indian Government officials and international dignitaries. This may seem trivial to a few, but it is necessary to highlight the efforts of Skålleagues who make sure that Skål India is not just 'heard' but also 'seen' at industry

events, corporate workplaces (yes....we are reaching corporates as well) and into the hands of prominent leaders. It is a part of the 360-degree approach towards making Skål India and its members known to travellers and influential people.

When you have an enthusiastic and passionate Club (Chapter) President, the energy percolates through the Board and into the members, resulting in creative and inspiring activations. President Sk. Raja Gopaul of Skål Trivandrum is one that stands out as an exceptional leader. Skål Trivandrum in a span of a few months orchestrated several events that are low-cost, yet highly imaginative and effective membership engagements that were also visible to the public with skilled craftsmanship. To me that is a true demonstration of out-of-the-box thinking at its best – they created novel ideas, spent less, got the members involved, and added a fair bit of public awareness, which is part of our overall strategy of 'direct to consumer'. Even the artworks promoting each of their events were tastefully done. Well done, Trivandrum!

We will continue to struggle with our declining margins, yet remain optimistic of well-defined strategies and timely action that will begin the process to 'Regrow', albeit slowly and steadily in 2021. And as we go through this process let us not forget our social obligations as Skålleagues and more importantly as senior professionals of the travel industry. Do read about Skål India's national CSR drive titled 'Project E-volution', the aim of which is to place tech equipment into the hands of young girls and boys, encouraging them to persevere with their education online.

This is not a fund collection drive that will result in a princely cheque being given to yet another charity – with

yet another ribbon-cutting. But will ensure that the items physically reach children who so desperately need the equipment and whose parents are at pains for not being able to provide this to their offspring. Let's donate those pieces of equipment gathering dust or languishing unused to alleviate a child's needs and bring some respite to their struggling parents who – like us – find themselves amid this never-ending scourge called the Covid-19 pandemic. Do read the details in this issue and approach your local coordinator.

I seek your support to make 'Project E-volution', not just another creative CSR project but a life-changing event for the underprivileged children and their parents. Let's make it a defining moment when Skålleagues, corporates, family, and even the public – your neighbours and friends – donate to a cause that is bigger than ourselves.

As I close, we look with bated breath at the launch of a global extravaganza, an event like no other. Dubai Expo 2020 is poised to raise its curtain and with that an opportunity for our travel trade fraternity to start their leisure & VFR businesses. Hope you enjoy reading all about this mega event.

**Before I close, I'd like to wish my fellow Skålleague N.S.N. Mohan from Hyderabad my best wishes as he prepares for the Skål International Director elections, which will take place in December. It is a matter of great pride to us as he steps forward and carries India onto the international platform.**

Sincerely,

**Carl Vaz**  
President  
Skål International India

# EXPO 2020 DUBAI

## THE MAKING OF A NEW WORLD



Get set to welcome **EXPO 2020 DUBAI**, the first Expo to be held in the MEASA region since the onslaught of the pandemic. Originally scheduled for **20 October 2020 to 10 April 2021**, this long-running mega-event was postponed and will now kick off on **October 1, 2021** and continue until **March 31, 2022**.

**H**aving come together in style at The world's longest-running and largest mega-event attracts more visitors than the FIFA World Cup and the Olympic Games. World Expos are hosted every five years in cities around the world and have wowed audiences since their inception in London in 1851. Expo 2020 Dubai will be the first Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia (MEASA) region and the first to be hosted in these changed times, by a nation and a city known for its ability to imagine and innovate.

Here's what you can expect: Six months of fun; education and innovation; 200+ participants; record participation from across the world; and One-Nation-

One-Pavilion for the first time in World Expo history! Plus, health and safety are in line with advice and guidance from the WHO.

This will be the most global Expo ever, offering unrivalled cultural experiences from more than 190 countries. Visitors will join the greatest global gathering, meet innovators and entertainers, and taste flavours from around the globe, every day for six months. From the world's most renowned architects and creative teams behind blockbuster movies, the **Thematic Pavilions** bring to life the Expo sub-themes through experiences never seen before.

## Thematic Pavilions

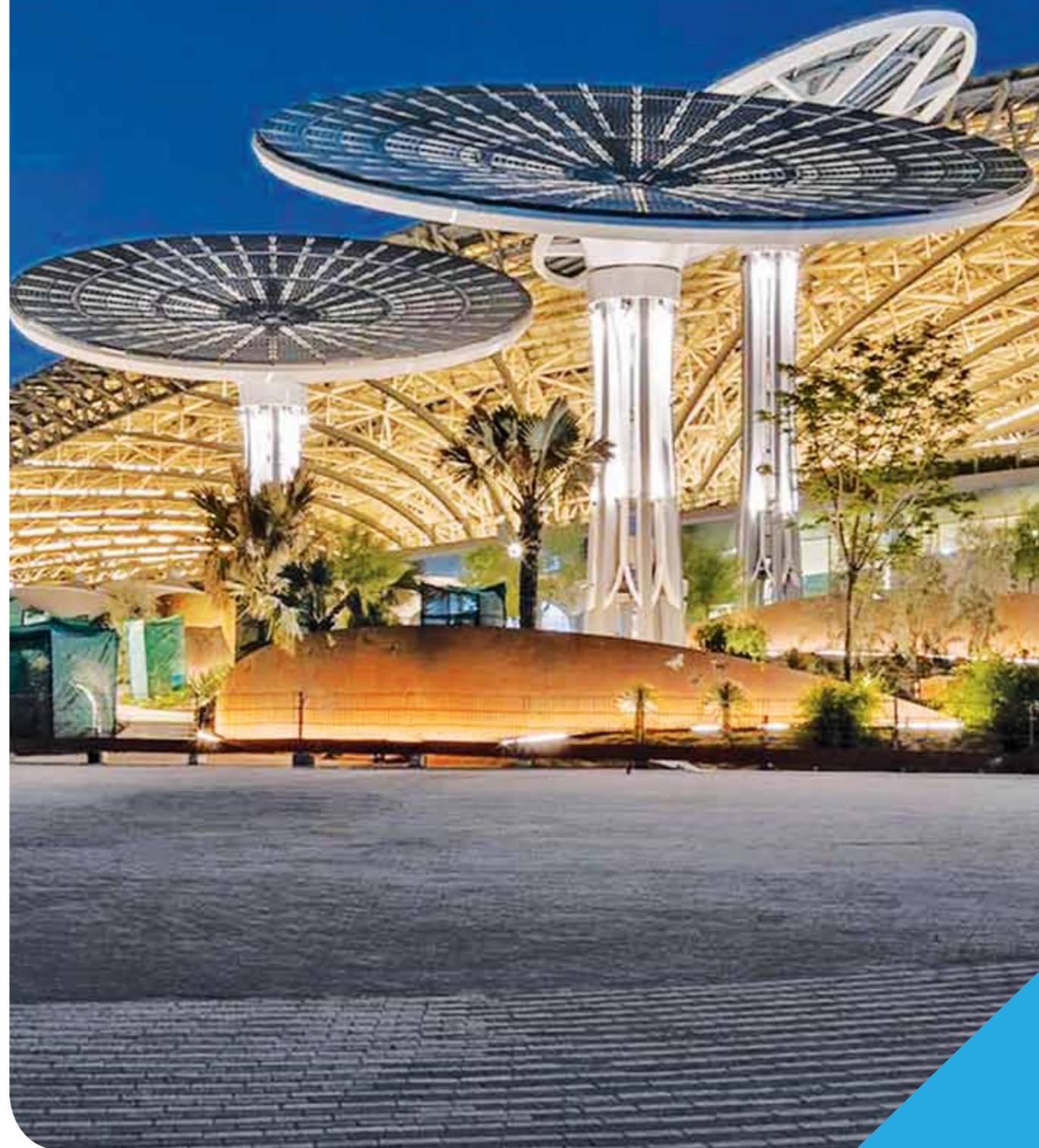


### MISSION POSSIBLE: THE OPPORTUNITY PAVILION

See how even your small actions can make a big impact and be inspired to be a force of change. Join a global mission, and follow in the footsteps of mentors who are just like you, and pledge to make a better future for all.

### TERRA: THE SUSTAINABILITY PAVILION

Creating its own electricity and water, Terra demonstrates the damage being done to our planet and how we can create new paths for sustainability. Visitors explore underneath a dense forest, as the roots communicate with one another, and dive into the depths of the ocean to meet a giant fish disturbed by pollution of the ocean.



# Thematic Pavilions



## ALIF: THE MOBILITY PAVILION

Visit the House of Wisdom in ninth-century Baghdad and meet nine-metre-tall historical giants of mobility. Marvel at memorable moments designed by storytellers behind some of the top productions in the world such as 'The Lord Of The Rings' and 'The Hobbit'.

## COVID-19 SAFETY MEASURES AT EXPO 2020

The health and well-being of visitors and everyone living in and visiting the UAE is a top priority. Expo 2020 Dubai follows guidance from the UAE Ministry of Health and Prevention and Dubai Health Authority and the latest information and advice from the World Health Organisation.

## KEEPING US SAFE: MEASURES & PRECAUTIONS

- Thermal cameras at arrival points
- Face masks to be worn at all times by visitors and staff
- Two-metre social distancing regulations
- Regular cleaning and sanitisation of venues and common areas
- Hand-sanitiser stations positioned at regular intervals around the site
- Appropriate facilities and specialist staff to manage any potential medical issues on site

## ENSURING SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Capacity limits to control the maximum number of people permitted in venues
- Signage and posters throughout the site that reinforces the importance of social distancing
- Floor markings to encourage social distancing in areas where visitors could queue or congregate
- Designated staff who will be responsible for monitoring and regulating social distancing across the site

## THE WORLD'S MOST INSPIRING ARCHITECTURE

Explore the city of the future, designed for better, more sustainable, and human-centric living, filled with architectural and operational ideas on how we will exist. Visitors can experience the world's most visually striking and emotionally inspiring architecture, every day for six months.

## ENTRY PORTALS

The Expo Entry Portals provide the gateways to Expo 2020 Dubai. They have been designed by celebrated British architect Asif Khan, who is responsible for Expo 2020's Public Realm design, who describes the portals as "the best work [he] has ever done". As the first on-site touchpoint, these portals will immediately introduce visitors to the breakthrough innovations they can expect throughout the site.

## THE WORLD'S GREATEST SHOW

The most breathtaking entertainment and events include concerts, theatre, and sports brought together during a six-month spectacle. Experience the world's best entertainment from local and international artists, every day for six months.

## DIVERSE LIVE EVENTS & PERFORMANCES EVERYDAY

There'll always be something to get excited about, with a jam-packed programme of live performances including world-famous stars, comedy greats, local talent, and touring attractions. From roaming dance entertainment, acrobats, and street performers to poetry slams and theatrical performances, enjoy cultural experiences from five continents that'll excite your senses and touch your heart.

## ENTERTAINMENT FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Enter a world of magic and discovery as the incredible and exciting work of International Participants is showcased, including brilliant cultural performances, theatre, art, music, conferences and much more. Over the course of the event's 182 days, there will be no shortage of excitement.

## ONCE IN A LIFETIME IMMERSIVE EXPERIENCES

Enjoy projection,

light, and sound shows on the largest 360-degree projection surface in the world and immerse yourself in dining inspired by space, microbiology, and artificial intelligence. With Immersive Experiences, Projection Showcase, and Live Theatrical Shows, the Expo site is a playground for the senses, pulling us in multiple directions, creating worlds that are deep, unpredictable, and, of course, entertaining.

### THOUGHT LEADERSHIP – WORLD MAJLIS

Expo's signature thematic dialogue programme will be one of the most expansive programmes for thematic dialogue ever hosted by a World Expo. Inspired by the ethos of World Expos and the principles of a traditional majlis or 'sitting place', the World Majlis aims to start global conversations on some of the most pertinent topics of our time. Thought leaders, government officials, academics, artists, and students come together to generate new perspectives, incubate meaningful connections between people and new ideas, and inspire a positive outlook about our shared future. 50 World Majlis conversations will take place during the six months across the Expo 2020 Dubai site.

### GLOBAL BEST PRACTICE PROGRAMME

Showcases local projects from around the world that have provided tangible solutions to the world's biggest challenges. It will highlight simple but effective initiatives, which localise the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and can be adapted, replicated, and scaled to achieve an enhanced global impact.

### EXPO LIVE

Expo Live is an innovation and partnership programme launched by

Expo 2020 Dubai to fund, accelerate, and promote creative solutions that improve lives while preserving our planet. Expo Live harnesses the convening power of a World Expo to demonstrate how innovations coming from all places and people can advance the pace of progress and inspire a more inclusive and prosperous future.

### OFFICIAL CEREMONIES, INTERNATIONAL DAYS AND SPECIAL DAYS

In addition to stunning opening and closing ceremonies, immerse in cultural celebrations and global key events. Attend a national day flag ceremony of your favourite country at the Stage of Nations, be mesmerised as the site is transformed on special days, and discuss important issues on international days. Enjoy a calendar of events that reflects the diversity of global cultures and themes.

### EXPO 2020 WILL BE EVERY FOOD LOVER'S DREAM

Dine around the world in the Country Pavilions and experience the future of food. Enjoy marvellous shows in the Public Realm while sampling local and regional cuisine.

### CURATED ITINERARIES UNFORGETTABLE JOURNEYS ITINERARIES CAN BE TAILORED TO OUR NEEDS AND REQUIREMENTS

With an extensive number of once-in-a-lifetime experiences that Expo 2020 will offer, make the most of tailored suggested itineraries featuring a selection of highlights.

Most importantly for Skålleagues in India and the region, this is our chance to have the world available to us – right next door! With Dubai and the UAE opening up for Indian travellers, opportunity has come knocking on our door. As the adage goes, opportunity seldom knocks twice.

## Landmark Pavilions

### EXPO LIVE PAVILION

- Share genuine stories of 'ordinary' people who have done extraordinary things, making innovation come alive in relatable, engaging ways.
- Engage in 'My Quest', a powerful immersive experience that sparks your potential and ability to make a positive impact.
- Join the 'Community of Innovators' in a multi-sensory interactive journey and discover the impact of global innovators on the community.



### KEY FACT

Architecture for the Expo Live Pavilion is inspired by the tent where the UAE's Founding Fathers met.



### WOMEN'S PAVILION

- Learn about unseen contributions, and the role women have played throughout history and the challenges they are facing today.
- Attend the Salon-Majlis to build on a long tradition of dialogue to address women's equal standing in societies. Join thought-provoking conversations and debates to shape the future when engaging with

global leaders to create impact.

- Watch world leaders, celebrity mothers, caregivers and community workers take the stage.

### KEY FACT

The Women's Pavilion is an Expo Pavilion in collaboration with Cartier, creating a meaningful and substantive collaboration.

## Organisation & Partner Pavilions



### GCC

- See how water highlights the GCC's achievements and unity.
- Marvel at a thousand golden threads that come together in the centre of the pavilion, woven into a giant pendulum – a symbol that reflects one Gulf.



### AFRICAN UNION

- Experience an 'Africa driven by Africans', united by heritage, culture and aspirations.
- Learn about the key pillars of Agenda 2063 towards a united, prosperous and peaceful continent.
- Step into a space of vibrant colours that depict the richness and diversity of Africa.



### LEAGUE OF ARAB STATES

- Follow a winding path that will take you through the many achievements and success stories of the organisation over the years.
- Learn about the different sectors that the League of Arab States has contributed to and united since 1945.
- See what the future holds in store for the Arab world's socio-economic integration.



### UNITED ARAB EMIRATES UNIVERSITY

- Visit the University of the Future.
- Become a pathfinder and discover innovative approaches to higher education.
- Dive into an ocean of possibilities and find your purpose.

## Organisation & Partner Pavilions



### DP WORLD

- Be inspired by a five-storey waterfall installation.
- Learn about the transformative powers of data through an immersive 270-degree experience.



### EMIRATES

- Experience the future of commercial aviation in UAE's Centennial Year 2071.
- Engage with future technologies and innovations in air travel.

## Country Pavilions

### India



### UAE



## Country Pavilions

SPOTLIGHT



## Country Pavilions

SPOTLIGHT



## Country Pavilions



## Country Pavilions

### SPOTLIGHT

Poland



Portugal



Sudan



Sweden



Republic Of Korea



Russia



Switzerland



Thailand



Saudi Arabia



Singapore



Turkmenistan



UK



Spain



Sri Lanka



Ukraine



Yemen





2nd NCM in full swing in New Delhi

# Skål India Hits The High Notes Despite Pandemic

Even the high point of the second Covid-19 wave in India couldn't keep Skål India's Board from successfully hosting and organising its 2nd National Committee Meeting on 24th March 2021 at the India Expo Centre, Greater Noida – all credit to its fantastic team, of course. **Sk. Vivek Braganza**, National Director, PR, Skål International India, reports...

To quote Henry Ford, one of the archetypes of getting things done - "Coming together is the beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is a success." Following the successful National Committee Meeting held last December in Kolkata, Skålleagues Presidents and Club Representatives gathered on the sidelines of SATTE 2021 for their 2nd National Committee Meeting on 24th March. Held at the world-class India Expo Centre in Greater Noida, Skålleagues were blessed to have access to this stellar venue, with the support of MoU partner, Informa Markets. The Centre serves as India's largest integrated exhibition and convention venue - and provides a state-of-the-art, safe and secure venue for our delegates.

Having come together in style at Novotel Hotel & Residences, Kolkata – the delegation consisting of member Presidents and representatives of the

15 Clubs across India were graciously hosted and supported by Informa Markets, at The Suryaa New Delhi, nestled in New Friends Colony, in the heart of the National Capital. The growing camaraderie was eminently visible, with friends old and new, enjoying the hospitality of our fine host, Sk. Greesh Bindra, President, Skål Delhi. Catch-ups over breakfast, private parties, evenings on the town were par for the course – giving our Skålleagues some well-earned respite from a challenging year for Tourism. Most delegates stayed through the week, from 23-26th March, giving everyone the chance to renew our vision of doing business among friends.

Before the National Committee Meeting, however, there was much ground to cover. As partners with Informa Markets, Skålleagues had unprecedented access to South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE) over 3 days of the show, 24-26th March. Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz and Skål Asia President Sk. Sanjay Datta stood up for Skål at the inauguration of the exhibition, sharing the dais with India's largest representation bodies for Tourism, across the spectrum of travel. To paraphrase astronaut Neil Armstrong, 'one small step for a man', but a great leap forward for our movement in India. The presence of a dedicated booth for Skål India gave Skålleagues a place to come home to, drive visibility and talk about our brand to visitors. As part of the MoU, Informa Markets kindly supported the NCM with a state-of-the-art venue for the meeting.

The stage was set for our Skålleagues to demonstrate the ability to work together, for the Skål movement in India. The National Committee Meeting opened in the evening with 20



**Felicitating Sk. Greesh Bindra, President of the largest Skål Club in the world**

evening with 20 Club Presidents, Representatives and members of the National Board. Also in attendance were 10 observers from the Clubs. Opening the meeting, Sk. Carl Vaz, President, Skål India, shared the progress of the India Board over the last five months, since installation in October 2020 in Chennai. 10 Board meetings, in person and over video conference, two National Committee Meetings in Kolkata and New Delhi, and a 100 days Performance Review meeting in Goa.

In a very short period, Skål India developed its own brand identity and launched a monthly magazine – KOTIN. Skål Bhubaneshwar is expected to launch soon, and plans are afoot to resuscitate Skål Ahmedabad, Mangalore, Nagpur, and Indore – ably led by Sk. Anurag Gupta, Committee Head – Membership Development, Skål India. Financial handover from the immediate past Board and audit has been completed, along with an overhaul of fiscal process and compliance, thanks to Sk. Ranjit Vig,

Treasurer, and Sk. Burjis Mehta, Sr. Auditor, Skål India. A special word of thanks was reserved for the team at Holiday Inn Goa, who graciously hosted the 100 days performance review. Sk. Sudipta Deb, Committee Head – Sponsorship at Skål India, having seamlessly lined up Goa has now set his sights on Mahabalipuram for the next big meeting of Skål India. The President thanked the entire Board and the National Committee for their constant support, without which none of these milestones would be conceivable.

Sk. Sanjay Datta, President, Skål Asia shared his vision for the movement in the Area. Passion and tradition are two reasons Skål has thrived. He reiterated the importance of the strength of individual members, forming a chain reaction. However, suffering one weak link in the chain causes tremendous disruption. We all need to reflect on the power of protocol, in giving and earning respect. For a movement based on friendship, there is little space for ego. Sk. Sanjay Datta reiterated his open-



**Skål India along with Skål Asia President Sk. Sanjay Datta, felicitate Informa Markets leadership team**

door policy, with a welcoming smile towards both bouquets and brickbats!

International Skål Councillor, Sk. Saravanan Palanivelu recognised being allowed to speak – which is a privilege laid out in the Statutes of Skål International. With over 1,250 members, India is seeing growth – not necessarily the state of the world at the moment. Sk. Saravanan highlighted the urgency to clear dues, fees, to ensure members are well placed to enjoy the benefits of fully paid-up membership.

Sk. Sanjeev Mehta, 1st Vice President, Skål India made his points clear. With a well-aligned board, tasks are well allocated, making delivery and performance more accountable. Working on registration of Skål India is a task taken over from previous Boards, and is well underway. In terms of alliances and MoUs, Sk. Sanjeev shared the latest list of partners – International Institute of Hotel Management (IIHM), Indigo Airlines, Informa Markets. In addition, Sk.

Sanjeev highlighted the importance of spreading our mission to nearby countries, which do not necessarily enjoy the benefit of engaging with Skålleagues. Discussions are on with the Maldives, for upcoming meetings of Skål India.

With a team of committee heads working on multiple projects, Sk. Venkat Reddy is a busy man. As 2nd Vice President of Skål India, he shared the urgency of supporting the Corporate Social Responsibility initiative – Project E-volution, providing needy children with the technology to attend online classes. Another focus area is to bring on more hoteliers, especially as we grow our footprint across India. With the support of Sk. Charles Fabian, President, Skål Coimbatore – the concept of adopting a village was discussed in great detail as a future objective of Skål India.

The Treasurer's report by Sk. Ranjit Vig was methodical and concise. With the President having



**Skål Goa recognised by Skål India's Board for winning Skål Club of the Year 2020 and prowess in Young Skål**

previously shared the work done towards Financial handover from the immediate past Board and audit completion, along with an overhaul of fiscal process and compliance. The Sr. Auditor, Sk. Burjis Mehta presented his report, which recognised the momentum towards better internal process control. Detailed findings were shared in-camera with the delegates present at the National Committee Meeting.

Club presentations followed, sharing the highlights and experiences of their members. Those who made presentations included— Sk.

Kamleshwaran, (Secretary, Skål Chennai), Sk. Kunal (Secretary, Skål Bombay), Sk. Shekhar (Secretary, Skål Goa), Sk. Charles (President, Skål Coimbatore), Sk. N.S.N. Mohan (President, Skål Hyderabad), Sk. Avijit President (Skål Pune), Sk. Raja (President, Skål Trivandrum), Sk. Anurag (President, Skål Bengaluru), and Sk. Sanjeev (President, Skål Kolkata)

Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz and the National Board recognised several eminent Clubs at the meeting. These included Skål Delhi (Largest Skål Club in the World); Skål Goa (Skål



**Skål Coimbatore recognized for its prowess with Young Skål, by the National Board.**

International Club of the Year – 2020, and Largest Young Skål in Asia); and Skål Coimbatore (2nd Largest Young Skål Club in Asia).

The meeting closed with a renewed commitment towards the next NCM, potentially to be scheduled in Mahabalipuram sometime later this year.

Thanks to our gracious hosts at Skål Delhi, led by Sk. Greesh, further celebrations awaited the delegates! Back at The Suryaa New Delhi, a rooftop



**Sk. Ranjit Vig presents the Treasurers' report**



**Sr. Auditor Sk. Burjis Mehta states his findings and recommendations**

soiree with live music kept Skålleagues well-engaged and in high spirits that evening. It was a special time, celebrating the birthday of Sk. Sanjeev, 1st Vice President and also recognising our partners present, including Indigo Airlines and a special appearance by Aashish Gupta, consulting CEO, Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH). The evening was a celebration of all things Skål, reminding us of the reason Skål was formed – friendship! Doing business among friends just seems to get easier every day.

# FULL HOUSE!

If any proof was required that this current Skål India team is a determined lot, one only needed to be present in New Delhi on the sidelines of SATTE 2021 for their 2nd National Committee Meeting, where a mega delegation consisting of Board members, Presidents and representatives of all 15 Clubs across India were in attendance...



Skål India President Carl Vaz,



Skål Asia President Sk. Sanjay Datta



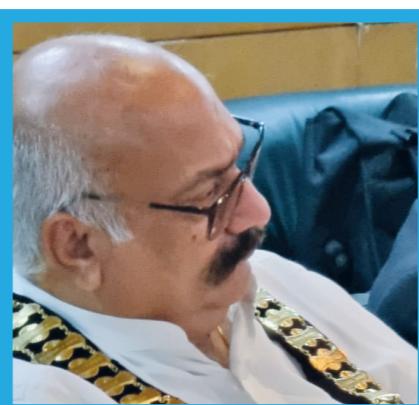
Sk. Sanjeev Mehra, 1st VP,  
Skål India and President,  
Skål Kolkata



Sk. Venkat Reddy, 2nd VP,  
Skål India



Sk. Greesh Bindra, President,  
Skål Delhi



Anurag Gupta, President,  
Skål Bengaluru



Sk. Saravanan Palanivelu,  
ISC, Skål India



Sk. Raja Gopaal Iyer, President,  
Skål Trivandrum



Sk. Avijit Chaturvedi,  
President, Skål Pune



Sk. Burjis Mehta, Sr. Auditor,  
Skål India



Sk. Manav Soni, Immediate  
Past President, Skål Kolkata



Sk. Kamleshwaran, Secretary,  
Skål Chennai



Sk. Romi Furtado, Member,  
Skål Bombay



Sk. Shekhar Divadkar,  
Secretary, Skål Asia, and  
Secretary, Skål Goa

## It's A Hap-Hap-Happy Birthday!



Celebrating Sk. Sanjeev's birthday



Celebrating with the birthday boy  
(L-R) Vivek, Sanjeev, Carl, Kunal, Vishal,  
Sunil M, Deepan, Burjis, Anurag



2nd NCM in full swing in New Delhi



Celebrating Skål's partnership with Team Indigo



Recognising Aashish Gupta, Consulting CEO, Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism & Hospitality



Sk. Carl, President, Skål India shares a moment with Sk. Mohan and Sk. Avijit



Sk. Deepan of Skål Bombay, volunteer photographer at NCM 2021



Sk. Kunal Sampat, Secretary, Skål Bombay



Sk. Verghese presents a tech solution to the National Committee for review



Skål Asia President  
Sk. Sanjay Datta.  
Skål Coimbatore  
President Sk. Charles  
Fabian, Skål Delhi  
President Sk. Greesh  
Bindra



Skål booth - Base of operations at SATTE 2021



Skål India shares the dais with every facet of Tourism in India



Skålleagues Sanjeev,  
Ranjit, Nasir, Carl

Skålleagues from across India congregate at the Skål India booth at SATTE 2021



Smiles all round (L-R) Sk. Burjis, Anurag, Sanjeev, Charles, Vivek, Manav, Deepan



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SKAL INTERNATIONAL DELHI - 125

### E-Volution by Skål International Delhi – 125

A unique visionary initiative by SKAL International to support online education post-pandemic to donate your unutilized or used electronics to the underprivileged.



Don't know what to do with your used/extra electronics?  
**HELP THE FUTURE IN NEED**

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A RAVICHANDRAN (NATIONAL HEAD - CSR & FVF, 78938 49994)

<b>CONTACT</b> <p>Ajay Bhatnagar 98189-11964</p>	<p>Sunil Mathur 98101-19950</p>	<p>Nisha Goel 8008-95321</p>
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## E-Volution by Skal International Hyderabad - 606

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**A RAVICHANDRAN ( NATIONAL HEAD - CSR & FVF, 78938 49994 )**

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**SKÅL**  
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## E-Volution By Skal International Mumbai South 732

**Help Bridge The Digital Divide !  
Support The Under Privileged !**

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laptops/ monitor/ mobile.**



**Do not let it  
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**Your small contributions can change the lives of many.**

### CONTACT

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# FACILITATING ONLINE LEARNING THROUGH CSR INITIATIVES

The dramatic shift to online learning in India due to the pandemic risks widening educational inequalities that already exist in our education set-up. Project E-Volution, Skål India's CSR initiative, is dedicated to bridging this gap, says **Sk. Ravi Chandran**



**Sk. Ravi Chandran**



**Making the transition to online learning**

**E**ducation is the most powerful weapon we can use to change the world," the late, great Nelson Mandela is known to have once said. That weapon is in jeopardy now. The Covid-19 crisis has forced education systems worldwide to find alternatives to face-to-face instruction. Globally, over 1.2 billion children are out of the classroom. As a result, education has changed dramatically, with the distinctive rise of e-learning, whereby teaching is undertaken remotely and on digital platforms. On a positive note though, research has indicated that online learning increases retention of information, and takes less time.

Meanwhile, the situation in India, which is presently battling a deadly second wave of the pandemic, is rather grim. Educational institutions like schools and colleges in our country have always relied on traditional learning methods, and follow conventional

## THE COLD HARD FACTS

- Over 1.5 million schools closed in India
- Only 24% of households have internet
- Entry-level workers in tourism impacted
- Most children have NO access to smartphones or laptops

settings of face-to-face interaction in a classroom. But with schools shut across India for more than a year now, millions of children have been forced to adapt to e-learning. Consequently, online teaching and learning have become the new normal for teachers and students – and on an unprecedented scale too.



Online learning is for everyone

Since lockdowns – either massive or localised – may be needed again and again in the future to respond to new waves of the infection until the vaccination drive achieves some semblance of herd immunity among people, it is of utmost importance for local governments to ensure the effectiveness of online learning programmes.

But we all know that there's only so much that a government can do by itself. Parents and teachers will also need to play an integral role in supporting students to develop these crucial attitudes, particularly in the current situation. Hence, targeted policy interventions are being designed to reduce the burden on parents and help teachers and schools make the most of digital learning. That's because, like it or not, online learning is here to stay for a long time.

At Skål India, we choose to play an important part in this process of transition. Covid-19 has hit India's children hardest because not all were able to transition to online learning, mainly due to affordability issues. So

we asked ourselves the question: How can an organisation like Skål step up to make a difference to these children's education? Therein lies the genesis of our pet project, 'E-Volution'.

Project E-Volution is a Corporate Social Responsibility initiative of Skål India, aligned with the 'Digital India' mission and dedicated to making significant contributions by adding new dimensions and perspectives to the domain of CSR. So we have created a platform to donate electronic products, used or new, to children in need. Each of Skål India's 15 Clubs, spread across all major cities in India, will serve as collection points for the following items – laptops, desktops, CPUs, keyboards, mouse & mousepads, printers & cartridges, Wi-Fi routers, etc. Even gift vouchers from electronics stores are most welcome.

Club Presidents and their Boards will work through their appointed CSR Director, responsible for collecting, storing, and disbursing donated goods and vouchers. The focus is on e-items only (so no food and clothes, please). Each Club will identify a collection centre



They say a smile can speak a thousand words



You too can light up a child's life

in their city; plan a media campaign with the Press, and organise events to generate further contributions.

Further, we plan to invite Indian corporates to share their best CSR practices with us, and discuss collaborative projects between Skål and its end stakeholders to ensure that

Project E-Volution achieves its objective of reaching out to the marginalised and underprivileged. We will particularly seek help from the companies engaged in manufacturing smartphones, laptops, and other electronic goods.

Our approach takes a much more ambitious, strategic view on CSR and sustainability, focused on empowering organisations to generate positive impacts financially, socially, and environmentally. This way, organisations transform themselves into powerful engines for innovation and growth, contributing actively towards the development of strong and healthy communities, prosperous and sustainable cities, and thriving ecosystems. As organisations expand, so does their positive impact on society and the environment. Skål India, through its Clubs, aims to fill the gap of helping those left behind. All of them are actively involved in the project.

From a personal standpoint, I've always favoured any kind of CSR activity. For me, it's all about giving back to the



Your generosity can address the issue of educational inequalities

industry and society. Sometime soon, I plan to start my own foundation (AARK Charitable Trust) along with a few like-minded friends. As of now, I'm quite contented associating with charities through our Hyderabad Club. Project E-Volution is a project that is close to my heart. I've been busy planning and strategising this programme for some time now to ensure that children's

education in India does not stop during the pandemic. I am grateful to the Skål India Board for its steadfast support in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on the education of underprivileged students.

*The writer is National Committee Head – CSR & FVF, Skål India, and also Vice President, Skål Hyderabad.*



Underprivileged kids are excited about their new, old laptop

# SKÅL PUNE PACKS A PUNCH

Despite the alarming rise of Covid-19 cases in the city, the Pune Club stands committed to collecting at least 200 units to support Project E-Volution says **Sk. Avijit Chaturvedi, President, Skål International Pune**

It's been over a year since we witnessed the first lockdown in India. While some children have successfully transitioned to online schooling, many have been left behind. Parents working in the entry-level of hospitality and travel-tourism related services have been hard-hit. Many of them just don't have the resources to help their children's studies make the transition to online learning. We are at high risk of losing a generation of learners.

Skål International India, through its 15 Clubs across India, is doing its bit trying to bridge the gap. I would like to take the opportunity to appeal to fellow Skålleagues to help in any way you can, by collecting new or pre-owned tech equipment in working condition, including laptops, desktops, CPUs, smartphones, printers, etc. so that somebody in dire need will benefit. All equipment collected will be tested, refurbished, and given to the needy youngsters to continue their education without taking a break. Our Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz has set a target of collecting at least one unit per member. That's a minimum of 1,500 units at least, all put together.



**Sk. Avijit Chaturvedi**

Skål International Pune (452), on its part, has decided to punch above its weight and collect at least 200 units through its 67 members despite the alarming rise of Covid-19 cases in the city and the ensuing lockdown. Due to the lockdown, the collection may get delayed, but definitely not denied to the youngsters in need. We stay committed to the noble cause.

# PERFECT DESTINATIONS: MYTH OR REALITY?

Just as beauty lies in the heart of the beholder, deducing whether a destination is exemplary or not is entirely a personal matter of choice, says **Hector Dsouza**.

**I**t's a question that's been asked several times over; by visitors, clients, acquaintances, and fellow travellers. What makes a destination perfect, or, are there perfect destinations on Planet Earth? What characterises one place making it superior to another? In most cases, the yardstick often adopted by analysts and tourism boards is quantitative in nature and is expressed by footfalls each location generates. Be it a village, town, city, or country. The more footprints, the more successful a destination is, though, this is not necessarily the best way to assess its 'perfectness'.

Travellers on the other hand are constantly looking out for a flawless experience, higher arrivals at a place may not necessarily influence their decision. Explorers, for example, are delighted by uncertainty, relishing opportunities for discovering the unknown in quaint surroundings. There's fun in imperfection. Heide Beal, Tenzing Norgay, Marco Polo and



Morjim in North Goa

Roald Amundsen are names that come to mind. Then there are trekking groups visiting pristine locations where they secretly wish they may never encounter fellow travellers, resulting in a closer bonding between the 'place' and 'them'. Ushuaia in Patagonia, Denali in Alaska, Camp I at Mt. Everest, Swabian Mountains in Baden-Württemberg, the upper reaches of the Garhwal, Kumaon, and Dhauladhar mountain ranges and the Western Ghats, all at high altitude offer these moments of solace and satisfaction. For this select band of travellers, these are picture-perfect destinations because they guarantee exemplary moments of visual beauty, notwithstanding the hardships encountered along the path; be it in

terms of getting there, habitation, or vagaries of the weather. Isolated from humanity, being closer to nature, the momentary feeling of being embraced by the surrounding succeeds in creating the flawless moment, logically leading one to conclude – it is indeed an ideal destination!

The intrepid in search of virgin beaches often find comfort when they discover an untouched beach on the fringe of the vast ocean or canoe to an unexplored island with few callers. Krabi in Thailand, Morjim in Goa, and the sun-kissed beaches in Male and Tahiti are instant recalls. Visiting a



Royal Bengal Tiger at Kanha-Kisli National Park in Madhya Pradesh

tiger reserve at Ranthambore or Kanha in the searing heat of summer and spotting an incredible variety of flora, fauna, and wildlife not easily visible during the winter months is another glaring example of an inhabitable forest into an impeccable location, mainly for the incredible experience it proffers. Being willing to adjust to the hard way of travel often provides great rewards. It took me 24 hours to reach Thimpu, Bhutan, from Kolkata 25 years ago. To this day, 'the land of the Hidden Kingdom', makes it to my all-time favourite list of destinations that I visited. Incidentally, perfect also happens when experience exceeds expectations.

A majority of visitors are pampered by comforts, convenience, and cost-effectiveness while traveling. Realising the importance of the three 'C's in tourism, many destinations have seamlessly factored in these points, enabling them to become

mass-tourism (perfect) destinations, thereby earning large chunks of revenue from leisure activities. Neighbouring destinations make it to the top ten destinations for the Indian market mainly because of their value-for-money offers and closeness to our sub-continent.

The exotic charm of each of these countries brings in many brownie points. Foremost on the minds are hassle-free happy holidays with low tension and high recall value. This partly explains why destinations the world over, offering sound infrastructure, affordable accommodation, boarding, tension-free atmosphere, taking good care of their tourist offerings, generally see a steady stream of visitors all year round. Innovative ideas coupled with brilliant marketing campaigns provide the necessary stimulus, ensuring the quintessential destination brand is retained over a period of time. 'Incredible India', 'Bond Is Great Britain',

'Beauty Has An Address' (Oman), 'The Sunny Side of Germany', and 'There's Nothing Like Australia' keep pinging my cerebral cortex.

A steadily increasing percentage of today's travellers equate 'perfect' as being an immaculate experience with the hotel/guest house/heritage home they stay in. Due credit should be given to the creators of these exquisite masterpieces – be it log huts, rooms on stilts, treehouse, luxury accommodation, theme hotels, heritage palaces, and so on; so long as they respect local laws, maintain the ambience, while complementing the destination. Fine dining, delectable cuisine with wine pairings, hobnobbing with fellow travellers at exquisite clubs, fancy nightlife adds value to their escapades. Visitors could give the location a 'perfect' tag, though they

may not deem it necessary to explore the outdoors due to paucity of time, a different set of priorities, or simply – no interest.

In extreme cases, some retreats go beyond the destination in terms of character, location ambience, and offerings, making it the prime reason for visiting the place rather than the other way around. Deogarh Mahal and Wildernest in India, Four Seasons Anantara, and Shangri-la in different parts of the world, for example, all offer unmatched signature experiences that are unparalleled, unrivalled, and utopian.

Copybook destinations are more imaging of the mind varying from traveller to tourist, and peregrinator to visitor. There's no denying that while the 'perfect' tag will not come on every



Sunrise at the Taj Mahal, Agra



**Natural Hot Water Springs Of Chumathang, Ladakh**

holiday and may remain a myth for many wanderers, awesome moments can be experienced by one and all on each outing.

My personal list of fine moments run into reams of print, a chosen few are mentioned here. Experiencing sunsets at Simtokha, Betul, and Wies, sighting my first tiger at Kanha-Kisli, participating in street festivals at Constanz, Germany, watching the sunrise at Binsar and Kalpa, tasting the original Pilsner at Prague, being bewitched by the Swiss Alps on a brilliant Saturday morning, bidding for the Kathiawari horse at Pushkar, arriving at the Grand Canyon by helicopter (it's a bit touristy but I enjoyed the ten-minute ride), interacting with Changpa Nomads at Chumathang, experiencing the Taj Mahal at sunrise, doing the treacherous downward walk from the Fort at Bundi and the 360 degree turn on the Roller Coaster at Europa Park in Baden-Württemberg; the list is endless and so are these fine moments. Not forgetting the hospitality of friends in different parts of the world, in-depth

conversation with fellow travellers, locals during my sojourns across different lands. Many a time, these fine experiences helped me conclude the visit was well worth the effort and the destination was indeed seamless.

Just as beauty lies in the heart of the beholder, deducing whether a destination is exemplary or not is entirely a personal matter of choice, subjective in nature and may or may not resonate with your fellow traveller or partner. Therein lies the beauty and charm of travel. May the dream of uncovering the meaning of the word 'ultimate' take the reader across unchartered territories, induce a variety of experiences, and further whet the appetite for travel.

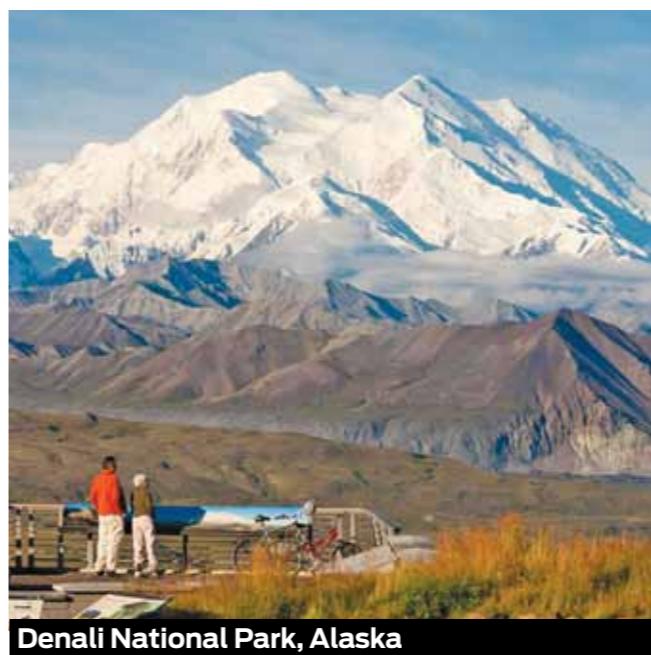
*\* The author is a member of Skål International Mumbai South – 732. He is the founder of L'Orient Travels and India Representative for the State Tourist Board of Southwest Germany. He is also a prolific travel writer whose articles have appeared in various newspapers and magazines.*



**Base Camp at Mt. Everest, Nepal**



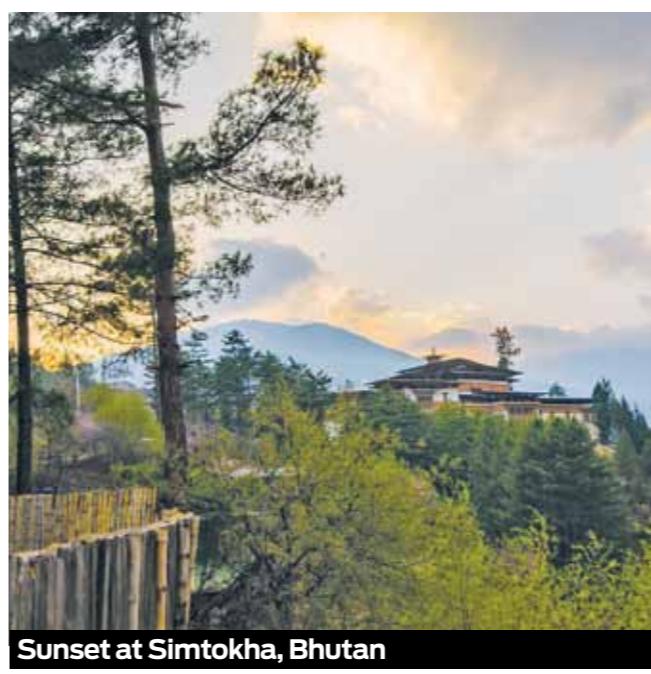
**Cocoa Island, a luxurious hideaway in the South Malé Atoll, Maldives**



**Denali National Park, Alaska**



**Europa Park in Baden-Württemberg, Germany**



**Sunset at Simtokha, Bhutan**



**Ushuaia, Patagonia - A Magical Journey to the 'End Of The World'**

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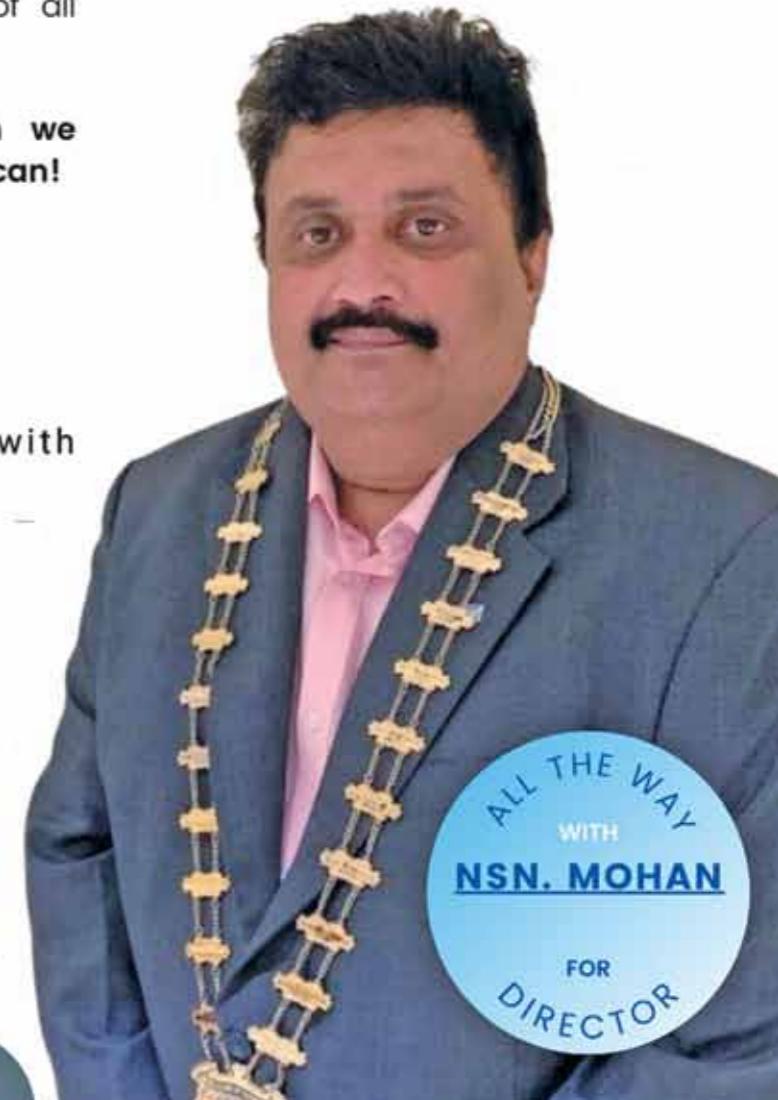
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## THE DARKEST HOUR IS JUST BEFORE DAWN



### EDITOR'S NOTE

Thomas Fuller, the English churchman, and historian of the 17th century, famously wrote that the darkest hour of the night comes just before dawn. It's a tenet that I adopted early, and I must confess it's served me well to tide through the most exacting moments in my life's journey. When things seem to be at their worst, it's a given that things are about to start improving. The harshest suffering inevitably precedes redemption.

Experts had warned that the second wave would wreak havoc upon our country. Even so, nobody could have possibly imagined the severity of its impact. India emerged in June and July of 2021 from a particularly savage second wave of Covid-19, with total confirmed cases at about 32 million and more than 400,000 deaths.

This wave was driven by multiple coronavirus variants, including alpha, which was first detected in the UK, and delta first identified in India and now the main source of infections in many countries. Because the emerging threat was not recognised early enough, health care services were overwhelmed starting in early April, with the lack of reliable oxygen supply becoming a major problem.

Having said that, the decline of cases in India has been surprisingly rapid given that there were daily new cases in the range of 400,000 in the first week of May and the test positivity rate in some districts was as high as 20%. With the vaccination campaign substantially picking up in India, about 15% of adults have now received both doses of the vaccine and nearly 40% a single dose. A record 8.8 million doses were administered on August 17, 2021, in a bid to achieve the 250 million target for August. Daily cases in India are now between 30,000 and 40,000 per day.

Until about a month ago, it was a grim scenario for our travel and hospitality industry—with new curbs and restrictions on domestic travel, to add to the already deep well of existing woes. The wheels had nearly ground to a standstill. But they hadn't stopped completely.

Now there's double the cheer for you, my dear Skålleagues. Covid-19 is on the wane in the country even as we speak—and travel is beginning to pick steam. And KOTIN, your very personal industry newsletter is all set to remake its monthly appearance, starting this month. There's plenty to savour in the September issue—from our coverage of the National Committee Meeting in New Delhi—to Project E-volution, Skål India's CSR initiative which continues to soldier on despite adversities. We have an exciting feature on 'Perfect Destinations'. And finally, there's a preview of what to expect from Expo 2020 Dubai, which goes on the floors in October.

**Ivor Vaz**  
Author, Historian, Journalist  
Editor – KOTIN  
Skål International India

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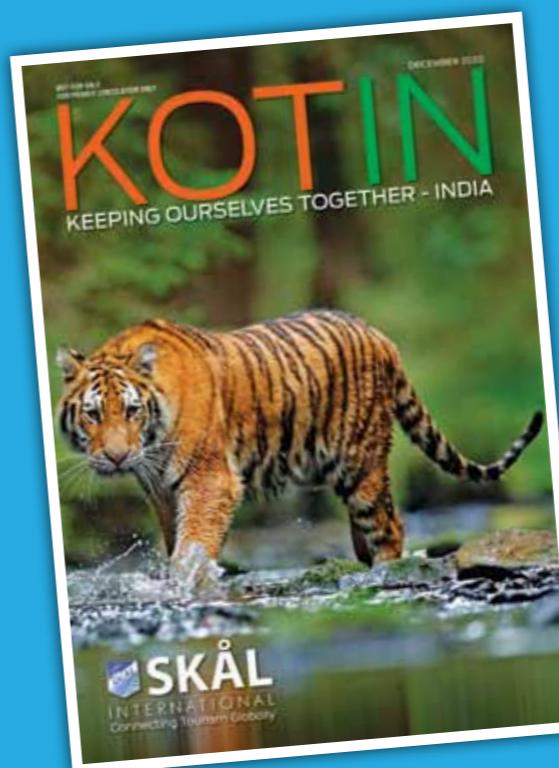
KOTIN, a trusted voice in the travel and tourism industry, is circulated amongst the members of Skål India, comprising industry professionals from the hospitality sector who form the most prominent and visible representatives of the various sectors of the industry—hoteliers, tour operators, airlines, tourism promotion boards, and travel consultants.

Skål India membership forms the crème de la crème of the industry, which includes key decision-makers including MDs, Presidents, Chairpersons, CEOs, CTOs, COOs, CFOs, Vice Presidents, Project Heads, and General Managers, as well as heads of various departments in the hospitality industry, including Sales & Marketing Directors, Chief Engineers, Procurement Heads, Revenue Heads, Housekeeping Heads, Chefs, F&B Directors, etc.

KOTIN is circulated throughout the country through Skål's 15 Clubs in Delhi, Kolkata, Bombay, Chennai, Kochi, Bangalore, Pune, Hyderabad, Goa, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Coimbatore, Mumbai South, Mysuru, and the soon-to-be-launched Bhubaneswar.

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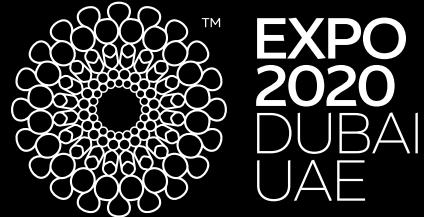
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