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DECEMBER 2020

KOTIN

KEEPING OURSELVES TOGETHER - INDIA



SKÅL

INTERNATIONAL
Connecting Tourism Globally

THE RAJBARI BAWALI

INSPIRED HERITAGE

The Rajbari Bawali is a 300 year old Boutique Heritage Hotel built in Greco - Roman style, and is a superbly restored structure. The property is reminiscent of both the British Raj and the feudal lifestyles of Bengal's Zamindari Landlords. All our rooms have high ceilings and spacious well-appointed bathrooms. Most of our rooms have traditional four poster beds, charming chaise lounges and regal wing chairs.

Some of the facilities/ amenities that we offer are the Conference Room, Restaurants, Library, Snooker Room, Table Tennis, Swimming pool, Spa, Lotus Pavilion - A Large sit out area, perfect for marriages and big gatherings in winter.

We curate and customize experiences such as a Village Walk, Sundowner Experience - a Country boat ride to watch the sunset on the River Hooghly, Culinary demonstration and Private Dining.



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Printed in India

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My fellow Skålleagues,

Ever so often in our lives, we find ourselves standing at a crossroad where a choice must be made. It is at these crucial junctions that we need to make important and informed decisions about matters that may have vast consequences in our journey and a long-lasting effect on our lives. It is at one such crucial juncture, that I have been elected as your National President to steer this team and members into not only safer but greener pastures.

I fear not for what lies ahead but instead eager to embrace the opportunity of a lifetime. An opportunity where our team makes informed and calculated decisions based on sound relevant education and wise counsel, experience and firm backing from each of you treasured members. On behalf of the team, I thank each of you for having elected us at this historic and life-defining crossroad.

On a personal level, I am extremely pleased to have teammates that bring a wealth of knowledge, first-hand experience, and more importantly self-resilience. Each of them brings a firm 'I will do it myself' attitude, and is not

an armchair manager. Together as a team, we will deliver on our promise to make this association and members businesses Recover & Resurge as a united and ever stronger Skål India.

The cascading effects of the pandemic are now evident across the entire travel & tourism supply chain – hospitality, transport, entertainment, attractions & experiences, ancillary services, and even the humble hawkers selling souvenirs have had their businesses erode to levels unheard of in recent history. But herein lies my positive thinking from personal and business experience. When you hit bottom, then understand that the only direction left – is upwards. So, hang in there dear Skålleagues, because we have a plan.

An ambitious and intricate plan is being developed that encompasses several phases. The first phase approved by the Board involves identifying our key challenges as an association and those faced by our members. This phase further involves deputising each Board Member with a defined portfolio based on their knowledge, skill sets, and experience. Board members will have accordingly activated several aspects of their portfolios operationally by the time you receive this message. The portfolios cover a range of critical activations from developing opportunistic industry alliances that will benefit clubs and their members, building bridges with Government at central and local levels, nurturing and mentoring young talent, strengthening and forging new international relations and onwards into an overarching mass media & public relations campaign.

This first phase which in effect is a 'Regroup & Recovery Plan' includes the development of a new brand identity that unifies Skål India, her clubs and her members.

Beginning the New Year 2021, Skål

International India will unveil its new brand identity directed at not only the business community but also our key target audience – the traveling consumer. Read more about the new brand identity and what it aims to achieve in this first edition of our Skål India magazine – KOTIN.

KOTIN is your monthly magazine that brings a wealth of reading to heighten your knowledge of Skål India – her clubs, her members, unique Indian destinations and even performance reports of your own National Board.

Adding more depth to our 1st phase, entrepreneurial Skålleagues have been requested to head specific committees that will play a vital role in the second phase, which will be termed as the "Resurgent Phase". These committees will deal with a range of subject matter, that cover membership retention & development, driving larger hospitality & government sector involvement in Skål India, skill development amongst members and young Skål and for the first time – developing the furthestmost frontiers of India for tourism.

My fellow Skålleagues, this may be that crucial time when each of us no longer sits in fear but collectively decide to charge ahead screaming for victory. Victory for Skål India! Victory for our members!

As we draw towards the end of the year, on behalf of the National Board, Club Presidents and Committee Heads; please accept my best wishes for the festive season and let us move confidently into 2021!

Sincerely and yours in Skål,

Carl Vaz
President
Skål India International



THE STORY BEHIND KOTIN

Vivek Braganza, National Director, PR, Skål International India, shares his thoughts on the brand identity for Skål International India, as well as 'KOTIN', the organisation's all-new India newsletter

We know Skål's vision is to be a 'trusted voice in tourism', while 'doing business among friends'. Our brand uses the colour blue to communicate values of stability and trustworthiness; incorporates straight edges into the logotype to convey strength and efficiency. We even adopt *Sans Serif* fonts to give a sleek, modern look to our written communication. All these elements (and more) come together to support brand identity. Significant energy and resources have been spent by Skål International to develop a new identity, which encompasses a new logo, website, stationery, email look and feel, and the like.

Developing an identity for Skål International India has been challenging, and yet an ultimately rewarding task. The old adage, it takes a village to raise a child, comes to mind. This baby has taken many minds, many hours, multiple Zoom sessions across geographies to develop!



Our nation is recognised as one of the most diverse on the planet. It's a country of many languages, faiths, cultures, and climates. India is all about the myriad experiences we provide every traveller. An ancient civilisation, in a young country, it is our social fabric which brings us together. With over 1,150 Skålleagues across 14 Clubs in 13 cities around India (and growing), we have a wonderful opportunity to develop not just our unity, but also the diversity that makes each of us special.

The stage was set, and young Varun Vig got right down to work! A successful designer from New York, Varun has worked on exciting projects such as the New York Fashion Week 2020, Adidas Originals 2018, and the album artwork for Maghreb, by rapper Naezy (who inspired Bollywood film Gully Boy). Skål International India was blessed to have Varun's support – pro bono – on this project.

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. This of course also presents a CSR opportunity which is certainly part of our remit as Skålleagues. Clubs are most welcome – encouraged, in fact – to incorporate these design elements into their club identity. For any support, please reach out to your Club Director (PR), or to your National Director (PR) – which is me, Vivek Braganza.

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 into a hotel; visits his/her travel agent;

drops by a tourism board booth; reads an industry publication; sees a social media post; or even upon seeing an ad from a proud Skålleague!

Why we chose the name KOTIN for our newsletter...

Expanded, it reads, 'Keeping Ourselves Together – India'. A play on 'kot-n', the international phonetic representation of cotton, we recognise India's most ancient of fabrics (circa 5000 BCE, Indus Valley Civilisation). One of our strongest products even today, cotton played a part in many significant milestones along our way, including its role in India's freedom struggle.

Returning to the modern era, we find ourselves in times of great turbulence. Heavyweights of our industry have struggled to survive, across all segments of tourism. The travel agent, cruise company, airline, hospitality company, destination marketer have all faced adversity head-on. In times like these, we must be united, to prepare and press forward the recovery we know must come. Let us not be the ones to wait and watch, but watch for opportunity while others choose to wait!

Why keep ourselves together...

- With over 1,150 members, across 14 clubs, why not leverage referrals from each other as an extended sales team?
- With experts across tourism, why not do business with a Skålleague, as your trustworthy insider?
- Learn from each other's best practices, share and collaborate to recover our business?

While most of this may not be new, we recognise the opportunity for Skål to play a more integral part in our own business, not just to recover – but also to grow in a post-Covid world.

A CHANGE OF GUARD

In order to resuscitate India's beleaguered travel & tourism industry, Skål International India recently elected a new leadership team.

Sk. Carl Vaz was sworn in as President along with his new team, comprising senior professionals from hospitality, education, and travel trade. A report...

Skål International India, at its recently concluded Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 28th October, at The Residency Towers Hotel, Chennai, elected a fresh team to preside over a recovery program for its travel & tourism members spread across 13 cities in India. The historic AGM was held as a hybrid event with members and voting delegates present physically and online.

Skål India comprises members across all verticals of the travel & tourism industry – hospitality (hotels & resorts), aviation, travel agents, tour operators, OTAs, ground transport, tourism boards, marketing consultants specialising in tourism, and several stakeholders from international and local Government representatives.

Also, Skål India comprises a total of 14 clubs, currently covering the cities of Srinagar, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai (2 clubs), Pune, Goa, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Mysuru, Coimbatore, Chennai, Kochi, and Trivandrum.

During his inaugural address, President Sk. Carl Vaz announced an ambitious overarching strategy that aims to create an outreach program targeting

The New Skål India Team

President: Sk. Carl Vaz

International Skål Councillor:
Sk. Saravanan Palanivelu

1st Vice President: Sk. Sanjeev Mehra

2nd Vice President: Sk. Venkat Reddy

Treasurer: Sk. Ranjit Vig

Secretary: Sk. Krishna Gopalan

Director - Young Skål: Sk. Shalini Charles

Director - PR & Communication:
Sk. Vivek Braganza

Senior Auditor: Sk. Burjis Mehta


Junior Auditor: Sk. A.R. Suresh

domestic and international outbound Indian travellers across India. He elaborated that an intense public relations campaign will focus on entrenching Skål India and its members as a reputed and trusted brand, that hinges on fair business practice and that Skål members cover every vertical of the travel spectrum.

"There is an opportunity to develop this area to the benefit of every Skål member, which aligns with Skål International's vision to serve as a trusted voice in tourism. We will in the next 60 days present to our members a detailed strategic plan that aims at driving business back into their offices and aggressively grow the number of clubs and members across India," Sk. Carl revealed, during the course of his address.

Sk. Vivek Braganza, Director, PR & Communications, Skål International India, said, "As an international brand with over 13,500 members worldwide and over 1,150 in India across 14 clubs, Skål International is a trusted voice in tourism. An affiliated member of the UN World Tourism Organisation, we support the 'Sustainable Tourism –



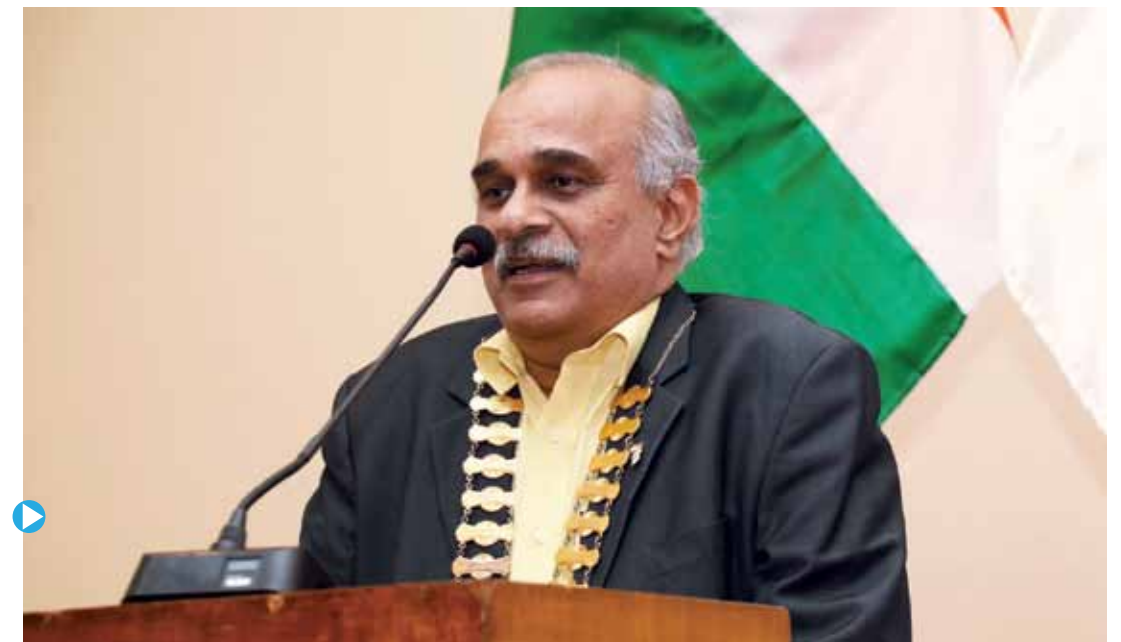
 **Sk. Carl Vaz, the newly elected President of Skål International India**

Eliminating Poverty' (ST-EP) initiative. We believe in doing business among friends, and this Board's objective is to bring Skål to the end customer while supporting our members' businesses across the country."

President Sk. Carl Vaz further added: "Our travel fraternity is faced with a heavily eroded bottom line owing to the pandemic and burden of dwindling budgets of the traveling consumer and corporate clientele. As part of our strategy, we will also have a unique new consumer-facing brand identity at every touchpoint in the travel chain from the time they book their ticket, board an airplane, arrive at a hotel, avail of transport service, dine at a restaurant or relax in a spa and even enter an attraction – the new Skål India brand identity will touch the consumer and in doing so build on the values of a Skålleague being a trusted voice in tourism."

"Skål International India will seek to enhance its interaction and support of government initiatives within India and also at key destinations of relevance to this market," Sk. Carl summated.

▶ Incoming Board of Skål International India



▶ Sk. Subi, President, SI Chennai makes his welcome address as Host Club



▶ Sk. Ranjini, IPP administers the Oath to President, Sk. Carl



▶ Sk. Sanjay, President, Skål Asia Area congratulates Sk. Carl



▶ Sk. Rajji Rai, Principal Advisor SII addresses the audience



▶ Sk. Amarjit Lidder, senior Skålleague and past President, congratulates Sk. Saravanan, International Skål Councillo



▲ Pinning ceremony - Sk. Nasir, SI Srinagar



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Anurag, SI Bangalore



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Sanjeev, SI Kolkata



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Raja, SI Trivandrum



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Avijit, SI Pune



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Charles, SI Coimbatore



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Subi, SI Chennai



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Sunil VA, SI Bombay



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Greesh, SI Delhi



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. NSN Mohan, SI Hyderabad



▲ Pinning ceremony Sk. Suresh, SI Mysuru



▲ Sk. Anurag, President, SI Bangalore congratulates Sk. Shalini, incoming Director - Young Skal



Chennai greets Sk. Nasir Shah who travelled all the way from Srinagar



Treasurer ever observant!



Skal India President with First Lady Sk. Sonalee Vaz



Skalleagues enjoy the moment 1



Skalleagues enjoy the moment 2



Skalleagues enjoy the moment 3

WHY BRAND IDENTITY MATTERS

Building brand Skål in India is critical. Your brand isn't just a logo. Rather, it epitomises the emotion you generate, it tells a story of interest, and it is meant to generate the feelings of customers each time they do business with a Skålleague...



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Marketeers often tout 'brand identity' as



their raison d'être. To quote Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon – 'your brand is what other people say about you when you're not in the room'. For us Skålleagues, we literally wear our passion on our sleeve, and can recognise a lapel pin from across a crowded room! Beware though, a brand is not just a logo – it is about the emotion we generate, in our customers, members, partners, and even families. The brand identity must reflect the feelings of our customer when they do business with a Skålleague. It must tell a story of interest, which encourages repetition by its very simplicity! The brand identity is our very own 'Mission Critical', when we wish to reach the B2C audience while doing business among friends.

Take a deep breath. Imagine how a brand makes you feel.

Does Old Spice bring a certain nostalgia to mind?

Does Surf Excel remind you to turn on the washing machine?

And does Macallan remind you of many fun evenings with friends?

What does Skål International India mean to us all? It's a thought worth spending some time on.

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About Varun Vig

Varun Vig is a Visual Artist and Communication Designer based in New Delhi, India who thrives on creative problem-solving through the lens of art, design and urban culture.

He has a BFA from The Parsons School Of Design, New York with a major in Communication Design and a minor in Fashion Communication. Varun's work embodies the accumulation of many years of interest, knowledge and understanding of urban subcultures, design, and travel experiences that aim to define his style and aesthetic. Inspired to create and tell stories of cultures, brands, people, and emotions through visual design and creative storytelling, he currently runs a creative studio called '2Treble Studio' in New Delhi.



baby has taken many minds, many hours, multiple Zoom sessions across geographies to develop!

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President Carl Vaz puts it so aptly when he says: "The best brands are those which are simple to understand, and tell a great story. What better way to grow our movement in India, than with a heartfelt connection to our roots, the social fabric of our Clubs – united in spirit, and devoted to spreading the vision of doing business among friends."

Did you know that the travel & tourism industry employs one-in-every-ten people on earth and provides livelihoods to hundreds of millions more? UN Secretary-General António Guterres released a new report that draws on UNWTO data to quantify the devastating impact that the coronavirus pandemic has had on global tourism. It warns that up to 120 million tourism jobs are at risk, with the economic damage likely to exceed \$1 trillion in 2020 alone. And we haven't even begun counting the losses in the hospitality sector yet.

As a newspaper editor, I've spent every minute of my last 21 years interacting with this sector. I've travelled extensively across India and the world, interviewing world leaders, diplomats, educationists, and tourism boards. It's no surprise therefore, the travel-tourism-hospitality industry is one I care genuinely about. I believe it is imperative that we rebuild the tourism sector, in order for it to regain its position as a provider of decent jobs, stable incomes, and the protection of our cultural and natural heritage. The role of tourism, as one of the most important economic sectors, providing livelihoods to hundreds of millions of people while boosting economies and enabling countries to thrive, can never be understated.

For an outsider, it's been a crash course into this charismatic world of Skål International India, its complex structure, functioning, achievements – and the various people who constitute its day-to-day working. It's been a



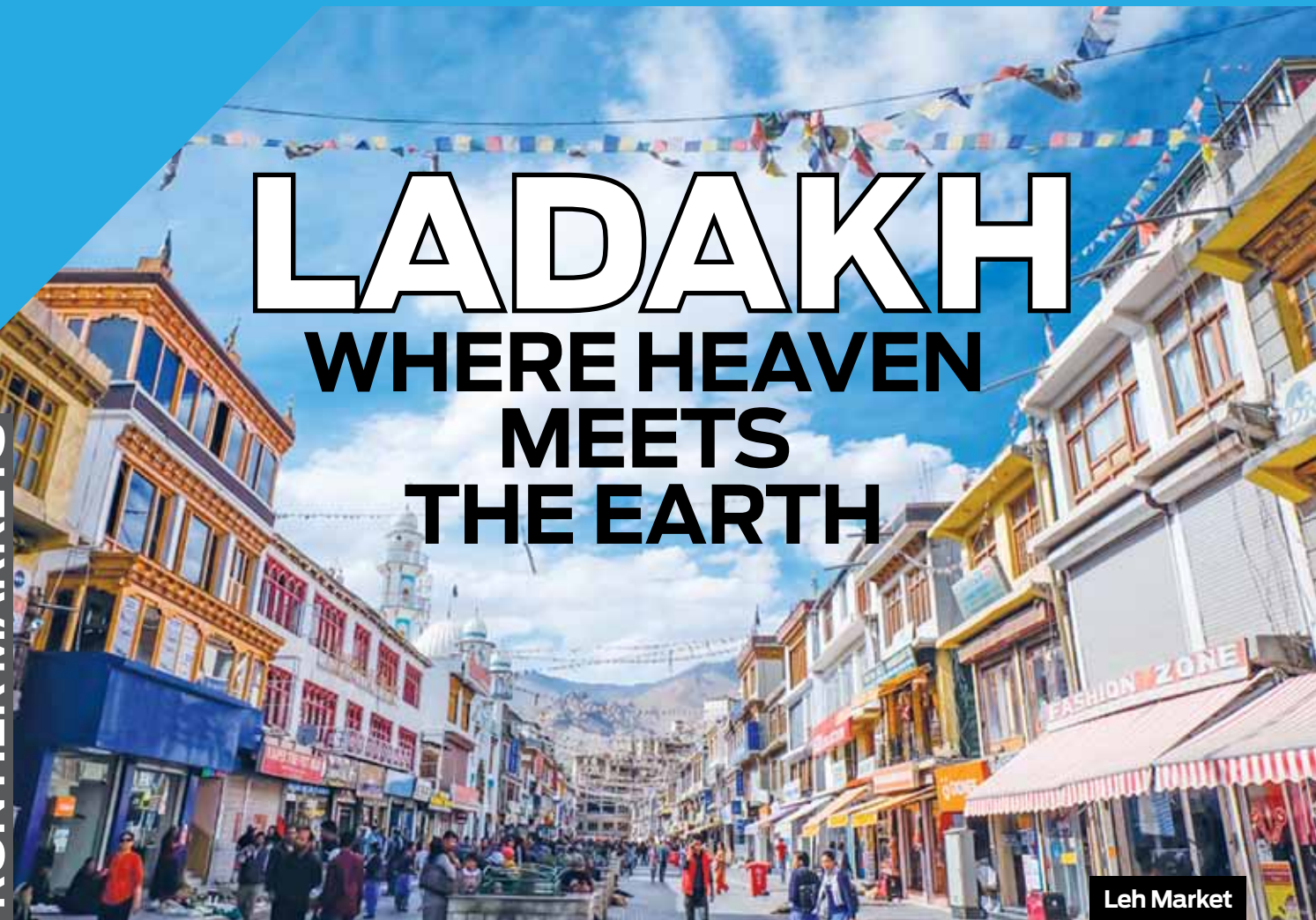
sheer pleasure working with its current President, Sk. Carl Vaz, who, thank goodness, believes in letting writers have a free hand – and the super-effervescent Sk. Vivek Braganza, who, as I found, is a man for every occasion. The long hours of brainstorming, writing, and designing, telephone talks, and endless Zoom conferences, that went into the making of this newsletter didn't matter. The outcome outweighed the effort. Hell, it didn't even matter that my fellow Editor N. Chandra Shekhar, my Creative Head Sushil Narvekar, and I, are doing all this beautiful work absolutely pro bono!

As you behold this newsletter in your hands (or if you're perusing it in a digital format), I hope it will serve as an inspiration to reach for the stars. Every now and then you will feel lost for answers in your career or life – we know that this ongoing pandemic has posed some serious questions to you and me. Flip (or scroll) through these pages in times of self-doubt. KOTIN is about 'Keep Us Together', after all. 'All For One & One For All' is the mantra of this great organisation. Hold on to it. I promise that there'll be nothing but blue skies from now on.

Ivor Vaz
Editor – KOTIN
Skål International India

LADAKH

WHERE HEAVEN MEETS THE EARTH



Leh Market

The sequestered getaway of Ladakh, India's newly designated Union Territory, beckons a number of tourists, both domestic and international, year on year. If you love to bask in the sheer splendour of wide-open skies, towering mountains, and breathtaking landscapes, add it to your bucket list, insists

Ivor Vaz

Ladakh, which became a Union Territory on October 31, 2019, is renowned for its remote mountain beauty and distinct culture. Its two districts, Kargil and Leh, are its joint capitals. Starkly different from the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir, which it once was a part of; Ladakh is a region with a character and colour of its own.

Leh, its capital, which stands at 3,505 metres/11,200 ft., is a veritable kaleidoscope of sights and sounds. A quaint town with a population of approximately 30,000 people, and nestling along the rugged slopes of the Ladakh range, it cradles a cultural legacy shaped at the crossroads of Asia on the sub-continental Silk Route. For long a bustling crossroads of the migration and trade routes, Leh town is by itself a sightseeing attraction. It has

FACT FILE

Classification: Union Territory of India (since October 31, 2019)

Districts: 1. Leh, and 2. Kargil

Capital City/Cities: Leh, Kargil

Government: Administration of Ladakh

Lieutenant Governor: Radha Krishna Mathur

Member Of Parliament: Jamyang Tsering Namgyal (BJP)

Area: 59,146 sq.km. (22,836 sq.mi)

Highest Elevation: Saltoro Kangri 7,742 metres (25,400 ft.)

Lowest Elevation: Indus River 2,550 metres (8,370 ft)

Population: 2.8 lakhs (2020 estimate)

Demonym: Ladakhi

Languages: Hindi, English (Official) Ladakhi, Purgi (Spoken)

Places of Tourist Interest: Zaskar Valley, Nubra Valley, Spituk Gompa, Hemis National Park, Magnetic Hill, Shanti Stupa, Hemis Monastery, Khardung La Pass.

Website: <https://ladakh.nic.in>

many historic monuments, including the 17th century Leh Palace built by King Singe Namgyal on the hill overlooking the town. Higher up the hill called Namyal Tsemo, are the ruins of the earliest fort dating from the 16th century, which also houses the equally old Tsemo Gompa. Below, in the bazaar, the main sites to be noted are the 17th century Jama Mosque and newly built Jo-Khang Vihara.

Tourism has won wide recognition as an important industry in the district in view of its potential for the creation of employment opportunities and generation of income on a large scale. This industry has a direct bearing on the socio-economic scene of the district. The tourism industry provides employment to a large number of

people engaged in related sectors like transport, hotels and catering service, cottage industry, etc. Tourism promotes economic activities in remote areas.

Since its opening for tourists (1974), Leh has registered an increasing number of footfalls, because of its alluring landscape, culture, tradition, and overall environment. Apart from the main places to visit in Leh/Ladakh (see *Box*), there is also a great scope for adventure sports such as trekking and white-water river rafting here.

Leh figures high on the international tourist map and attracts a large inflow of tourists both from home and abroad. The economy of the region is, therefore, based on tourism. That is why Leh abounds with hotels, guesthouses, and taxis. There are 250 hotels and guesthouses of different classes in Leh.

Prior to lockdown, Leh was well connected to New Delhi by a one-hour flight. Air India, Jet Airways, and Go Air operated regular flights on this route. Some of these airlines also operated shuttle flights on Leh-Srinagar and on the Leh-Jammu sectors.

Leh is also accessible by road. The Srinagar-Leh National Highway is the main overland approach to Ladakh from Kashmir. This 434-km long highway broadly follows the historic trade route between Ladakh & Kashmir. It runs across the Zoji-La Pass (3,505 metres/11,500-ft.), in the Zaskar range of the Himalayas, which generally opens for vehicular regular traffic by mid-April/early May. Drass, the first township over the Pass, inhabited by a population of mainly Dard origin, has the reputation of being the second coldest inhabited place in the world. Kargil, the second largest town of Ladakh and headquarters of Kargil district, is a major overnight transit station on this road.



Bird's Eye view of Leh City

From A Skål Perspective

With 14 Clubs across 13 cities, Skål International India has a tremendous opportunity to leverage its strength in the large cities to benefit the nations' frontiers. Tremendous tourism potential already exists in frontier markets including the North East, Arunachal Pradesh, Leh/Ladakh, Lakshadweep, and the Andaman Islands. Skål India's vision encompasses the growth of the Skål movement by bringing partners from these regions into closer contact with their Skålleagues, thereby enhancing the organisation's mission of 'Doing Business Among Friends'.

It makes perfect sense for each Skål member to leverage his/her knowledge of the source markets for India, bringing together local partners who understand these frontiers deeply. This also aligns well with India Tourism's 'Dekho Apna Desh' pledge – and the challenge from our Prime Minister Narendra Modi to visit new destinations within India.

The second option is to take the road journey from Manali, Himachal Pradesh. The Manali-Leh Road (473-km.) is open from late May through September. For much of its length, it passes through barren areas entirely devoid of any settled habitation. The first major pass on this road, the Rohtang Pass (3,978 metres/13,000 ft.) cuts through the Pir Panjal range and connects Lahoul. Beyond Keylang, the headquarters of Lahoul district, the road follows the Bhaga River up towards its source. Leaving the Bhaga Valley, it ascends and crosses the Baralacha-la (4,892 metres/16,050 ft.) in the Great Himalayan Range, the watershed between the Indus and the Chenab River systems.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, recently declared some more areas of Ladakh open for tourism. These areas (Khaltse, Nubra and Nyoma Sub-Division) are among the outstanding pieces of Himalayan Panorama, and most suitable for cultural and adventure tourism.

Another reason to pack your backs when the lockdown ends, I say.



▲ Magnetic Hill, Ladakh



▲ Hemis Monastery



▲ Shanti Stupa



▲ Zaskar Valley



▲ Nubra Valley



▲ Nyoma Monastery, Changtang



▲ Spituk Gompa



▲ Trekking in Lamayuru



▲ Khardung La Pass



▲ Prayer flags at Khardung La



▲ Rumbak Village in Hemis National Park, Ladakh



▲ Snow Leopard in Hemis National Park

INDIA

THE LAND OF THE TIGER

THE TYGER BY WILLIAM BLAKE

*Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye,
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?*

*In what distant deeps or skies.
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?*

*And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread
feet?*

*What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp,
Dare its deadly terrors clasp!*

*When the stars threw down their
spears
And water'd heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make
thee?*

*Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?*

N. Chandra Shekar reminiscences on the romanticism of the tiger, our National Animal in the Indian consciousness...

India, rich in bio-diversity and heavily populated forests, is the land of the Royal Bengal Tigers, Asiatic Lions, Asian Elephants, and the One-Horned Rhinoceros. India has a unique flora and fauna which draws wildlife lovers from all over the world as well as within the country. At present, there are 104 national parks, 500 plus wildlife sanctuaries, and many protected areas in the country. Wildlife tourism in India is a growing phenomenon, and especially those designated as tiger reserves are popular tourist destinations, experiencing considerable and growing visitor numbers. India, as a wildlife tourist destination, is gaining global recognition. According to research by Conservation India, wildlife tourism is growing at 15% annually in parks of which 70% of the visitors are Indian. The tiger has been the symbol of magnificence, power, beauty, and fierceness.

Once upon a time, tigers roamed freely all over India through the dense

INTERNATIONAL TIGER DAY

The International Tiger Day is celebrated annually on July 29 to spread awareness about the need to protect tigers which are an endangered species. Tigers have lost 90% of their natural habitat and their world population is less than 4,000.

contiguous forests. Tigers are found in a variety of habitats, including tropical and subtropical forests, evergreen forests, dry deciduous forests, grasslands, mangrove swamps, and the variety of other vegetation that cover the Indian sub-continent. Today tigers are found all across the country in 19 states. As per estimates, India is home to 75% of the world tiger population.

As per 'Status of Tigers, Co-predators & Prey in India' report released by Union Forest & Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on the eve of International Tiger Day, the total big cat population in India stands at 2,967 as compared to 1,400 in 2014. Javadekar said that India's Project Tiger was launched in 1973 with just 9 tiger reserves. "Today, India has 50 reserves having 2,967 tigers. The tiger sits at the peak of the food chain and the increased numbers are a testimony of the robust bio-diversity," said the minister.

With 231 tigers, Jim Corbett National Park, in Uttarakhand, is the largest habitat of the big cats in India. Corbett's tiger count has been rising — from 137 in 2006 to 174 in 2010 and 215 in 2014. Corbett is followed by Nagarhole (127) and Bandipur (126), both in Karnataka; Bandhavgarh in Madhya

Pradesh and Kaziranga in Assam (104 each). Among states, Madhya Pradesh topped the tiger estimation, with 526 (it had 308 last time), going past Karnataka (524 this time, 406 earlier).

Corbett is the only reserve with more than 200 tigers and with the highest tiger density in India at 14. The count in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve also rose from 58 to 82. Pilibhit reserve's population is also up by two to 57. Sohagi Barwa Wildlife Sanctuary, which used to be a non-tiger zone in Uttar Pradesh, now has one tiger. However, Mizoram's Dampa reserve and Bengal's Buxa lost the six tigers they had between them.

In our first newsletter, we draw inspiration from India's National Animal The Tiger - which has been a part of its continuing tradition and folklore as the symbol of magnificence, power, beauty, fierceness, bravery, and valour, but also as a symbol of our success of our conservation efforts in protecting tigers natural habitat from the brink of destruction to the current situation where it has become the key catalyst in tourism for the country.



Sk. Carl Vaz
President
Skål International India



The Skål Connection

On October 28th, 2020, Carl Vaz was elected as President, Skål International India (2020–2022) at the AGM in Chennai. Skål International is the world's largest global tourism association comprising senior professionals from travel, hospitality, airlines, and tourism board organisations. Carl currently leads a team of professionals on the Skål International India Board with an ambitious plan to revive and restore the businesses of Skål's India members.

He formerly served as President for Skål International Bombay for 2 terms: 2012–2014, and 2014–2016. He thereafter served on the Skål International India Board for one term each as 2nd Vice President (2016–2018), and 1st Vice President (2018–2020). October 2020, he was elected as President, Skål International India (2020–2022)

Educational & Professional Qualifications

Carl has pursued a degree in Business Administration whilst living abroad and upon his return to India pursued two post-graduate diplomas from the K.C. College of Management Studies,

Mumbai, in the fields of Business Management and Advertising & Public Relations

Carl Vaz has also undertaken various marketing communications, international trade & finance workshops, and programs during the past 30 years through various global and Indian educational institutions.

He is actively involved as a guest lecturer on travel & tourism at various educational institutions in his home city, Mumbai. Further, he is a regular invited speaker at tourism and business-oriented seminars as Chairman & CEO of Charson Advisory Services Pvt Ltd and Managing Director for Destination Canada, India GSA.

Prior to his appointment with Destination Canada, Carl served for 20 years as the Director for Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (India Representative Office).

Charson Advisory

Carl's very own company, Charson Advisory Services Pvt Ltd, is the Indian subcontinent's leading brand management, tourist board

representation, and advertising/marketing communications consultancy firm focusing exclusively on aviation, hospitality, and the tourism industry.

Through in-depth market research, public & media relation programs and brand development council, Charson Advisory provides successfully tested and cost-effective marketing strategies to National Tourism Organizations (NTO) of various countries and private sector organisations from the international and domestic travel and tourism industry.

Charson Advisory's clients over a 13-year period have included some of the world's most prestigious Government bodies such as Destination Canada, Tourism Council of Bhutan, Dubai Expo 2020 (2021–2022), Dubai's Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing, Dubai Export Development Corporation, and Turismo de Portugal. In addition, the company has served other prestigious National Tourism Organisations, including Thailand, Slovenia, and Croatia.

Charson Advisory was also the PR agency that launched the Indian operations for global meta-search engine Skyscanner. The company works with the hospitality clientele within and outside of India on public relations assignments.

Awards & Citations

With over 120 awards and citations; Carl Vaz has been recognised by the travel trade industry, media houses, and educational institutions. Some notable examples are listed hereunder:

- Express Travel World Awards for 'Best International Tourism Board in India' and 'Excellence in Customer Experience' for Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce

Marketing; India's most coveted tourism award in December of 2003, 2010 and 2011. The first NTO to receive the award 3 times!

- 'Best Destination Marketing Company in India' in 2019
- 'Best Company for Destination Marketing Services in India' in 2018
- 'Best International Publicity and Promotion Company' in 2017

The above were bestowed by Today's Traveler – A PATA Gold winner travel magazine.

- Carl Vaz has been recently featured in CEO magazine as one of the top PR professionals in India.
- He was also recently presented as 100 Most Influential Leaders at the Business Television India (BI TV) sponsored Global MICE Congress Awards.
- Carl has been the recipient of accolades from travel industry association such as TAAI, TAFI, and ETAA.

Personal Recreational Pursuits

Carl Vaz has two very diverse personal interests; as an aviator and a scuba diver enthusiast who is currently pursuing a certification course as a 'Dive Master'.

Pursuing his childhood dream of becoming an aviator, Carl is certified to fly Cessna aircraft at the Bombay Flying Club, and has experience in the Mediterranean from the Malta School of Flying, and is currently fulfilling his Private Pilot's License requirements.

Carl is also a PADI certified search & rescue scuba diver. With numerous open seawater dives to his credit, he has experienced deep water dives and progressed through some tough oceanographic conditions.

Sk. Sanjeev Mehra
1st Vice President
Skål International India



A highly motivated and ambitious individual, Sanjeev Mehra is the Founder & Director of Aaryan Leisure & Holidays Pvt. Ltd, an IATA accredited company. He has 25 years of success in the tourism industry and has worked as a tour operator and Luxury & MICE travel consultant. He is also a Travel Agent for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship of Canada, and Destination Canada.

Before becoming 1st Vice President of Skål International India, he served as 2nd Vice President (2018-2020). He has been a member of Skål International Kolkata since 2009, and has been the club's President from 2019. He also served as Secretary from 2014 to 2018. He has attended several Skål Congresses, including Skål World Congress in Hyderabad; Skål Asia Congress in Macau, and Bangalore; and Skål World Congress in Kochi, Goa, and Kolkata.

Prior to founding Aaryan, Sanjeev

worked with CA TCG Software (P) Ltd from 1999 to 2002 as Head of Travel & Administration. He also worked with Sita World Travel India as Branch Manager from 1990 to 1998. Over his career, he has received several personal awards and citations, besides leading his company and team to 15 award wins during the last 10 years. He has been voted among the top best Travel Agents in India, and Top 50 in Kolkata. Other notable recognitions include Best MICE Consolidator 2014 (East India Travel Award), and Best Company in TTF Award for contribution to tourism.

Sanjeev did schooling and college in West Bengal. He completed his B.Com from Calcutta University, and has a Post-Graduation Diploma in Business Management from Calcutta University. He is fluent in English, Hindi, Bengali, and Punjabi, and counts reading, travelling and sports among his biggest hobbies.

Sk. Venkat Reddy
2nd Vice President
Skål International India



A multi-skilled hospitality professional with 30 years of experience in managing profitability in customer-centric business, S. Venkat N. Reddy has hands-on experience in start-ups and establishing multi-unit businesses; besides leading hotel & restaurant operations, both overseas and in India. He has developed several strategic alliances and team development programs to enhance business profitability.

Just to say Venkat has plenty of corporate experience would be an understatement. Since June 2017, he has been General Manager at Ambassador Pallava in Chennai, where he motivates and leads a team of 250 across departments. Prior to that, he worked at The Residency, another boutique hotel in Chennai from 2014-2017, in the same capacity. Earlier, he worked at The Residency Towers (2009-2010) as F&B Manager.

Venkat has sizeable overseas experience in the hospitality domain as well, having worked with Ras – The Essence of India, an Indian restaurant in

Singapore, as General Manager, besides previous stints as Restaurant Manager in Rang Mahal and Pizza Hut – also in Singapore. Furthermore, he has been a freelance consultant for restaurants in Singapore, working with restaurant owners for enhancing operations and training of team members.

He lists among his key skills Budgeting & Revenue Analysis, Cost & Inventory Management, Multicultural Team Management, Menu Engineering, Project Engineering & Management, PR & Communication, and Multiple Outlet Management.

Before his sojourn as 2nd Vice President at Skål International India, Venkat was President of Skål International Chennai from 2017–2019.

He holds a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Osmania University, Hyderabad. He also has a Graduate Diploma in Business Management from Singapore Institute of Management, and a Diploma in Hotel Management from IHM Bhubaneswar.

Sk. Krishna Gopalan
Secretary
Skål International India



Krishna Gopalan has 30 years of solid experience in the travel & tourism industry.

He began his career with Bulsara Travels, Pune (1991-1994), before moving on to Prasanna Overseas Travels (1994-1997). He then joined Travel Masters (Mumbai) Pvt. Ltd in June 1997 as a Counter Executive, and after 23 years in the organisation, he currently holds the position of Vice President.

Before becoming the new Secretary of Skål International India (2020-2022), he was President of Skål International, Pune (2018-2020). Krishna also served as Chairman, Board of Studies Diploma in Travel & Tourism at Maharashtra State Institute of Hotel Management & Catering Technology, Pune, from 2018 till date. Other portfolios he has handled include Chairman, Travel

Agents Association of India, Pune Chapter (2013-2017), where he was previously Secretary (2005-2008) and Treasurer (2011-2013).

Krishna has been a lecturer at IITC Pune, for Diploma in Travel & Tourism (1995-2000), and has also conducted classes for IATA Basic & Advance Distance Learning course (1996-2003).

Born and raised in Pune, Krishna completed his graduation in Commerce from Pune University and got a Diploma in Travel & Tourism from IITC Pune in 1993. He was a topper in Fundamentals of Fare Construction conducted by Air India Staff College in 1995, and also a topper in Lufthansa Advance Fare Calculation in 1997. He also completed an IATA Advance Diploma (Distance Learning) from Montreal in 1999.

Sk. Ranjit Vig
Treasurer
Skål International India



Ranjit Vij is the Founder and Managing Director of Caair Travels, a business travel & tourism, and event management company, with over three decades of experience across domestic and international markets promoting leisure, incentive holidays and experiential celebration events to discerning luxury customers.

Ranjit and his organisation engage to illuminate the opportunities in uber-luxury and experiential tourism. He has a deep fascination to curate ideas that offer vacations with innovative solutions that are unique for travel within India and abroad, each of which is based on his personal experiences.

As a professional, he is a recipient of the American Express Award of Excellence for Asia-Pacific. Currently, he is also the Vice President of the Skål Club Delhi, and has been at the helm of several

industry bodies, such as Advisor to the American Express Partner Network in India, President of the Visit USA Chapter in Delhi, and a member of the Board of Travel Agents Association of India. He is a regular invitee to several institutes for sharing talks on travel & tourism.

Ranjit graduated with Honours from the Hindu College, University Of Delhi, and did his Master in Business Administration with a major in International Marketing from IMI Delhi.

An avid sportsperson, Ranjit is a keen golfer, with an interest in outdoor activities such as cross country driving, deep-sea diving, bungee jumping, and skydiving. He is married to Anuradha, and they have a son who is an alumni of Parsons School of Design in New York, and is currently pursuing a career in communication and graphic design.

Sk. Saravanan Palanivelu
International Skål Councillor
Skål International India



The International Skål Council is an advisory body to the Executive Committee and the General Secretariat of Skål International. Each National Committee has a Councillor who serves as the link between the Council and the Committee. It thus follows, as Skål India's International Councillor (2020–2022), Saravanan Palanivelu holds a critical portfolio, especially considering that India has the largest membership after the United States.

What makes Saravanan the ideal man for the job is his long-time familiarity with the organisation and oodles of international exposure. He has previously been Asia Area Director–Young Skål (2011–2015), Asia Area Auditor (2015–2018), Asia Area Treasurer (2019–2020), and Advisor Statues–Skål India (2019–2020). At Skål's Chennai Chapter, he held the posts of Joint Secretary (2003–2004), Secretary (2004–2008), Vice President (2008–2010) and President (2010–2012). He has also been Skål India Vice President (2012–2014).

Furthermore, he has attended six Skål World Congresses (in Cairns, Chennai, Antalya, Budapest, Sydney, and Hyderabad); and eight Asia Congresses

(in New Delhi, Penang, Colombo, Bali, Manila, Singapore, Bahrain, and Macau). As Skål Chennai President, he signed a Twinning Club agreement with Skål Colombo at the Sydney World Congress.

Back in 1986, Saravanan established his own proprietorship company, Viking Tours & Travel, in Chennai. Launched initially as an outbound travel agency, it expanded its bandwidth to all areas of the travel & tourism business and received IATA accreditation. In 35 years, Viking has created for itself a niche market to newer destinations for city travellers.

Saravanan is also closely associated with the Travel Agents Association of India, and has held the post of Southern Regional Chairman (2010–2012) and a Managing Committee post at National level (2017–2019).

A postgraduate in Economics from the University of Madras, Saravanan has also completed Air India's Ticketing Course. He is an avid sportsperson, having represented his college team in football, handball, and athletics. He enjoys travelling with family and friends.

Sk. Vivek Braganza
National Director,
PR & Communication
Skål International India



Vivek Braganza leads Shangri-La Group's commercial activity in India.

A passionate sales and marketing man, he started his career in FMCG, selling denims when Levis' first retailed in the subcontinent!

After an MBA in Sales & Marketing, Vivek's journey in hotels began as a Management Trainee with the Taj, before later moving to roles with Marriott and Starwood. He joined Shangri-La in 2016. During his 17 years in hospitality, Vivek has managed segments as diverse as lawyers, the PCO industry, medical tourism, luxury agencies, the Diplomatic Corps, and the Indian public sector. Previous leadership experience includes reopening Taj Holiday Village in 2007, launching the Meetings & Convention Sales vertical for Marriott India in 2009, reopening Goa Marriott Resort & Spa in 2010, repositioning of Westin Pune in 2014 and expanding Shangri-La's presence in India since 2016.

As a certified regional trainer in Marriott, Starwood, and Shangri-La, Vivek's

passion has always been to identify and develop the next generation of Sales & Marketing superstars in his industry. He is adept at programmes such as Sales Foundations, Group Contracting, and Collaboration for Success.

A proud Indian of Goan origin, Vivek has grown up between Goa, Pune, Antwerp (Belgium), Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mumbai. An avid camper and outdoorsman; when not at work, the Braganza family can usually be found near a waterfall, lake, or mountain. Active in the tourism industry, Vivek is Director, PR & Communications for Skål International Bombay (2019–21) and Director, PR & Communications for Skål International India (2020–22). He is also an Associate Member of EEMA, the Exhibition & Events Management Association of India.

In his current role at Shangri-La, Vivek is responsible for the pipeline of business for a global portfolio of 101 hotels, with a focus on MICE, Destination Weddings, Luxury, and Corporate Travel from the Indian market.

Sk. Shalini Khanna Charles
Director, Young Skål
Skål International India



A hospitality professional, educator, mentor, entrepreneur, and environmentalist among other things, Shalini Khanna Charles, Director, Young Skål, defines the highly motivated breed of new-age industry professionals. Apart from being Director – Young Skål India, she also presently holds the post of Director – Young Skål Asia Region. She was previously Director – Young Skål Bangalore (2016-2018).

Shalini is the Founder/Director of Atithi Vriksha Shiksha, an organisation she established in December 2018, which imparts short-term, job-oriented, hospitality education. AVS is designed to benefit the underprivileged at all levels by taking hospitality education to the grassroots, skilling deserving candidates for careers in hospitality, upgrading the skills of those already employed in the industry, and providing entrepreneurial skills to those who want to start their own ventures.

Earlier, she was Director/Principal at IIM Bangalore (2011-2018), where she was responsible for setting up the

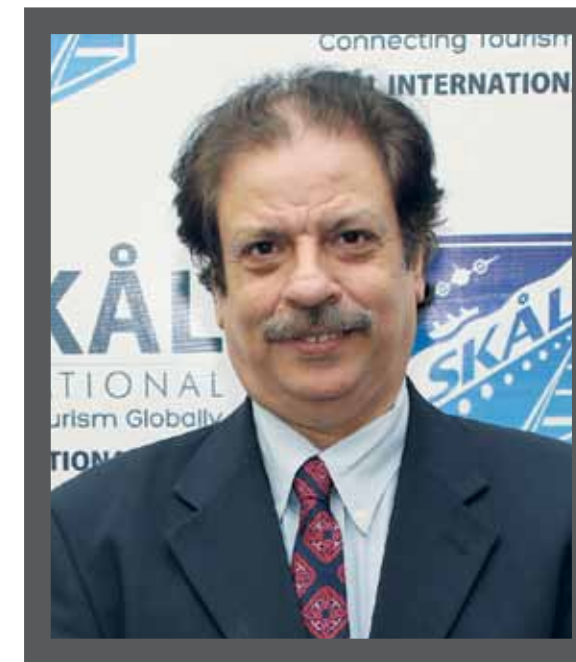
institute, from hiring faculty, marketing responsibility of sourcing students, tie-ups, and following university guidelines. She also did liaison with the fellow colleges for hospitality competitions, local governments, and all major hotel chains, helping build brand IIM Bangalore.

Overall, she has 12 years in the field of formal management education. Her calling is in mentoring students and making them future-ready. She is a qualified hotelier, adept at handling front office operations, guest relations, and accommodation.

She holds a Diploma in Hospitality from IIM Kolkata (1988) and is a Bachelor in Hotel Management from Bharthiar University (2015).

Shalini is married to Suresh, a hotelier. They have one daughter, Inika Serah Charles, a corporate lawyer working in Mumbai. She loves dogs and is like a mom to Chelsea, Zoe and Curious who keep her busy in her free time. Gardening is also her passion.

Sk. Burjis Mehta
Sr. Internal Auditor
Skål International India



A travel & tourism professional with over 30 years of experience, Burjis Mehta is presently the CEO of Skyworld Tours & Travels, where he has been since 2007. Managed by industry professionals, Skyworld is an extension of the larger Seaworld Shipping Group which conducts shipping and other allied activities, and has multi-location offices.

Incidentally, Skyworld started as an 'in-house' travel agency to cater to various travel needs of Seaworld Shipping. Since, it has grown into a full-fledged, professionally-managed travel company, with services such as computerised instant reservations, international & domestic air ticketing, passport & visa services, hotel bookings, car rentals, and domestic & foreign tours at preferential rates. Skyworld is reliable, client-focussed, and provides personalised end-to-end services to its corporate customers.

The company is approved by International Air Transport Association (IATA) and is affiliated with key professional bodies including Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) and Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI).

Prior to Skyworld, Burjis served as Vice President at the TCI/Thomas Cook Group (2006-2007). He also has had previous stints as Regional Head with International Travel House Ltd, an associate company of ITC; and Business Head at Carlson Wagonlit Travel.

His Skål India connection runs deep. He is a former 1st Vice President and Secretary of Skål International Bombay. He is also Secretary of TAFI (WI) since November 2020, and has served on subcommittees of TAAI in the past.

Burjis is alumni of St. Xavier's High School and Bhavan's College, Mumbai

Sk. A.R. Suresh
Jr. Internal Auditor
Skål International India



Believe it or not, A.R. Suresh holds a degree in Mechanical Engineering! However, his passion for travel and tourism prompted him to alter his career path. That was three decades before ago. Today, he is a tour operator associated with the Travel Association of Coimbatore, and a Member of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI).

Suresh began his career as a travel agent in 1991 and has covered every place in India to explore Indian tourism. His work experience includes field surveys in nearly every historical and religious place in Southern India.

In 1992, he launched a partnership company specialising in 'Pilgrimage & Historical Tours'. It later expanded to outbound tours. In 2007, Suresh decided to go solo, and established his own company, Golden Travels, specialising in outbound tours to

unexplored destinations for Indian travellers.

With a skilled and professional multinational team, Golden Travels is committed to providing high-quality travel services. Each team member brings in a wealth of experience and knowledge of regional and international travel & tourism, and hospitality to add to its pool of expertise

With 30 years' experience, Suresh is a highly motivated professional with a deep knowledge of all aspects of the travel & tourism industry, including managing tour events. He has served as an Executive Committee member at Skål Club Coimbatore since 2018. He has also been a Travel Agent Association of Coimbatore (TAAC) member since 2015, where he served as Treasurer from 2015-2018, and as Advisory Committee Member from 2018 to the present day.



Sk. Greesh Bindra
Committee Head – Hospitality & Govt. Relations
Skål International India

A committed entrepreneur with 37 years of experience in the hospitality industry, Greesh Bindra has been associated with independent hotels as well as renowned chain hotels. Not only is his name popular across the industry, but he is also highly regarded among foreign guests who keep returning to the hotel he leads, regardless of their preference for brands. Even so, his collaborative and people-oriented approach, as well as his passion to develop young industry professionals into leaders has earned him the tag of 'People's Person'.

Greesh is currently Vice President—Operations with The Suryaa, New Delhi, where he has been since June 2019. His key achievements in this role include overseeing the Hilton-Dushanbe in Tajikistan; and spearheading a new project of an upcoming luxury resort in Jaipur.

Earlier this year, he took up a contractual

assignment with Signum Hotels & Resorts on its Board of Advisors as Chief Development Officer, wherein he is responsible for the development of the brand in India and international markets. He is also a member of The Board Of Advisors at Centriq Inc., a multi-cloud native intelligent process automation, customer experience, and insights platform. Prior to this, he was Regional General Manager (North, West India & Bangladesh) for the InterContinental Hotels Group.

Greesh recently received the 'Hotelier of the Year' Award at the 15th Annual International Hospitality & Travel Awards (2019). and 'Lifetime Achievement in Hospitality' by The Golden Star Icon Awards (2019).

An avid golfer in his leisure time, Greesh also sits on Executive Committee of India Golf Tourism Association.



Sk. Charles Fabian

Committee Head – Hospitality & Skill Development
Skål International India

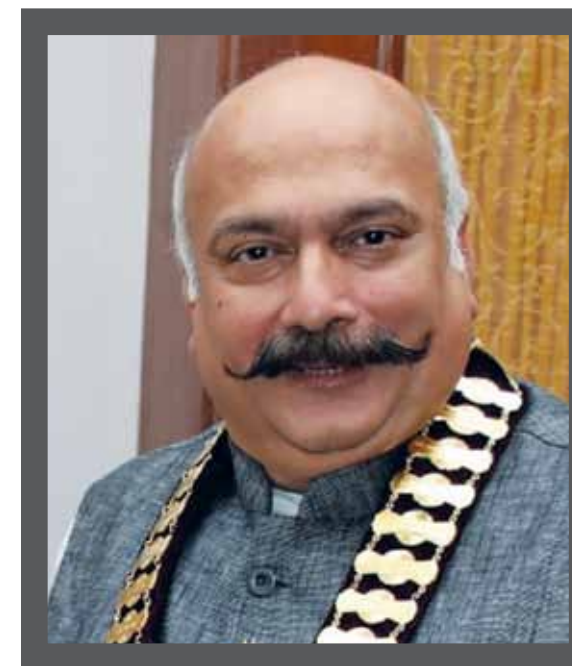
Charles Fabian may well have been a successful cricketer, a model, or an actor, had he chosen to be one. He had to have some serious talent, having played league cricket from his school days right until 1991. And yes, he acted in a handful of commercials too. Yet, hospitality was his clarion calling; and that was the career track he rode.

He began his career as an apprentice in the F&B department and gradually rose to Director, Operations, over a span of 38 years. During this period, he garnered heaps of experience in all F&B divisions, including specialty restaurants; all-day dining outlets; permit rooms; and events & conferences. His first job was at the Taj Coromandel, where he worked for 15 years. He later worked at Savera Hotel (Chennai), The Residency Towers (Chennai), and The Residency Towers (Coimbatore).

Charles' overseas experience includes three years in Muscat, Oman, on deputation while still at Taj Coromandel, where he rendered services for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He also worked for four years as F&B Manager at the Palace Inn Hotel, Bahrain.

He has been a member of Skål International Chennai since 2012, and helped institute the Skål Club of Coimbatore in 2019.

Charles holds a Diploma in Hotel Management & Catering Technology from Annamalai University, Chennai. Today, he is content to sit back and listen to some relaxing music while reminiscing how nearly four decades in the hospitality industry have quickly flown by.



Sk. Anurag Gupta

Committee Head – Membership
Skål International India

A member of Skål International's Bangalore Chapter since 2003, Anurag Gupta made his mark straightaway, organising an exhibition during the Skål World Congress in Chennai the same year. He became a Committee Member (2012-2014), and later Secretary (2014-2020). During his tenure as Secretary, he was instrumental in bringing the 48th Skål Asia Congress to Bangalore in 2019. He is currently President of Skål International Bangalore (2020-2022).

Clearly, exhibitions and event organisation is his forte. No surprise then that Anurag is the brain box behind the India International Travel Exhibition, India's premier B2C & B2B travel & tourism event, which he has been putting together in the country's Tier II and Tier III cities since 2007. IITE provides a great platform for interaction between HNIs from these B and C towns, and travel service providers,

travel boards, and travel agents. The event is organised keeping in mind the consumer's travel and leisure needs. The event also facilitates a launchpad for new entrepreneurs in the field. Participants can reinforce their business links, for they converge with business professionals and entrepreneurs in a hassle-free environment.

Anurag also publishes a monthly travel magazine, Corporate Outbound, since 2011, which is widely circulated in hotels, airlines, tourism boards, and the travel industry.

A postgraduate in Business Management, and a Diploma holder in Systems Management, Anurag loves driving across the length and breadth of India to understand the social fabric of the nation.



Sk. Sudipta Deb
Committee Head – Sponsorship
Skål International India

A Hotel Management graduate with a Masters in Marketing, Sudipta Deb is a seasoned hospitality professional with over 22 years of experience in the sector. He started his journey in hospitality industry from a stand-alone hotel and climbed the ladder and managed reputed national and international brands like ITC, Accor and Lemon Tree. His passion and excellent people skills helped him achieve many successes, both at unit and regional level. He played a key role in identifying potential markets for business expansion and new acquisitions.

In the year 2013, his aspiration to be an entrepreneur led him to co-found Infallible Travel Concepts Pvt. Ltd., widely known as I Travel. The idea behind coming up with the start-up was to offer the Corporates and individuals an ecosystem, that manage hotels and resorts, technology based travel and

accommodation desk, corporate events and leisure travels - all under one roof! Currently, he is the Managing Director of I Travel.

He believes in measurable success, and to him effort that is driven by the passion in right direction is the key to achieve excellence. His proven track record of sales and operations held him to be the key member in conceptualising growth idea for I Travel. He plays a strategic role of product acquisition, positioning and management and overall success of I Travel.

He is well travelled within India and across the globe. His passion towards exploring new destinations is the key to bring the concept of 'itravel-2-Japan' a unique programme of 'Exchanging Cultural Excellence' between India and Japan in collaboration with Nagasaki Wesleyan University.



Sk. Ravi Chandran
Committee Head – CSR& FVF
Skål International India

Ravi Chandran, or RC as he is fondly called in Skål circles, is a seasoned hotelier having extensive cross-functional experience of over 30 years in an assortment of 3-star hotels, 5-star hotels, resorts, and convention centres at various locations. The last 15 years have seen him at the helm of operations as senior management.

He has been associated with Skål International, Hyderabad Chapter, for over 16 years. He has served in various capacities on the Board as EC Member, Secretary and Vice-President in the past. He has been currently re-elected as Vice President, Skål Hyderabad for 2020-2022, besides been co-opted on the Board of Skål International India as Committee Head for CSR and FVF (2020-2022).

A soft-spoken and a passionate Skål league, he worked on the detailing

and cost estimations for the winning bid to host the Skål World Congress in Hyderabad in 2017. During the Congress, he held the crucial role of coordinating the pre and post International Secretariat and was the one point contact. Furthermore, he actively participated in the pre-Congress canvassing at the Skål World Congress in Spain.

Ravi is closely associated with Hotel Restaurant Association of Telangana State (HRATS) in the capacity of Vice President for a second term; and Association of Catering Professionals as Honorary Secretary for five years.

An award-winning hotelier, RC has won many accolades for his hotels he has served including the recent Best Three Star Hotel of the State award from the State Tourism Board.



Sk. Mohamed Ibrahim Siah
Committee Head – Frontier Markets
Skål International India

A former President of the Travel Agents Society of Kashmir (TASK), which is the apex tourism body in Jammu & Kashmir, Ibrahim Siah is the Founder President of Skål International India's Srinagar Chapter, which was launched exactly two years ago. The club, which is Skål India's 12th, was formed with just 21 members, consisting of hoteliers, travel & tourism operators, and adventure specialists.

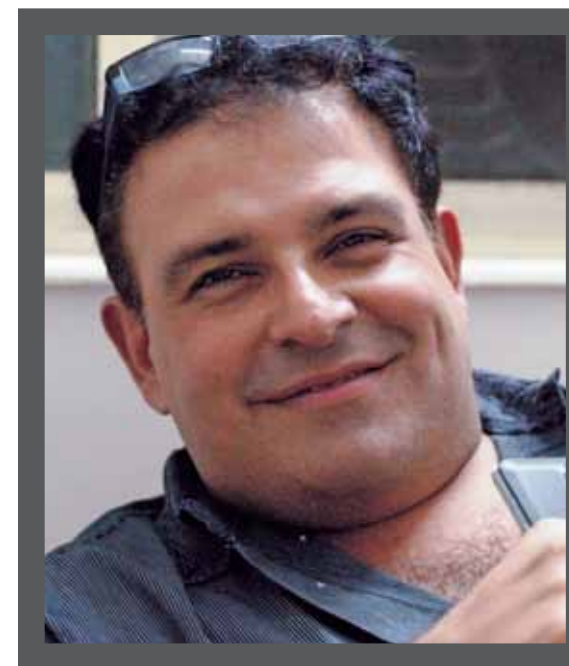
And while Skål may be new to the region, J&K tourism certainly is not. Ibrahim happens to be a third-generation travel operator, whose family was among the first that ventured into the business even before India won its Independence.

From a young age, Ibrahim was passionate about the industry and was keen to continue the great legacy of the travel & tourism business that his forefathers had started. And so, after

completing his education from Church of England School, he jumped into the fray and joined the professional trade of houseboats-running, and began to organise an array of tours to the most remote corners of the Valley.

Being closely connected with the travel trade, which was rapidly growing in J&K, Ibrahim recognised the need to march along with the times. He soon succeeded in creating a fleet of deluxe houseboats, including a six-bedroom beauty, attracting wide recognition for Shahnama Group of Houseboats & Tours.

And while the tourism and hospitality sector faces many challenges today, Ibrahim remains optimistic that if all concerned parties work with a common vision, mission, and framework for its consolidation, tourism in J&K might witness a rerun of its glory days.



Sk. Ajay Chhabria
Committee Head – Trade Relations
Skål International India

To be in the travel & tourism business was never on Ajay Chhabria's mind. And yet, fate or destiny (call it what you may) had a big part to play, when overnight...it just happened!

Until 2009, Ajay had little to do with the travel industry. He was only too happy to be part of his family business, running franchises of Monginis and DHL, which the Chhabria family owned at Sion Circle in Mumbai. His wife Hema, however, was into the travel business. She ran a company called In-Time Travels, started by her in 1994 in order to keep herself busy post-marriage.

Then, that fateful year, Ajay chanced to attend the Arabian Travel Market on behalf of his wife. And everything changed! The Chhabrias rang in a whole lot of innovations, starting by resetting their profile on Facebook. Astonishingly, the business grew 12 times, and Hema couldn't handle this surge all by herself.

So Ajay joined her, and their 12-year journey together as business partners got underway.

In 2016, the Chhabrias rechristened the company as In-Time Travels By Design LLP. It is a comprehensive travel house today, dealing with a bunch of top corporates as well as elite leisure travellers.

Ajay, who has just been installed as Committee Head – Trade Relations at Skål India, is an alumni of Don Bosco School, and Sydenham College of Commerce & Economics, Mumbai. He is an avid movie buff and likes to watch Bollywood films featuring Juhi Chawla, and Hollywood flicks with Sandra Bullock and Will Smith. He lists badminton and gymming among his main interests. And skydiving features right at the top of his bucket list.

Recharge Celebration 2020

Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat

December 4–6, 2020, Kolkata



Skål Club Kolkata wishes to thank its Skålleagues from the National Board and other Skål Clubs for making Recharge Celebration 2020 successful.

The event was inaugurated by Nandini Chakraborty, IAS (Principal Secretary, Tourism Department of West Bengal). We also had the privilege to have with us Koushik Bhattacharya, IAS (Managing Director, WBTBCL, Director of Tourism), and Sagnik Chowdhury (Deputy Director General & Regional Director (East), Ministry of Tourism, Government of India). Also in attendance was the newly installed National Committee, headed by Sk. Carl Vaz, President, Skål International India.

We would like to thank our Principal Sponsors – Tourism Department, Government of West Bengal; India Tourism Kolkata – Regional Office (East); and Ministry of Tourism – Government of India; as well as our other sponsors for extending their support to this event.

From a Skål perspective, the highlight of the event was the signing of an MoU with the International Institute of Hotel Management. We are grateful to Dr. Suborno Bose, Chief Mentor of IIHM, who signed the contract along with Sk. Carl.

Held at the Novotel Hotel & Residences Kolkata, Recharge Celebration 2020 was aimed at breaking the shackles of the virtual world and unlocking the path ahead. The focus was on achievements and future plans for the growth of Skål Clubs. Skål's increasing network will create a strong backbone for the travel & hospitality industry, and help us in doing business with our Skålleagues, thereby setting new benchmarks for the Generation Next. Not to forget, all protocols required for health safety as per Covid-19 guidelines were maintained.

Finally, Skål Club Kolkata is bidding for the World Congress 2023, in Kolkata. Ours has been a heritage city with the privilege of being the first capital of India. Our culture, people, art, and music have won the hearts of millions. It will be a proud moment for us to host the World Congress in the City of Joy. We request all Skål Clubs across India to extend their support towards making this dream come true.



Dear Carl & Team,

The Skål Asia Board joins me in congratulating you and expects you to achieve greater glory in times to come.

Over the years, we have held a profound reverence for the stature and scale of this organisation, and are honoured to have been active participants in its growth.

As proud members of Skål International Asia, we express our genuine regard and felicitations to you and those who have dutifully nurtured the organisation, and continue to do so.

We wish you the very best and stand committed to working towards a common goal for the benefit of all Skålleagues in the Asian region.

Team Skål Asia is delighted and extends all its support to you. Do keep us informed of all developments. Let me assure you that we shall try our best to live up to your expectations at all times.

Yours in Skål,

Sanjay Dutta
President
Skål International Asia

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



Ivor Vaz is an author, historian, and journalist who has been associated with Indian media – mainly in the newspapers & magazines space. He has also to his credit, solid stints in the electronic and digital media.

Over the space of three decades (1991-2020), he has served as National Editor – Response, with The Indian Express Ltd., and DNA (Zee Media Group), for a collective period of 15 years. Additional work experience includes stints with various A-list media houses, including The Times of India, MTV, Pacific Internet, Dalal Street Journal, Young Explorer (MET Group), and Plus Channel.

Beat-wise, he has covered every vertical from foreign affairs, travel & tourism, banking & politics, finance, education, real estate, IT, entertainment, and sports. His articles have appeared in The Times of India, The Economic Times, The Indian Express, Financial Express, Hindustan Times, Mint, New Indian Express, Free Press Journal, and DNA – Daily News & Analysis, besides several magazines.

He researched and written two coffee-table books. His latest, 'A Labour Of Love' (2017) documents the history of the Mumbai Obstetric & Gynaecological Society (MOGS), and 'A Genealogy of Generations' (2003), an avant-garde

coffee-table book which traces the history of 'Maximum City' Mumbai. In 2005, he co-authored 'Fetal Attraction', a book on pregnancy, labour, and childbirth, with an eminent Indian gynaecologist. He has also written articles for the British Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology (BJOG), published by The International Federation of Gynecology and Obstetrics (FIGO).

In 2013, he launched his own company, PageOne Media, a 360° media-consulting firm, which specialises in conceptualising and developing special reports across various verticals, and publishing the same in leading Indian newspapers.

Given that his job profile often entails publishing international reports with various publications, he travels to countries that have strong bilateral ties with India. He has previously travelled to Australia, Canada, UK, Ireland, Switzerland, Italy, Spain, Portugal, UAE, Egypt, Singapore, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and Thailand, among other places.

There isn't a State or Union Territory in India he hasn't set foot in either (well, almost!). His induction as Consulting Editor at Skål International India ought to course-correct minor mistakes, he believes!



N. Chandra Shekar
Journalist & Mediaperson
Associate Editor –
Skål International India

PageOne Media

PageOne Media is a 360° media-consulting firm with deep expertise in the media, information, and entertainment space. It is an equal partnership firm, started by two media professionals, Ivor Vaz and N. Chandra Shekar, having a collective experience of 60 years.

Since the establishment of PageOne Media in 2013, it has been engaged in the business of creating customised content for niche, sector-specific magazines such as Small Business News Express (magazine on MSMEs, endorsed by former Ministry of India for MSMEs, Government of India), The Mumbai Protector (magazine of the Maharashtra/Mumbai Police); bilateral trade journals (Indo-Swiss Business, Indo-Israel Business, Indo-US Business, Indo-Canadian Business, Indo-Africa Business, Indo-Latin American Business, Indo-Arab Business, and Open Trade), and business and management magazines (CSR Mandate and Indian Administrator).

PageOne Media has executed key projects for leading Indian newspapers

N. Chandra Shekar has worked with leading national newspapers and led the editorial for niche magazines in the financial sector such as Business Newsweek, Dalal Street Investment Journal, and Insurance Plus. Over 25 years, he has edited magazines on aviation & defense (International Aerospace) and B2B journals like Ambrosia (on the alco-beverage sector) and Asian Photography (on the photo-imaging industry). As Category Head for the financial and retail sector (covering corporate retail, auto, health, events & exhibitions, and entertainment) at DNA, he has conceptualised, developed, and executed theme-based features.

such as Hindustan Times/Mint Mumbai Mirror, The Indian Express/The Financial Express, DNA, and New Indian Express (South), providing editorial services for their Response Teams, by creating editorial content for 'Special Features', 'Advertorials', and 'Special Reports' for their clients.

PageOne Media, (as an independent SBU), on its own initiative, has developed Special Features on various themes and got them published in leading newspapers.

PageOne Media has also executed research reports/white papers for leading consulting houses. The most recent report for a leading consulting house (for their client who is one of the leading players in the telecom space) dealt with 'The Future of Businesses in a Digital World', focusing on, Big Data, Data-Analytics, consumerisation, Internet of Things, virtualisation, cloud computing, and digital transformation.

Today, PageOne Media offers a vast gamut of services for any media-related requirement – from content to creatives, to ad-sales.



THE RAJBARI BAWALI

INSPIRED·HERITAGE

The Rajbari Bawali is a 300 year old Boutique Heritage Hotel built in Greco - Roman style, and is a superbly restored structure. The property is reminiscent of both the British Raj and the feudal lifestyles of Bengal's Zamindari Landlords. All our rooms have high ceilings and spacious well-appointed bathrooms. Most of our rooms have traditional four poster beds, charming chaise lounges and regal wing chairs.

Some of the facilities/ amenities that we offer are the Conference Room, Restaurants, Library, Snooker Room, Table Tennis, Swimming pool, Spa, Lotus Pavilion - A Large sit out area, perfect for marriages and big gatherings in winter.

We curate and customize experiences such as a Village Walk, Sundowner Experience - a Country boat ride to watch the sunset on the River Hooghly, Culinary demonstration and Private Dining.

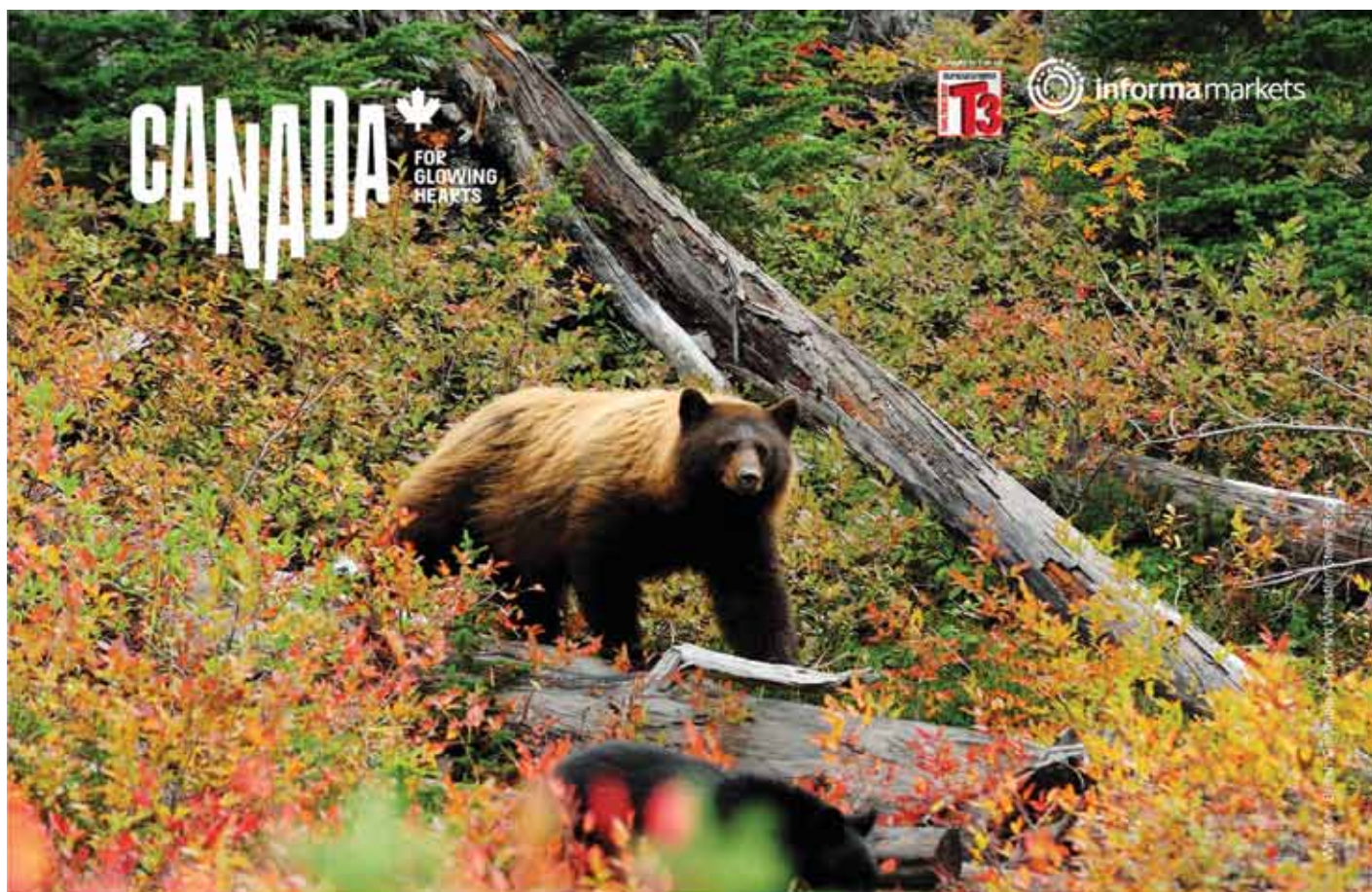


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FOR GLOWING HEARTS



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