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VOL. 2, ISSUE 2, FEBRUARY 2021

# KOTIN

KEEPING OURSELVES TOGETHER - INDIA

## 100 DAYS IN OFFICE

A PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF  
SKÅL INDIA'S FIRST 100 DAYS &  
THE ROADMAP FOR PHASE 2:0

SKÅL INDIA'S A-TEAM SETS A  
SCORCHING PACE DESPITE COVID-19



### SKÅL DELHI

All You Needed To Know  
About India's Oldest & Largest  
Skål Club



### SKÅL COIMBATORE

Coimbatore Club Launches  
India's Largest Young Skål To  
Mark 2nd Anniversary



### SKÅL GOA

With Best Asian Club & Best  
International Club Awards For  
2020, Goa Is On A Good Roll



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# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



**My dear Skålleagues,**

We face the inevitability of another challenging year as a direct result of this persistent global pandemic. It is imperative that we come together to share ideas, resources, and spare some of our individual time to create a brighter future for our members, our work staff, our customers, and yes, even family. We must toil now and in speed for a brighter future that is not within easy reach.

The above challenge reverberated through every inch of my being as I led the team through the first 100 days culminating on the 4th of February

2021. This was a critical period in the 'Regroup & Recovery' plan as it not only entailed the sowing of seeds but the very creation of the seeds I had envisioned. And with hands folded to the heavens, I gave thanks for providing me with a team that stood steadfast and worked tirelessly on several projects that is unrivalled in not only Skål India's history but amongst most associations during this pandemic. Despite the inconveniences of lockdowns across states & cities, the Board met in person and online – we brainstormed, planned in detail, and activated the entire wish list.

The result is there to see at the end of our first 100 days. For the first time, we have an established Skål India brand identity, a physically printed and digital monthly magazine going beyond an ordinary newsletter, we completely overhauled our accounting and compliance procedures, we streamlined our social media assets and set about creating several verticals to spearhead membership drives, new club formation, CSR, skill development, and more.

As in the lyrics of the song by The Hollies go, "The road is long and with many a winding turn...." we needed to assess what we had accomplished and begin the plan for Phase 2.0 which would entail the next set of challenges: how to get Skål India to communicate directly with the Indian traveller? How do we

reach out directly to HNI travellers as an association? How do we make Skål India resonate with corporate clients and bring in the much-needed MICE movement at the earliest? How do we consolidate and expand the membership and new chapters at the same time? We needed a venue to thrash out the alternatives. And in an instant answer to my prayer, Sk. Xavier Furtado the founder and owner of the Holiday Inn Resort Goa opened his doors and welcomed us in from the 9th to the 11th of February. Thank you, Sk. Furtado, for taking care of all our requirements without a single rupee being charged and more importantly for placing your trust in us – the 'trust' that we are attempting to do the right thing for our travel industry.

Details of Phase 2.0 will be discussed at the 2nd National Committee meeting scheduled to take place (in person) on the 24th of March at Noida on the side-lines of SATTE 2021. Once we have tabled this with our Club Presidents and their representatives it will be publicised in the next issue of KOTIN. A special thank you must go out to Informa Markets for coming forward to host our entire stay and National Committee meeting expenses during SATTE 2021.

In this issue, you will read about the great achievements of Skål Goa, Skål Coimbatore and Skål Delhi. Achievements and activation that secured Skål Goa on the Asia & World map by winning not just the Asia award but also the Skål International Global Award for the 'Best Club'. A credit to the team led by President Sk. Ernest Dias, the board and members of Skål Goa for upholding the spirit of Goans.

A congratulatory note also needs to be sent to Skål Coimbatore led by President Sk. Charles Fabian and his team. They launched a Young Skål chapter and in one swift move turned it

into the largest in India with 42 Young Skålleagues from various institutions of repute.

An interesting read in this month's issue is an article by Sk. Hector D'souza from our Mumbai South chapter. I am confident there are many other Skålleagues with a flair for writing and we would love to publish your work if it covers tourism and hospitality from a Skål perspective that is non-political or anti-establishment. Many of you are aware that Skål is a networking & fraternity body, whilst TCS and GST are issues, Skål will not involve itself in a public affairs program on these or similar subjects.

As you read this issue, plans are underway to embark on a national CSR campaign to help young ones' cope with online courses. There may be Skålleagues or their employees who are unable or find it difficult to provide tech equipment for their children's online education/coaching. I would like to acknowledge the work of Sk. Venkat Reddy, Skål India 2nd Vice President and in particular Sk. Ravi Chandran (Vice President, Skål Hyderabad) and Skål India National Committee Head for CSR & FVF for conceptualisation and time to drive this national project.

Let me close by proudly stating that our new Skål India Flag flew in fair winds on the tall masts with our National India flag at the Holiday Inn Resort Goa during our meeting. It was a proud moment when the National Anthem and Skål Hymn were played prior to our meeting with our new brand identity fluttered at the entry to the resort. It made a point – Skål India is going onwards and upwards. With fond wishes,

**Carl Vaz**  
President  
Skål International India



# 100 DAYS AROUND THE COUNTRY WITH SKÅL INDIA

However beautiful the strategy, it is important to occasionally look at the results. It is also critical to review execution in order to ensure that the vision is being brought together. With that in mind, the Skål India National Board, along with the National Committee Heads, came together in Holiday Inn, Goa to review, reflect and relate their plans toward recovery, writes **Sk. Vivek Braganza**, National Director – PR



Skål India National Board with Committee Heads at the Holiday Inn Resort Goa



(L-R) Sk. Fiona Nicholl, Vice President, Skål International; Skål India VP-2 Sk. Venkat Reddy; and Sk. Sarvanan Palanivelu, International Councillor, Skål India participated in the 100-day event online

“Vision without execution is a hallucination,” Thomas Edison, the prolific inventor, scientist, and businessman, is understood to have said. It has often been said that a bias towards action is what makes the business world go round. The over 1,200 members of Skål International India, elected their new National Board on the 28th of October 2020, a team focused on leadership for change. A team with big goals and deep experience to bring it all together. A team brought together under National President Sk. Carl Vaz. Sk. Carl’s approach was clear. “We have inherited the mantle during testing times. Our members need us to bring Skål India to the forefront of the recovery of tourism in the country. We have high expectations to meet, and sound planning is the bedrock of everything we do,” he said. From setting up the administrative and financial base to developing marketing channels to membership engagement – the journey has been a busy one, with many milestones along the way.

Winston Churchill once said, “However beautiful the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.” It is important to review execution in order to ensure that the vision is being brought together. With that in mind, the National Board along with the National Committee Heads came together in Holiday Inn, Goa to review, reflect and

relate their plans toward recovery. The format was rather straightforward, in true agile style – projects are led by specific team members, who bring together functional experts as the need arises. Leadership is brought in when needed, to build consensus for approvals and support workflow. This approach allows for quicker iterations of product development, in a fast-changing marketplace of many variables.

At a 3-day-long workshop in Goa, the stage was set. The event opened in the presence of Sk. Sanjay Dutta, President, Skål Asia and Sk. Fiona Nicholl, Vice President, Skål International. Sk. Fiona, who joined the sessions virtually, said: “I am delighted to hear of the great work from this team, with many achievements in the first 100 days of your term. The pandemic has challenged all of us, to enhance membership engagement across the world. We have made significant steps to rebuild the Skål International website, which makes it more user-friendly for our Skålleagues.” Also speaking at the event, Sk. Sanjay addressed the audience in person. “Let us recognise the power of TEAM – Together Everyone Achieves More. Working together, leaving aside self-recognition, it is important to focus on the betterment of our membership,” he said.





Incoming Board of Skål International India



Skål Asia President Sk. Sanjay Dutta makes an address



The National Committee launches Skål India's new Brand Identity 'Our Social Fabric' in Kolkata



Skål India President Sk. Carl Vaz makes an addresses



The first step towards execution is the team. The National Board selected leadership from within the talent pool of Skål Clubs across India. The mandate was to look for Skålleagues with the ability, AND the motivation to work for the common vision. In these tough times, a heartening response followed – and the Committee Heads were brought on board, listed in alphabetical order here...

- Sk. Ajay Chhabria – Trade Relations
- Sk. Anurag Gupta – Membership Development
- Sk. Charles Fabian – Hospitality & Skill Development
- Sk. Greesh Bindra – Hospitality & Government Relations
- Sk. Ibrahim Siah – Frontier Markets
- Sk. Ravi Chandran – CSR & Florimund Volckaert Fund
- Sk. Sudipta Deb – Sponsorship

Each Committee Head brings to the table their vast experience and network to the service of the Skål movement, and a readiness to dedicate their time to bringing our lofty vision to life. It is path-breaking work and we are all blessed

by their presence. The Committee Heads are part of Sk. Venkat Reddy's team, in his role as 2nd Vice President of Skål India. Sk. Venkat said: "Bringing this team together has been a powerful step forward for Skål India. We have lots of ground to cover, and I am looking forward to working closely with each of our Committee Heads to deliver a legacy that we can all be proud of."

#### NEW MoUs WITH IIHM, INFORMA MARKETS, & TRAVEL WORLD ONLINE

The National Board also supports the growth of partnerships across the industry. Managing the portfolio of MoUs and Alliances is Sk. Sanjeev Mehra, 1st Vice President of Skål India. In a very short time, Skål India has grown its footprint by leveraging its network in Education, Exhibitions, Media, Hospitality and Airlines. Our new partners include the International Institute of Hospitality Management, Informa Markets, Travel World Online. Several MoUs are under discussion and expected to come to fruition shortly. Speaking at the event, Sanjeev said, "We must appreciate and understand that our vision is not just about the 2-year term of the current Board, but



IIHM's Dr. Suborno Bose & Sk. Carl Vaz sign an MoU

to give Skål India the base we deserve for years to come. This is a long-term approach which needs energy, participation, and drive from all our stakeholders."

#### FISCAL COMPLIANCE



Sk. Ranjit Vig, Skål India Treasurer

Supporting activities across all functions, was Treasurer Sk. Ranjit Vig whose focus is crystal clear. "Clean books of accounts are the litmus test of our organisation. Sound administration backed by transparent financial goals and achievable stretch targets will continue to define our approach." The fundamentals of keeping our Treasury intact, while supporting healthy cash flows and liquidity will continue. Regular internal audit, a pipeline of revenue generation, and transparent compliance are some of the pillars that are now in place.

#### ESTABLISHING A NEW BRAND IDENTITY

One of the major milestones along the first 100 days, was the launch of a new Brand Identity for Skål India. We know Skål's vision is to be a 'trusted voice in Tourism', while 'doing business among friends. Developing an identity for Skål International India has been challenging, yet it is an ultimately rewarding task. India is recognised as one of the most



Sk. Vivek Braganza, National Director – PR

diverse on the planet. A country of many languages, faiths, cultures, and climates. With over 1,200 Skålleagues across 15 Clubs in 14 cities around India (and growing), it is Our Social Fabric that brings us together. The brand identity project was entrusted to Young Skålleague, Sk. Varun Vig. Our new brand identity recognises the beauty, history, and diversity of India's fabrics and prints. An amalgam of the distinctive styles of each region we are located in, each Club's print is an integral part of the social fabric of Skål International India. The imagery can also be extended as we bring in new Clubs across India, by recognising their local traditions and artisans. Sk. Vivek Braganza, Director – PR & Communications said, "The vision is to create a recognisable brand for Skål International India. One that is visible when the customer walks in to buy a flight ticket, checks in at a hotel, visits their travel agent, drops by a tourism board booth, reads an industry publication, sees a social media post, or even when they see an ad from a proud Skålleague!" The brand identity has also been brought to life with new stationery, including the creation of multiple marketing assets. With on-brand stationery, visiting cards, letterheads, e-signatures, presentation decks, and creative content for social media, Skålleagues in India have access to a ready template of material to promote the cause in their Clubs and across India.





Skål India President Carl Vaz launches KOTIN, Skål India's monthly magazine-cum-newsletter



Skål India VP-1 Sk. Sanjeev Mehra showcases the inaugural issue of KOTIN at the Kolkata

### LAUNCH OF 'KOTIN'

Along with the launch of a new brand identity, an additional marketing channel was created for Skål India. In partnership with Ivor Vaz of Page One Media, KOTIN (Keeping Ourselves Together – INdia) was created as India's monthly magazine, to reach out to the end consumer – progressing our Brand Identity and bringing to life the stories of Skålleagues and Skål India, of relevance in the B2C market. A play on kot-n, the international phonetic representation of cotton, KOTIN magazine recognises India's most ancient of fabrics (circa 5000 BCE, Indus Valley Civilisation). The magazine now serves as a tangible product of Skål India, not only providing strong brand recall, but also a potential revenue source from advertising and promotion.

### PROJECT E-VOLUTION – A CSR INITIATIVE



Sk. Ravi Chandran, Committee Head – CSR & FVF

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 their 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.

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT

Skill Development is another way our industry can give back to society. Sk. Charles Fabian, Committee Head – Hospitality & Skill Development, said: "Meaningful change is possible with a collaborative effort from all of us. We can provide beneficiaries, and our vision will improve lives through skill development." Charles has identified a recipient village, who will be adopted by his home Club, Coimbatore, with support from Skål India and our Clubs across the country. Asia



Sk. Charles Fabian, Committee Head – Hospitality & Skill Development; and President, Skål Coimbatore

President Sk. Sanjay Dutta kicked off the initiative by pledging financial support.

The agile style of management brings with it quick results, and it is important to recognise as many as possible. Each one is the culmination of smart work but also hours spent to bring the vision to life. Some of the memorable milestones from the first 100 days were:

- Launch of Skål International Bhubaneshwar
- CSR Project E-Volution, to support online education of needy children with digital devices
- Social media handles on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
- Official WhatsApp channels
- Young Skål induction sessions with Pune, Coimbatore, Trivandrum and Bangalore
- Launch of Young Skål Coimbatore (Asia's 2nd largest)
- President's visits to Trivandrum, Bangalore, Pune, Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata
- National Committee Meet – Kolkata
- EOGM – Delhi
- Board Meets – Hyderabad, Kolkata, Delhi, Goa





**Sk. Greesh Bindra, Committee Head – Hospitality & Government Relations; and President, Skål Delhi**

#### ADMINISTRATIVE COMPLIANCE

Sk. Greesh Bindra, Committee Head – Hospitality and Government Relations highlighted his activity and plans around relationship building in his sector. Speaking at the event, Sk. Greesh said “the hospitality industry is a big opportunity for Skål India. This audience can bring our vision towards end customers a reality, by talking about Skål to educate guests of the movement.” Similarly, most staff in the hotel sector are not aware of this Mission, and he has plans to build 4 regions within the country, by building a hospitality vertical for Skål India. This can forge a connect to the hotelier community and bring our Clubs access to new members in each region.

Membership development is already in full swing, with the signing of Skål International Bhubaneswar. Sk. Anurag Gupta said: “We are ready, and we can see the horizon clearly.



**Sk. Anurag Gupta, Committee Head – Membership; and President, Skål Bangalore**

Bhubaneswar is just the beginning, expect more Clubs this year.” These are exciting times for Skålleagues all across our 15 Clubs in India, who can expect new Clubs in Nagpur, Mangalore, Indore, Chandigarh, Amritsar, Guwahati, Nashik, and Madurai.

Coming to Sponsorship, the stage is set – with KOTIN now a running monthly publication, supporting the existing social media channels of Skål India. With a ready set of communication channels to offer prospective sponsors, Sk. Sudipta Deb, Committee Head – Sponsorship, said: “We need to value and recognise the power of the Skål brand. As the only association connecting all facets of Tourism, we have an immense network and value addition to offer our partners.” Stressing the need for support from the Clubs, we have the potential to enhance our database for everyone’s benefit, with quality content and connections reaching the B2C market.



**Skålleagues Romi Furtado, Krishna Gopalan, Ivor Vaz, Sanjeev Mehra, Charles Fabian, Anurag Gupta, Ranjit Vig, and Ravi Chandran pose for a keepsake at the Beach Grill, Holiday Inn Resort Goa**

Bringing it all back together was Sk. Carl Vaz, who thanked the many stakeholders who made this work



**Sk. Sudipta Deb, Committee Head – Sponsorship poses in a traditional outfit during the National Committee meet in Kolkata**

possible. The support and guidance from Sk. Fiona Nicholl at Skål International, Sk. Sanjay Dutta at Skål Asia. A special mention was given to Sk. Romi Furtado, who supported us with his presence as Compere for the event. Manish Puri, VP – Passenger Sales of Indigo was thanked for his virtual presence during the meeting. The immense support of Holiday Inn Goa was also recognised, as venue host for the 100 days meeting. The President looks forward to meeting again in Delhi, hosted by our partner Informa Markets at SATTE 2021.

These are exciting times, as we drive forward the vision of bringing Skål India to the consumer. At the 100 days checkpoint, the Mission remains clear – Regroup, Recover, Regrow and Rejoice!

We recognise the milestones of the past, as guides to the future. To quote famous Canadian Hockey player Wayne Gretzky, “I skate to where the puck is going to be, not where it has been.”



Holiday Inn Resort Goa

# AN OASIS OF TRANQUILLITY

The Holiday Inn Resort Goa recently hosted Skål India's National Board and Committee Heads who descended into the State for their 100-day performance review, and to map the path ahead. **KOTIN Editor Ivor Vaz** sought out the benevolent hosts, siblings Xavier Furtado and Savita DaSilva, who are Skålleagues as well, for an intricate tête-à-tête about the current state of affairs in the hospitality industry and the story of the property itself

SPECIAL REPORT



Skål India Board and Committee Heads pose for a keepsake with Skål Asia President Sanjay Dutta, and Xavier Furtado, Savita DaSilva, and Mohammed Parvez at the Holiday Inn Resort Goa

**B**oasting a coveted beachfront location and expansive grounds spattered with coconut palms and manicured lawns, the Holiday Inn Resort Goa is a well-established

property in a relaxed setting. It's the perfect choice for vacationers looking to adopt the susegaad (laid-back) lifestyle of the people of India's Sunshine State.



Lunchtime at Zest Cafe & Kitchen: (L-R) First Lady Sonalee Vaz, Skål India President Carl Vaz, 1st VP Sanjeev Mehra, Skål Asia President Sanjay Dutta, Romi Furtado, KOTIN Editor Ivor Vaz, and Sudipta Deb

Situated 38 km away from Dabolim International Airport and just 17 km from Margao Railway Station, this sprawling 25-acre property is located in Cavelossim, a quaint little hamlet in South Goa. It lies on the southernmost tip of Salcette taluka that starts from Majorda Beach in the north to Mobor Beach in the south. What makes the location a red-hot favourite from a tourist's standpoint is its peninsula configuration – it is surrounded by water on three sides, ensuring privacy for its residents. To its west lies the largely-virgin and eminently picturesque Cavelossim-Mobor Beach stretch. To its east is the Sal River that flows gently into the Arabian Sea from the southern tip of the cape.

On an ordinary day, this resort as well as its neighbourhood would be bustling with foreign tourists. But these are indeed extraordinary times. The Covid-19 situation has rendered international travel impractical, at least for now. However, with receding

caseloads in the country, the domestic market has opened up considerably, and it wouldn't be unfair to say that the upsurge has already begun.

Says Xavier Furtado, Chairman & Managing Director, Holiday Inn Resort Goa: "Domestic travel is gaining steam at the moment since the pandemic has begun to ease out. Obviously, people cannot holiday abroad owing to travel restrictions. As a result, they are travelling within the country, and we all know how popular Goa is. Our occupancy is fairly good at 75%, but revenues still need to pick up as we have done a lot of discounting to bring in the footfalls."

Xavier's sister Savita DaSilva, who is Director (Operations) at the resort, agrees wholeheartedly: "Domestic tourists have a major part to play in Goa's hospitality industry. One segment that was doing especially





well pre-pandemic was MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, Exhibitions). Earlier it would be viewed as an off-season segment, but that is no longer the case. MICE now accounts for the majority of our business. Of course, there are fewer conferences these days, but I'm sure it will pick up by October."

She adds: "We especially proud to say that Holiday Inn is one of the most sought after properties for wedding destinations in South Goa. In 2019-2020, we had about 75 weddings. Before the pandemic, we'd get bookings for about 300-400 people and 150 rooms on average. And though there has been a slight lull of late – we're down to 50-80 rooms as of now, prospects for the wedding season in 2021 are already bright with the number of bookings we're getting. Hopefully, if all goes well, from October to March we are looking at two very strong quarters. By 2022, we should be back to pre-Covid-19 levels."

As it has been for every other organisation in the hospitality and travel business, the past year was a

particularly rough one. Says Xavier: "From April to October we were closed, and we didn't have a clue when we would be able to open, or whether we would be able to open at all. Utilities were on. All sorts of expenses were on. For us, it was all about survival during the initial days of the outbreak. We've faced many challenges over the years, but 2020 has been a soul-searching examination for us."

Xavier likens the present-day challenges to the time when he, along with Savita, the youngest of his three sisters, first returned to India from Kuwait after the Iraqi invasion in 1990. They purchased the land in Mobor through Averina International Resorts Pvt. Ltd, the hospitality company which they earlier established in 1986. In 1992, they began building a hotel and opened up in 1993-1994. They called it Averina Beach Resorts (named after their parents Avertano and Rina). At the turn of the millennium, they became franchisors for Holiday Inn, thus making it the first franchise hotel in Asia to be managed by an independent party.

Recalls Xavier: "It was pretty challenging at the time. We opened with 60 rooms, and later added 20 rooms at a time, each time. Initially, we would get a lot of business from the charters. That kept our company afloat. In the beginning, the kind of clientele we got was very premium, but as the years went by, it got worse. Today, the domestic market has replaced the charters. The input we get in terms of revenue from charters is nothing compared to what we get from the domestic market. We can safely conclude that our business doesn't depend on charters anymore. In 2018-2019, we reserved only 20 rooms for charters."

"Post-pandemic, we are making conscious efforts to restore consumer confidence," says Savita. "A lot of new safety procedures had to be put in place. When it comes to hygiene, Indian hotels have a long way to go before measuring up to world standards. We're fortunate that InterContinental Hotels Group IHG plays a big role in staff training. Being backed by a brand has really benefited us. In order to follow their protocols to a 'T', we had to adopt some strict sanitisation measures, but they have

proven to be very beneficial as our guests feel safe. Our online reviews are testimony to that. Today we can confidently say that we've reached a new level in hygiene and sanitisation, and we are proud of it."

According to Xavier, there are plenty of takeaways from the pandemic despite the slump in business. "Our profitability, particularly for the month of December has never been better. We learned the art of downsizing. It was a hard decision to let people go, but it was all about survival for us. We had very little choice in the matter."

"The pandemic forced us to take some really disciplined decisions. That turned around our game, so as to say. It's a learning for the future years, which, I think, has changed the scope of profitability. Today, we can safely say that we've come a long way in terms of efficiency. Our staff is super professional. That is our biggest strength. And that is the reason why our clients can't wait to return here," Savita concludes.



## LAST WORD IN LUXURY



### ROOMS & SUITES

The Holiday Inn Resort Goa accommodations provide guests with an authentic hospitality experience. Its well-appointed rooms, suites, and villas offer mesmerising pool and sunset views, complemented by a secluded garden, tropical foliage surroundings, and upscale design details. Each room type features individual outdoor terraces with stone pathways leading to each individual doorstep. The rooms are equipped with television, Wi-Fi access, and a service-focused telephone system directly connected to on-property services.

### SPA, GYMNASIUM, & RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

At The Holiday Inn Resort, Goa, guests enjoy the modern-style vacation experience. It provides guests with an alluring spa where guests are welcome to choose from an array of varied treatments and massages. Its world-class gymnasium offers a stellar experience for your mind, body, and soul with its enriching interiors, massive floor space, incomparable hygiene,

and ultimate luxury for guests to keep their workout regime intact. The resort also offers a variety of recreational sports for land and water lovers. With a daily schedule of activities to choose from, guests of all ages are sure to find something to enjoy. Activities include aqua zorbing, lawn tennis (seasonal), pool, and table tennis.

### DINING

**Zest Cafe & Kitchen** is an all-day multi-cuisine dining restaurant featuring individual open-theatre cooking stations, where guests can watch their food being prepared.

**Beach Grill** is a seasonal multi-cuisine restaurant that offers exemplary food and drink options on the beachfront, where one can enjoy beautiful views of the ocean, listen to the waves, or watch pretty sunsets.

**Sundowner Bar:** What can possibly be better than sipping on your favourite cocktail while enjoying the live entertainment that takes place every evening against the backdrop of the Arabian Sea?

## MEET THE FOUNDERS

### XAVIER FURTADO

Chairman & Managing Director



Xavier is the creative mastermind who spearheaded the growth of Averina International Resorts over the last two and a half decades. Hospitality is not only his forte but his undying passion. Under his guidance and leadership, the company has grown and thrived over the last 25 years, creating an established chain of restaurants and taking the Holiday Inn Resort Goa, a 5-star resort on the picturesque beaches of Goa, to different heights.

He holds a degree in Hotel and Restaurant Administration from Oklahoma University, and a Diploma in Food & Beverage Service from Cesar Ritz Le Bouveret, Switzerland. He also owns the renowned 'The Fisherman's Wharf' chain of specialty restaurants. Another feather in his successful is the recently-launched Oriental restaurant, 'The Red Ginger' in Panaji.

### SAVITA DASILVA

Director – Operations



A thoroughbred professional with in-depth expertise in the hospitality industry, Savita DaSilva is Director (Operations) at Holiday Inn Resort Goa. Her administrative skills and organisational talent bring great strength to Averina International Resorts as a company.

### MOHAMMED PARVEZ

Vice President – Sales & Marketing



Having worked in the hospitality industry for over a decade across not only domestic but major international hotel chains, Parvez has an undying zeal to drive business growth and take the top-line revenue to new heights. A persistent and persevering nature with a drive to succeed self-motivates Parvez to exceed his own self-set goals constantly.





The Executive Committee meets to pave the way for 2021

# A HARD ACT TO FOLLOW

It's the oldest Skål Club in the country. It's one of the largest in the world in terms of membership. Even so, it's the incredible list of activities and programmes that the Skål Club of Delhi conducts through the year that sets the template that all Skål Clubs across the globe would do well to follow, writes Managing Committee Member **Tekla Maira**

As the Skål Club of Delhi inches close to its 70th year of existence from its inception in February 1954, it is no wonder that the organisation recently earned itself the distinction of being one of the largest among all Skål Clubs in the world. A sought-after membership has been synonymous with the Skål Club of Delhi and has evolved over the years as a role model for Skål Clubs across India.

Today the Club boasts of 225 active members from diverse segments of the industry all of whom are immersed in the Club's activities. Membership criteria is strictly followed and only those industry professionals who have a clean track record and fulfil the criteria are finally selected by the Screening Committee for enrolment as members. Memorable events include our traditional Christmas Lunch every

December as each year draws to a close. The annual Skål Ball has over the years been an event not-to-be-missed and in fact, the memory of the last Ball going live in the virtual space with over 44,000 views was a matter of pride and esteem.

Some of Delhi Club's best-known Skålleagues are Padma Shri Sk. Ajeet Bajaj and his daughter Sk. Deeya Bajaj who proudly hoisted the Skål flag on Mount Everest after the duo successfully scaled the peak! Sk. Mandip Singh Soin left the Skål footprint in Antarctica during his recent expedition. Our members have listened to their experiences with rapt attention and with great interest.

While 2020 was an unusual year, our membership remained active and involved through virtual educational events as also a golf tournament in collaboration with the Indian Golf Tourism Association. The proud winner was our very own Club President Sk. Greesh Bindra, who is an avid golfer besides being an acclaimed hotelier under whose able stewardship the Delhi Club continues to forge ahead. Special mention must be made of the virtual HR workshop curated by the Committee where we had HR professionals address concerns from the perspective of employees as well as employers. Being the need-of-the-hour, this event was well received and attended, and led to some animated discussions.

Corporate Social Responsibility has been one of the Club's priorities, and regular initiative is taken towards this end. Joining the fight against Covid-19, the Skål Club of Delhi identified two very prestigious NGOs with an impeccable track record to drive the Skål Club's objective to support the homes for the old, destitute, and abandoned, and





**December 2020 Christmas Lunch. (L-R) Sk. Rohit Khosla, National President Sk. Carl Vaz, Skål Delhi President Gresh Bindra, Skål Asia President Sk. Sanjay Dutta, Sr. Auditor Burjis Mehta, Skål Pune President Avijit Chaturvedi, Sk. Homa Mistry and Sk. Kunal Sampat**

also to support the livelihood of young children in remote areas of India.

Earth Saviours Foundation, an NGO located in Bandhwari Village, Gurgaon, is one such organisation taking care of more than 500 senior citizens, mentally disabled individuals, and abandoned people. These people are brought to the NGO by the police, government hospitals, courts, social welfare departments, and even common citizens after they are rescued. The facilities at the NGO, which include accommodation, food, medicines, and everyday amenities, are completely free of charge for these underprivileged people.

The Delhi Club has taken cognisance of the above situation and extended financial support amounting to INR 400,000 to the organisation. An Initiative Touch Your Soul (AITYS) organisation works in remote rural regions of Uttarakhand, where regular income or adequate means of livelihood is more of an exception than

the rule. With the objective to better the lives of underprivileged people in this region, AITYS has been implementing initiatives to uplift school infrastructure, retain children in school through annual education sponsorship and conduct free medical camps for villagers. The core principle of AITYS is: 'No child should be deprived of education due to poverty'.

In recognition of the hardship that the young children are going through in these very challenging times, Skål Club of Delhi extended financial support to 70 children to the tune of INR 350,000.

Welcoming the National Skål Committee in December 2020 as they held their meeting in New Delhi created a feeling of togetherness and lifted the feeling of gloom from what was one of the most difficult years for the industry. It was a privilege to have them in our midst during our traditional Christmas lunch in the lawns of The Imperial Hotel.

## Skål Delhi – Fact File

Skål Delhi, also known as Skål Club of Delhi is the first Skål Club which was formed in India in February 1954. Being the premier industry body promoting tourism and friendship, it offers an excellent opportunity to promoters and sponsors with a view to expanding their business interests by leaps and bounds.

At present, Skål Delhi has 225 members. Membership criteria are strictly followed and only those industry professionals who have a clean track record and fulfil the criteria are finally selected by the Screening Committee for enrolment as members. The popularity of the Club can be judged from the fact that there are always 8 or 10 applicants on

the waiting list. In a study conducted by Skål Delhi during June 2006, Skål Delhi achieved the 3rd position among the Top Ten Skål Clubs of the world. Today it is one of the largest Skål Clubs in terms of membership.

Each year, the Club organises seven to eight luncheon meetings on the third Wednesday of every month, two dinners, one family picnic, a trip abroad or within the country, and one movie show. At times, renowned speakers are invited to address the members during a lunch meeting. On average, between 60% and 75% of the members attend these events. The Skål Ball, a grand industry annual event, is generally celebrated in the month of February and is attended by all the bigwigs of the travel industry.

We hope 2021 heralds a new era as the Club plans a whole new agenda of activities to keep the membership engaged through meaningful events incorporating Skålleagues with their partners.

Skål Delhi has an Executive Committee of 11 of which 5 are nominated as Office Bearers. The EC comprises individuals who hold responsible positions in the industry. Despite their busy schedules,

the Committee meets ever so often, planning ahead to keep the momentum going. We are proud to be guided at all times by Skål International Asia President Sanjay Dutta who plays a prominent role in mentoring the club through his experience and insights.

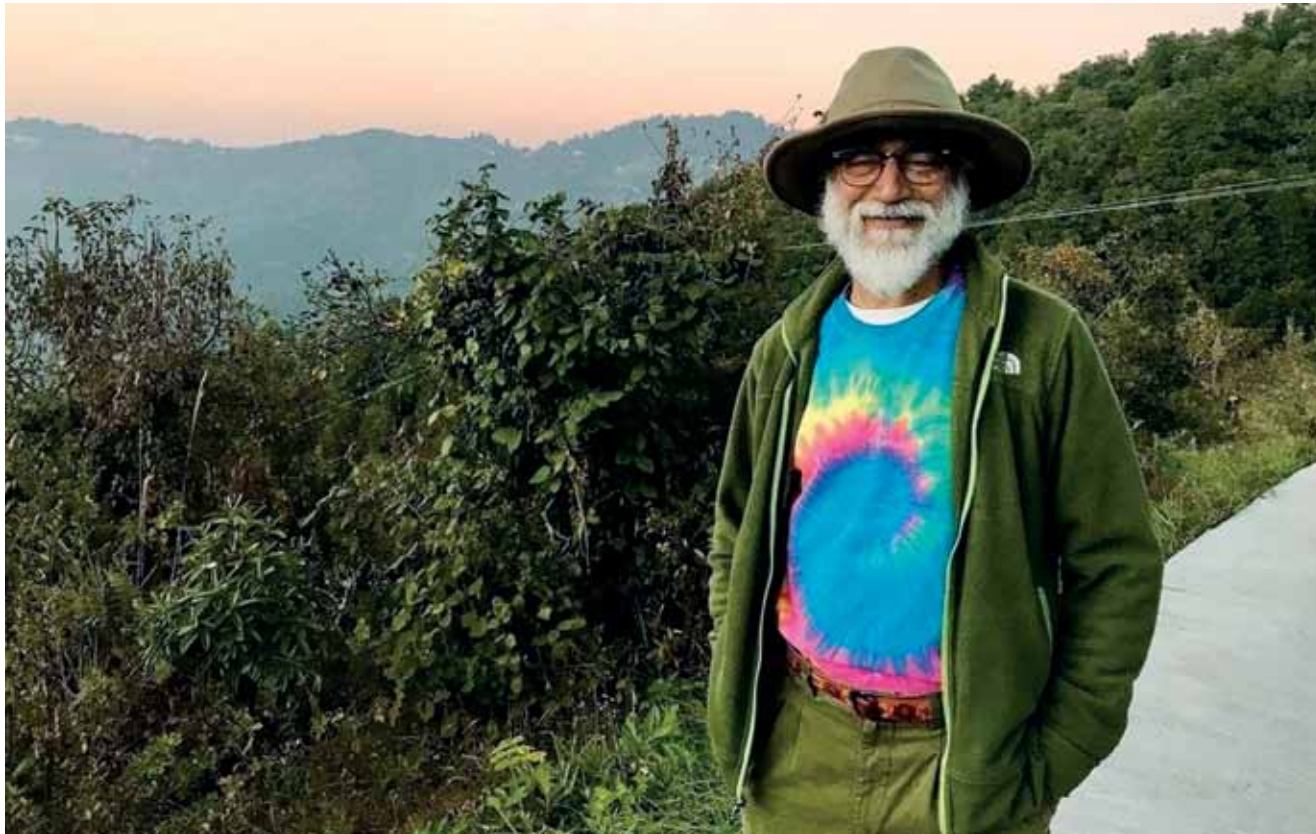
Skålleagues from across India are encouraged to connect with the Club during their visit to the Capital City and join our planned events!



**Jubilant celebrations at the IGTA Golf Tournament**



# THE PRIDE OF DELHI CLUB



**Sk. Mandip Singh Soin**

Sk. Mandip Singh Soin, (born 9th March 1957) is a prominent Indian mountaineer, explorer, adventure travel expert, environmentalist, speaker and a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society. He has spent over 40 years in the field of adventure, having gone on expeditions to all the seven continents of the world. His mountaineering ascents and explorations include several Indian 'firsts' such as the first Indian ascent of Mount Meru in 1986 in the Himalayas as well as several first Indian ascents in the French and Swiss Alps, Italian Dolomites, Wales, and Scotland. He is a strong advocate of responsible tourism and Founder President of the Ecotourism Society of India.

In 1992, he became the first Indian to be conferred the Ness Award for expeditions and exploration by the Royal Geography Society, UK. The same year, he was also nominated 'Person of the Year' and 'India's Most Versatile Adventurer' by Limca Book of Records. In 2012, he was conferred the highest civilian honor in India for Adventure by the President of India – the Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award for Lifetime Achievement. In 2015, he became the only Indian to be honoured by the 'Citation of Merit' from the famous Explorers' Club, USA, at the 111th Explorers' Club Annual Dinner.



**Sk. Ajeet Bajaj & Sk. Deeya Bajaj**

Sk. Ajeet Bajaj (born 17th September 1965) is the first Indian to ski to the North Pole and the South Pole within a year. Bajaj is the first Indian to have skied to both the North Pole and the South Pole. He has also travelled to multiple countries spanning all seven continents. In July 2008 he kayaked along the coast of Greenland as part of an Indo-American team. The expedition's aim was to create awareness about the effect of global warming on glaciers.

Bajaj won a bronze medal in the National Games for kayaking. He has received one silver and two bronze medals in international rafting competitions in Switzerland and Siberia, Russia. He has captained an international team for the World

White Water Championships in Turkey. He qualified as a climbing instructor at the French National School of Alpinism & Skiing and has experience in a host of other adventure sports including skiing, rock climbing, snorkelling, sea kayaking, scuba diving, bungee jumping, and canyoning. He is a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and is former President of the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 2012.

Bajaj along with his daughter Deeya Bajaj (also a Skålleague) climbed Mount Everest on 16 May 2018. This made them the first father-daughter duo to do so.





▲ Sk. Carl Vaz, Sk. Greesh Bindra and Sk. Sanjay Dutta raise a toast



▲ Sk. Greesh Bindra and Sk. Carl Vaz



▲ Sk. Greesh Bindra and Sk. Sanjeev Mehra



▲ Sk. Greesh Bindra and Sk. Vijay Wanchoo at the Christmas lunch with a special guest



▲ Sk. Rajesh Sethi, Sk. Greesh Bindra Sk. Carl Vaz and Sk. Rohit Khosla



▲ Sk. Ranjit Vig and Sk. Sanjay Dutta

# FORECASTING TRAVEL TRENDS IN 2021

BY INVITATION

By nature, the travel-trade & hospitality industry is quite volatile, even in the best of times. If those in the trade are willing to be patient, go the extra mile, re-invent, and reduce costs and profits, they will be amply rewarded during the next two to three years, says **Hector Dsouza**

One shoe doesn't fit all. This may be the best phrase to describe how travel and tourism will pan out in 2021. The world is currently witnessing changes on the global level almost on an hourly basis. What holds good now may not necessarily hold good hereafter. As I write this, some parts of the world are experiencing the second wave of Covid-19; in a few places, it's been almost wiped out; while many other countries are still dealing with the first wave.

In the context of these developments, predicting travel trends and forecasting is slightly better than groping in the dark, thanks in no small measure to vaccines that have begun to roll out by global pharma companies in January. Ultimately, all invented vaccines will serve some part of the human population in 2021. With mass vaccinations being reported almost on a daily basis, this heartening news will pave the way for concretisation of plans by suppliers of travel, be it







A majority of planes were grounded in India through 2020

hotels, airlines, cruises, tour operators, online travel companies, and retail agents. In the short term, some uncertainty will prevail, mainly due to prevailing conditions in different countries and destinations.

Optimism and hope are two main ingredients needed for sustenance and growth. All travel verticals are steadfastly holding onto this dictum. The challenge, though, is that recovery will not come uniformly across all verticals at the same time. Profitability could take a beating. Purchasing patterns having changed, may ultimately lead to closure or merger of a couple of verticals.

Short-haul domestic flights will recover first and the same is evident in India with flights almost reaching a 70-75% load factor on many networks, be it metro or non-metro sectors. In 2021, capacities will increase as more and new destinations will be added to networks and capacity restrictions lifted. It's likely that orders for new aircraft will commence in the second half of this year. Short-haul and

medium-haul international flight networks will initially witness some resistance but will pick up substantially in the second quarter.

With softening of room rates, hotels in all categories will see demand picking up during the year. Contactless experience, trimming of costs, and improved sanitisation, will witness demand flocking back to hotels, hotel chains, and homestays. The time frame for recovery could be between six to nine months. What would benefit hoteliers is the low supply of rooms as compared to expected demand. Currently, the 150,000 rooms in the regulated category fall short, during peak months. Of late, hotels and resorts bordering cities are already witnessing a huge demand with room rates at pre-pandemic levels. There is no denying that hotels will need to up the confidence levels by organising experiential stays to travel trade to dispel doubts of safety. If this measure is treated as an investment and not an expense, this vertical will be the biggest beneficiary. Full recovery to pre-Covid-19 levels will be witnessed in

the fourth quarter of 2021. The meeting and incentive segments should not be forgotten and will contribute tremendously to this vertical, be it in filling up rooms or hosting events.

The transport and vehicle hire sector will more likely see a staggered recovery during the summer months of 2021. With demand being slow in the first quarter, and inbound travel halted due to restrictions imposed by source markets, there will be a slow recovery with increased pressure on prices. This demand-supply mismatch will in all likelihood affect this sector. Also, the traditionally slow quarter of the monsoon months could see revival laborious and unpredictable.

Covid-19 and subsequently staying indoors meant people were more exposed to digital than ever before. Online shopping became 'de rigueur' during the past few months and deals became the flavour of the season. 'Contactless' purchase could mean some retail travel and tour agencies are likely to face the brunt. Group tour operators on the other hand will need to reduce the price of products to retain clients. Artificial Intelligence used by search engines has immaculately assessed purchasing patterns and buying habits. Those suppliers of travel services who availed of this facility stand to gain. Artificial Intelligence will keep travellers updated with deals, offers suggested holiday trips much in advance thereby helping convert wannabe travellers into willing customers.

Though package holidays and bundled packages will cost less, the price of travel will go up, especially on tours because of the need to buy adequate overseas health insurance, trip cancellation insurance and cost of vaccines as well as taxes. This could be a dampener on the already



Travelling during the times of Covid-19

overstretched household incomes that have taken a beating for the most part of 2020.

Mutations to the virus or a new virus strain, erratic weather patterns causing severe destruction, civil unrest, and the collapse of economies are some global factors that could disrupt tourism. Nevertheless, the world is better equipped and prepared to handle these challenges. By nature, this industry is quite volatile, even in the best of times. Like the shoe shop, different sizes may need to be tried until one finds the 'perfect pair'. Revival will take place at different periods of time for verticals in 2021.

To conclude, 2021 will be equally challenging. Those involved in the trade who are willing to be patient, go the extra mile, re-invent, and reduce costs and profits, will be amply rewarded during the next two to three years.

*\* 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.*



# REASONS TO CELEBRATE

With the launch of a Young Skål housing 42 members, the Coimbatore Club has stormed its way into the record books, according to its charismatic leader President **Sk. Charles Fabian...**

SPOTLIGHT



Sk. Carl Vaz, President – Skål India and Sk. Charles Fabian, President – Skål Coimbatore present the new brand identity flags

**F**or the Skål Club of Coimbatore, February 9, 2021, was a red-letter day in every respect. It marked the second anniversary of the Club. The day also witnessed the official launch of Young Skål Coimbatore with a whopping 42 members, making it the largest Young Skål Club in the country, and the second-largest in Asia.

Two years had rolled along in a flash. The Skål Club of Coimbatore (730) was formed on 9th February 2019, with 27 members from the hospitality and travel-trade fraternity. The idea took root a few months earlier when all the hotel GMs of Coimbatore congregated to throw a welcome party for Sk. Charles Fabian who had shifted his base from Chennai (as Director of Operations at The Residency Towers) to Coimbatore.

A few months later, the Travel Agents Association of Coimbatore (TAAC) reached out to The Residency Towers requesting to conduct a high tea party on the premises. As the host, Sk. Charles was given a slot to address the gathering. That is when he inspired the gathering to start a Skål Club in Coimbatore that

could benefit the travel agents and hospitality professionals in the city. Soon thereafter, the Club formation process started, and all 27 people who registered to become members nominated Sk. Charles Fabian as the first President of Skål Coimbatore.

Cut to the present. The plan to launch a Young Skål Club at Coimbatore was there from the very beginning, according to Sk. Charles. “Since we already had three Young Skål members among our ranks, we always sought to strengthen the Club with additional young members from the first year itself, and thereafter work on the launch of our own Young Skål group. We had big plans when we celebrated our 1st Anniversary at Hotel Le Méridien in February 2020, where the Regional Director of India Tourism was the Chief Guest. Unfortunately, Covid-19 came around and wrecked our plans. As a team, all we could do was wait for things to settle down. After the lockdown was lifted, the Committee once again got into action to restart the Young Skål launch process.”

In order to inspire more youngsters from the industry in Coimbatore to sign up, Sk. Charles roped in Young Skål India Director Sk. Shalini Charles and Skål India 2nd Vice President Sk. Venkat Reddy, who in turn, helped present a thought-provoking webinar via Zoom. The attendance was overwhelming, to say the least.

Dr. P. Premkanna, Professor & HOD of Catering Science from Hindustan College Of Arts And Science (HICAS), was very eager to spearhead the process of forming the Young Skål unit. He formed a team to coordinate with nine institutes in the city. Since Skål Coimbatore already had active members from five different colleges, the process becomes less challenging, and the registration process became a breeze.



Sk. P. Premkanna, Director – Young Skål Coimbatore

“As we saw the interest in the young minds, we decided to launch the Young Skål on the 2nd anniversary of the Coimbatore Club,” adds Sk. Charles. Once the idea was conceived, Skål Coimbatore’s PR Director Sk. Gugan Illango demonstrated his bigheartedness by volunteering to completely host the event at his premises, ‘My Village’, an eco-friendly resort at Anakatti, which is roughly 25 km from Coimbatore’s city centre.

“Our ultimate vision is not to simply increase our membership, but rather to get the right people with a positive mindset and great passion to take the Skål Club of Coimbatore to international recognition,” Sk. Charles concludes.



# THE BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

**Sk. Charles Fabian**, President – Skål Coimbatore, and Committee Head – Hospitality & Skill Development, Skål India, lists the advantages of being a Young Skål member at the Coimbatore Club...

This pandemic has taught us important lessons. First and foremost, we came to realise that when any disaster strikes, the tourism & hospitality industry is the first to die and the last to recover. After the pandemic hit, most students who had opted for a career in this industry, are still in a state of disorientation or shock. Their morale is really low. Hence, our Club's foremost priority is to get them engaged in our activities, motivate them, keep their spirits up, and make them believe that a better future lies ahead.

In all our educational institutions (even the elite ones), nobody teaches students how to cope with crisis situations in the industry. Nowhere in the syllabus will you find lessons on 'revenue management' or 'material management'. Here at our Coimbatore Club, we plan to conduct sessions on such topics in order to enrich the minds of our youngsters.

We plan to organise fellowships over high tea at various hotels with stalwarts from the industry who will share their success stories with our young Skålleagues and inspire them to aim higher.



**Sk. Charles Fabian, President – Skål Coimbatore, addresses the gathering**

Right from the start, we will get our Young Skål members involved in various CSR activities. That will help them understand the importance of social and corporate responsibilities.

Finally, we plan to sponsor a nearby village that is underprivileged and develop its residents in mind, body, and soul, with a help of an NGO. We will conduct sessions in yoga, skill development, and rehabilitation & well-being. This will help in the all-round development of our youngsters.



**(L-R) Skål Coimbatore's Director YS Sk. Premkanna (Director YS), Sk. Arun Kumar (Secretary), Sk. Vimal (1st Vice President), Sk. Charles Fabian (President)**



**Sk. Milton, Sk. Rajkumar, Sk. Tharani Tharan and Sk. A.V. Sivaraman**



**Sk. Carl Vaz and Sk. Charles Fabian light the ceremonial lamp**



**National VP-1 Sk. Sanjeev Mehra, 2nd Auditor A.R. Suresh and National Secretary Sk. Krishna Gopalan at the event**



**National President Sk. Carl Vaz addresses the gathering**



**Sk. Charles with Former National President Sk. Ranjini Nambiar, Sk. Mildred Smith and Sk. Ramesh Chandra**





▲ Sk. Dr. Bhindu Nair and Sk. Sudhakar listen in rapt attention



▲ National VP-2 Sk. Venkat Reddy addresses the gathering



▲ Sk. Mildred Smith being honoured



▲ Secretary Sk. Arun Kumar honouring Sk. Gugan Ilango, Director of 'My Village Eco Resort' for being the hospitality partner



▲ Coimbatore Club with the National Board members - a keepsake for the ages



▲ Sk. Venkat Reddy, Sk. Krishna Gopalan, Sk. Carl Vaz, Sk. Charles Fabian and Sk. Sanjeev Mehra showcase the new brand identity flags



▲ The Skål India National Board honours Ms. Smitha for sponsoring the event



▲ Sk. Dr. Premkanna, Director – Young Skål being administered the Skål oath by Sk. Charles, President – Skål Coimbatore



▲ Coimbatore Club members take the Skål oath



▲ National Board members enjoy the cultural programme



▲ Traditional dance item being performed at the event



# Targeting Lifestyles To Prevent Further Breakdowns

In less than a year since its launch, 'MY' has evolved into India's most trusted safety lifestyle brand. In a freewheeling interview, **Kavin Kumar Kandasamy**, Founder & CEO of MYPPE Wellness Services Pvt Ltd, shares with **Ivor Vaz** his thoughts on the ongoing pandemic, the decision to venture into the safety lifestyle business, and his company's products on offer...



Kavin Kumar Kandasamy, Founder & CEO, MYPPE Wellness Services Pvt Ltd

## What prompted you to get into the safety lifestyle business?

When the pandemic broke out, my partner Raja Palanisamy and I saw what was happening in the world around us and wondered what exactly the problem was. Upon close examination, we identified lifestyle as the root cause. Lifestyle is something that is developed over the years, even centuries. Every action of yours is something very innate to you. You act in a certain way because your parents and your forefathers did the same. But what if we were to enhance our lifestyle and take it to a safer place? Our vision as an organisation is to prevent another breakdown like this from happening again. To do that, we recognised the



MY Mask

need to target people's lifestyles. That is the genesis of our evolution into a safety lifestyle company.

Today, when people ask me in what kind of business I am in, I tell them that I am in the people's business. And when you are in the people's business, you have to rely on the right people to develop the right products. So we reached out to the right people. Our job is to ask the dumbest questions. And in the dumbest questions lie the most profound answers.

## Why 'MY'?

We wanted a brand that's easy for people to remember. Every time they say 'MY', they have a sense of ownership of the brand. We worked very hard to keep it very simple. While the company is called MYPPE Wellness Services Pvt Ltd, the brand is 'MY'.

## We needed a big alarm like Covid-19 to wake up to the necessity of safety and hygiene; didn't we?

I don't think people in our country would be too worried if this were an epidemic playing out somewhere else on the planet. That way it would be somebody else's problem, not ours.



UV One

But since it is a pandemic, we're very worried about it. Be it the rest of the world or India, Covid-19 has affected us all. The numbers present a grim picture. It is difficult to believe that a small microorganism can shut down the entire world. But that's what happened. An alien object came in and destroyed our lives.

The Spanish flu pandemic of 1918, the deadliest in history, infected an estimated 500 million people worldwide and killed an estimated 20-50 million victims – about one-third of the planet's population. Bad as it was, the Spanish flu didn't spread across many different countries because the world wasn't so well connected back then as it is today. Because we're connected now, any disease that springs up anywhere is bound to seep into someone else's boundaries.

History has shown us that there'll always be an outbreak of some sort or the other every once in a while. We've had Ebola, SARS, MERS, and what have you not. Now it's Covid-19. Personal hygiene is no longer a choice, but





UV Safe

a necessity. It is essential for our safety and for the well-being of the people around us. That's the biggest lesson the pandemic has taught us.

#### Tell us about your product range.

We are currently designing and producing products that are inspired by the immediate uncertain circumstances we live in, which are elegant for convenient usage as well.

Take the face mask for instance. You cannot step outside your home without wearing one today. It is an alien object whether you like it or not, but I see it being a part of our life for the next 2-5 years. The world is flooded with masks and variants of face covers with numerous claims. At 'MY', we have engineered a mask for all seasons that addresses pollution, as well as bacterial & viral concerns. Our patent-pending activated carbon + copper filter is self-healing from viral attacks and regenerative for a lifetime of six months. Such innovation when brought to the daily lifestyle assures the customer of safety from the ever-evolving threats around us.

Two other products, 'UV One' and 'UV Safe' bring home the advanced

benefits of UV technologies in aesthetically appealing designs to the residences, offices, and premises of our customers. The apparel lineup is made of reusable fabric that prevents any viral strikethrough for daily usage. We intend to create an official work-wear lineup that instils the confidence in our customers to step out and engage in the new normal. At 'MY', we are also working on a new line up of innovative fashionable protective gear that is sustainable.

From a safety standpoint, 'MY' believes in a comprehensive approach to protection. Our partnership with 'Airbolt' powers our line-up of Bluetooth locks and GPS Solutions. This association is set to transform enterprise locking solutions, individual tracking and tracing solutions. The GPS solutions integrate with our hotspot tracing network, which enables pre-empting a breach into a bio-bubble for an organisation. 'MY Lock' and 'MY GPS' give customers the next dimension of safety through touch-free solutions and AI-enabled bio trackers.

#### What kind of research went into the development of your products?

Until early 2020, we were into the supply of protective gear. That didn't involve much research from our side as these were everyday medical products. So we already had the knowledge of their advanced medical properties. Post-pandemic, we figured that if we could blend these medical properties with lifestyle properties, we would have something in the safety lifestyle space. Our aim was to bring these products in a simpler form so that people could adapt and adopt them on a daily basis.

#### What about UV?

I want to stress on one thing here. UV has been around for centuries. So it's ancient knowledge. UV has been there ever since the sun has been around. The question here is how effectively we could harness the power of the sun. How do we control this energy and use it? Getting it into a pocket solution is what we managed to do. In just three months, we came up UV One, a pocket sanitizer, which would normally take 6-8 months for any company to design and produce.

So innovation is not about coming up with something new; it's about identifying which technology to use at the right time. Again, you may ask why this wasn't done before. The answer is necessity. Necessity forces you to look at everything around you and see how you can innovate from there.

#### How does UV One compare with a sanitizer?

UV One can be used to sterilise any device including laptops, where you obviously cannot use a liquid sanitizer. If you want to clean surfaces with liquids, you would need to buy about 30-40 bottles over the span of two years. With our product, you would end up buying just one unit, which means lesser waste in terms of plastic. Besides, it's rechargeable and has



Kavin Kumar Kandasamy &amp; Raja Palanisamy

longer life efficiency – the UV light will not fade for the next five years.

#### How beneficial is it to have offices in Coimbatore and Bengaluru?

It's a huge advantage. Both Coimbatore and Bengaluru are significant Electro Magnetic Compatibility (EMC) hubs. The carbon + copper filter used in our masks, which is India's first, cannot be produced in an ordinary factory. To work with activated carbon + copper, you need a massive compressed hydrogen tank. And a compressed hydrogen tank is nothing but a hydrogen bomb if not dealt with properly. Such facilities are available only at factories or units that manufacture for the defence sector. Luckily, these are available in Coimbatore. If we were located in any other place we would have found it more difficult to manufacture the product.

#### There are a number of similar products in the market... How different are yours?

If you're using a disposable mask, you would end up spending ₹5-10 every two days on average.





### Safety Lifestyle Is The New Standard

'Our vision is to create a breakdown-free world through safer lifestyle products for individuals and organisations. This we intend to achieve through our innovative products, that are practical to use and simple to weave into our daily lifestyles in a sustainable way. With the dream of building the world's first truly safety lifestyle company, we have the ardent task of envisioning everyday products for individuals and organisations that transcend past visible utility to an intrinsic value of protection.'

— **Akshay Bansal**,  
Chief Operating Officer, MYPPE  
Wellness Services Pvt Ltd

At ₹200, Our 'Series 1' mask, which is washable and lasts for at least six months, is very affordable. Besides, when we talk of safety, we don't just take into account a bacteria or a virus. Pollution is a problem. Particulate matter is also a problem. Our mask keeps everything out. It's the only mask that protects you from sulphur and nitrogen.

Today, everyone claims to be manufacturing anti-viral overalls. That doesn't even make sense because it would have to be at a yarn level – which it is not. The anti-viral properties for our overalls are designed at a yarn level. It's a level certified by American standards.

If you compare like-for-like products with 'UV One', you'll find that our price per unit (₹1,999) is simply unbeatable. Even the big companies with multimillion-dollar pockets haven't cracked the price code. Secondly, their products aren't as effective as ours. They just buy similar products from other countries in a different form and sell them here in India. Needless to mention, none of their products are as heavily tested as ours. Finally, none of our competitors

offer product compliance. We do. All our products meet the regulatory requirements that apply to them.

If you look at our line up, each of our products has a competitor, but none is fool-proof like ours.

### Is it a conscious decision on your part to position yourself as a B2B company?

The reason we're going B2B is that we don't have to engage with as many customers as we have to in the B2C space. We're working with 500-600 corporates right now. If we can get 200 of those corporates to sign up with us on a subscription model, that keeps us busy for the next two years. In B2B, we have no real competitor, and so we want to ensure that we capitalise on this and drive repetitive sales through these corporates. In order to get employees back into the workplace, B2B is bound to be a safe bet.

The second thing is, most of our products are very innovative and therefore take quite a lot of time to manufacture. We are steadily increasing the capacity of



our manufacturing bandwidth. B2C is a straightforward option because we get to directly talk to the consumer – and if the consumer engages with us, we are happy to sell the product. But at this point, we've been holding that bandwidth for the corporates.

Also, being a young company, we don't want to be thinking about the retail space right now. Besides, we don't have enough market info. The cost involved with the retail market is not something that we're willing to bear at this point. When our brand recollection is pretty high, that is when we will enter the retail market.

### Where do you foresee the application of your products?

Hotels, restaurants, airports, railway stations, homes, offices, and schools are some places that instantly come to mind. Actually, I'd say just about everywhere. But I think the most contaminated levels for viruses can be found in restrooms. I for one have been using the UV One on all my flights and water-closet seats wherever I go. It gives me a sense of safety because I know our product works.

In the foreseeable future, I see people buying our masks and sanitizers at airports. I see people picking our products as a last-minute buy as safety gear. I see people using our products as gifting options. So at different degrees of awareness levels, people will engage with our products very differently. Most are very compact and easy to carry. We are investing a lot of resources in educating our customers

### MYPPE Wellness Services Private Limited

'MY', a safety lifestyle brand, commenced its operations in June 2020 to offer simple yet sustainable solutions to help people get adapted to the new normal keeping in mind their safety and protection. Through continuous innovation, the company wanted 'MY' to offer a contented lifestyle choice that turns compulsion into an extraordinary experience.

MYPPE Wellness Services Private Limited has its registered office in the industrial city of Coimbatore with branch offices in the software city of Bengaluru, and a dealer presence in 14 states across India. It also has built a distribution network that serves the Middle East, Europe, and South East Asian countries. 'MY' has 54 employees and has contract manufacturing facilities in Coimbatore, Bengaluru, and Pune. It is an innovation-driven company creating a new and safer normal for everyone. 'MY' provides products and services to over 85 educational institutions and is the preferred protection partner for numerous hotel chains and corporates in India.

**Contact: T.M. Shabeer (Mo: +91 80505 00800) / Akshay Bansal (Mo: +91 78670 96450) for Sales and Support.**

about our safety lifestyle offerings.

### Any last thoughts?

When anyone talks about safety – be it child safety, employee safety, or home safety, I want them to think about 'MY'. A new normal can always evolve. But safety is the new normal today.



# IT'S RAINING AWARDS FOR SKÅL GOA

After winning the Skål Club Of The Year (Asia) at the SIAA Congress, Skål Goa went on to win the Skål International Club Of The Year too, besides a slew of other awards. Read on...



Skål Goa President Sk. Ernest Dias with his team at Hyatt Centric Candolim

Amid the doom and gloom of a pandemic-blighted 2020, there came a bright ray of sunshine for the travel & hospitality industry in Goa. The Goa Club of Skål International India bagged the prestigious Skål International Club Of The Year 2020 Award at the 81st Skål World Congress, which was held virtually on the Zoom platform, on December 5th, 2020. In all, 350 clubs from 87 countries across the world were considered for the honour, of which the Skål International Goa (691) received the maximum votes.

For those who come in late, the voting for this award comprises two factions – firstly, votes from each Club

representing 60% of the total votes; and secondly, votes from the Executive Committee Judges Panel, representing the remaining 40%. The Club receiving the maximum votes is named as 'Skål Club Of The Year', and receives the Michael O'Flynn Perpetual Trophy, as well as a free double registration for the upcoming Skål World Congress – which, in this case, is scheduled to be held in Quebec, Canada, hosted by Skål Quebec City Club from October 12-17, 2021. This victory at the World Congress in December marked a golden moment for Skål International Goa as well as Skål International India.

By bagging the World Award, Skål International Goa achieved a rare double



Sk. Shalini Charles, Sk. Ernest Dias, Sk. Carl Costa

honour. The Club had earlier won the Skål Asia Club Of The Year 2020 Award at the 49th Skål International Asian Area (SIAA) Congress in Thailand, in September. There was a further shower of awards for the Goa Club at the event. Goa and Singapore shared the Young Skål Best Asia Club 2020 Award. Finally, Sk. Carl Costa, Director Young Skål of the Goa Club was declared Best Young Skål.

Donna D'Souza, the Principal of Institute of Hotel Management & Applied Nutrition (IHM) Goa, who mentors the very enthusiastic Young Skål members comprising 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year students of the Institute, played a stellar role in organising various programmes and events through the year, wherein stalwarts from the tourism & hospitality fraternity interacted and shared their experiences with the young men and women. Needless to add, all the team building and image enhancement exercises gave a huge fillip to the Goa Club's Young Skål events calendar, which eventually helped Skål Goa clinch the Young Skål Best Asia Club 2020 Award.

Back home, in another honour, Sk. Mario Sequeira was conferred with a special recognition – the President's

Special Recognition Award, by Skål International India for services rendered to the organisation. The Skål Goa chapter also received the Gold Award for net membership increase in 2019. The Club increased its membership by 26% during the year and continues to grow with quality membership.

Commenting on the awards, Skål Goa's President Sk. Ernest Dias said: "The Executive Committee has worked tirelessly towards this well-defined goal of securing the Skål Club Of The Year Award, both on Asia and the World stage. It is indeed a proud moment for us at Skål Goa. I am blessed to lead this active and vibrant group. Our Executive Committee is very happy to go the extra mile for the sake of its members. Their hard work has paid off. Care for our members and society is paramount. We have great plans for the future with new members on the waiting list to join our Goa Club."

Skål International Goa works with a clear cut mission in unison with its members for the upliftment and betterment of Tourism in Goa, India, and the international arena.



# YOUNG SKÅL GOA A STAR IS BORN

FOCUS

Young Skål Club Goa was launched on August 20th, 2019 at the Institute of Hotel Management & Applied Nutrition (IHM), located in Porvorim, Goa. It was decided to associate the effort of starting the Club with IHM since it is a premier institute in the Hospitality Education field in the State of Goa. Some senior Skål members came forward to sponsor 24 students from the institute, and also took on the role of mentoring them. The young men and women underwent an orientation programme, and in 2020, they were registered as Young Skål members with Skål International. Post-registration, they got a certificate of membership from Skål International.

## THE NEED FOR A YOUNG SKÅL

Every healthy organisation is defined by its young generation, which is expected to take up the mantle of leadership in times to come. Skål Goa took a conscious decision to engage with the students and assist them in hospitality & tourism education. This way, young Skål members will get a feel of Skål International while learning the ropes from senior Skål leagues, as well as other industry professionals.

## ACTIVITIES

Young Skål members will be able to participate in all Skål Club activities, be it CSR, PR, Travel Fair, or otherwise. Senior Skål leagues will undertake training schedules for Young Skål members without disturbing their academic curriculum, and in close coordination with the IHM authorities. Programmes include visits to hotels of different categories, and meeting with



**Carl Costa, Director, Young Skål Goa**

GMs, and Heads of Sales, Revenue, Front Office, F&B, Engineering, and Security, so that the youngsters get a deeper insight into hotel operations and are able to choose their areas for future growth. Visits to Flight Catering Units, Distilleries, and Travel Agencies are also on the cards. CSR activities will be conducted so that the students can take up leadership roles with a touch of compassion. Nature Conservation, Sustainability, Going Green, Hygiene, Sanitation, and Garbage Management are other key focus areas.



▲ Members of Goa Club raise the Skål Toast at ITC Grand



▲ President Sk. Ernest Dias presents a Certificate of Appreciation to Young Skål Director Sk. Carl Costa



▲ President Sk. Ernest Dias presents a cheque for Skål Goa CSR activity



▲ Skål Goa EC Team & Paul John Officials at Paul John Distillery



▲ Skål Goa President Sk. Ernest Dias presents the Membership Certificate to a YS Member



▲ Young Skål Goa's Blood Donation Camp at IHM Porvorim





▲ The Skål Goa Family



▲ General Body Meeting at Pride Sun Village, Arpora



▲ Sk. Shyam Haridas, Sk. Tanay Singh, Sk. Ernest Dias, Sk. Vivek Kerkar and Sk. Prasad Kanoth at Club Mahindra, Varca



▲ Sk.Charles Bonifacio, Sk. Ernest Dias, Sk. Shekhar Divadkar with Dr. Guru Of GMC



▲ President Sk. Ernest receives an Award from Raj Kumar Kamat, President of Vibrant Goa



▲ Santa comes calling at a Skål Goa Christmas event



▲ Skål Goa partners with ISHRAE for the Tech Fest



▲ Skål Goa's Ladies Day Out at Shangrila Jungle Resort



▲ Sk. Kartikeya Tiwari doing a Presentation for Super Hotelier & Saarthi



▲ Dr. Aira Almeida, Sk. Mario Sequeira & Dr. Anish Lawande At South Goa District Hospital



▲ VP 1 Sk. Reshma Alves with Skål Goa members



▲ YS Director Sk. Carl Costa with Skål Goa EC members in support of YS activity



# IN THE FAST LANE

EDITOR'S NOTE



Amid the doom and gloom the pandemic wrought upon the hospitality and travel industry in our country for the most part of 2020, came one ray of brilliant sunshine. On 28th October, Skål International India elected a new National Board, which brought along with it a fresh vision and a dynamic plan of action. Wishful thinking, one might have imagined, at the time. Although the skies had opened up for a few domestic flights, travel restrictions were still firmly in place across state borders. That itself may have daunted most people, but this bunch of men (and one woman) was clearly *something else*. They had *different* ideas.

100 days down the line, nobody's sneering. Everyone with eyes has seen what a whirlwind ride it has been for President Sk. Carl Vaz and his team that has been travelling non-stop across the length and breadth of the country to meet the lofty manifestos they set for themselves – be it instituting new Skål Clubs, conducting membership drives for Young Skåls, fiscal compliance, administrative compliance, government liaison, CSR activity, skill development, and sponsorship generation among other things. Hell, I think that would have been

challenging even during normal times, let alone in a world ravaged by Covid-19.

For a beleaguered hospitality industry struggling to get back on its feet, the good news is that domestic travel is already showing signs of recuperating, and is expected to continue to aid recovery for hotels in 2021. I've seen that first-hand during my limited outings with the Skål entourage on the road. My first was a United Maharashtra programme on 16th January that saw the Skål Clubs of Pune, Bombay, and South Mumbai come together for a fun-filled day event in Karjat. The most recent was a 2-day conclave (9th-10th February) at the Holiday Inn Resorts, Goa, wherein members of the National Board along with the Committee Heads met to review their performance thus far, and draw a roadmap for Phase 2:0.

Whichever way you look at it, one thing's loud and clear. This team – the 'A-Team' of Skål India, as I've come to call it – won't hesitate to pull out stops in order to achieve its objectives, and at a scorching pace too. Our Cover Story in this issue of KOTIN encapsulates Skål India's achievements during its first 100-day reign. The issue also follows the performances of three of our best-performing Clubs – Delhi, Coimbatore, and Goa – and the myriad activities they engaged in through 2020. It's a textbook stratagem for others to adopt.

Life's not only about expecting, hoping, and wishing. It's about doing, being, and becoming. You, my dear Skålleagues, can make it a reality with your inspiration and perspiration.

## Ivor Vaz

Author, Historian, Journalist  
Editor – KOTIN  
Skål International India

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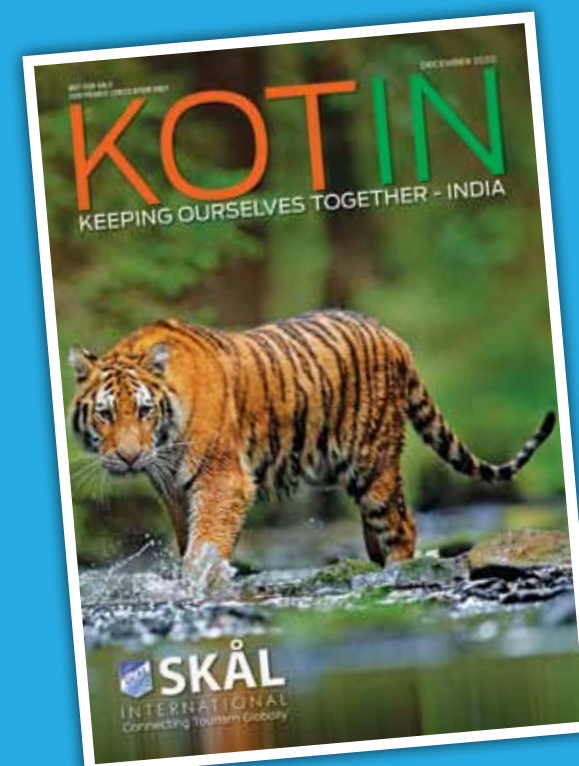
KOTIN, a trusted voice in the travel and tourism industry, is circulated amongst the members of Skål India, comprising industry professionals from the hospitality sector who form the most prominent and visible representatives of the various sectors of the industry – hoteliers, tour operators, airlines,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

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