

# Politics & Democracy

Volume IX • Issue V

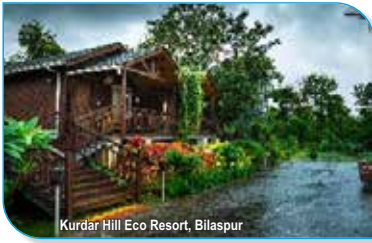
May 2023

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Why corruption as a poll  
plank can be a self-goal for  
Congress in Karnataka





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# CONTENT

## Politics & Democracy

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## Why corruption as a poll plank can be a self-goal for Congress in Karnataka

There may be talks of corruption to create an impression that the Modi government or other state governments run by the BJP are equally bad. But there's not an iota of evidence

## America and Germany should realize that Rahul Gandhi is not above law





18

## IndiGo Strengthens Connectivity to 16 Countries in Europe

IndiGo, the leading carrier in India, has announced codeshare connections to Sofia and Varna, via Istanbul, effective from April 17, 2023. The 20 weekly connections offer multiple options and easy access to Bulgaria during the upcoming holiday season. IndiGo has previously launched connecting flights to 15 countries in Europe through its codeshare partnership with Turkish Airlines.



22

## Unique, natural, organic and low intervention wineries to visit to New Zealand

Autumn marks wine harvest season for New Zealand, when the wines are ready for picking the season's vintage. Not only is it one of the busiest times of year for wine producers, it's also one of the most gorgeous – with the vines turning golden-orange and heavy with ripe fruit.



24

## Weekdays are the New Weekends!

The JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resorts and Spa is excited to announce a new initiative to inspire travellers to take advantage of the weekdays with their loved ones. With the new "Weekdays are the New Weekends" campaign, guests will be able to enjoy the luxury amenities and services of the resort, while also enjoying the benefits of a mid-week escape.



32

## Stop Overpacking, travel with less stress and more freedom

Are you the kind of person who can't resist stuffing your suitcase to the brim before a trip? Do you feel like you need to bring every possible outfit, just in case the weather decides to do a 180? Are you the type of traveler who packs for every possible scenario, even if it's highly unlikely to happen? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then you, my friend, are an over-packer.



38

## Feel the majestic energy of water (Spirituality)

Spirituality in Chhattisgarh is deeply intertwined with its culture, traditions, and natural beauty, and offers a unique and enriching experience for visitors seeking spiritual fulfillment. The state is home to many ancient temples, pilgrimage sites, and religious festivals, which are integral to the spiritual beliefs and practices of the people.

# Why corruption as a poll plank can be a self-goal for Congress in Karnataka

There may be talks of corruption to create an impression that the Modi government or other state governments run by the BJP are equally bad.  
But there's not an iota of evidence



**Sudesh Verma**

**T**he Congress and other parties are making their last-ditch effort to try to malign the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Prime Minister Narendra

Modi knows fully well that Modi is the country's best bet to fight corruption in government, bureaucracy, politics and various other spheres of public life.

The Congress' high-decibel campaign in Karnataka seeks to derail the fight against corruption but it is sure to fail as other similar campaigns have failed earlier.

The state is slated to witness the 'Modi magic' once again. The prime minister will launch a full-blown campaign in the last 15 days before the state witness polls. Modi is the lone crusader fighting against corruption

and the myth created by the Congress and other Opposition parties would fall flat since the campaign would enable people to see the truth through the anti-corruption prism — the Modi parameters.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tried a similar smear campaign during the 2019 Lok Sabha elections on the issue of the Rafale deal but failed desperately. His "Chowkidar Chor Hai" campaign





may evoke the laughter of onlookers in a rally but cannot be substantiated. On the contrary, this campaign has given the BJP a handle to browbeat the Congress and talk about its proven track record on corruption. Corruption is not the Congress' strong forte.

Not long ago, people had seen the visuals of senior Congress leader, DK Shivakumar, throwing Rs 500 notes at the crowd that had gathered to watch his road show in Mandya last month. Such a naked display of wealth and erosion of political morality put the Congress in the dock. He is a person already maligned. Cases of



was stunted and blown to pieces by the slogan "Mai Bhi Chowkidar" coined by Modi and followed by the BJP workers and his millions of supporters across the world. Rahul's campaign fell like a pack of cards and the Congress could not prevent the BJP from winning more Lok Sabha seats than those in 2014.

The Congress' slogan in Karnataka of '40 percent cut government' has emanated from the allegations labelled

by the contractors' association that failed to substantiate the allegations. A state CID inquiry into one such allegation of corruption against KS Eshwarappa found no truth in the whole case. But Eshwarappa, who was the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister, had to resign to save embarrassment to the party.

The Congress has committed the mistake of holding on to a slogan that

disproportionate assets have already been registered against him and the high court, last Thursday, rejected his plea against the CBI investigation. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in 2019 in a money laundering case. The Income Tax (IT) department found him to be involved in hawala transactions and unearthed unaccounted assets worth crores of



Rupees.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is himself facing charges of fraud in the National Herald Case and both he and his mother, Sonia Gandhi, are out on personal bail bond of Rs 50,000 each. The case involves the use of party funds to buy property worth thousands of crores in the name of private individuals. Rahul cannot even talk of vendetta politics here because the lower court has taken cognisance of the case and the higher courts have refused to grant a stay on the proceedings.

The list of omissions and commissions by the Congress and other Opposition parties is very long. Leaders of all these parties know that the law will come catching very soon.



The prime minister is not just talking

about their corruption but has also enacted legislation to strengthen the fight against the loot of the exchequer. Now it is becoming increasingly difficult to own benami property or save money in the bank without an address or accountability. The IT-enabled systems of administrative checks would help track such properties.

Earlier, people used to buy assets abroad without the fear of being caught. Some even shifted outside to escape the law. But now, it is not possible, since such properties can easily be confiscated if the source of money is proven to be corruption or fraud. It has become easier to track financial crimes.

And those who ask why the BJP leaders are not getting caught should





know that the law applies equally to all. Those in the know of things know that it is very difficult to make money using government power. The way Modi is keeping an eye on ministers and MPs, very soon there would be no premium on becoming MPs or MLAs or ministers. Those who took politics to be a shortcut to becoming rich would be disillusioned.

Till now, the Opposition has not been able to come up with a single case where it can show any minister making money due to his office or influence. There may be talks of corruption to create an impression that the Modi government or other state governments run by the BJP are equally bad. But there's not an iota of evidence.

The Congress should learn from its past experience that it can't catch Modi on the wrong foot. Ever since Gujarat days, the Congress has been trying to put Modi on the back foot. They had come up with various allegations of corruption and favouritism including undue favours to some business houses. Modi had set up a judicial commission to probe the allegations and nothing was found to be true.

The same is going to be the case of high-voltage allegations of favouring the Adanis. Modi, while taking decisions, knows that he would come under public scrutiny. He formulates a policy and the structure and anyone who qualifies gets the government contract. The policy is not twisted for anyone because he has

none to favour. What is good for the country is good for him.

People know that Modi is not corrupted and hence, cannot be manipulated. This is the reason why he still stands tall. He has the trust of the people with him, unlike others, who talk big about fighting corruption but do secret deals in the closets. The Karnataka victory of the BJP would bear the Modi stamp and embolden the decisive fight against corruption. ■

*The writer is the convener of the media relations department of the BJP and represents the party as a spokesperson on TV debates. He has authored the book 'Narendra Modi: The Game Changer'. The views expressed are personal.*

# The 3rd Education Working Group meeting of G20 in India, which took place in Bhubaneswar, concluded with a pledge to improve learners' skilling, upskilling, and reskilling

G20 India's 3rd Education Working Group meeting concludes today in Bhubaneswar with a commitment to ensure the betterment of learners with respect to skilling, upskilling and reskilling. The 3 day seminar and meeting held from 26th-28th April 2023 had discussions focussed around priority area 3 'Building Capacities, promoting life-long learning in the context of future of work' in the seminar.



**S**hri K. Sanjay Murthy, Secretary Higher Education, Shri Sanjay Kumar, Secretary School Education and Literacy and Shri Atul Kumar Tiwari, Secretary Skill, Development and Entrepreneurship and senior officials of the Ministries attended the meeting. 60+ Delegates from 27 countries including G20 members, invited and International Organisations including United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and Organisation for Economic

Cooperation & Development (OECD) were present.

The three-day event commenced with a seminar around the topic of the future of work in collaboration with the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. It was divided into three sessions of panel discussions. The themes of the panels were 'Building an agile response to the needs of labour markets and institutional capacity building in the context future of work: enabling high quality technical and vocational education', 'Creating pathways between higher and vocational education' and 'Equipping

children with a range of future skills to set them on course of lifelong learning'. Delegates shared their policies and initiatives in Vocational Education and Training. They also acknowledged the importance and the constant need to upskill and re-skill in order to keep up with the evolving world. They also discussed challenges that their countries are facing with respect to the future of work.

On the sidelines of the 3rd EdWG meeting and seminar, included a multimedia exhibition on the same topic. Key participants in the exhibition were NCERT, MEITY,





IKS (Indian Knowledge System), TRIFED, Singapore, UNICEF, Meta, IIT Bhubaneswar, IIM Sambalpur, NIT Rourkela, CSIR-IMMT, Auroville Foundation and many other from Industry, Academia, Government Agencies, Multilateral Agencies, Startups, etc. along with Experience Zone on Future of Work and large technology exhibits. The exhibition was open to local institutions, students, academicians and researchers from 23rd-25th and 27th -28th April, 2023.

Day 1 of the event began with the inaugural address by Union Minister

of State for Education, Shri Subhas Sarkar. He spoke about the importance of investing in education and skill development in order to ensure that people are equipped with knowledge, capabilities, skills and attitudes to succeed in the 21st century. The meeting observed G20 members and invited countries discussing on the outcome documents in preparation for the Education Minister's Meeting in June, which continued to the last day.

The meeting concluded with an excursion component. Delegates were taken to Konark Sun Temple,

followed by cultural performances in Puri. Delegates were given patachitra paintings as a memorable token for their visit to Bhubaneswar.

The 3rd EdWG meeting was successful in raising the awareness about G20. Various Jan Bhagidari Events were also organised starting from Utkal Diwas till 22nd April. Several Mock G20's were conducted across the state which included 590 student participation. About 1 lakh + citizens participated in about 1,235 Jan Bhagidari events making India's G20 Presidency a truly People's Presidency.

# Amicus Capital leads Rs 2.25 billion (\$27.5 Mn) investment into Aequs Pvt. Ltd.

Maiden round of external investment intended to prime the company for the next phase of growth.

**A**micus Capital and existing investors have infused fresh capital to the tune of Rs 2.25 billion (\$27.50 Mn) into Aequs Private Ltd., a diversified contract manufacturing company.

Aequs is a diversified manufacturing partner for global OEMs and domestic players across the Aerospace, Toys, and Consumer Durable Goods verticals. The Company has fully integrated manufacturing operations across three clusters: (a) Belagavi Aerospace Cluster (BAC), (b) Koppal Toys Cluster (KTC), and (c) Hubballi Durable Goods Cluster (HDC), all located in North Karnataka. Each cluster is the first of its kind in India and brings unique capabilities to its respective market. In 2016, BAC was awarded the “Global Airbus Innovation Award” in 2016 and recognized as the



first of its kind in the world.

In addition to its India-based manufacturing operations, Aequs also operates global aerospace manufacturing facilities located in the US (Paris, Texas) and France (Cholet).

The Company proposes to use this round of funding to scale-up its manufacturing capabilities to serve both domestic and multinational OEMs clients across the three verticals.

Aravind Melligeri, Chairman & CEO remarked: “The equity investment by

Amicus Capital marks the first external funding into Aequs and sets us on a new trajectory to further expand operations in the three current verticals and continue to provide world-class manufacturing solutions to our global customers.” Commenting on the investment, Mahesh Parasuraman, Co-Founder and Partner at Amicus Capital, said: “With its marquee customer base, state-of-the-art infrastructure and vertically integrated manufacturing capabilities, Aequs is uniquely positioned to play a significant role in India’s emergence as a global manufacturing power-house. We are extremely happy to partner with Aravind and the leadership team at Aequs to become a leading manufacturing platform in the world, with expertise across different industry verticals.”

## Vocalist Padma Shri Smt. Aruna Sairam Mesmerizes Audience of Bhilwara Sur Sangam 2023

A significant milestone for India’s rich cultural heritage of classical music was celebrated on April 16 at Kamani Auditorium in New Delhi with the start of the eagerly awaited Bhilwara Sur Sangam 2023, an Indian classical music festival that successfully marked a decade of the festival. Day 1 of the festival featured a stunning performance by renowned vocalist Padma Shri Smt. Aruna Sairam, a melodious performance that captivated the audience with soulful renditions of classical compositions.

Smt. Aruna Sairam’s performance was the highlight of the festival’s first day, as she demonstrated her

exceptional talent and mastery of classical music, captivating the audience with her soulful voice. Her performance paid homage to the varied musical traditions of India and captured the true spirit of Bhilwara Sur Sangam.

The chairman of the LNJ Bhilwara Group, Ravi Jhunjhunwala, expressed his delight at Padma Shri Smt. Aruna Sairam’s performance on the opening day of the festival. “Her performance tonight is a testament to her extraordinary talent and love of music. She is a legend in the world of Indian classical music, and we are thrilled to have her grace our festival and share her gift with our audience,” he stated.

Numerous classical music lovers, critics, and well-known musicians attended the festival and were treated to a memorable performance by Smt. Aruna Sairam. The audience erupted in thunderous applause as she performed soulful renditions of classical pieces, mesmerizing them.

The Bhilwara Sur Sangam Festival 2023 showcases some of the greatest maestros in the classical music world as part of a celebration of India’s rich cultural heritage. Day 1 was a resounding success, setting the tone for the remainder of the festival, which aims to promote and preserve classical music.



## IMPHAL, INDIAN NAVY'S THIRD SHIP OF PROJECT 15B SAILS FOR MAIDEN SEA TRIALS

Imphal, Indian Navy's third indigenous stealth destroyer of the Project 15B class, planned to be commissioned later this year, undertook her maiden sea sortie today. The ship incorporates several niche technologies and high indigenous content and is designed in-house by the Navy's Warship Design Bureau and constructed by Mazagon Dock Ltd. (MDL) stands proud testimony to the Indian Navy's thrust on the national vision of 'AatmaNirbhar Bharat' and 'Make in India' initiative.

Imphal will have the unique distinction of being the largest and most advanced destroyer to be ever named after a city from the North-East. Imphal would thus be a befitting symbol of the growing importance and contribution of the North-Eastern region and the state of Manipur towards national security and development.

Imphal will add significantly to the Indian Navy's combat capabilities. With the recent commissioning of her predecessor INS Mormugao in December 2022 and the fifth Project 75 submarine INS Vagir in January 2023, commencement of sea trials of Imphal is yet another important milestone in MDL's continued contribution towards building a strong, modern and self-reliant India.

## The Farm Machinery Technology Summit was inaugurated by the Union Agriculture Minister.

Small farmers of the country should get the benefit of technology - Shri Tomar



The Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the Summit on Farm Machinery Technology, organized by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Tractor and Mechanization Association (TMA). Shri Tomar said that there are about 85 percent small farmers in the country, who should get the benefit of technology & machinery. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the government is continuously working in this direction at its level. An amount of Rs.6120.85 crore has been released to the states from 2014-15 to 2022-23 for various activities like training, testing, setting up of CHCs, hi-tech hubs and Farm Machinery Banks (FMBs) under the Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM). Besides 15.24 lakh farm machinery and equipment have been distributed at subsidized rates through state governments, including tractors, power tillers and automated machinery.

Chief Guest Union Minister Shri Tomar said that by implementing the new system at the Central Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institute (CFMTTI), Budni (M.P.), the Government of India has reduced the time taken for completing the testing of tractors to a maximum of 75 working days. Also, from the year 2014-15 to 2022-23, 1.64 lakh workers have been trained by the Central Government through its four FMTTI designated authorized test centers. The introduction of the Rupees One lakh crore Agricultural Infrastructure Fund is also an important step in this direction, in which projects worth Rs. 14,000 crore

have been approved which are benefitting the farmers. Kisan drones are being promoted, for which along with introducing the drone policy, subsidies are being given to various sections including farmers, SC-ST category, women farmers while crop specific SOP has also been issued for application of pesticides with drones.

Shri Tomar said that agriculture is a priority of the country, no one could destroy the fabric of our agriculture-based rural economy even in adverse circumstances. In terms of agricultural products, India stands at Number One or Second rank in the world, which is a result of the hard work of the farmers, the contribution of scientists and industry, and the farmer friendly policies of the government with the support of technology. But we do not have to rest on our laurels, rather we have to prepare a roadmap keeping in view the requirement of the population that will increase by 2050 and in the changing political scenario, according to the growing importance of India in the world, we are concerned about meeting the needs of our country as well as other countries.

While doing so, we have to play an important role. After 2014, a different type of work culture has taken roots in the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Modi. The changes that have come in these years have spread hope across the country and the world. If the resolution of the government is strong and the intent of the leader is noble, then the initiative is good and the ability to accept it also increases. India is ahead of America, Japan and Germany in cashless transactions.

# America and Germany should realise that Rahul Gandhi is not above law



Sudesh Verma

What the US and Germany have demonstrated is their lack of understanding and appreciation of the functioning of Indian democracy. Rahul Gandhi cannot be given special status just because he belongs to a political family

The United States, which is the fulcrum of Western civilisation, and Germany, which is the major player in the European world, came up with foolish assertions that they are watching the developments on Rahul Gandhi without realising that they are not helping his cause, but ending up creating a villain out of him.

Saying that one is watching the developments has got no meaning since every country watches the developments in other countries. That is why every important country has its representatives all across the world as envoys. For example, India must be watching keenly the way the US administration is treating its former President Donald Trump. India can also talk a lot about the failure of the US to resolve the racial issue. But

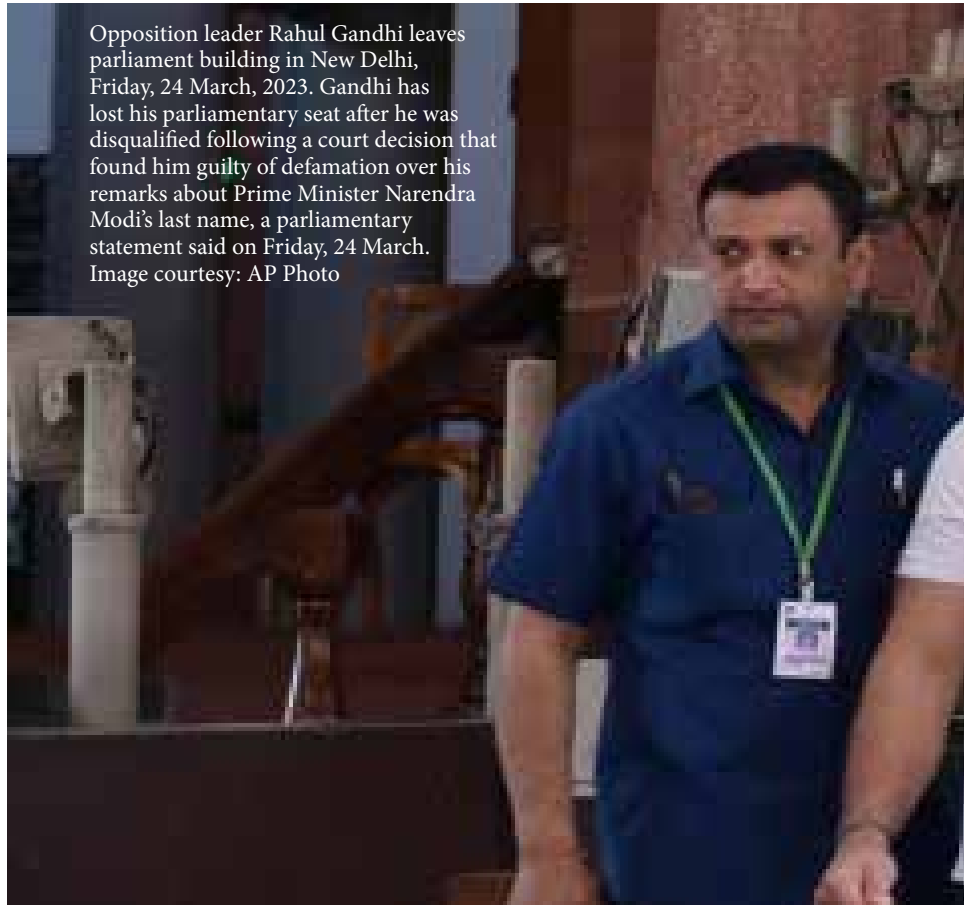
when you assert that you are watching the development, it has a different connotation. It means the country either thinks itself to be a policeman or it suffers from a superiority complex. And this happens when there is a conflict between your understanding and practice of democracy. The US, the Western world and Europe have been in high praise of Indian democracy. The way people come out and vote, the way democratic institutions have become strong and trustworthy in India has been the topic of debate.

Why then discordant note on the issue of Rahul Gandhi? Is Rahul Gandhi for them bigger than Indian democracy? This creates doubt in the mind of an average Indian. If these countries value Indian democracy, they would know that the people of this country do not

like Rahul Gandhi or his politics and they have voted for Narendra Modi as the symbol of hope. India does not have a dictatorship that the ruling establishment can treat it the way it wants. Even elected governments have restrictions. There is the press and the judiciary.

To see Rahul's present situation, as an outcome of political rivalry by the ruling establishment, is a travesty of matured understanding. Rahul may cry foul but those who understand the Indian justice system would say for sure that this has been his own doing. First, you cannot give a communal slur for an entire community. Rahul had the option of clarifying that he did not mean that. He was defiant because of his hatred for the Modi surname and wanted punishment rather than saying sorry.

Opposition leader Rahul Gandhi leaves parliament building in New Delhi, Friday, 24 March, 2023. Gandhi has lost his parliamentary seat after he was disqualified following a court decision that found him guilty of defamation over his remarks about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's last name, a parliamentary statement said on Friday, 24 March. Image courtesy: AP Photo







Even after the punishment, he had the option to go for appeal. Rather than enacting a drama over the situation, he should have opted for a legal battle. It appears he sensed a great opportunity in projecting himself as a victim. But he forgot that judicial orders cannot be assigned political motives. While some of his well-wishers in foreign lands may buy this, people in this country are far more mature. Every issue is debated at roadside tea stalls or chaupal in Indian villages.

Why did the US jump the gun? US Principal Deputy Spokesperson Vedant Patel, at his maiden press conference, said: “Respect for rule of law & judicial independence is a cornerstone of any democracy. We’re watching Mr Gandhi’s case in the Indian court and we engage with the Indian government on a shared commitment to democratic values including freedom of expression. In our engagements with our Indian partners, we continue to highlight the importance of democratic



principles and the protection of human rights including freedom of expression as a key to strengthening both our democracies engaging with the government of India.”

Two days later, Germany, too, joins in. The German government said: “We have taken note of the verdict of the first instance against the Indian Opposition politician Rahul Gandhi as well as the suspension of his parliamentary mandate. To our knowledge, Rahul Gandhi is in a position to appeal the verdict. The appeal will show whether the verdict stands and whether suspension has a basis. We expect standards of judicial independence and democratic principles to be applied.”

The prime question in everyone’s mind will be why the same hue and cry or such observations were not made when other legislators were disqualified

in a similar fashion when they were convicted for an offence for two years. Rahul Gandhi had upheld the validity of this process of disqualification and tore the ordinance that the UPA government under Dr Manmohan Singh sought to bring, to nullify the provision enunciated by the Supreme Court.

The BJP has rightly slammed the Congress for seeking foreign intervention. The representatives of the Modi government have rightly objected to such statements by foreign countries and the fact that this government would not tolerate any interference from anyone in its internal affairs.

Despite pitfalls, the judicial process in the country has acquired immense respectability. What the US and Germany have demonstrated is their lack of understanding and appreciation of the functioning of Indian democracy. Rahul Gandhi cannot be given special

status just because he belongs to a political family. Such statements would put a question mark on the intentions of these countries.

As far as the Congress is concerned, it should figure out why Rahul Gandhi should not be compared with Mir Zafar who invited a foreign power, i.e. the British, to fight internal power struggles. The loss of Indians at the Battle of Plassey in 1757 led to the establishment of the British Empire in India. Rahul has given an opportunity to these foreign countries to poke India through their irresponsible statements.

The writer is the convener of the media relations department of the BJP and represents the party as a spokesperson on TV debates. He has authored the book ‘Narendra Modi: The Game Changer’. The views expressed are personal. ■





75  
आज़ादी का  
अमृत महोत्सव



पॉवर फ़ॉर ऑल  
के तहत  
1.47 करोड़ घरों  
को बिजली कनेक्शन



डबल इंजन की सरकार - विकास की दोगुनी रफ़्तार



सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

# IndiGo Strengthens Connectivity to 16 Countries in Europe

IndiGo, the leading carrier in India, has announced codeshare connections to Sofia and Varna, via Istanbul, effective from April 17, 2023. The 20 weekly connections offer multiple options and easy access to Bulgaria during the upcoming holiday season. IndiGo has previously launched connecting flights to 15 countries in Europe through its codeshare partnership with Turkish Airlines.



**S**ofia, the capital of Bulgaria, boasts beautiful parks, Viennese-style architecture, museums, and ancient Roman history, as well as a lively nightlife scene and delicious food. Customers can explore the city's popular tourist attractions, such as St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, Pirotska Street, Mount Vitosha, Sofia Central Mineral Baths, and Boyana Church.

Varna, Bulgaria's maritime capital, is a hub for commerce, transportation, education, tourism, entertainment, and healthcare, and is known for its year-round artistic and cultural events. Customers can visit the Sea Garden, Cape Galata, Varna Sea Port, Central Beach, and Saint Athanasius Church, among other well-known attractions.

Turkey is a must-visit destination for history enthusiasts, with sites such as the ancient Greek city of Ephesus, the Cappadocia rock valleys,

the pure white travertine terraces of Pamukkale, and the ruins of the former Armenian capital Ani. Other popular attractions include the Hagia Sophia Mosque, Dolmabahce Palace, Bosphorus Strait, Istanbul Sea Life Aquarium, Blue Mosque, Grand Bazaar and Spice Bazaar, Turkish and Islamic Arts Museum, and Istanbul Cevahir Mall. The city boasts an excellent mix of Byzantine and Ottoman architecture, Middle Eastern cuisine, and pleasant weather.

These flights cater to both business and leisure travellers seeking affordable flying options to access destinations that offer business opportunities and tourist attractions. Customers can book their tickets through IndiGo's official website, [www.goIndiGo.in](http://www.goIndiGo.in). These new flights will also boost the airline's domestic connectivity.

## Mr. Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales at IndiGo

We are delighted to introduce new connections from Istanbul to Varna and Sofia. These connections will not only enhance business connectivity but also provide customers with affordable options to plan travel during the forthcoming summer vacations. With the addition of this route through Turkish codeshare, IndiGo now connects to 32 destinations in Europe. We will continue to seek opportunities to provide affordable fares, on-time performance, and hassle-free connectivity across an unparalleled network for our customers.





# VietJet's new direct route to Australia provides connectivity boost to India

Vietnam's leading new-age airline, VietJet, has launched direct flights connecting Australia's largest cities; Melbourne, Sydney, and Brisbane. These new routes will boost tourism and trade between the two continents by facilitating the movement of travelers.



Vietnam, which demonstrates the growing connection between Australia and Vietnam.

Operating on the new A330 aircraft, the flights from Melbourne to Ho Chi Minh City will be scheduled for Sundays, Wednesdays, Fridays and Ho Chi Minh City to Melbourne on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Additionally, the route connecting Sydney and Ho Chi Minh City will also operate three return flights per week. Sydney to Ho Chi Minh City on Mondays, Thursdays and Saturdays and Ho Chi Minh City to Sydney on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays. The flights duration is approximately 9 hours between destinations.

Indians can now fly to Australia (Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane), Hong Kong and all over Asia in Bali, Thailand, Japan, South Korea & Taiwan via VietJet's great and reasonable connecting services. With the expansion of VietJet's flight network to major cities in India, VietJet has emerged as a pioneer airline bridging the distance and travel time between the two countries. VietJet is enabling the carrier to better connect and serve the rise in demand for both leisure and business travel. Further catering to the needs of its Indian customers, VietJet is offering special inflight hot meals with a variety of dishes, both vegetarian and non-vegetarian, served by a dedicated and friendly cabin crew as well as other services.



**C**elebrating the 50th Anniversary of diplomatic relations between Vietnam and Australia, Senator Don Farrell, Australia's Minister for Trade and Tourism and Special Minister for State, visited Vietnam to congratulate VietJet on the launch of direct routes connecting the two

countries. The Minister's visit follows a recent visit to Vietnam by Governor-General of Australia, David Hurley, who also welcomed the new flight routes connecting Australia and Vietnam.

Minister Farrell also welcomed the plans for new routes, including the first ever direct flight to Brisbane from

# Aeroporti di Roma, ITA Airways and Trenitalia join forces for a more integrated system of air-train intermodality

For a more integrated and sustainable mobility that puts the customer experience, innovation and environmental protection at the center. This is the scope of the intermodality project promoted by Aeroporti di Roma, ITA Airways and Trenitalia which have jointly developed a new “train plus plane” package that enables passengers to simplify the travel experience by combining rail with air travel on a single ticket with check-in at the train station via the dedicated counters in the Leonardo da Vinci Airport.

**T**he new product created by the three partners using technology supplied by AccesRail, allows passengers to purchase a combined train + air ticket through all the digital channels of ITA Airways, as well as through qualified travel agencies, ITA Airways ticket offices and the ITA Airways Contact Center. Passengers who choose this intermodal option will also be able to check in for their flight at the dedicated counters available at the train station of Leonardo da Vinci International Airport in Fiumicino.

Passengers who reach Fiumicino airport on board a Frecciarossa or other high-speed train to Roma Termini, in conjunction with the Leonardo Express train to Roma Termini, and continuing with flights on the international and intercontinental network operated by ITA Airways (with the exception of the U.S. and Israel), can check in and check their baggage directly at the station of Fiumicino airport, to collect it at their final destination operated by the Company.

The experience of intermodal travel joins the agreements already signed between Aeroporti di Roma and the Ferrovie dello Stato Group to develop integrated the ‘train + plane’ service



and facilitate connections between the main stations, airports and ports of Italy, also focusing on the development of new forms of urban air travel. In addition, ITA Airways recently initialed a Memorandum of Understanding with FS, with a view to creating multimodal services between plane and train, the basis for establishing business and operational partnerships destined to expand an offering of multimodal mobility capable of responding effectively to the demands of local tourism and business and provide an agile and convenient “end-to-end” travel experience with the aim of implementing shared digital platforms.

The intermodal product further enhances the offerings in connection with the airport at Fiumicino, adding rail connections with the main Italian cities. There will be direct Frecciarossa

links with high-speed trains for Italian cities like Naples, Florence, Bologna, Padua and Venice. Thanks to the High-Speed rail connections from and to Roma Termini, convenient connections to the airport hub are offered with the Leonardo Express, which connects Fiumicino rapidly with Roma Termini.

The President of ENAC, Pierluigi Di Palma was present at the press conference, as was the Vice Minister for Infrastructures and Transportation, Galeazzo Bignami, who concluded the panel. The check-in service at the railway station of Fiumicino Airport will be active on an experimental basis for the duration of the aeronautical summer season. More information on the intermodal product is available on the websites of Aeroporti di Roma, ITA Airways and Trenitalia, in the specific sections devoted to it.





# FinMont: A New Global Payment Orchestration Platform

The founders of German airline, Hahn Air have announced the launch of a new global payment orchestration platform, FinMont, specifically for Travel Merchants. The new payment platform uses cloud-native technologies to integrate acquiring banks, payment, fraud, forex, and chargeback providers and offer a fully automated and seamless payment solution. It aims to reduce shopping cart abandonment, increase sales conversion, and ensure clear visibility across the payment flow for all payment transactions.

The PayTech firm is offering the travel industry a significantly different solution compared to other options available as it will streamline not only B2C payments but also B2B payments. Combining both payments into a single view will help decision-makers identify and fix any inefficiencies in their current payment processes. The firm's mission is to help travel merchants use payments as a strategic tool to stand out from competitors.

In the B2C payments space, many airlines and agents lose customers in the buying process due to only being able to offer limited payment methods. Some have even relied on only one payment provider, which is a high-risk strategy and can have huge consequences, especially if there is any downtime and having such a limited solution can mean higher fees for payments. With B2B payments, merchants historically have struggled to process supplier payments as they all require unique information such as the time of payments, payment methods used or invoicing process. Whether travel merchants are pre-paying suppliers, paying them in multiple currencies, paying them on check-out or on receipt



of an invoice, FinMont will streamline and automate the whole process. The new payment orchestration platform aims to revolutionise payments by connecting multiple banks and providers seamlessly through one simple gateway. It will also improve payment authorisation and conversion rates, reduce payment costs, and remove historic issues such as downtime or reliance on one payment provider. It will also give travel merchants more freedom in choosing their payment partners and accommodate industry-specific payment flows like IATA NDC. The FinMont ecosystem will not only connect acquiring banks, payment, fraud, forex, and chargeback providers but also integrate with ERP/CRM systems and other travel specific distribution channels

offering a complete payment ecosystem for the travel industry. Dr SubyValluri, CEO of FinMont, commented, "Having worked in the travel and payment industry for many years with a software engineering and economics background I have seen first-hand how complex and often archaic payment solutions impact airlines and travel agents. With so many payment methods, banks and card suppliers around the globe managing payments have always been challenging for firms across the travel sector.

To be able to launch our solution with the founders of Hahn Air, we believe FinMont offers a truly unique and cutting-edge solution for the global travel industry to tackle both B2C and B2B payments." ■

# Unique, natural, organic and low intervention wineries to visit in New Zealand

Autumn marks wine harvest season for New Zealand, when the wines are ready for picking the season's vintage. Not only is it one of the busiest times of year for wine producers, it's also one of the most gorgeous – with the vines turning golden-orange and heavy with ripe fruit.



New Zealand has an abundance of wineries embracing innovative and sustainable winemaking, resulting in many unique wines to taste and winery experiences to discover.

Here are some of the most unique wineries forging their own path when it comes to winemaking in New Zealand, and producing stunning natural wines.

## Cambridge Road Winery, Martinborough

Winemaker Lance Redgwell's small slice of Martinborough is located just across the road from some of New Zealand's most renowned traditional wineries – but his style is a little different to the usual. Using organic and biodynamic practices, Cambridge Road makes naturally fermented

wines with minimal additives except for a small amount of sulphur. Some are aged in barrels, including a native tōtara wood barrel large enough to fit a small car inside - believed to be the only native timber being used to age wine in New Zealand. The result of this approach is beautiful natural wines, with gorgeous names such as 'Down the Rabbit Hole', 'Cloudwalker', and 'Ebb' and 'Flow', and unique bottle artwork



designed by different local artists. The Martinborough winery has a decidedly relaxed and casual feel – grab a spot in the sunny courtyard or cosy dining room complete with roaring fireplace, and enjoy a tasting – likely with Lance himself – accompanied by a platter of local cheeses and meats.

## Black Estate, North Canterbury

This picturesque organic and biodynamic vineyard offers a full immersive experience – whether you want to pop in for a quick tasting, stay for a long lunch at the winery restaurant, or make a night of it and stay amongst the vines at the Black Estate B&B. Black Estate's three vineyard sites are farmed organically and biodynamically to produce fruit and wines that are expressive of the place and season. Fruit is handpicked and settled in natural oak, tank or clay amphora, with no other fining or filtration processes used - resulting in beautiful examples of natural wines including Pét Nat, Chenin Blanc, Pinot Noir, Riesling and more. Book a seated wine tasting or enjoy wine by the glass alongside a lunch made with spray-free, organic produce gathered and fished by locals. During June and July, the restaurant menu comes alive with a celebration of truffles, sourced from a neighbouring property.

## Greystone Winery, Waipara

With stunning organic wines, a seasonally-focused restaurant, and next-level PurePod accommodation, you don't even need to leave the Greystone Winery property to enjoy a luxury escape. Greystone became New Zealand's first net carbon zero certified winery in June last year, thanks to a number of sustainable initiatives to lower its carbon footprint. From using ducks as a form of pest control over pesticides and sheep as mowers and fertilisers; to planting cover crops that improve organic soil matter and



decreasing the glass in their bottles to reduce emissions, the winery regards regenerative viticulture as the way of the future. Sample the fruits of their labour alongside Greystone's famous long lunch, available from Thursday to Monday. The menu changes weekly according to what's in season and available, but always celebrates fresh produce – think Clevedon oysters and Canterbury Wash Creek organic lamb, paired with Greystone Syrah.

## Folium Winery, Marlborough

Another winery shaking up the winemaking game is Folium Winery, which implements 'dry farming' or winemaking without irrigation. Winemaker Takaki Okada began dry farming in 2011 for its wine-style and environmental benefits, including saving significant amounts of irrigation water. The lack of irrigation also allows the winery to create a different style of Sauvignon Blanc, due to lower levels of methoxypyrazines - a chemical compound that contributes to herbaceous flavour. A BioGro certified organic vineyard, Folium also employs the services of several team members including Ponsonby and Archie the sheep, who are responsible for weed

control (and great at escaping), free range chickens, and bees to increase the biodiversity of the vineyard.

While this winery doesn't have its own cellar door, you can taste its wines through many of New Zealand's fine wine stores – we recommend grabbing a bottle to share once you arrive at your accommodation of choice.

## Churton Wines, Marlborough

Churton Wines has truly gone back to basics when it comes to winemaking – employing the services of gentle giant Clydesdale horses to work between the vines rather than tractors in an effort to become more sustainable and reduce emissions. The 30-year-old vineyard is the first in New Zealand to employ horses for under-vine soil work, an idea sparked by employee Emma Rossignol, who witnessed the technique being used in France. The horses, Gordon and Xena, are much lighter on the earth than tractors, which reduces compaction of the soil, improves soil health, and helps with retaining water. Being smaller than tractors, it also increases access to the under-vine areas. This autumn season, visit New Zealand and check out these innovative wineries producing amazing wines. ■



# Weekdays are the New Weekends!

The JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resorts and Spa is excited to announce a new initiative to inspire travellers to take advantage of the weekdays with their loved ones. With the new "Weekdays are the New Weekends" campaign, guests will be able to enjoy the luxury amenities and services of the resort, while also enjoying the benefits of a mid-week escape.

General Manager Ronan Fearon said, "We know that weekdays can be busy and stressful, but they don't have to be! We want to encourage guests to take a break from the routine and indulge in some much-needed relaxation time. With our exclusive package, we're making it easier than ever for guests to enjoy a memorable and rejuvenating experience with their friends and family."

The "Weekdays are the New Weekends" package includes a lavish buffet breakfast and dinner, welcome amenities, sunrise yoga

sessions, complimentary local high tea experience, first round of beer and mocktails at flamingo pool bar, extended checkout time, along with departure gifts to guest. The package is designed to provide a comprehensive experience that guests can enjoy throughout their stay, from the moment they arrive until their departure.

In addition to the package amenities, the JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resorts and Spa offers a range of activities and services that guests can enjoy during their stay, including an 18-hole golf course, a world-class spa, multiple dining options, and much more.

"We're thrilled to offer this package to our guests and invite them to discover the beauty of a mid-week escape. We're confident that this package will appeal to all types of travelers, whether they're seeking a romantic getaway, a family vacation, or a relaxing solo trip," said Ronan Fearon, General Manager of JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resorts and Spa.

The "Weekdays are the New Weekends" package is available for booking now at the JW Marriott Bengaluru Prestige Golfshire Resorts and Spa. ■





# Current Trends and Future Prospects of Tourism in the Maldives

In anticipation of the summer travel season, global hospitality development company Pulse Hotels & Resorts has highlighted the latest trends expected to be the key drivers for increasing travel demand to the Maldives.

**M**aldives remains to be a year-round destination of high interest with travellers from around the world visiting for leisure including families with children, couples and solo travellers, groups of friends or corporate retreats and MICE travel.

Pertinent trends and insights that make the summer months look very promising for travel to the Maldives, as shared by Mr. Althaf Mohamed Ali, Chief Operating Officer at Pulse Hotels & Resorts:

Asian countries, especially China and India try becoming top source markets for summer 2023: India has consistently been a primary source market for the Maldives and expected to continue topping the list for this summer season as well, with high interest from other countries especially in Asia including China. Last year, India took the leading 14.4% market share with 241,369 tourist arrivals into the destination.

Spike in last minute holiday planning with short to long duration bookings:

Since the start of 2023, the Maldives has seen a spike in last minute holiday bookings from across countries, and with summer season on, this trend is expected to continue picking up in a big way. Vacationers are also increasingly cashing in on last minute travel deals from flight operators, online travel companies, hotels and resorts, as well as destination-led promotions.

Although typical leisure holidays in the Maldives tend to last between six and seven nights, the country's idyllic private island resorts have recently attracted a growing number of long-stay travellers who seek to blend work and leisure. With an increasing number of companies worldwide, particularly in Asia, adopting remote work policies, the Maldives has become a haven for those looking to escape the daily grind while still staying connected. In addition, families with school-aged children from countries like India are opting for longer stays of seven to ten nights or more during the holiday season.

Fuelling a sustained travel demand to unlock the tourism potential for Maldives as the preferred destination in 2023 and beyond: With other destinations around the world opening up back to pre-pandemic levels, there is immense potential for the Maldives to maintain its positioning as the top private island paradise.

MMPRC (Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation) already has several destination marketing and promotional initiatives in place to drive higher numbers, including partnerships with resorts and travel brands, digital and social media campaigns, participation in major trade events, media engagement programmes and beyond. Some other key contributors are various global flight carriers servicing major cities with multiple weekly flights, and continued flexible travel policies by the Maldivian government are only going to be added incentives for travel to increase to the sunny side of life, Maldives. ■

# Meet the First Ever Frankincense Sommelier of Muscat



Frankincense or luban as it is called in India has a unique history and mystical story behind it. The tale of the three wise men gifting frankincense to baby Jesus is widely popular, but do you know the origins, mystical story, and its cultural connect? All this and more are revealed during this interesting tour.

## The Frankincense Sommelier

Khalid has trained under Dr. Patricia Groves who has spent over 20 years researching and writing books about Oman's heritage, art, and culture. Khalid embarked on a quest to visit Salalah in the Dhofar region, to learn how frankincense is grown and harvested, and to meet with local villagers to understand its purpose. He also underwent an intensive training programme at the National Museum of Oman and Bait Al Zubair Museum to earn the official title of Culture and Heritage Ambassador at Shangri-La Muscat. His role involves bringing guests moments of joy by sharing stories and his knowledge of frankincense.

## Frankincense Garden Tour

Khalid oversees the traditional Omani welcome and takes guests on an incredible route discovering the history, architecture, and art of the hotel that's deeply rooted in Oman's cultural heritage and resort's private frankincense garden. Guests can touch, smell, and see frankincense in its natural form. The tour is complimentary for guests staying at

Shangri-La Muscat and held every Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. The architecture tour is held every Tuesday and Friday, and art tour is held every Thursday.

The resort's restaurants and bars feature cocktails and dishes infused with frankincense. Khalid recommends tasting Phoenix from the Flames cocktail that has limoncello, pastis, bourbon, orange, and frankincense. At the Luban Spa, guests can indulge in Arabian-Oriental treatments and massages that use frankincense oil.

## Traditional Omani Welcome

The guests are welcomed in an authentic Omani way at the resort. As soon as they enter one of the two resorts – Shangri-La Barr Al Jissah and Shangri-La Al Husn – which are side by side on Oman's beautiful coast, they can smell the sacred scent of frankincense wafting through the grand lobbies. They are greeted with Arabic coffee and dates.

## The Origin of Luban

Frankincense is an aromatic resin that originates from two main species of trees, *Boswellia sacra* and *Papyrifera*. Used widely in making incense and perfumes, it has an ancient origin when Egyptians called it the 'sweat of the Gods'. In the ancient world, Frankincense was more valuable than gold, and southern Oman just happened to be rich in Frankincense.

The word for frankincense in Arabic is luban, which is an integral part of Oman's heritage dating back to the 16th century. Decades ago, a mountainous area called Dhofar in southern Oman was renowned for its thriving import and export trade, exporting Arabian horses and frankincense. In ancient times the frankincense trail was the most important commercial route throughout southern Arabia. Frankincense was transported by camel along the spice trails from east to west and on to other empires across the globe.

## The Connection to Oman

Oman is home to the finest frankincense globally and it's also one of the most respected exporters of top-quality frankincense. Khalid grew up in Seeb, which is a coastal fishing village near Muscat, about a 10-hour drive to Salalah. It produces the finest frankincense in Oman. Salalah is shielded by a mountain that has created a wadi (dry valley or ravine) rich in minerals and soil, creating optimum conditions for the *Boswellia sacra* and *papyrifera* trees to grow. There is a special technique used to harvest the frankincense with a knife called a Manqaf. The Manqaf is used to make a cut in the tree's trunk and the sap slowly oozes from the cut and drips out in tear-shaped droplets. The aromatic resin then hardens and is cut from the tree bark.

## One Luban, Many Uses

Luban is used as a room scent and ward off any negative energy. It is well known for its healing and restorative properties as well as a perfume note and an aphrodisiac. The aromatic resin is also used for ceremonial and celebratory occasions such as during prayer and at weddings, and to ensure good health for a mother and child during childbirth. Khalid remembers his mother would burn half a kilogram of frankincense daily to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere in their house. She would boil Al Hojari frankincense in warm water, which is a high grade of frankincense that can be ingested for medicinal purposes.

Luban is commonly burnt at sunrise and sunset and is a key part of the welcome experience in an Omani household. Guests are offered Arabic coffee and dates amid wonderful scent of frankincense, which is recreated at the resort.

Shangri-La Muscat extends a heartfelt Omani hospitality to each of its guests and offers unique experiences that stay with them for years to come.





# Beyond the Grain

Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra is thrilled to announce the Millet Food Festival with the theme “Beyond the Grain.” The ten-day festival, starting on April 26th, will aim to provide unique dining experience featuring the extensive variety of superfood curated by the culinary experts.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets with approval by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Taj Hotel & Convention Centre is proud to be part of this initiative.

The hotel's chefs have undertaken a series of initiatives to explore the usage of millets in traditional cooking, including the visit to village Tundla near Agra to learn about growing the crop and cooking recipes with millets. The result is a menu that showcases millet's versatility as an ingredient and highlights its nutritional benefits.

Speaking about the initiative, Mr. Rahul Joshi, General Manager, Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra said “As

we celebrate the International Year of Millets, IHCL takes pride in running this initiative successfully across several regions. Millets are an essential part of our traditional Indian cuisine and have tremendous nutritional benefits. By organising the Millet Food Festival, we are not only celebrating our rich culinary heritage but also contributing towards sustainable agriculture and healthy living. Our efforts align with our commitment to responsible hospitality and building a better tomorrow. We hope to inspire more people to adopt a millet-based diet and contribute towards a healthier, happier India for generations to come.”

“In the food festival, we are featuring extensive variety of cuisines including

millet salads, millet burgers, millet porridge, and even millet-based desserts. ‘Beyond the Grain’ is all about experiencing the variety Millet can offer while also highlight the nutritional benefits of this grain. Millet is rich in fiber, protein, and important vitamins and minerals. Along with the dining experience at our fabled Daawat – E – Nawaab, we will have our team talk to our guests on how to incorporate millet into a healthy diet,” said Palash Ghosh, Executive Chef at Taj Hotel & Convention Centre, Agra.

The festival will take place at the hotel's celebrated specialty restaurant Daawat-E-Nawab, and will be open between 6:30 pm to 11:00 pm. Guests can relish dishes such as Bajra ke Raab with jowar crisp (broth of pearls millet with sorghum crisp), Jowar sabz ki seekh kebab (sorghum coated vegetable kebab on skewers cooked in charcoal tandoor), and Ragi crusted fish with Alleppey curry (finger millet crusted fish served with raw mango coconut curry). The “Beyond the Grains” Millet Food Festival promises to be a unique and exciting culinary experience, highlighting the potential of millets in traditional and innovative cuisine. ■

# Upgrade yourself with Biohacking

Have you ever felt like you could use an upgrade? Maybe you're tired all the time, struggle to focus, or just don't feel like you're performing at your best.



Well, what if I told you there's a way to biohack your body and mind to optimize your performance and achieve a state of optimal health and wellness? Yes, you read it right - biohacking. It's not just a buzzword or the stuff of Instagram. It's a real, scientifically-backed practice that involves using cutting-edge technology,

nutrition, and lifestyle changes to hack your biology and achieve peak performance.

But what does that even mean? Well, think of it like this: you know how you upgrade your phone's operating system to make it faster and more efficient, biohacking is like upgrading your body's operating system to make it perform at

its best.

Sounds too good to be true, right? I get it. The idea of biohacking can be a little intimidating or even ridiculous to some. I mean, who needs to hack when you've got a cup of coffee to get you going in the morning, right?

But the truth is we live in a world where stress, poor nutrition, and lack of

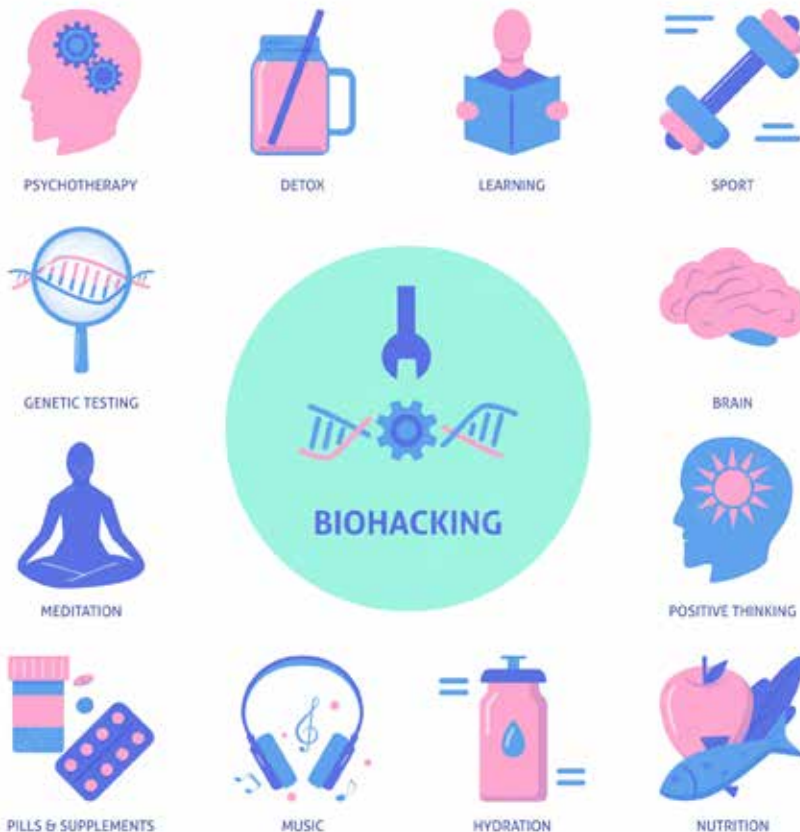


exercise have become the norm. And that can take a toll on our bodies and minds. So, why not take advantage of the latest science and technology to optimize our health and wellness?

In this article, we'll explore the science behind biohacking, the benefits and risks of this practice, and some popular biohacking techniques that you can try for yourself.

## What is Biohacking?

Biohacking is a term that has been gaining popularity in recent years, but what exactly does it mean? Simply put, biohacking is the practice of using science and technology to optimize your body and mind. This can include everything from optimizing your diet, sleep, and exercise routines to using supplements, wearable devices, and even gene editing technology. While some may view biohacking as a fringe movement or even as a form of self-experimentation, many people are turning to biohacking as a



way to improve their overall health, performance, and well-being.

Biohacking is essentially the practice of "hacking" your biology to optimize your health and well-being. This can involve a variety of approaches, including dietary changes, exercise routines, and the use of supplements and wearable devices. Some people may even go so far as to use gene editing technology to modify their DNA to enhance their physical or mental abilities. While the idea of biohacking may seem like something out of a science fiction novel, there is a growing body of scientific research that supports the practice of biohacking. For example, studies have shown that optimizing your diet and exercise routines can improve your overall health and reduce your risk of chronic diseases like heart disease and diabetes. Similarly, using wearable devices like fitness trackers can help you monitor your physical activity levels and improve your fitness over time.



## Benefits of Biohacking

One of the main benefits of biohacking is that it can help you optimize your health and well-being in a way that is tailored to your individual needs. For example, if you have a genetic predisposition to a certain condition, you can use biohacking techniques to help mitigate your risk of developing that condition. Similarly, if you have a specific health goal, like improving your athletic performance or reducing your stress levels, you can use biohacking techniques to help you achieve that goal.

Another benefit of biohacking is that it can help you stay motivated and engaged in your health and fitness journey. By using tools like fitness trackers and genetic testing, you can get real-time feedback on your progress and make adjustments to your routine as needed. This can help you stay on track and reach your health and fitness goals more quickly and effectively than you

would otherwise.

Finally, biohacking can help you tap into your full potential by optimizing your body and mind. By optimizing your diet, sleep, and exercise routines, you can improve your mental clarity, creativity, and overall cognitive function. This can be especially beneficial for people in high-stress or demanding careers, as well as those who are looking to maximize their performance in sports or other physical activities.

## Risks of Biohacking

While there are certainly many benefits to biohacking, there are also some potential risks and drawbacks to consider. For example, some biohacking techniques may be expensive or time-consuming, and may not be accessible to everyone. Additionally, some techniques, like gene editing, can carry ethical concerns and potential long-term health risks.

Another potential risk of biohacking is that it can be easy to become obsessed with optimizing your health and well-being to the point where it becomes unhealthy or even dangerous. This is known as orthorexia, and it can lead to disordered eating habits, obsessive exercise routines, and other unhealthy behaviors. It's important to approach biohacking with a balanced and realistic mindset and to always prioritize your overall health and well-being over any specific goal or objective.

These famous biohackers have used their expertise and experience to explore new technologies and techniques to enhance their physical and mental performance. Here are some of the most famous biohackers you can look up to for inspiration:

- 1 Dave Asprey: Asprey is considered one of the pioneers of biohacking, also known as 'lifestyle guru' and is the founder of Bulletproof, a company that specializes in performance-enhancing products. Asprey is known for his popular book "The Bulletproof Diet," which advocates for a high-fat, low-carbohydrate diet that can help improve mental clarity and energy levels. He is also known for his experimentation with nootropics, which are supplements that can improve cognitive function.
- 2 Tim Ferriss: Ferriss is a well-known entrepreneur, author, and podcaster, and he has also made significant contributions to the field of biohacking. He is the author of "The 4-Hour Body," which is a comprehensive guide to optimizing the human body through various techniques, such as cold therapy, intermittent fasting, and strength training. Ferriss is also a proponent of nootropics and has experimented with various supplements to improve his cognitive function.
- 3 Ben Greenfield: Greenfield is a biohacker, author, and podcast host who has dedicated his life





to optimizing his health and performance. He is known for his expertise in fitness and nutrition, and he has written several books on the subject. Greenfield has experimented with various biohacking techniques, such as cryotherapy, cold exposure, and infrared saunas, to improve his physical and mental performance.

- 4 Dr. Jack Kruse: Kruse is a neurosurgeon and biohacker who has focused on optimizing the body's natural rhythms to improve health and performance. He is known for his work on the "quantum biology" of the human body, which involves using light, magnetism, and other natural forces to enhance the body's functions. Kruse is also a proponent of cold therapy, and he has experimented with various techniques to improve his health and performance.
- 5 Max Lugavere: Lugavere is a filmmaker, author, and health advocate who has dedicated his life to understanding the connection between nutrition and brain health. He is the author of "Genius Foods," a book that explores the science behind how certain foods can improve cognitive function and prevent cognitive decline.

Lugavere is also a proponent of nootropics and has experimented with various supplements to improve his cognitive function.

- 6 Molly Maloof: Maloof is a physician and biohacker who focuses on using technology and data to optimize health and wellness. She is a leader in the field of personalized medicine and has worked with several Silicon Valley startups to develop innovative health solutions. Maloof is also a proponent of nootropics and has experimented with various supplements to improve cognitive function.
- 7 Angela A. Stanton: Stanton is a biochemist and author who has dedicated her career to understanding the relationship between nutrition, health, and disease. She is the author of "Fighting the Migraine Epidemic," a book that explores the science behind migraines and provides practical advice on how to prevent and treat them. Stanton is also a proponent of ketogenic diets and has written extensively on their potential benefits for health and wellness.

## How to start?

Biohacking is a personal and

individual journey that strives to achieve better performance and well-being. However, with so much information out there, it can be challenging to know where to start. To make things easier, let's break down biohacking into three categories: habits and behavior, diet and supplements, and technical gadgets.

**Habits and Behavior:** Meditation is a simple and effective biohacking tool that can improve your physical, mental, and emotional health. If you're new to meditation, start by dedicating at least 10 minutes each morning to practice. Sleep optimization is also crucial for your well-being. Besides eating healthily and exercising regularly, you can improve your sleep quality by supplementing melatonin, optimizing your sleep environment, and using blue light filter glasses to protect your melatonin production.

**Diet and Supplements:** Your diet plays a vital role in your health and well-being. Biohackers often follow specific diets like paleo or keto, depending on their goals. Intermittent fasting is also a popular biohacking tactic that involves cycling between periods of fasting and eating. Supplements are another way to optimize your body and mind, but be cautious and listen to your body to avoid overdoing it.

**Technical Gadgets:** Technology can also help you hack your way to better health. A walking pad is a simple yet effective way to stay active even when you're working from home. Blue light filter glasses can improve your sleep quality, while cryotherapy or ice baths can help with muscle recovery and discomfort.

Remember, biohacking is not a one-size-fits-all solution, and what works for someone else might not work for you. The first rule of biohacking is to pay attention to yourself, your reactions, and your well-being. Start small and take things at your own pace. Biohacking should be an enjoyable journey of discovery, not a source of pressure or stress. ■

# Stop Overpacking, travel with less stress and more freedom



Are you the kind of person who can't resist stuffing your suitcase to the brim before a trip? Do you feel like you need to bring every possible outfit, just in case the weather decides to do a 180? Are you the type of traveler who packs for every possible scenario, even if it's highly unlikely to happen? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then you, my friend, are an over-packer.



Overpacking is the art of stuffing your luggage with unnecessary items that you probably won't even use during your trip. It's a skill that's been honed over years of travel, and it's hard to break. But fear not, dear reader, for you are not alone.

Over-packers come in all kinds. There are the "just in case" packers, who bring multiple outfits for each day of their trip. There are the "gadget" packers, who bring every electronic device they own, even if they won't have time to use them. And then there are the "souvenir" packers, who leave little room in their suitcase for anything else because they plan to fill it to the brim with trinkets and knick-knacks from their travels.

But why do we overpack? Is it because we're afraid of not having what we need? Is it because we want to be prepared for any possible situation? Or



is it simply because we can't bear to leave anything behind? Whatever the reason, overpacking can lead to a lot of unnecessary stress and frustration.

So, the next time you're packing for a trip, take a moment to reflect on your packing habits. Do you need five pairs of shoes for a weekend getaway? Do you need to bring your entire makeup collection for a camping trip? Remember, less is often more when it comes to travel.

Packing light is a mantra among experienced travellers. The idea is to pack only what you need and not to burden yourself with unnecessary weight. This not only saves you time, money, and energy, but it also makes your travels more enjoyable.

Many famous travellers have spoken about the importance of packing light.



Rick Steves, the travel writer and television host, is a strong advocate of traveling light. He once said, "You can't travel heavy, happy, and cheap. Pick two." Another famous traveler, Anne Lamott, has also spoken about the benefits of packing light. In her book "Traveling Mercies," she writes, "I don't pack a lot. I don't see the point. It's just more to drag around."

When it comes to luggage on a long trip, less is more. Lugging around a

heavy suitcase or backpack can be exhausting and stressful, making it difficult to fully enjoy the trip. It's important to pack smart and only bring what is necessary. This can also help save money on luggage fees at airports. So, how can you pack light? Firstly, Before you start packing, make a list of all the items you will need for your trip. This will help you avoid packing unnecessary items. One strategy is to pack only what you know you'll need, rather than bringing extra items "just

in case." As travel writer Pico Iyer once said, "Pack "must-have," not "just in case." This means that you should pack for one average week, not for every possible scenario. Don't bring items that you might need, but probably won't use.

Another strategy is to use packing cubes, which can help you stay organised and maximise space in your luggage. Travel writer and photographer Dan Bailey recommends using compression packing cubes to save even more space. When packing for a trip, it's important to consider the weather conditions you'll be facing. Check the weather forecast for your destination and pack accordingly. If it's going to be hot and humid, pack lightweight and breathable clothing. If it's going to be cold, pack layers that you can easily remove or add as needed. It's also a good idea to choose versatile items, such as clothes that can be mixed and matched, and to wear bulky items. This can help you save space and weight in your luggage. As travel writer Rolf Potts recommends, don't pack to capacity. Leave some room in your bag for souvenirs or other items you might pick up along the way. Don't go into 'survival' mode to avoid overpacking for



every possible scenario. It's important to pack only the essentials and focus on the items that will make the trip comfortable and enjoyable. This can include solid toiletries, and lightweight packing cubes to keep things organized.

It's also important to keep in mind that a person's packing style can be a reflection of their personality. Some people may prefer to pack light, focusing on only the essentials and enjoying the freedom of traveling without heavy baggage. Others may prefer to pack more, finding comfort in having everything they may need "just in case". According to Fielding, a travel expert, your packing habits reflect your anticipation of what lies ahead in terms of safety and comfort. Thus, whether you tend to pack light or heavy is not a personality flaw but rather a safety prediction based on your needs. It's important to find a style that works for you and your travel preferences.

Choose the right bag, when it comes to luggage on a long trip, Lugging around a heavy suitcase or backpack can be exhausting and stressful, making it difficult to fully enjoy the trip. It's

important to choose the right kind and size of bag depending on the various factors of your travel.

Rolling your clothes instead of folding them can also help save space and prevent wrinkles. Lastly, it's crucial to consider safety when packing for a trip. Products such as money belts, luggage locks, AirTags, and RFID-blocking wallets can help keep both you and your belongings safe while traveling.

But why is it so important? One, it's much more convenient. Carrying around a heavy bag can slow you down, make it difficult to manoeuvre through crowded areas, and add unnecessary stress to your travels. It can also be costly, as many airlines now charge extra fees for overweight or oversized luggage. Additionally, overpacking can be a safety risk. The more you pack, the more you have to keep track of, and the greater the risk of losing something valuable or having it stolen.

Overpacking when traveling can have a range of negative consequences that are best avoided. Overpacking can lead to extra costs, such as overweight

luggage fees or the need for larger transportation options. There are also safety concerns to consider, as packing too much can increase the risk of losing or having items stolen, while also making it difficult to lift or move an overloaded suitcase. Often, overpacking is unnecessary, as we frequently end up not using many of the items we pack, leading to wasted effort and hassle. Additionally, overpacking is also bad for the environment, contributing to a higher carbon footprint and increased waste.

The question of whether to pack light or heavy when traveling remains subjective, with no definitive answer. However, airlines' recent adoption of low-cost ticket tiers, such as basic economy, which limits passengers to a small bag, and the increase in checked-bag fees have prompted the travel industry to encourage people to travel with less. As a result, striking a balance between packing just enough and overpacking can be challenging. It's always advisable to pack only what is necessary, 'Less is more' in terms of luggage. ■



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# Transformation of Indian Hospitality Industry

“In addition to domestic tourism, many international hotel chains are also expanding their presence in India, attracted by the large and growing market for hospitality services. Today, hotels are increasingly investing in technology solutions to keep up with the experiential tourist,” said Mr. Chander K. Baljee, Chairman & Managing Director, Royal Orchid Hotels Limited

## What are your expansion plans?

Royal Orchid Hotels Limited (ROHL), the fastest-growing Indian hospitality chain recently announced a strategic expansion of its Regenta brand across India. As per company reports, 26 new properties are slated to open in 2023 targeting leisure and business guests alike. ROHL will add to its list of properties across India with new openings in Tier 2 and 3 cities such as Coorg, Gulbarga, Gangtok, Digha (West Bengal), Nellore, Jhansi, Raipur, and Pune among many others.

The openings are slated across different sub-segments across Indian cities. The list includes three Regenta Resorts, nine Regenta Central properties, seven Regenta Inn properties and seven Regenta Place properties.

## How you will focus on Skill Training Programs for the upcoming students in Hospitality Industry?

We will collaborate with industry partners to ensure that skill training programs are relevant and up-to-date. With the collaboration, industry partners can provide valuable insights

into workforce skills, knowledge and the designing of training programs.

The next step is aligning with industry standards by designing courses focusing on skill training. This can be working with industry associations or regulatory bodies to ensure that the content of courses meets industry requirements.

Experiential learning is also an effective way to develop skills and knowledge within the hospitality industry. This can focus on internships, apprenticeships, or other forms of work-based learning that provide hands-on experience. Our next focus would be online and blended learning options making skill training programs accessible to students. These formats are effective for working professionals who need flexibility in their schedules. We also pay keen emphasis on providing students with career guidance and support throughout their training programs. This can involve connecting students with industry professionals, mentorship opportunities, and placements.

## What is your opinion about the overall Hospitality Sector? How they have revived? Is it



## flourishing?

The Indian hospitality industry is on a revival path but in most cases with demand rising, more recovery. It can be safely said that one of the key drivers of demand for the hospitality sector in India is domestic tourism. This sector has shown tremendous potential and



steady growth. Domestic tourists are increasingly looking for high-quality hospitality services, and this has led to a surge in demand for hotels and other hospitality services in popular tourist destinations.

In addition to domestic tourism, many international hotel chains are also expanding their presence in India, attracted by the large and growing market for hospitality services. Today, hotels are increasingly investing in technology solutions to keep up with the experiential tourist.

### Are you planning to expand in International Market? If yes, which all?

Yes, we are in talks with multiple country property owners, especially in countries like Maldives, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.

continue in the coming years. Below are some ways in which the industry is changing:

1. **Contactless check-in and check-out:** Many hotels are implementing these processes to reduce the need for physical interaction between guests and staff. This is implemented through mobile apps, self-check-in kiosks, and other technology.
2. **Digital Concierge:** Guests can procure instant access to information and assistance such as recommendations for local restaurants and attractions, room service requests, and more. This is being achieved through the use of chatbots, mobile apps, and voice-activated assistants.
3. **Smart Rooms:** These rooms are equipped with IoT (Internet of
4. **Virtual and Augmented Reality:** is being used by hotels to provide guests with immersive experiences, such as virtual tours of hotel facilities, attractions, and destinations. This technology is also being used to enhance training and development for hotel staff.
5. **Predictive Analytics:** Hotels are using predictive analytics to better understand guest preferences and behaviour which allows them to personalize the guest experience and improve customer satisfaction. This technology is also being used to optimize pricing and revenue management.
6. **Cloud-based solutions:** are being used by hotels to improve efficiency and reduce costs. This includes cloud-based property management systems, customer



### How is the Indian Hospitality Industry is Transforming Through Innovation & Technology?

The Indian hospitality industry is rapidly transforming through innovation and technology, which will likely

Things) devices, such as smart thermostats, lighting, and appliances that can be controlled by guests through their mobile devices or voice assistants. This not only improves guest experience but also helps hotels to save energy and reduce costs.

relationship management systems, and other software solutions.

Overall, the Indian hospitality industry is embracing innovation and technology to provide a better guest experience, improve efficiency, and stay competitive in a rapidly changing market. ■

# Enriching Wine Experiences With Atmosphere Core

Atmosphere Core elevates guests' holiday experiences across its portfolio of three brands and eight resorts in the Maldives through Creative New Wine Events and vintages from its third exclusive wine partner, the Glenelly Estate.

**S**un, sand, and sea with some exquisite vino. While wine may not be the first thing that springs to mind when you think of a Maldives getaway, Atmosphere Core is turning heads with their innovative approach to cultivating an authentic in-house wine culture.

Following inspiring in-resort events with Champagne Guy Charbaut in 2021 and 2022 and Bodegas Viñátigo in 2022, Atmosphere Core announces exclusive wine experiences across its portfolio of eight resorts and three brands. Woven into the holiday plans, sybarites can savour sublime terroir wines while basking in the sheer bliss of the Maldives' idyllic isles.

Free-flowing champagne and fine wines set a celebratory note at THE OZEN COLLECTION. Now, wine lovers can challenge their palate with sophisticated weekly Blind Wine Tasting sessions, held at both OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI and OZEN LIFE MAADHOO.

At VARU By Atmosphere, a part of the Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts brand, gourmet 'Moonshine Wine & Dine' experiences are hosted at the Charcoal restaurant on full moon nights. It is a symphony of flavours with a special wine for every culinary creation of the three-course dinner.

COLOURS OF OBLU brand adds an engaging, exuberant touch, for

unforgettable memories with loved ones. OBLU SELECT Lobigili offers special Honeymoon Wine events. OBLU SELECT Sangeligoes beyond traditional wine pairings, inviting guests to relish their tipples with quirky fusion canapés featuring local dishes as toppings. The refreshing Wine Not?! events are organized every week. A variety of old and new world wines are presented during the weekly World-Wine Xperience held at La Promenade at OBLU Xperience Ailafushi.

## Three Wine Partnerships Driven by Shared Values

Atmosphere Core has partnered with three family-owned wineries—Champagne Guy Charbaut, Bodegas Viñátigo, and the newest addition, Glenelly Estate. Each of their three wine partners were carefully chosen based on years of research and consideration of their authenticity, family-owned values, and unique expressive terroir wines that cannot be found elsewhere in the Maldives.

Owners and winemakers of Champagne Guy Charbaut and Bodegas Viñátigo travelled to THE OZEN COLLECTION resorts in 2022 for inspiring wine soirees and masterclasses. In early 2023, a team of frontline F&B professionals from Atmosphere Core were hosted at the Bodegas Viñátigo winery in Canary Islands for an immersive, week-long educational tour. They gained a true appreciation of the craft, evident through the sparkling, genuine guest interactions. ■







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