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VOL. 2, ISSUE 3, MARCH 2021

# KOTIN

KEEPING OURSELVES TOGETHER - INDIA



**ODISHA: INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET**  
DISCOVER AN ANCIENT LAND OF MAJESTY AND MYSTERY



#### PROJECT E-VOLUTION

Skål India's signature CSR initiative supports children of tourism



#### SKÅL BHUBANESWAR

How one man's grit and determination guaranteed the formation of India's 15th Club



#### SATTE 2021

Over 10,000 visitors at the Expo witness the resurgence in the travel and tourism industry



## आज़ादी का अमृत महोत्सव

# CELEBRATING THE LIFE OF EVERY INDIAN

SPREAD ACROSS 36 STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES,  
INDIA'S 1.3 BILLION PEOPLE ARE CELEBRATING  
A FABULOUS 75 YEAR-OLD JOURNEY  
AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY.

19,500 LANGUAGES AND DIALECTS.  
118,666 NEWSPAPERS AND PERIODICALS  
IN 100 LANGUAGES.  
700+ TRIBES AND  
INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES.  
8 CLASSICAL DANCE FORMS.  
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89,451 SPECIES OF FAUNA.  
47,000 SPECIES OF FLORA.  
80.73 MILLION HECTARES  
OF VIRGIN FOREST LAND.

THE AZADI TRAIL IS AN INITIATIVE  
THAT CURATES TOURS TO PLACES  
ASSOCIATED WITH INDIA'S  
INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT  
AND ENCOURAGES THE LOCALS  
TO DISCOVER SUCH PLACES  
IN THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



## My dear Skålleagues,

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 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.

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. The reports of the National Board, the auditors, Club Presidents, and representatives will be covered in the April issue of KOTIN.

In this issue, you will notice that 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.

I must take this opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of our Memberships and Travel Trade Relations Committees headed by our 2nd Vice President Sk. Venkat Reddy and supported by Bengaluru President Sk. Anurag Gupta (Skål India Membership) and Sk. Ajay Chhabria (Skål India Travel Trade Relations) for not just cementing the birth of Skål Bhubaneswar, but now aggressively pushing ahead the pace for three additional clubs (chapters)

in the North & West of India. Do read more about Odisha and a ‘sneak peek’ of the upcoming leadership team at Skål Bhubaneswar – 738.

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 Gopaal of Skål Trivandrum is one that stands out as an exceptional leader. Skål Trivandrum in a span of just five 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! I am proud to say that our chapters at Trivandrum, Kochi, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Bombay are some fine examples featured in this month’s section titled ‘Skål Trailblazers’.

A gentle request to all PR Directors at each of our 15 Clubs (Chapters) – Do send us a brief note and images of your local Club (Chapter) events that are low-cost and yet highly engaging, and test the boundaries of being creative, resulting in you becoming a ‘Skål Trailblazer’. If we implement this across India, we will be able to see activations that inspire and act as eye-openers, and no longer will we have events that serve as just ribbon-cutters. The year gone by and the current has personally taught me one very clear lesson – go back to the drawing board and rewrite the plans for the new world that we are facing.

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.

As I end this month’s message, 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. This is what they call a selfless act. Skål

Sincerely,

**Carl Vaz**  
President  
Skål International India



# E-volution Brings Life To CSR @ Skål India

Project E-volution, Skål India's signature initiative is a focused attempt to bring resources and support to children of tourism who do not have access to Digital India, writes **Vivek Braganza**, National Director, PR & Communications, Skål India



An underprivileged schoolgirl is delighted to learn on her laptop



Sk. Ravi Chandran, Vice President, Skål Hyderabad & Skål India Committee Head - CSR & FVF

Lockdowns have been difficult. Period! Enough has been said of a tough transition from those heady days of idealised purpose and freedom; the shock of sudden change preceding a rough landing on these stony shores. We have all struggled to find a new groove, a pattern, a method to this particular form of madness. Some of us have emerged phoenix-like, from the proverbial ashes. Most have battled to a truce, with an unsteady horizon ahead. We are the lucky ones. There are many poised on the precipice, having struggled to leave poverty behind, investing their hopes in the next generation. It is this generation that is at risk, now. Spare a thought for the children, most of them shut out of school. The privileged ones have access to Digital India. But many do not.

'Education is the kindling of a flame, not the filling of a vessel' – so said Socrates. For many children, that flame is burning out. We can kindle the fire once again. 'Project E-volution' is Skål India's focused attempt to bring resources and

support to reduce this problem, starting with the children of tourism. Many entry-level workers in this industry cannot afford the high cost of digital supplies like smartphones, laptops, tablets – the screens that now dominate education, online. Their children are being left behind, and we can make a difference. With 1,200 members, 15 Clubs across India – it is time for Skål leagues and friends to step forward.

According to Chanakya, the famous Indian strategist and philosopher, 'education is a best friend. An educated person is respected everywhere.' Project E-volution aims to serve as a friend, in need – to those who need a friend, indeed.

Corporate Social Responsibility is part of the ethos of any Skål organisation, be it the Club, National, Region, or International level. Skål India is building its signature initiative, Project E-volution in 2021.





Speaking of the programme, Sk. Ravi Chandran, Committee Head – CSR & FVF, said: “In this pandemic, it is now time for each and every Skålleague to help our friends who are in distress. We at Skål India can do our bit to help the children of tourism’s most junior staff.” The aim of this initiative is to align with the Government of India’s Digital India programme; supporting those in need of used laptops and smartphones for online education. The programme aims to launch on 28th April, World Skål Day across the country.

Each of Skål India’s 15 Clubs will serve as collection points for the following:

- Used laptops/new laptops
- Used smartphones/New smart phones
- Desktops/CPU’s / Keyboards/Mouse
- Printers/Cartridges
- Wi-Fi Routers
- Gift Vouchers from Electronics stores etc.
- Donation in Cash through the closest Skål Club
- Venue & High Tea Sponsorship for a launch event
- Complimentary space in Leading Local Newspapers

Collection, storage and distribution would be organised through each Club, located in the following cities:

- Delhi
- Kolkata
- Mumbai (2 Clubs)
- Chennai
- Hyderabad
- Pune
- Bengaluru
- Coimbatore
- Trivandrum
- Goa
- Cochin
- Mysuru
- Bhubaneswar

Club Presidents and their Boards will work through their appointed CSR Director, responsible for collection and disbursement of donated goods. The

focus is on e-items, and not food, clothes, etc. Each Club will identify a collection centre in their city; plan a ‘catch-up-day’ with the Press, and organise events to generate further contributions.

Speaking of the programme, Sk. Carl Vaz, President of Skål India said “as responsible Skålleagues, we recognise that we cannot Regroup, Recover, Regrow and Rejoice – until we support those colleagues in tourism, who are most in need of our help. With the support and engagement of our Club Presidents and members across India, we aim to make an impactful change through Project E-volution. It has been heartening to see the corporate world reacting with positive support to the project.”



Skål India’s CSR initiative focusses on empowering the children of tourism





Surya Deula, the stone chariot wheel in the Konark Sun Temple

# ODISHA

## INDIA'S BEST KEPT SECRET

Only in Odisha, you can sail against the wind, conquer the hills, pose with the smiling birds, and hear the stories of the Stones. If you're planning a domestic holiday, you'd do well to consider this land of majesty and mystery, says **Ivor Vaz**

There's a good reason why Odisha Tourism Development Corporation (OTDC), the State Government's official website, describes the Odisha as 'India's Best Kept Secret'. This pristine state, located on the eastern seaboard of India is bestowed with natural and cultural heritage. Its illustrious history, strategic geographical location, diverse topography, and profound bounties of nature make it every traveller's dream. Except, alas, for one tiny factor – not many domestic tourists have really cared to properly explore its immense tourism potential. Even so, Odisha is India's bridge to its own golden past and resurgent present. The grand scenic beauty of nature, historic monuments, ancient temples, architectural marvels, exotic

sea beaches, luxuriant forests, majestic mountains, captivating wildlife, mystic waterfalls, beautiful handicrafts, vast water bodies, famous classical and folk dances, enchanting music, tempting local cuisine, and (most importantly) its hospitable people make for a remarkable cocktail of eclectic experiences.

Interestingly, the land that roughly corresponds to present-day Odisha has gone by various names in the past, most prominently 'Kalinga', which appears repeatedly in ancient texts and literature. Glimpses of its rich heritage can still be found in Odisha's numerous temples, chaityas, and stupas, which can be found all over the State.

Odisha's capital city Bhubaneswar, also known as India's Temple City, is over 2,500 years old and is a blend of ancient monuments and modern construction. It is believed that Bhubaneswar had over 2,000 temples in the past. Many of them were destroyed by Muslim invaders, but thankfully, a few important ones like Lingaraja Temple still stand. The temples are built in Kalinga style of architecture, which is unique to Odisha. A trip to Bhubaneswar offers insights into the Kalinga War, one of the most documented battles in ancient Indian history, following which the victorious Mauryan Emperor King Ashoka renounced fighting, embraced Buddhism, and went on to become one of the greatest Indian saints ever.

Cuttack is the second-largest city in Odisha and is also the cultural capital of the State. This is in no small measure due to the range of cultural activities that keep happening here. Prime among these is the Bali Yatra. This festival is a reminder of the glorious past of the city and the trade links it had with faraway places such as Bali, Java,





Konark Dance Festival

and Sumatra. Another notable festival is the Kite Festival held in the month of January every year. The hotspots that should be on every tourist's list include the Bhitarkanika Wildlife Sanctuary, home to the endangered Olive Ridley turtles; the prominent seaport, and the beaches of Paradip; the 14-century fort of Barabati; the Mahanadi Barrage; and the temples of Singanatha and Bhattarika.

Puri is a must-visit destination for all devout Hindus. As one of the *Char Dhams* or Four Abodes (the others being Badrinath, Dwarka and Rameswaram), its significance cannot be overstated enough. This seaside town is known for its religious structures like the Jagannath Temple, arguably the most famous Hindu shrine in India, and the starting

point of the annual *Rath Yatra* (Chariot Festival), which attracts hundreds of thousands of people each year.

History and heritage are inseparable in Puri, and this is reflected in its renowned Sun Temple of Konark, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This architectural marvel, which dates back to the 13th century, is a representation of Sun God Surya's chariot that is drawn by six horses. There are 24 wheels of the chariot that have different symbolic designs on them, which are rock-cut. Konark is also home to the widely-attended Dance Festival and Sun Festival.

Among other notable tourist hotspots in Puri are its sun-kissed beaches, particularly the 'Blue Flag' winning

Golden Beach. Another gem is the Chilika Lake, a saltwater lake at the mouth of the Daya River, flowing into the Bay of Bengal, covering an area of over 1,100 km. It is the largest coastal

lagoon in India and a wintering ground for thousands of migratory birds on the Indian subcontinent.

Odisha with its unique topography is a shelter to numerous exotic and rarest species of wildlife. It offers 19 Wildlife Sanctuaries, one National Park, and two Tiger Reserves. The Nandankanan Zoological Park finds a special place on the national map because of its huge assortment of white tigers. The sanctuary also houses gharials (crocodiles), lions, tigers, panthers, pangolin, mouse deer, and vultures.

The tourism sector has been accorded important status in Odisha – the State Government, through its Department of Tourism, is taking concrete steps for the development and promotion of tourism in the region. During the year 2019-20, until the pandemic began, the footfalls in the State amounted to 1,51,36,160.

While present-day Odisha may have acquired a modern face to it, the land still retains its ancient charm. A visit to this beautiful hinterland will take you straight into a bygone era. You cannot possibly hope to cover every tourist destination here in one go, but knowing more about them would ensure that you visit them during your subsequent tour to the land.



Migratory birds in Chilika Lake, Odisha





Konark Sun Temple



Gopalpur Lighthouse



White tigers in Nandankan Zoological Park



Khandadhar Falls, Rourkela, the Highest Waterfalls in Odisha



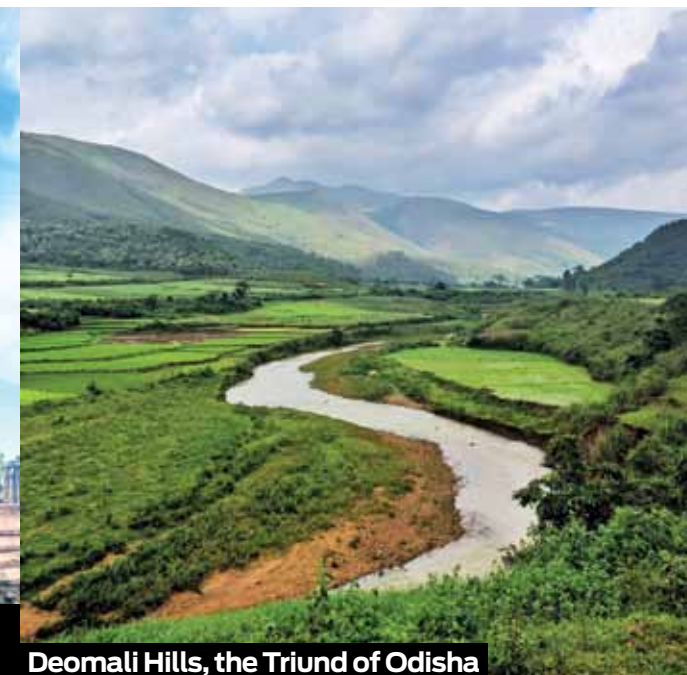
Jagannath Temple, Puri



Barabati Fort, Cuttack



Lingaraja Temple, the largest temple in Bhubaneswar



Deomali Hills, the Triund of Odisha



Netaji Birth Place Museum, Cuttack



Dhuli Shanti Stupa



Mukteshwar Temple, the finest example of Kalinga style of architecture



Olive Ridley Turtles on Gahirmatha Beach





Debrigarh Wildlife Sanctuary



Daringbadi - The Kashmir of Odisha



Rajarani Temple, also known as Love temple because of its famous erotic carvings



Cuttack City



Rath Yatra in Puri



Orissa High Court, Cuttack



# GOLDEN BEACH GETS A BLUE TAG

The State Government of Odisha hopes the recently-acquired Blue Flag certification awarded to Puri's Golden Beach will deliver a significant boost to tourism in the state.

**Ivor Vaz reports...**

In what could play a crucial role in boosting the tourism sector of Odisha, the Golden Beach of Puri was conferred with the prestigious 'Blue Flag' certification from the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), a Copenhagen-based, non-government, non-profit organisation, in October last year. It is the first beach in the state to receive this tag. This Tag elevates environmental protection and

conservation of natural resources in coordination with the UN's sustainable development goals.

The Blue Flag Programme for beaches and marinas run by FEE, which is situated at Denmark and started certification of Blue Flag beaches since 1987, promotes sustainable development in





in freshwater and marine water areas by achieving high standards in four categories, i.e. water quality, environment management, environment education, and safety. Over the years, the Blue Flag Certification has become a highly respected and recognised eco-label across the world. Thirty-three stringent criteria are to be fulfilled to obtain and maintain Blue Flag Certification.

Puri's Golden Beach for a length of 870 metres, from Digabareni Square to the back of Mayfair Hotel, has been taken-up as the pilot Blue Flag Beach in Odisha by the World Bank-funded Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project (ICZMP) of the Forest and Environment Department, Government of Odisha. The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF), Government of

India, developed the core infrastructure activities and has also taken up mechanised pollution-abatement services, beach safety, and security measures by BVG India Ltd at a cost of Rs. 7.88 crores (the core infrastructure activities included modern public toilets, changing and shower room, watchtowers, development of solar lighting systems, seating places, and demarcation of safe swimming zones). The peripheral activities were taken up by the State Government like approach road, fencing with a plantation, parking, sand sculptures, water supply, jogging track, installation of CCTV and public address system through the State Project Management Unit of ICZMP, at a cost Rs. 3.34 crores.

With the 'Blue Flag' Tag, the beach will be now equipped with world-class

facilities and further develop new tourism hotspots. It will also help to encourage sustainable beach tourism in Odisha and other coastal states. The Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) has invested Rs. 8.5 crores in developing environment-friendly tourist amenities at the Puri Sea Beach as part of this initiative.

"The Golden Beach of Puri has received the coveted Blue Flag certification by conforming to stringent environmental norms and ensuring world-class sustainable tourist amenities. The renowned eco-label will add to the charm of the World Heritage City," Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced on his Twitter handle.

Prakash Javdekar, Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change;

Information & Broadcasting; and Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, GoI, tweeted: "It's a proud moment for India. All eight beaches recommended by the Centre under the Beach Environment and Aesthetic Management System (BEAMS) programme have received the Blue Flag certification. It is an outstanding feat as no country has ever been awarded for eight beaches in a single attempt."

Besides Puri's Golden Beach, the other seven beaches that secured this recognition are Shivrampur (Dwarka, Gujarat), Ghoghla (Diu), Kasarkod and Padubidri (both in Karnataka), Kappad (Kerala), Rushikonda (Andhra Pradesh), and Radhanagar (Andaman & Nicobar Islands).





Aerial view of Bhubaneswar city centre

## FACT FILE

Odisha, formerly known as Orissa, is located in the northeastern part of the country. It is bounded by the Jharkhand and West Bengal to the north and northeast, by the Bay of Bengal to the east, by Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to the south, and Chhattisgarh to the west. Before India became independent in 1947, Odisha's capital was at Cuttack. The present capital was subsequently built at Bhubaneswar, in the vicinity of the city's historic temples in the east-central coastal plains. In late 2011 the state's name was officially changed from Orissa to Odisha, and the name of its language from Oriya to Odia.

Odisha is the 8th largest Indian state by area, and the 11th largest by population. It has the 3rd largest population of Scheduled Tribes in India. It has a long coastline of 485 km (301 mi) along the Bay of Bengal. The region is also known as Utkala and finds mention in India's national anthem, 'Jana Gana Mana'. The language of Odisha is Odia (formerly Oriya), which is one of the 'Classical Languages' of India.

**Classification:** State of India April 1st, 1936 (Utkala Divasa)

**Districts:** 30

**Capital & Largest City:** Bhubaneswar

**Governor:** Ganeshi Lal

**Chief Minister:** Naveen Patnaik (BJD)

**Area:** 155,707 sq.km. (60,119 sq.mi)

**Highest Elevation:** Deomali Peak 1,672 metres (5,486 ft.)

**Population:** 47,098,218 (2021 estimate)

**Demonym:** Odia

**Language:** Odia (Official), Hindi, Telugu, Urdu and Bengali are also spoken English is the official language of correspondence between State and the Union of India

**Places of Tourist Interest:** Bhubaneswar, Puri, Konark, Dhuli Giri Hills, Cuttack, Bargarh, Jeypore, Barbil, Paradip, Sambalpur, Chandipur, Pipli, Baripada, Gopalpur, Berhampur.

**Website:** [www.odisha.gov.in](http://www.odisha.gov.in)

## SKÅL TRAILBLAZERS



Women of Skål Bombay pose with Cholada Siddhivarn, Director, TAT; Brenda VanHorn, Principal Commercial Officer, US Department of Commerce; Stefania Constanza, Consul General of Italy in Mumbai; and Zakia Wardak, Consul General of Afghanistan in Mumbai

## Skål Bombay Celebrating Women Leaders In Tourism

Skål International Bombay put together a special programme to recognise women leaders, taking strength from the fact this Club is the highest female contingent in Skål India. Influential woman leaders were invited to an exclusive event for women Skålleagues of the Club. Held at the Rooftop Rendezvous at the Taj Mahal Palace, the elevated view was surpassed by the tall leaders who spoke that afternoon.

In the presence of National President Sk. Carl Vaz and Bombay President Sk. Sushil Bhatt, the attendees had the privilege to listen to four eminent speakers: Stefania Constanza, Consul General, Consulate General of Italy in

Mumbai; Zakia Wardak, Consul General, Consulate General of Afghanistan in Mumbai; Brenda VanHorn, Principal Commercial Officer, US Department of Commerce; and Cholada Siddhivarn, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand in Mumbai.

The National President, Club Board and guests felicitated each lady Skålleague with a certificate to commemorate the occasion. The event was heartily received, and the guest speakers were gracious to spend quality time with members, sharing their life experience earned from growing up and working in diverse parts of the world.





Adnan Altay Altinors, Consulate General of Turkey in Hyderabad; M.V. Ganesh, COO, Radisson Hyderabad Hi-Tech Hotel; Sk. N.S.N. Mohan, Skål Hyderabad President; and Dr. Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner to AP & TS, network at the event

## Skål Hyderabad Rekindling The Travel Bug

Skål Hyderabad, which caters to the development of tourism in Andhra Pradesh & Telangana, conducted a Tourism Networking event in Radisson Hi-Tech Hotel in Gachibowli, to discuss the maladies affecting the industry at present and charting the roadmap ahead.

Dr. Andrew Fleming, British Deputy High Commissioner to AP & TS, Chief Guest, said that the UK is a preferred destination for Indian travellers, especially with its huge Indian diaspora spread across the British Isles, while expressing confidence that tourism would restart in 2021-22. Other speakers on the occasion included Guest of Honour

Adnan Altay Altinors, Consulate General of Turkey in Hyderabad; Annette D'Silva, Commercial Advisor, Consulate General of USA in Hyderabad, and Cholada Siddhivarn, Director of the Tourism Authority of Thailand.

Skål Hyderabad President Sk. N.S.N. Mohan highlighted the need to develop AP & TS as global market destinations. He also stressed on the importance of teamwork and networking. Skål Hyderabad VP Sk. Ravi Chandran and Sk. Akash Saxena, Director – Membership Development, inducted 12 new members who were pinned by the seniors and administered the Skål Oath.

## Skål Trivandrum From Metro To Retro

Skål Trivandrum, in association with the Kerala Tourism Department organised a heritage tour through the streets of Thiruvananthapuram for the benefit of its members. Titled 'Let's Go Metro To Retro', the event was staged aboard a double-decker KSRTC bus, which was inaugurated and flagged-off by Her Highness Princess Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bai of the Travancore Royal Family.

The trip started from the Kowdiar Palace Gate and covered a vast majority of heritagespots including Vellayambalam, Kanakakkunnu Palace, Public Office, LMS Public Library, College of Fine Arts, St Joseph Church, Palayam Mosque,

Secretariat, Pulimoodu, Ayurveda College, Pazhavangadi, Overbridge, East Fort, and concluded at Kovalam Government Guest House. The main objective of this tour was to promote the history of Thiruvananthapuram and its landmarks and to make it a popular destination for travellers seeking a touch of nostalgia.

Several dignitaries and government officials attended the function, including KSRTC CMD Biju Prabhakar (IAS), and eminent historian Dr. Sasi Bhushan. Trivandrum Club President Raja Gopaal Iyer presented Princess Pooyam with a copy of KOTIN, Skål India's magazine, on the day



Her Highness Princess Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bai of the Travancore Royal Family flags off the KSRTC bus





Skål Kochi President James Kodianthara (second from right) flags off 'Oru Desi Drive', a historic journey that began in Kochi. Mitra Satheesh will drive across the country's length and breadth, encouraging people to travel after following the requisite health protocols

## Skål Kochi A Historic Journey Begins

As tourism opens up in the country, Mitra Satheesh, a 40-year-old mother of two – and Assistant Professor at the Government Ayurveda College, Tripunithura in Kochi, has embarked on 'Oru Desi Drive', a car journey across India to encourage people to return to travel. She is being accompanied by her 11-year-old son Narayan. She set off on the adventure earlier this month in her Maruti S Cross.

After travel restrictions imposed due to the lockdown were lifted, she drove to Hampi in September, followed by a trip to the Nilgiris in November, and Karnataka in December.

Some of the pitstops on her current journey include researching mat weaving in Pattamadai, a village in the Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu; the forgotten Cheriya scroll paintings of Hyderabad in Telangana; exploring the tribal villages of Bastar, Koraput, and Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh; an Aryan village in Leh; the terracotta temples of Bishnupur and terracotta mosques of Malda in West Bengal; and meeting the Rabha-Bodo tribals of Assam.

Skål Kochi President James Kodianthara flagged off the historic journey, which is being supported by Incredible India's Dekho Apna Desh, a Government of India undertaking.

## Skål Chennai Planning For A Post-Pandemic World

Covid-19 has dramatically and irreversibly changed many aspects of our lives. Across the world today, humans are living through a period of extraordinary change. Dealing with this disruption has been a challenge for businesses, especially in the travel and hospitality sector.

That's the question Skål International Chennai set out to answer as the Club hosted a meeting at E Hotel and Residences, Express Avenue Mall.

It was well-attended with over 70+ members and guests. The main

objective was how to prepare for and move ahead with the new normal.

One of the highlights of the day was a presentation by Mohammed Farouk, Director, India Tourism, Bangalore, on the 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign, which was launched by the Union Ministry of Tourism in January last year. He briefed the attendees about the revised guidelines for Travel Trade approval from the Ministry of Tourism while touching upon benefits available to approved agents under the Marketing Development Assistance Scheme by the Ministry, a major benefit that most approved agents are unaware of.



International Skål Councillor Sk. Saravanan Palanivelu and Skål India VP-2 Sk. Venkat Reddy showcase a copy of KOTIN along with Skål Chennai President Sk. Seetharam Subramaniam





Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz & Sk. Anurag Gupta pose for a keepsake with the members of the newly-formed Bhubaneswar Club

# CRACKING CODE BHUBANESWAR A STORY OF TRUE GRIT

It was a case of more misses than hits at first. But one man's grit and determination ensured that the Bhubaneswar Club will now take its rightful place as the 15th Skål Club in the country. **Ivor Vaz** traces the long and arduous journey of blood, sweat, and tears...

In the words of Debasish Mahapatra, "it all began with a dream." The travel professional who will soon be ordained Secretary at the soon-to-be-launched Skål Club of Bhubaneswar first heard of the organisation in 2017. "When I discovered that Skål International is the only professional organisation promoting global

tourism and hospitality through friendships, and was operational in over 100 countries including India, I was genuinely intrigued," he recalls. After some sustained Google searches and inquiries with industry professionals, he decided he wanted to be part of it.

From the beginning, it was Debasish's

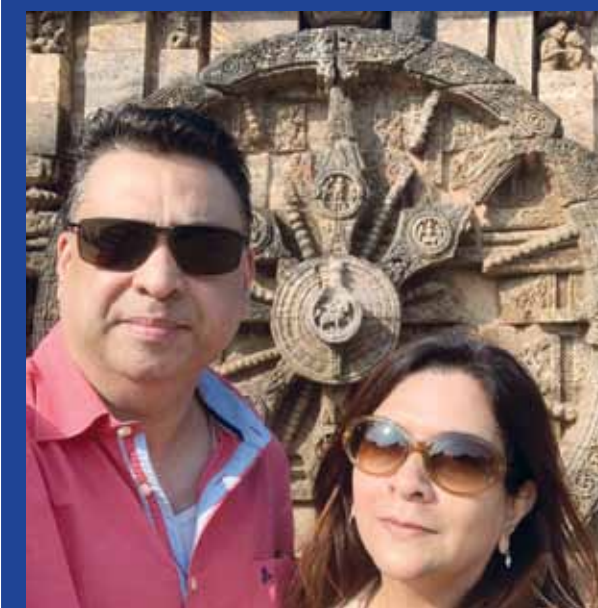


Sk. Debasish Mahapatra, Secretary, Skål Club, Bhubaneswar

intention to start a Club in his hometown of Bhubaneswar. Consequently, he spoke to people of his fraternity, trying to convince them of the huge networking opportunities by simply enrolling in a global umbrella organisation like Skål. Unfortunately, no one was willing to listen back then. And so, he hopped on a plane to neighbouring Kolkata which housed the nearest Skål Club in the country from his location and enrolled there.

In Kolkata, he reconnected with George Nathaniel, a former colleague of his from his early days with a travel agency. From a close perspective, he got to observe how George, who was Director of Membership Development at the Kolkata Club went about the enrolment process. Debasish made mental notes as to how he would adopt the strategies when he returned home. He also reunited with another old friend, Anurag Gupta, who played the same role as George at the national level. By the turn of 2019, Anurag, President of Skål Bangalore, had been appointed Committee Head for Membership at Skål India.

## MEMORIES ARE MADE OF THIS!



Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz and First Lady Sonalee Vaz visit the Konark Sun Temple

Incidentally, it was Sk. Carl and First Lady Sk. Sonalee Vaz's first visit to Orissa ever. Post the announcement of the launch, the couple headed on their own steam exploring the State. They took time off to visit the famous Konark Sun Temple, and later unwind at Mayfair Heritage, Puri; and Mayfair Palm Beach Resort, Gopalpur-On-The-Sea (formerly an Oberoi property). "It's a wonderful property, rich in history. You have to see their list of guests to believe it. It's been fruitful discovering the Eastern part of India whilst I attend to my formal work obligations as President of Skål India. Thank you to the staff of the hotel and at Mayfair Lagoon Bhubaneswar for their care," Sk. Carl wrote on his Facebook page.





**Skål India President, accompanied by Skål Bangalore President Sk. Anurag Gupta and Bhubaneswar Secretary Sk. Debasish Mahapatra, visit Bhubaneswar President Sk. Jitendra Kumar Mohanty at his office**

Very soon, Debasish was fraternising with the likes of Skål India's National Secretary Krishna Gopalan, 1st Vice President Sanjeev Mehra (also President of Skål Kolkata), and Carl Vaz, National President of Skål India. "I must thank Sk. Carl, Sk. Sanjeev, Sk. Krishna, and Sk. Anurag for believing in my dream of opening a Skål chapter in Bhubaneswar and extending their wholehearted support in helping me establish it," says Debasish.

It is understood that the original plan was to begin the launch process in early 2020. But then the Covid-19 pandemic broke out in March 2020 and all plans were cast aside. It was only after travel restrictions were lifted that National President Sk. Carl and National Membership Director Sk. Anurag were finally able to travel to Bhubaneswar in December 2020.

This time around, armed with the lessons he had learned in Kolkata, Debasish was ready to roll. He would

leave no stone unturned to ensure that the preparatory process went smoothly. He had already invited all the leading hoteliers and travel operators from the City and the State for an orientation session on Skål to be presented by the National Board's biggest leaders. With the help of his close friend Pradipta Mohapatra, who was Vice President of the prestigious Mayfair Hotels & Resorts at the time, he managed to secure the most premium property for the action to unfold – Mayfair Lagoon, Bhubaneswar.

The event went ahead without a single glitch. It consisted of an AV presentation by National President Sk. Carl, followed by a few interactive sessions between the participants. By the end of the exercise, 22 professionals (including two from Puri and one from Cuttack) had confirmed their membership with Skål Club of Bhubaneswar. A new chapter had just been written in the pages of Skål's history. Says Debasish: "For me, it was a dream

come true. Most of the biggest groups in the travel and hospitality industry are already on board. I'd like to thank Sk. Carl and Sk. Anurag for visiting Bhubaneswar and encouraging the industry leaders of Odisha to launch their own Club. Odisha as an upcoming tourism destination will certainly be benefited from this initiative. I believe with the help of the Skål International network, we can take Odisha Tourism to a higher level. For a start, I am sure we can attract more domestic tourists."

National Skål President Sk. Carl Vaz was equally effusive in his praise. "It was indeed a pleasure to meet up with the members of Odisha's travel industry. I look forward to the foundation of the Skål Bhubaneswar chapter. I am confident that we can make the State of Odisha prominent for domestic and international tourism. Together we can achieve the impossible and prove that strong partnerships and friendships make India and our travel industry ever more resilient. What better way to begin 2021 than with a new Skål India Club, despite the pessimism in the travel industry?"

Back in Bhubaneswar, Jitendra Kumar



**Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz and First Lady Sonalee Vaz at Gopalpur Beach with the Lighthouse in the background**

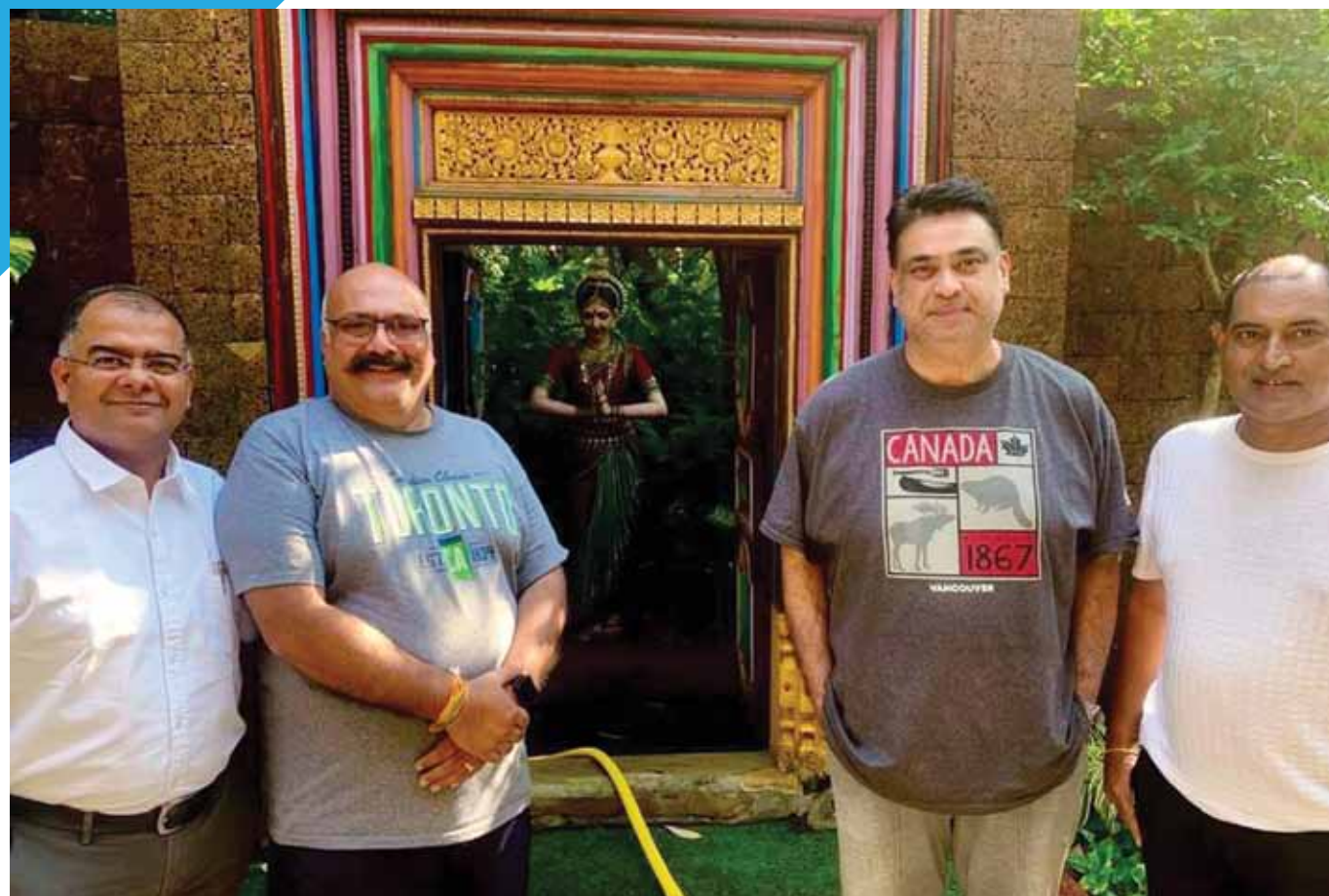


**Sk. Jitendra Kumar Mohanty, President, Skål Club, Bhubaneswar**

Mohanty – a respected personality and successful entrepreneur in tourism, hospitality, and education sectors, with 37 years of business experience behind him was a unanimous choice to be voted as the first President of Skål Bhubaneswar. Understandably, Debasish, the only member with previous Skål experience was elected Secretary. Debasish Patnaik was made Vice President and Saurav Dash was appointed as Treasurer. One position for Vice President 2 was kept vacant for a member from Mayfair Hotels & Resorts. Other portfolios handed out were Director – PR to Subrat Dash, Director – CSR to Debabrata Dash, and Membership Drive Officer to Amar Kumar Sahoo.

The newly-ordained Secretary of Skål Bhubaneswar is a contented man today. The Club of his dreams is set to open in April (perhaps has already opened even as you're reading this). One last thought lingers on his mind though. "It's my objective to make Bhubaneswar one of the most dynamic Skål Clubs in the country. The important thing is that we are up and running now," Debasish concludes.





Mayfair Hotels & Resorts, where the seeds for the forming of Skål Bhubaneswar were sown. Mayfair VP Pradipta Mohapatra, Sk. Anurag Gupta, National President Sk. Carl Vaz, Sk. Debasish Mahapatra



Presentation by the National President which motivated eminent hoteliers and travel agencies of Odisha to launch the Bhubaneshwar Club



Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz gets a traditional welcome



Front row (L-R) Sk. Debasish Mahapatra, Sk. J.K. Mohanty, Sk. Carl Vaz. Back row (L-R) Sk. Anurag Gupta, Sk. Savarav Dash





Dignitaries take the stage at SATTE 2021. (L-R) Pallavi Mehra, Group Director, Informa Markets in India; M.P. Bezbaruah, Former Secretary—Tourism, Govt. of India & Secretary General, Hotel Association of India; Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism, Maldives; Arvind Singh, Secretary—Tourism, Govt. of India; Maneck E. Davar, Chairman, Service Export Promotion Council; Jyoti Mayal, Vice-Chairperson, FAITH; and Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director, Informa Markets in India

# SATTE 2021

## A CLARION CALL FOR REVIVAL OF TOURISM

Even as the pandemic plays out during its second wave, Asia's leading travel and tourism exhibition, SATTE 2021 laid a concrete stepping stone for the beleaguered travel & tourism industry to proceed towards a balanced recovery, where terms such as 'sustainability', 'niche', 'domestic' and 'Experiential Tourism' will be critical in the new normal. **Ivor Vaz** reports...



Arvind Singh, Secretary – Tourism, Govt. of India, speaks on the occasion

The 28th edition of South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE) went ahead smoothly as planned at the India Expo Mart, Greater Noida, Delhi-NCR between 24th to 26th March 2021. Managed by Informa Markets in India, India's leading B2B exhibition organiser, it was the first mega physical event of its kind since the pandemic broke out last year.

The travel and tourism industry has been one of the most severely affected industries by the pandemic, and therefore, SATTE offered a key opportunity for the stakeholders from this industry to brainstorm, share knowledge, exchange ideas and conduct business for the revival and growth of the sector.

This three-day Expo organised with a comprehensive line of best

practices and safety protocols witnessed participation from cross-sections of the industry and garnered strong support from the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Service Export Promotion Council (SEPC) of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Ayush and State & Union Territories Tourism Boards, such as Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand, Kerala, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Odisha, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Bihar, and Chhattisgarh, to name a few. Uttar Pradesh was the host state for SATTE 2021.

The much-awaited event was inaugurated by Chief Guest Arvind Singh, Secretary – Tourism, Government of





Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director, Informa Markets in India lights the lamp, as Milan Hovorka, Ambassador of the Czech Republic in India looks on

### SK. CARL VAZ @ SATTE 2021

Speaking on the occasion, Skål International India President Sk. Carl Vaz emphasised the importance of events like SATTE, especially in tough times like these. “We can all talk about the need for bringing our industry back onto its feet and the effects of the imposition of several taxes or lack of support from Government. But, we need to acknowledge that Informa Markets has gone ahead and walked the talk, putting together this exhibition with over 10,000 attendees. I’d like to thank them for having taken this major step in restoring some confidence in the travel and tourism industry. No country can truly evolve unless it has a very vibrant travel-tourism and hospitality industry – and we most certainly do. Events like SATTE highlight the positivity that is prevalent in the industry despite the setbacks, and define our mettle.”

India, along with key dignitaries Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism, Maldives; M.P. Bezbaruah, Former Secretary – Tourism, Government of India and Secretary General, Hotel Association of India; Maneck E. Davar, Chairman, Service Export Promotion Council; Jyoti Mayal, Vice-Chairperson, Federation of Associations in Tourism & Hospitality (FAITH); Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director, Informa Markets in India; and Pallavi Mehra, Group Director, Informa Markets In India.

International participants such as Nepal, Maldives, Malaysia, Utah and Expo2020 Dubai showcased their product profiles and preparedness to woo Indian travellers. Private players such as Travel Boutique Online, ITC Welcome Heritage, My Value Travel, Tripjack, Youngistan Travellers, STS World, Destination India, Nix Tours, Hora Tourism, and Rayna Tours, amongst others, also participated this year.

To facilitate those who are not able to

attend the event physically this time around, SATTE 2021 has created unique features such as the SATTE Virtual Zone, and the T3 Studio. This enabled travel exhibitors to display their services and products effectively to the buyers.

Congratulating the organisers of SATTE 2021 for sending out a strong message of resurgence in the travel and tourism industry, Arvind Singh, Secretary – Tourism, Government of India, said that travel and tourism is the leading service industry of India and as per WTTC. “The industry contributed 6.8% of the total economy amounting to Rs. 16,681 billion. It generated 39,82,18,000 jobs which translate to 8.0% of the total employment of the Indian economy,” Singh said, adding that India is emerging as a nation to look up to for several countries in terms of health infrastructure, and we have already vaccinated 32 million people and would be continuing our efficient drive.



Pallavi Mehra, Group Director, Informa Markets in India, lights the lamp (foreground), while Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism, Maldives, lights the lamp in the background

### SATTE – FACT FILE

SATTE (South Asia’s Travel & Tourism Exchange) offers a comprehensive platform to domestic and international buyers and professionals from across the travel, tourism, and hospitality industry along with National and State Tourism Boards (NTOs and STOs). SATTE is recognised as Asia’s leading travel and tourism exhibition to conduct business, share knowledge, exchange ideas in order to arrive at solution-driven innovations to accelerate the pace of the growth of the industry. SATTE is well-supported by the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, National and International Tourism Boards, Indian and international travel and trade associations & organisations amongst others





Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism, Maldives; Arvind Singh, Secretary – Tourism, Govt. of India; and Nepal Tourism Board CEO Dr. Dhananjay Regmi, at the lamp lighting ceremony

Taking about Central Government schemes for promoting tourism, he gave the example of 'Dekho Apna Desh', which is an initiative to promote domestic tourism in India and is intended to enhance tourist footfall in places of interest so as to help develop the local economy. Apart from that, he also talked about the Dekho Apna Desh Pledge Campaign, under which tourists who visit at least 15 tourism hotspots are awarded an exciting prize.

"The 'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign has already organised more than 80 webinars. The website of 'Incredible India' has also been updated in multiple languages like Chinese and Arabic to facilitate a smooth flow of communication across multiple countries. Initiatives like System of Awareness Training for Hospitality Industry (SATHI), SWADESH, and the Incredible India Tourist Facilitator (IITF) Certification Programme have been launched. The programmes aim at enhancing the overall experience

of tourists by creating a pool of talented and skilled individuals in the travel, tourism, and hospitality industry. We are positioning India as a centre of Ayurveda, Yoga, Sidha, and Naturopathy, which will serve to boost Wellness Tourism. The guidelines have already been drafted by the Ministry. Schemes have also been extended to wellness tourism service providers," Singh concluded.

While welcoming guests and exhibitors, Yogesh Mudras, SATTE 2021's organiser and Managing Director, Informa Markets in India, said: "We are glad to receive such an overwhelming response from our exhibitors, and support from authorities and tourism boards. The industry is still subject to the see-saw effect in terms of the economy. Exhibitions like SATTE will help in delivering a positive tone to the associated stakeholders and industry players. It will also strategically strengthen 'Atmanirbharta' as

## ABOUT INFORMA MARKETS

Informa Markets creates platforms for industries and specialist markets to trade, innovate, and grow. Its portfolio is comprised of more than 550 international B2B events and brands in markets including Healthcare & Pharmaceuticals, Infrastructure, Construction & Real Estate, Fashion & Apparel, Hospitality, Food & Beverage, and Health & Nutrition, among others. It provides customers and partners around the globe with

opportunities to engage, experience, and do business through face-to-face exhibitions, specialist digital content, and actionable data solutions. As the world's leading exhibitions organiser, it brings a diverse range of specialist markets to life, unlocking opportunities and helping them to thrive 365 days of the year.

**For more information, please visit [www.informamarkets.com](http://www.informamarkets.com).**

## INFORMA MARKETS IN INDIA

Informa Markets is owned by Informa PLC, a leading B2B information services group and the largest B2B Events organiser in the world. Informa Markets in India (formerly UBM India) is India's leading exhibition organiser, dedicated to helping specialist markets and customer communities, domestically and around the world to trade, innovate and grow

through exhibitions, digital content & services, and conferences & seminars. Every year, it hosts over 25 large scale exhibitions, 40 conferences, along with industry awards and training across the country; thereby enabling trade across multiple industry verticals. In India, Informa Markets has offices across Mumbai, New Delhi, Bangalore, and Chennai.

envisaged by the Government. We are upbeat about the future and about the efforts we all need to put together for the revival. Two common themes that have emerged are ensuring safe and sustainable growth and greater use of the latest technology solutions. These can be leveraged to build further inroads into niche and in-demand segments like Domestic Leisure & Business, and Wellness & Health Tourism that we are also promoting at SATTE."

With the current international air travel restrictions, SATTE reoriented its strategy, which is mainly focused on the domestic market along with

select international destinations that have opened doors for tourists post the lockdown lift.

Alongside the Expo, the SATTE 2021 Conference presented a host of thought-provoking knowledge sessions. Day 1 of the Conference saw panel discussions on topics such as Domestic Tourism: Exploring the Unexplored; International Tourism: Tackling the Pandemic Impact; Technology: Adopting SMART Tourism; and a Destination Showcase by Gujarat. Day 2 witnessed panel discussions on Religious





Entrance to India Expo Mart, the venue for SATTE 2021

Tourism, Wellness Tourism, and Women in Travel, along with Destination Showcases by Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, and Lakshadweep.

The Ministry of AYUSH participated for the first time at SATTE. Dr. Kishor Patel, MD (Ayu), Research Officer (Ayu), Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), shared his experience by saying: "The Ministry of AYUSH has a leading role in promoting wellness; it is a multi-dimensional concept. Our country is the land of wellness practices and sciences such as Ayurveda, Yoga, and Meditation, but not many people are aware of these practices. It is our maiden association with SATTE; undoubtedly, it has been a great opportunity to receive a platform for reaching out to the masses and getting them acquainted with these terms."

Over the years, SATTE has had the support of international and domestic organisations and associations.

This year, the reputed list included **Skål International India**, besides the Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO), Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), Association of Domestic Tour Operators of India (ADTOI), Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), Outbound Tour Operators Association of India (OTOAI), IATA Agents Association of India (IAAI), Hotel Association of India (HAI), Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI), India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB), Network of Indian MICE Agents (NIMA), Association of Buddhist Tour Operators (ABTO), Universal Federation of Travel Agents Association (UFTAA), Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA), and Enterprising Travel Agents Association (ETAA) amongst others. EQUATIONS is the NGO partner this year.

From a Skål India standpoint, the event was well attended by members from each of India's 15 Clubs. Prominent among the luminaries were Skål Asia



Yogesh Mudras, Managing Director, Informa Markets in India, addresses the participants

President Sk. Sanjay Datta; Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz; National VPs 1 & 2 – Sk. Sanjeev Mehra and Sk. Venkat Reddy; National Treasurer Sk. Ranjit Vig; and Skål Delhi President Sk. Greesh Bindra, who hosted the Skål National Board, Committee Members, and Club Presidents during their stay in New Delhi.

SATTE 2021 was amply supported by its All Secure & Travel Safety



Dr. Dhananjay Regmi, Chief Executive Officer of Nepal Tourism Board

Guidelines – a safety standard initiative by Informa that safeguarded the Health and Safety of the exhibitors, visitors, and its employees to restart exhibitions. These were in line with the Government's guidelines to ensure a smooth, secured experience for everyone at the show. In a nutshell, the Expo has laid a concrete steppingstone for the travel and tourism industry to proceed towards a balanced recovery.



Wearing of Face Mask and Social Distancing were strictly adhered to at SATTE 2021



# GLIMPSES @ SATTE 2021







Skålleagues from across India pose for a keepsake with Skål Asia President Sk. Sanjay Datta and Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz

# SKÅL INDIA @ SATTE 2021



(L-R) Sk. Venkat Reddy, Sk. Deepan Shah, Sk Kamleshwaran, Sk. Vivek Braganza, Sk. Romi Furtado, Sk. Sanjeev Mehra, Sk. Burjis Mehta



(L-R) Sk. Burjis Mehta, Sk. Anurag Gupta, Sk. Sanjeev Mehra, Sk. Charles Fabian Sk. Vivek Braganza, Sk. Manav Soni, and Sk. Deepan Shah



Sk. Sanjeev Mehra and Sk. Manav Soni at the Skål India stall at SATTE 2021



Sk. Romi Furtado and Sk. Joe Fernandes



The Skål India logo proudly flashes alongside the logos of other travel associations at SATTE 2021





(Standing) Sk. Sunil Mathapati, Sk. Deepan Shah,  
(Sitting) Sk. Vivek Braganza, Sk. Romi Furtado



Skål Asia President Sk. Sanjay Datta and Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz take their place among the dignitaries on the podium



Max Fernandes and Yogesh Mudras of Informa Markets with Sk. Romi Furtado



Sk. Avijit Chaturvedi, Sk. Mushtaq Vakani, Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz



Sk. Charles Fabian at the Skål India Stall at SATTE 2021



Sk. Romi Furtado, Sunil Mathapati, Sk. Deepan Shah, Sk. Vivek Braganza

# Skål India Booth at SATTE 2021



KOTIN, Skål India's inhouse magazine makes its debut at SATTE 2021



Skål India's band identity is excellently showcased through its 14 Club flags



Project E-volution, Skål India's signature CSR initiative generated a lot of interest at the Expo



# KOTIN

## Truly Keeping India Together

KOTIN, the monthly newsletter cum magazine of Skål India is everywhere. Since its launch, it's been very well-received by Embassies, Consulates, Departments of Commerce, and Tourism Boards...and not to forget, officials from various Departments of Tourism in India too!



Skål Kolkata President Sk. Sanjeev Mehra presents a copy of KOTIN to (L-R) Nandini Chakravorty (IAS), Principal Secretary, Tourism Department of West Bengal; Vachirachai Sirisumpan, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand in New Delhi; and Kaushik Bhattacharya (IAS), Managing Director, WBTDCL, Director of Tourism & Ex-Officio Joint Secretary



KOTIN presentation at the Skål Bombay 'Women's Day' event. (L-R) Sk. Carl Vaz, President, Skål India, Cholada Siddhivarn, Director, Tourism Authority of Thailand in Mumbai, Brenda VanHorn, Principal Commercial Officer, US Department of Commerce, Stefania Constanza, Consul General, Consulate General of Italy in Mumbai, Zakia Wardak, Consul General, Consulate General of Afghanistan in Mumbai, Sk. Sushil Bhatt, President, Skål Bombay



Sk. Saravanan Palanivelu and Sk. Venkat Reddy present a copy of KOTIN to Mohammed Farouk, Director, India Tourism, Bangalore





Sk. N.S.N. Mohan presents a copy of KOTIN to Andrew Edlefsen, Principal Commercial Officer, US Consul General, Hyderabad



Skål Delhi President Greesh Bindra hands Dr. Shilpi Behl a copy of the magazine at her flagship clinic, Avana



Sk. Raja Gopaal Iyer presents a copy of KOTIN to Princess Pooyam Thirunal Gowri Parvathi Bai of the Travancore Royal Family



Sk. Saravanan Palanivelu and Sk. Venkat Reddy present a copy of KOTIN to Dr. Shreevidhya Venkatraman from MGM Healthcare



Sk. Anurag and Sk. Carl present copies of KOTIN to Jenu Devan (IAS), Managing Director & Commissioner of Tourism, Gujarat



Sk. Anurag, Sk. Carl & Sk. Vivek present copies of KOTIN to Yuvraj Padole, Deputy Director, (Events & Marketing), Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board



Sk. Manav, Sk. Carl, Sk. Sanjeev & Sk. Mohan with Abdulla Mausoom, Maldives Minister of Tourism & Dr. Hussain Niyaaz, Maldivian Ambassador to India



## A TALE OF RESILIENCE



It's almost like a rerun of an old horror movie. Just when we thought that the pandemic had run its course and some semblance of normalcy was beginning to return, a familiar scene is unfolding across India. In large cities, hospital beds are filling up once again with Covid-19 patients. Large public spaces are being converted into makeshift treatment centres. Restrictions are clamping back down, with new lockdowns in place. Maharashtra – and Mumbai in particular – appears to be the most severely affected.

Based on all available evidence, India has plunged into its second wave. And although this was not entirely unexpected, it threatens to be worse than the first one – this time, with its new variants and strains. According to the Indian Ministry of Health, the country recorded over a lakh new cases in a day for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic. The previous record high had been in September last year, with nearly 98,000 cases in a day during the peak of the first wave. Daily cases had gradually fallen by nearly 90% to reach about 9,000 cases a day in mid-February – which was hailed as a sign that the country had controlled its outbreak. It's been a bleak March,

however, with daily cases jumping more than tenfold.

It's a body blow for the travel and hospitality industry that had managed to dust itself off after a long hiatus. Even so, the industry in India is displaying a resilience that's commendable and rare. The 28th edition of SATTE, Asia's leading travel and tourism exhibition, went ahead smoothly as planned in Greater Noida between the 24th and 26th March 2021. Informa Markets, India's leading B2B exhibition organiser has walked the talk, putting together this exhibition with over 10,000 attendees during this trying period. The event was well attended by members from each of India's 15. Skål Clubs.

Besides coverage from the sidelines of SATTE 2021, in this issue of KOTIN, we've got all the latest news and information from the world of travel-tourism and hospitality. This month's Cover Story takes you to the State of Odisha, one of India's unheralded but surprisingly wondrous treasure troves. Just before Bhubaneswar officially becomes India's 15th Skål Club, we bring you the heartrending story about its formation. Our special report of the month is another poignant tale about 'Project E-volution', Skål India's CSR initiative, which is a focused attempt to bring resources and support to children of tourism who do not have access to Digital India. Finally, we take you on a cross-country excursion to witness what each of our enterprising Clubs is up to.

A lot of blood, sweat, and tears have gone into bringing out this issue of KOTIN. We hope you cherish it as much as we did putting it together for you. Skål!

### Ivor Vaz

Author, Historian, Journalist  
Editor – KOTIN  
Skål International India

## ADVERTISE WITH US

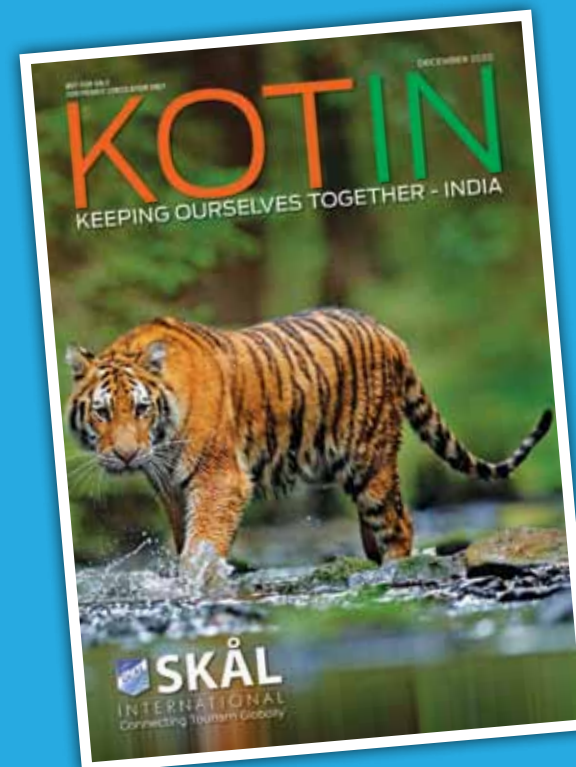
KOTIN, a trusted voice in the travel and tourism industry, is circulated amongst the members of Skål India, comprising industry professionals from the hospitality sector who form the most prominent and visible representatives of the various sectors of the industry – hoteliers, tour operators, airlines,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

KOTIN will also be distributed in the corporate sector to heads of marketing, sales, and travel departments.

KOTIN provides advertisers with a targeted audience who are high net worth individuals, entrepreneurs, investors, and senior corporate executives in the hospitality industry via carefully controlled distribution and circulation channels.



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