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EDUCATION



DR DEVIYA RANE

## CASHING IN ON CASHEW

The Chairperson of Goa Forest Development Corporation has injected interest and capital into the humble Goan fruit with CASHEW FEST 2024, that turned out to be a runaway success

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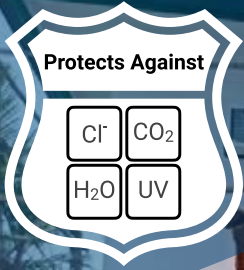


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# EDITORIAL

## FARM FRESH



**Harshvardhan Bhatkuly**

Lush green forests, the sparkle of the azure ocean and the skies a majestic blue, are the characteristic features of beautiful Goa. The land of Goa, lying at the foothills of the Western Ghats, has been blessed with abundant fertile soil making agriculture the mainstay of the Goan populace right from its early days. Indeed, the name Goa has its etymological roots in the Sanskrit word 'Go' meaning cow, indicating that the original settlers of the land were engaged in agriculture. Since then, all through the millennia, Goa has been the land of toiling farmers and diligent cultivators, long before the mining boom and the tourism activities took hold of the state.

Despite this eternal connection of agriculture to the land, recent statistics indicate that most of the agricultural land in Goa has been going out of cultivation and is progressively being put to non-agricultural use, with government reports showing that the decrease in average size of farmlands has been the most in the state. Here, it is the small and marginal farmers who have been most involved in this land fragmentation as the average size of land they possess has registered a decrease. Apart from Goa's fertile agricultural land which is fast depleting, its unique *Khazan* farms have also been affected due to short-sighted planning, public apathy, illegal land-filling and haphazard urbanisation. With everyone wanting a piece of Goa's land, the far areas are bound to deplete, as Goans continue to sell their holdings for tempting rates. The state is also home to the largest urban population amongst all the small states in India and an exponential increase in urban population has put a lot of pressure on agricultural land in the state, contributing to the decline in agricultural produce and making Goa dependent on its neighbouring states for the supply of fruits and vegetables.

All, however, is not doom and gloom and in line with the popular belief, there's light at the end of the tunnel. Amongst the list of the Padma Shri awardees for 2024, was Goa's

own son of the soil, Sanjay Patil, who received the prestigious award for his remarkable contributions to natural farming and zero-energy micro-irrigation system. Hope is found in the likes of Patil, who despite the many odds that he encountered on his journey, continued to persevere and saw his efforts bear fruit. An increasing number of farmers like Patil focus on the benefits of organic farming and advocate a shift to natural farming practices, not solely for the sake of profits, but also to preserve the fertility of the soil and reduce the harm caused to the environment by chemical fertilisers. Patil's *kulaghar* is home to various crops like arecanut, black pepper, cashew, pineapple and coconuts, which thrive with his *jeevamrut* produced from natural sources like cow dung. In this regard, it is the youth of the state which stand to be inspired from veterans like Patil, who has made good use of the guidance available from agricultural institutions in the state, including the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Central Coastal Agricultural Research Institute (CCARI), apart from Goa's Agriculture Department. The youth of today are the future of tomorrow and it is this generation which can successfully carry forward the baton handed down by our ancestors. While a successful career abroad, white-collar jobs and the likes of it may seem lucrative, getting back to our roots and cultivating the soil of our ancestors while incorporating the benefits of modern science is a much more fulfilling profession. Of course, there is no denying that it is a tough job entailing hard labour that demands patience to see one's efforts bear 'fruit'.

The government, in this regard, has a big role to play in making people aware of the benefits of organic agriculture, encouraging the young to take up full-time farming as a profession and disseminating information about agriculture-related schemes and subsidies. The task is chalked out and the road ahead is set; in the words of Swami Vivekananda, lets "Arise, awake and stop not till the mission is achieved"

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## Passenger footfalls at the Dabolim airport continue to decrease

The month of March witnessed a 21% decrease in passenger footfalls at Dabolim airport in South Goa amid already dwindling numbers that the airport has begun to see in the past few years.

The total passenger traffic at the airport decreased by 18% from 84 lakh passengers in 2022-23 to 69.7 lakh passengers for the 2023-24 period. A key reason for this is the slowdown



in foreign tourists, as per information shared by the Airport Authority of India. Coupled with this decline in

foreign passengers, the airport also seems to have lost out on domestic air travellers at a time when tourism dominated by domestic tourists is on a rise in the state. However, it is a fact that the Dabolim airport faces stiff competition from its North Goa counterpart, Mopa airport. The Greenfield airport which commenced operations in January 2023, and is now readying for construction of

phase 2, saw passenger footfalls to the tune of 44 million for the entire year of 2023-24. The shifting of the air bases of international carriers like Oman Airways, Qatar Airways and Air India to the Mopa airport have all added to the Dabolim airport's woes as concerned stakeholders like the hoteliers and taxi operators of South Goa express worry about their future. **✎**

## GSPCB to now charge industries for issuing compliance certificates

The Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) which regularly receives applications to issue quarterly certificates for compliance of imports as well as compliance certificates from industrial units registered with it, will now levy a fee of ₹5000 for every certificate.

The move comes at a time when the GSPCB has also sought to revise the charges for authorisation to handle different types of waste. Under the Hazardous and Other Waste (Management and Trans-boundary Movement) Rules 2016, a fee of ₹10,000 was charged for processing authorisation to handle hazardous and other waste and trans-boundary movement, e-waste and solid waste, which is now hiked to ₹15,000.

Similarly, a fee of ₹15,000 will also be charged to collect, store, transport, segregate, dismantle, recycle, or dispose of e-waste. As with e-waste, a fee of ₹15,000 will also be charged for the handling of solid waste, as per the new rules.

The Board has also sought to revise the fees for those industries seeking to manufacture, stock, distribute, sell, import, or use plastic carry bags, plastic sheets, or plastic packaging.

Industries looking for fresh registration with one year validity will now have to pay ₹5000 under the Plastic Waste Management Rules, while a subsequent renewal application, which is valid for three years, will be charged at ₹15,000. **✎**

## GOA'S FAMOUS 'KHOLA' CHILLI FARMERS FACE 40% DROP IN PRICE

Amid a plentiful harvest, cultivators of Goa's famous Khola chillies lamented that they are battling a price plunge of around 40% for their premium quality produce, which bagged the GI tag in 2020.

This year, the farmers are earning ₹700 per kg for the fine variety as compared to ₹1000 - ₹1100 for the previous years. Rupesh Velip, General Secretary of the Federation of the Gawada, Kunbi, Velip and Dhangar (GAKUVED), pointing to sharp fluctuations in the market forces stated,



"Cultivating the GI-tagged chillies has not benefitted the farmers, as the selling price for the famed chillies for some farmers was as low as ₹600 per

## GOA SHIPYARD LTD AND DAMEN SHIPYARDS INK DEAL TO BUILD E-TUGS



In accordance with the Ministry for Ports, Shipping and Waterways, which aims to make India a global hub for green shipbuilding by 2030, Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) has joined hands with the Dutch shipbuilding conglomerate Damen Shipyards to jointly develop electric-tug boats. The former, which builds warships for the Indian Navy and the Indian Coast Guard, inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the latter in Mumbai in the presence of Liesje Schreinemacher, Dutch Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation. The MoU, will pave the way for GSL to obtain cutting-edge, reliable and green solutions.

The Ministry for Ports, Shipping, and Waterways has given impetus to its aim to transition to green energy

by launching the Green Tug Transition Programme which introduces hybrid, green tugs that will be powered by hybrid propulsion systems before adopting non-fossil fuels like methanol, ammonia, and hydrogen. To considerably reduce emissions, at least 50% of all tugs operational in India are likely to be converted into green tugs by 2030.

Commenting on the collaboration, a high ranking official from Netherlands stated, "The acceleration towards energy transition is an opportunity for both countries to collaborate. Energy is just one example of how we are collaborating. We are doing it in different fields, like agriculture, health, water, on climate studies but if we look at energy, one very specific point is on green hydrogen". **✎**

kg."

To support the farmers, the Federation has placed demands like support price and protection from bison attacks, before the government in order to make good their losses.

On the other hand, the Agriculture Directorate maintains that the price of the

chilli has fallen due to market forces, as Valpoi-based farmer Nestor Rangel poignantly mentions that the prices of all varieties of chillies have fallen in the state due to higher production in Karnataka and other states like Andhra Pradesh. **✎**

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## Environmental clearance to mining companies to be expedited

The Union Environment Ministry has constituted a three-member State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) under the chairmanship of Dr Purushottam Raya Pednekar to accelerate the procedure to issue Environmental Clearance (EC) certificates to mining companies. The chairman and the members of the newly-


constituted authority are slated to hold office for a term of three years.

The Central Ministry had also formed the nine-member State Level Expert Appraisal Committee under the leadership of Pascoal Barbosa Noronha in a bid to assist the authority. Two mining companies have already completed public

hearings and a few companies have approached the SEIAA to conclude the terms of reference for conducting the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The mining industry, more than a decade ago, was the largest contributor to the Goan economy. However, the brakes were put on mining in Goa in March 2018, following the

Supreme Court's decision to quash the second renewal of mining leases.


Consequent to the Goa government's push to restart mining activities, the state's mining industry kick-started operations on April 4, after a six-year hiatus, with Vedanta Sesa Goa beginning fresh extraction of ore at the Bicholim mineral block-Block 1 

## Polluting pharmaceutical companies in Goa told to furnish details to the NGT

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has issued notices to all states and Union territories, including Goa, asking them to furnish detailed compliance reports explaining the existing regulatory norms, the number of pharmaceutical companies adhering to these norms and the action initiated against violators, in a bold move to tackle the issue of pharmaceutical-induced environmental pollution. The order, passed recently, directs the states to file their responses at least a week before the next date of hearing, which falls in August 2024. This directive comes in the wake of increasing instances of pharmaceutical pollutants infiltrating water bodies, soil, and ecosystems through various routes, some of which included untoward disposal by healthcare facilities,



manufacturing units and households. The NGT order particularly highlights the role of drug ingestion, excretion, chemicals used in agriculture and improper waste management as adding to the issue.

Faced with the reality that pharmaceutical-induced environmental contamination was an issue that needed urgent attention, the original application was registered based on an article titled 'Impact of pharmaceutical toxicity on environment and its regulatory aspects' published in the journal, *Current Science* on 25th February 2024. The article found that pharmacies at times cannot filter all the chemicals used in pharmaceutical production and these unfiltered chemicals cause chemical pollution in the environment 

## IPSCDL contemplates roping in Finnish companies to handle water pollution




In a bid to deal with pollutants in the capital's three major water bodies – the Mandovi River, the St. Inez and the Rua de Ourem creeks-and handle Panaji's wastewater management system, the Imagine Panaji Smart City Development Limited (IPSCDL) intends to use the services of two Finnish companies.

According to a senior IPSCDL official, one of the two Finnish companies, Lamor India, may be roped in to assess water quality and handle waste water management along the Mandovi riverfront. The authorities also plan to use the company's expertise in bioremediation of the three major water bodies of Panaji.

The second company that the IPSCDL authorities

have pinned their hopes on is the Helsinki-headquartered RiverRecycle. The company, which is a start-up dedicated to combating plastic pollution in rivers, boasts of having collected over 2.5 million kilograms of waste from rivers in India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Ghana. Although this company was established just five years ago, it boasts of having innovative solutions to collect and recycle plastic waste as well as other debris floating on rivers and water bodies.

The Smart City authority's interest in these two Finnish companies grew when officials held discussions with them at a recent workshop which was facilitated by Finland's consulate 

## Patent awarded for facemask with filtration



Dr Neena Panandikar



Prof Gaurish Samant




Dr Aneesh Lawande

The joint efforts of a team of two engineers and a doctor, who developed an innovative face mask with filtration, bore fruit as the Central Government's Patent Office awarded them a patent for their sustainable innovation.

The team comprising of Dr Neena Panandikar, Principal, Don Bosco College of Engineering, Fatorda; Gaurish Samant, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering and Dr Aneesh Lawande, Cardiothoracic Surgeon,

had applied for the patent in November 2020 but received it only in the last week of April 2024. They, however, are optimistic that although their patent took four long years, the process is easing up at present. Describing the facemask, Dr Panandikar states that the main frame was made with a 3D printing platform and it has a unique filtration system made from non-woven indigenous material that is available within the country itself. The filtration

system comprises PM 2.5 filter and absorption layers which are low in cost and are easily replaceable. At the height of the pandemic and recognising the urgent need for an effective, high-filtration mask that prioritised both comfort and functionality, Dr Panandikar brought on board Gaurish Samant for his innovative approach and Dr Lawande for his practical expertise in the field to develop this innovative facemask 

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**Dr Deviya Rane, Chairperson of Goa Forest Development Corporation has injected interest and capital into the humble Goan fruit with CASHEW FEST 2024, that turned out to be a runaway success**



**DR DEVIYA RANE**

# CASHING IN ON CASHEW

**About yourself...**

I grew up in Margao, surrounded by a large, loving family and many cousins. I was particularly close to my grandmother, who played a significant role in my upbringing. My early education was at Manovikas, followed by Model English High School. I then attended Chowgule

College for my higher studies and went on to earn my MBBS from Goa Medical College.

Throughout my life, some of my school and college friends have remained my closest companions. Although they now live in different parts of the world, our friendship remains as strong as ever.

I was born into the Timblo family, originally from Assolna but later settled in Margao, where we entered the mining business. In school, I had a passion for sports and dance, and I dedicated ten years to learning Bharatnatyam. I enjoyed painting and reading fiction, which provided a

perfect balance to my academic and professional pursuits.

My parents instilled in me the importance of hard work, integrity, and compassion. My father's steadfast values and my mother's incredible sacrifices for her children have been a guiding force in my life. She devoted herself entirely to

our well-being and education, ensuring that we had every opportunity to succeed. Her dedication and love has been a constant source of inspiration for me.

These experiences have shaped who I am today, blending my love for tradition, my commitment to my profession, and the enduring relationships that continue to support and inspire me.

#### **You are a doctor by profession, what made you get into medicine?**

Psychology and biology have always been my favourite subjects, and that naturally drew me towards a career in medicine. My maternal side of the family, the Kenkres, includes several doctors, and my mother herself is a doctor. This strong medical background inspired me from a young age.

My passion for medicine, particularly the healing aspect, further fuelled my desire to become a doctor. At that time, there were limited streams to choose from, so I pursued a medical degree with the intention of specialising in dermatology and cosmetology. However, life had other plans for me. I got married in 1998, and by 1999, I had my older daughter, Aishwarya. A few years later, my younger daughter was born, and I devoted my time to raising my children.

Even though my career took an unexpected turn, my passion for medicine and the desire to help others heal has always remained strong. These experiences have only enriched my perspective and commitment to the field.

#### **What were the early years like in the profession?**

The early years of my medical profession, particularly my time at Goa Medical College (GMC), were some of the most memorable and cherished moments of my life. It was a fascinating period, where I delved deeply

into the intricacies of the human body and its functions. The friendships I have formed during those years have lasted a lifetime, and participating in inter-collegiate events added a dynamic and enjoyable aspect to my studies.

Every exam was both a stressful and a valuable learning experience. The one-year internship was especially memorable, with my posting in Mandur standing out as an unforgettable experience. Joining the dermatology department and working under the guidance of the late Dr Rege was incredibly enlightening and enriching.

Working as a junior resident in the Outpatient Department (OPD) and wards allowed me to engage directly with patients, providing me with hands-on experience in healing and patient care. This period was profoundly satisfying, as nothing compares to the fulfillment of helping and healing others. These early years laid a solid foundation for my career and deeply reinforced my passion for medicine.

#### **What made you enter politics?**

Getting married into a political family was a new and unique experience for me. In the early years, I often accompanied my father-in-law, Pratapsingh Rane and my husband, Vishwajit while they engaged with constituents. I spent a lot of time quietly observing, absorbing the dynamics, and understanding the community's needs. This immersion deepened when Vishwajit prepared for his first election in 2007, a process that we started well before the actual campaign.

During this time, I actively contributed by campaigning and working behind the scenes, focusing on creating self-help groups and programs to skill women in various fields. Empowering women has always been a passion of mine, and I found fulfillment in helping them become self-reliant and confident.

Over the years, my involvement grew, and I realised I needed to step into active politics myself. I saw an opportunity to stand on my own feet, establish my individuality, and make a significant impact. My background in social work

and my experience as a doctor, where I treat and heal people, naturally extended to my political aspirations. I approached politics with the same dedication, aiming to work closely with people, understand their needs, and help improve their lives.

Entering politics was a way for me to channel my passion for social work and community service into a broader platform where I could affect real change. If I wanted to bring about transformation, I needed to be the change, and that belief propelled me into the political arena.

#### **You are the MLA of Poriem constituency. What change do you envision for your constituency and how are you going about it?**

As the MLA of Poriem constituency, which carries a legacy of over 50 years, I am acutely aware of the significant history and expectations associated with this role. For decades, the people of Poriem have supported and voted for Pratapsingh Rane, the longest-serving Chief Minister of Goa, known as the 'maker of modern Goa'. When I had the opportunity to be elected under the BJP symbol, I understood the enormity of the task and the big shoes that I had to fill.

Initially, I had apprehensions about whether the constituents would accept, respect, and support me. However, during the campaign, I made it a priority to understand and address the issues faced by the people, their expectations, aspirations, and dreams. As the campaign progressed, I received tremendous support and gained the faith of the community.

I envision building and developing a new and improved Poriem. My focus is on promoting eco-tourism to boost the local economy and preserve our natural heritage. Sattari, nestled at the foothills of the Western Ghats and the Vagheri Hills with the lifeline of our Mhadei River flowing through its forests, offers immense potential for eco-



Dr Deviya and Viswajit Rane make a perfect 'power couple'



Dr Deviya and Viswajit with Vijayadevi and Pratapsingh Rane

Dr Deviya with her parents Deepa and Prakash Timblo

tourism projects, including waterfall tourism and bird trails.

Additionally, I am committed to ensuring necessary infrastructure, improving and resolving water supply and electricity issues, mobile internet connection in the outskirts, is brought to Poriem so that our people do not face any inconvenience. My goal is to create sustainable development that enhances the quality of life for all residents while preserving our natural beauty and cultural heritage.

By addressing both immediate needs and long-term goals, I aim to foster a constituency that is vibrant, progressive, and reflective of the rich legacy it holds.

#### As a woman in politics, what is your role in empowering women?

As the MLA of Poriem, I am dedicated to being a voice for my constituency in the Legislative Assembly. I present and advocate for the issues, dreams, and aspirations of our people, with a special focus on empowering women, particularly those from rural backgrounds. My role in politics allows me to create a platform for these women, providing them with the necessary skills, market access, and training to become independent and capable.

As a woman in politics, I understand the unique

challenges and barriers that women face. This personal insight drives my commitment to creating opportunities for women to thrive. I actively work towards implementing programs and initiatives that focus on skilling and empowering women, enabling them to contribute meaningfully to their families and communities.

One of my key initiatives is to establish self-help groups and provide vocational training programs that equip women with skills in various fields, from handicrafts to entrepreneurship. By providing these women with access to markets and teaching them how to manage and grow their businesses, I aim to foster economic independence and self-reliance.

My goal is to create a supportive and empowering environment where women can achieve their full potential.

#### You organised the Cashew Fest last year as well as this year. What made you come up with the idea of the fest?

As the Chairperson of the Goa Forest Development Corporation (GFDC), which originally started as a Cashew Corporation, I became acutely aware of the challenges faced by cashew farmers, particularly the women from rural areas who form the backbone of this industry. Despite the focus on

cashew nuts, the cashew fruit and its numerous benefits were largely overlooked.

This realisation led me to create the Cashew Fest, with the aim of celebrating and promoting one of Goa's most significant and versatile fruits – cashew. Goa hosts several festivals like the wine festival and beer festival, but I felt that the cashew fruit, with its rich history and economic importance, deserved its own dedicated celebration.

The primary objective of the Cashew Fest is to raise awareness about the cashew fruit and its myriad benefits, while also empowering the cashew cultivators and the women who work tirelessly in cashew plantations. These individuals have devoted their lives to this industry, and it is crucial to recognise and support their contributions.

Through the festival, we aim to provide a platform that not only showcases the cashew fruit but also highlights the hard work and dedication of those involved in its cultivation. By doing so, we hope to create greater appreciation and demand for cashew products, ultimately benefiting the local economy and improving the livelihoods of the cultivators and workers.

The grand success of the Cashew Fest Season 1 and 2, stands as a testament to our commitment to sustainable

agriculture and economic empowerment; ensuring that this vital industry continues to thrive and grow for generations to come.

#### How have you ensured the involvement of locals in the festival?

Ensuring the involvement of locals in the festival was paramount to its success. Recognising the diverse array of stakeholders involved in the cashew industry, I endeavoured to unite everyone under one umbrella to create a significant and impactful event.

From farmers to distillers, self-help groups to artisans, and designers to handicraft makers – all those who utilise cashew as the foundation of their products were invited to participate and showcase their talents. By bringing everyone together, we aimed to provide a platform for collaboration and mutual benefit.

During the three days of the festival, technical sessions were organised in the mornings, featuring key stakeholders and speakers from the cashew industry. Topics ranged from government initiatives for cashew development to improved cultivation practices, the evolving feni culture, and the nutritional benefits of cashew. These sessions served as a forum for knowledge exchange and collaboration, further reinforcing our goal



Dr Deviyan and Viswajit with daughters Arundhati (above) and Aishwarya (right)

of saving and empowering the cashew industry.

Through this inclusive approach, we not only celebrated the rich heritage of cashew cultivation but also fostered innovation and economic empowerment within the local community. Together, we are paving the way for a thriving and sustainable cashew industry that benefits all involved.

**What were the various products displayed at the fest?**

The Cashew Fest 2024 Season 2 showcased an impressive array of products, highlighting the versatility and cultural significance of cashew in Goa. With over 78 stalls, the festival featured contributions from distilleries, restaurants, artisans, handicrafts makers, and designers, all using cashew as the foundation for their creations.

To provide a glimpse of the unique offerings, we introduced elements such as the traditional *Bhatti* used for Feni distillation, showcased in its original form known as *Launi*. The earthen pots used for distillation were crafted using mud sourced from anthills, preserving the authentic tradition.

One of the highlights was the wooden cottage, Madame Rosa Feni. Tastic Station, built by Wooden Homes India. This structure symbolised the eco-friendly spirit of the Cashew Fest.

The event featured two outstanding unsung artists, Ravikiran Parmeshwar and Shweta Solyekar, who painted live, adding a vibrant and interactive artistic dimension to the festival. Visitors experienced innovations like the Cashew Nut Extractor Machine by Ashok Joshi from Nagargao, Sattari, providing an educational and interactive aspect to the festival.

Top restaurants and distilleries from Goa curated a variety of cashew-based delicacies to eat and drink, offering visitors a taste of the culinary possibilities of cashew. A fashion show was curated to perfection by Archana Bhohe featuring Goa's young talent who showcased their innovative designs, emphasising the creative potential of cashew and its by-products in fashion.

By bringing together these diverse elements, the Cashew Fest not only celebrated the rich legacy of cashew cultivation but also showcased the innovative and creative uses of cashew in various industries.

**The Fest was a success. What were the main factors that contributed to the success of the festival?**

I would like to express my gratitude to Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant, for declaring the Cashew Fest as a state festival and extending the necessary support.

I would like to thank Govind Gaude, Minister for

Art and Culture and Sports for supporting us with the required venue facilities; Babush Monserrate, Minister for Revenue and MLA of Panjim; and Rohit Monserrate, Mayor of Panjim, for all the support provided throughout the festival. I would also like to thank Vishwajit Rane, Minister for Forests for his continued support.

It is the relentless effort of the entire team at GFDC that has made this event a grand success. I am immensely grateful to my teams, who have worked tirelessly, leaving no stone unturned to ensure the success of this event. Their dedication and perseverance were crucial in bringing this festival to life.

A special mention goes to the team at Vinsan World for executing every aspect that was deliberated on and envisaged for the second edition of Cashew Fest. Their expertise and meticulous planning helped us curate this event from start to finish. Their attention to detail and commitment to excellence ensured the festival's grand success.

Our key stakeholders played a significant role in the festival's success. Their support, collaboration, and active participation enriched the event and contributed to its overall impact.

The Department of Agriculture and Goa Police have been really helpful to us.

Their support throughout the event is really appreciated.

The enthusiastic participation of the local community, including artisans, local fashion designers, and self-help groups, added a unique charm to the festival. Their contributions highlighted the cultural and economic importance of the cashew industry.

The success of the Cashew Fest 2024 Season 2 was a result of the collective efforts of our devoted farmers, hardworking team, expert event managers, supportive stakeholders, and the vibrant local community. This festival is not only about entertainment, music and dance, but also about education and promotion of the cashew fruit and our cultural heritage through the fruit; for Goans it is not just a fruit but a way of life.

**What value additions do you envision for the future editions of Cashew Fest?**

For future editions of Cashew Fest, we plan to make the technical sessions more comprehensive and include workshops on sustainable farming practices, innovative processing techniques, and global market strategies for cashew products.

We aim to explore international expert participation to share global best practices and innovations in cashew cultivation and processing. This will open up new avenues for export for the Goan cashew industry.

We will continue to ensure that our festival is eco-friendly by encouraging the use of biodegradable materials, recycling, and eco-friendly packaging solutions. We have been successful in connecting our farmers with the stakeholders directly for all the required necessary raw materials.

These elements will help in making our future editions of the festival more relevant, impactful, educational, and an enjoyable experience, without shifting focus from the core objective of ensuring continued



MLA Ganesh Gaonkar, Mayor of Panaji Rohit Monserrate, Tourism Minister Rohan Khaunte, Rajya Sabha MP Sadanand Shet Tanawade, Minister of State for Tourism Shripad Naik, Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant, Health and Forest Minister Vishwajit Rane, MLA Joshua D'Souza with GFDC Chairperson Dr Deviya Rane at the inaugural edition of Cashew Fest Goa, last year

growth and success for Goa's cashew industry.

**Goa is famed as a tourist destination. How would you look at synergizing with the promotion of Brand Goa?**

GFDC is committed to synergizing with the promotion of 'Brand Goa' by enhancing and diversifying the state's tourism offerings. As a nodal agency, GFDC has ambitious plans to elevate hinterland tourism and create sustainable tourism infrastructure.

We are enhancing bird and nature trails across the state to provide tourists with immersive experiences in Goa's rich biodiversity. GFDC is investing in the refurbishment of existing facilities under its jurisdiction, ensuring they meet high standards of comfort and accessibility for tourists.

Recognising the growing trend towards wellness tourism, we plan to establish yoga, naturopathy, and wellness centers. GFDC is developing eco-tourism resorts that blend luxury with sustainability. We are committed to upgrading the Bondla Zoo, making it a top-tier wildlife attraction.

Goa's waterfalls are a major attraction, and we are improving amenities at these sites. This includes better access paths, safety measures, and visitor facilities to ensure a pleasant and safe experience for all.

We are exploring the introduction of jungle safaris,

allowing tourists to experience the thrill of Goa's wilderness.

This synergy between GFDC's efforts and Brand Goa will not only boost tourism but also preserve and showcase the unique ecological and cultural heritage of the state. This vision is in line with promotion of Brand Goa.

#### **Your family support and inspiration**

Having the tallest political leaders like Pratapsingh Rane and Vishwajit Rane in my family has been a profound source of inspiration for me. Their dedication to serving the people of Sattari and Goa has deeply influenced my own journey in public service.

Their exceptional body of work has been instrumental in bringing pioneering changes for the betterment of Goa.

Pratapsingh Rane's visionary leadership has put Goa on the global tourism map, showcasing our state's unique cultural and natural beauty to the world. His legacy of transformative initiatives continues to inspire me daily.

Their remarkable ability to connect with and manage the people of Sattari has been a constant motivation for me. Their hands-on approach and commitment to nurturing and uplifting our community have set a high standard for public service. They have been pivotal in driving socio-economic development in our area, especially in remote regions, ensuring that every individual has the opportunity to thrive.

Their combined efforts in fostering the growth and prosperity of our community

have taught me the importance of dedication, hard work, and genuine care for our constituents. I am eternally grateful for their support and guidance, which continuously inspire me to serve the people of Sattari and Goa with unwavering commitment and passion.

My daughters Aishwarya and Arundhati, Vishwajit, my parents and in-laws are my pillar of support and their encouragement motivates me to strive for excellence and do better every day.

#### **Future Plans**

I have a vision for a new and progressive Poriem which is centered on empowering women and youth, providing employment opportunities, and creating state-of-the-art facilities and infrastructure.

One of my key priorities is to empower women through skill development programs, offering them platforms to showcase their talents and become financially independent. This initiative will particularly focus on women in rural areas, ensuring they have access to the resources and training needed to succeed.

In addition, my future plans involve leveraging the initiatives at the GFDC to make it a self-sustaining and profitable corporation. By implementing innovative projects and enhancing existing operations, we aim to create sustainable income streams that will benefit both the corporation and the local communities it serves.

Ultimately, my goal is to foster an environment where the women and youth of Poriem can thrive, contributing to the socio-economic development of our region. Through strategic initiatives and community-focused projects, we will build a brighter, more prosperous future for everyone in Poriem and the Goa Forest Development Corporation.

Crossed boundaries, we have made a mark locally, but we further aim to create a national mark and then go international 🇮🇳



Dr Deviya flanked by her supporters after her record victory margin from Poriem in 2022

# Growing Stronger Together

Our founder, the late **Mr. V. M. Salgaocar** envisioned an organisation that would enable the all-around development of the state. Building on this foundation, the **Vimson Group** has spent over seven decades empowering the Goan community. From creating employment opportunities for our people to generating revenue from exports, it is our mission to contribute towards Goa's financial and social growth.

We owe our corporate success to our commitment to sustainability. Protecting our environment and ensuring the well-being of the community is our priority. To ensure sustainability in mining, we support startups across the globe and encourage them to create innovative technologies for socially responsible solutions. Through our residential projects, we strive to improve the quality of life by offering premium sustainable homes. Our NBFC caters to the economic requirements of a broad spectrum of Small and Medium-size Enterprises across many sectors, while our Wealth Management Company, being one of the largest in the state, offers advisory services to achieve our clients' financial goals.

Giving back to the community remains a vital part of our corporate ethos. Our team of doctors and medical staff provide quality healthcare to the local population. We give our Goan youth the opportunity to excel at the grassroots levels and shine at a professional level through our lauded youth development and community outreach programs.



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# Get Cashew Crazy!!!

The second season of the acclaimed Cashew Fest Goa was held with much gusto and excitement

Introduced by the Portuguese in the 16th century, Cashew has grown to become the mainstay of the Goan economy over the years, with the juicy fruit becoming an inseparable part of every Goan's life. In keeping with the significance of this seasonal delight to the Goan society, the Goa Forest Development Corporation Limited organised the second season of its famed 'Cashew Fest' which aimed to celebrate tradition while at the same time empower communities. The three day festival, organised from the 10th -12th May 2024, at the Dayanand Bandodkar ground in Panaji was an unforgettable event that sought to blend culture and tradition with community empowerment.

A beacon of hope for cashew farmers and local communities, Cashew Fest Goa 2024 showcased over 50+ food stalls, from traditional cashew processing demonstrations to a mouth-watering array of cashew-based delicacies which sought to invite visitors to immerse themselves in a rich tapestry of Goan traditions, ensuring that the legacies passed down from our ancestors endure for generations to come. The festival aimed at empowering local businesses, especially women-led rural self-help groups, preserving and promoting the Goan cultural heritage and also ensuring a sustainable future



for Goa's cashew industry. This was accomplished through technical sessions and discussions, wherein the challenges faced by local farmers were addressed, sustainable farming practices were promoted, and advice to enhance cashew yields was shared, thereby, paving the way for a thriving industry that empowers local communities.

Building on the resounding success of Cashew Fest Goa 2023, which was declared a state festival by the Chief Minister of Goa, Dr Pramod Sawant, Season 2 was twice as bigger and better. With attractions ranging from delectable 50+ food and beverage stalls to enlightening technical sessions and captivating performances by esteemed artists like Dhvani Bhanushali, Akhil Sachdeva, and Ash King, attendees were in for an unforgettable experience. Adding to the excitement, this year's festival also featured performances by acclaimed national and Goan bands such as True Blue, Crimson Tide,

and Mark Revlon.

The highlight of the festival was undoubtedly the Sundowner event, where attendees grooved to the beats of well-known bands like Jazz Junction, Anicca Project and Jukebox Trio. DJ Harsha, DJ Afroz, and DJ Azim also spun out foot-tapping tunes, leaving guests with unforgettable memories of evenings spent well under the Goan sky.

Before the grandeur of Cashew Fest Goa 2024 Season 2 unfolded, the captivating pre-event, Cashew Fiesta, set the stage for what attendees could expect at the main festival. Held on the 30th of April at the scenic Cazcar Distilleries in Nanora, this prelude provided an exclusive insight into the upcoming festivities. Attendees were treated to a diverse range of activities, including a poetry competition titled 'Cashew - The Fruit of Goa' in both English and Konkani. This competition showcased the literary talents of participants, with the top 10 contestants from each category invited to recite their poems

Music shows (left) and technical sessions (below) raised the level of public interest at Cashew Fest 2024

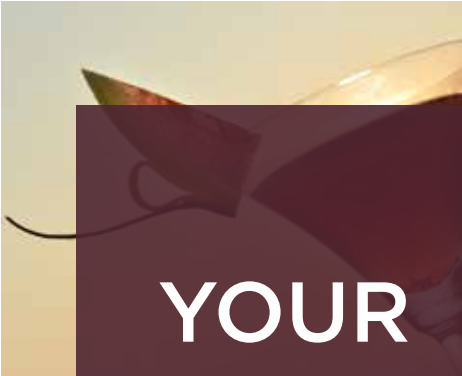
at the pre-event. Additionally, a thought-provoking panel discussion focused on the highlights, key insights, challenges, and solutions encountered in the production of cashew, offering attendees a deeper understanding of the industry's intricacies.

Furthermore, the pre-event paid homage to the backbone of the cashew industry – the farmers – with a heartfelt felicitation ceremony. This gesture of appreciation celebrated their invaluable contributions to Goa's rich cashew heritage. Adding a tantalising touch to the prelude was a sumptuous tasting session of cashew-based delicacies. Crafted specially for the occasion by Fierce Kitchen in collaboration with Kamaxi School of Culinary Arts, these dishes provided a preview of the culinary delights awaiting attendees at the main festival.

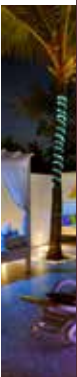
The main festival was no doubt a resounding success, which witnessed an impressive turnout right on its opening day as crowds flocked to explore the 78 stalls set up for the occasion. The stalls, which were mandated to offer cashew in at least 75% of their offerings, showcased the versatility of the cashew nut in all its delectable forms. From stalls like Moji Feni and Goenchi Feni selling the traditional Goan Feni with its spiced up variants to others like Jambhale Cashews selling the cashew nut in its spicy avatar, Cashew Fest Goa 2024 had it all for cashew lovers and enthusiasts alike. Cashew Fest Goa Season 2 was an experience

worth a lifetime, a festival like never before, which carefully wove together tradition, culture, and sustainability, to create a melange of enduring experiences. **BE**





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# When the sound of silence makes way for the sound of music

Government mulls extension in sound restrictions in a bid to promote Goa's image as a wedding destination

By ZENIA BRAGANZA

While sound is a natural part of human existence necessary to sustain life on earth, noise is always something that has been unwanted. Noise between 120-140 decibels (dB) causes pain and is typically associated with noise pollution, a term that has become the talk of the town in most cities and urban centres.

Noise pollution can have harmful effects on human health, wildlife, and environmental quality and can cause digestive disorders, stress, and insomnia in people who are exposed to high decibels of noise. For the purpose of protecting and improving the quality of the environment in residential areas, a comprehensive noise standard has been developed and recommended as Ambient Noise Standards, prescribed by the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. The Noise Pollution (Regulation and Control) Rules, 2000 indicate the maximum sound levels allowable during the day and night time in the industrial, commercial, residential and the silence zones. These rules, which stipulate 'night time' as the period between 10pm to 6am, apply to most zones, with certain exceptions. They ban the bursting of sound emitting firecrackers, the beating of drums, trumpets or the use of any sound amplifier during these hours, with the responsibility on the restriction or the use of loud speakers or Public Address system given to the State Police Department. The rules have a set maximum permissible decibel limit of 5 dB allowed in various areas and also specifies penalties for both individuals and organisations.

Goa, being a state with an economy largely dependent on tourism, often bears the brunt of these sound restrictions. Tourists who flock to the state



**“We will have to look at the issue from the tourism angle. A solution has to come. If the event is happening in a hall, which is sound-proof, then there is no problem in granting permission for holding events beyond 10 pm”**

**DR PRAMOD SAWANT**  
Chief Minister

with an aim of partying all night, couples who fly down to wed in Goa and event planners are often left disappointed with the 10 pm sound ban. Nightlife, unarguably the most important factor behind the evolution of Goa into a party destination that it is, has surely taken a hit with the sound restrictions, which have also been enforced by the High Court.

In this light, the government's recent announcement regarding working out a solution to extend sound restrictions beyond 10 pm, has been welcomed with open arms by

stakeholders in the tourism industry. While mulling on the decision, Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant stated, “There are sound restrictions on all events post 10 pm as per Central Act. But the Goa State Pollution Control Board (GSPCB) is working on it. There are both issues- closed-door and open-air venues. We will have to think positively if we want to promote the State as a wedding destination. We will have to look at the issue from the tourism perspective. A solution has to come. If the event is happening in a hall, which is sound-proof, then there is no problem in granting permission for holding events beyond 10 pm.”

This move was immediately welcomed by Jack Ajit Sukhija, President of the Travel and Tourism Association of Goa (TTAG), who felt that the move would greatly benefit the Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions (MICE) industry and the wedding industry, which constitute the fastest growing segment of the industry in Goa. Commenting on the announcement, Sukhija stated, “We would also request the CM to try and move all permissions required for events to a single-window app monitored by the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) and also to take cognisance of the issues caused by copyright agencies.”

Proprietor of the popular Panaji-based event management company, Crosscraft, Socorro Francis Serrao states, “Relaxing sound restriction timings beyond 10 pm is crucial to promote Goa's image as a wedding destination. Couples choose Goa for its picturesque beauty and vibrant culture and a relaxed timeline is essential to make their beachside or outdoor wedding a success.

By allowing celebrations to extend beyond 10 pm, we can create a more vibrant and memorable experience for our guests, cementing Goa's reputation as a premier wedding destination.”

Stakeholders in the industry are also elated by the thought, the government has also recognised the cultural and religious significance of post wedding rites following the Church nuptials for the Catholic community in the state. Expressing his views on the announcement, a former Member of Parliament from South Goa even urged the Chief Minister to consider extending the sound permission time limit for wedding receptions until midnight, given the Catholic community's unique culture of celebration.

Shruti Tiwari, a renowned wedding planner and Founder of VLW Global feels this move will significantly boost the wedding industry in the state.



She says, "I personally feel Goa as a destination has boomed over the years and as per my interactions with the hotels, property owners and managers, this year might be one of the best for the hospitality industry. The 'Wed in India' concept which is being hashtagged and promoted extensively, where the international clients are consciously selecting Goa, Rajasthan and Kerala as the destination for their big day is really going to be working in our favour in boosting the economy overall. Because of this conscious promotion of tourism, I feel the weddings in Goa will definitely increase and if the government takes this decision of increasing outdoor music timelines, it will be the icing on the cake."

While the announcement may have come in as a blessing for the stakeholders in the industry who expect an increase in bookings, the decision may

cause anxiety amongst affected locals, especially those living in the vicinity of wedding venues. Serrao, however, feels that this is an issue which can be handled, with no one suffering in the process.

"The venue management can take responsibility for ensuring that noise levels are reasonable, and with most wedding venues located in beach resorts away from residential areas, the impact on nearby residents can be minimised. By relaxing timings, we can create a win-win situation for both the industry and local communities," says Serrao who feels that the relaxation of sound restriction timings is a must to support the growth of Goa's wedding industry. He also highlights that it is important not to confuse noisy DJ clubs or EDM events with the peaceful music and family performances of Goan weddings, which should



**"We would request the CM to try and move all permissions required for events to a single-window app monitored by the Entertainment Society of Goa (ESG) and also to take cognizance of the issues caused by copyright agencies"**

**JACK AJIT SUKHUJA**  
President, TTAG

not ideally cause a nuisance to those around.

Shruti feels that guests select Goa as their wedding

destination primarily because of its scenic beauty and if the sound restrictions are indeed relaxed, it would greatly enhance the overall experience of the wedding entourage. Post 10 pm, she feels, the intensity of the music can be reduced so as not to cause a disturbance to those residing in the vicinity of the wedding venue.

The announcement comes at an opportune time in the state as the Central Government too is keen on promoting the idea of having weddings in India, so that the wealth remains within the country. The move will surely attract couples to celebrate their big day in Goa, as will also boost the state's image as a tourist-friendly destination.

Co-operation and mutual understanding between the locals and the industry will surely go a long way in promoting Goa as a welcoming destination. 🇮🇳

PAVAN AGNI

# “I look forward to growing a well bonded Chapter with business for all members”

Pavan Agni, President of BNI Aparant Chapter speaks on his plans during his tenure

By SYBIL RODRIGUES

**What can you tell us about BNI Aparant Chapter**

BNI Aparant was started 14 years ago and we celebrated our anniversary on April 23rd, the day BNI first came to Goa. BNI is a 35-year old global organisation that focusses on business growth via networking.

When BNI started out in Goa, the idea of promoting someone else's business conjugally was not prevalent but in the last 14 years we have grown by leaps and bounds, reaching 15 Chapters across the length and breadth of the State. Aparant is the first Chapter in Goa, and being the pioneer Chapter we have a certain kind of image that we have to live up to.

**What is your primary focus as President?**

Over the last 14 years, we have had over 28 terms with 25 Presidents and plenty of initiatives have been taken up during these terms. When a Chapter is formed it starts with 15 or 20 entrepreneurs and then grows to a medium level size of 50 members.

We have crossed 100+ members several times over the years. So the idea of reaching a critical mass of 100 members is essential, because when that happens the matrix of relationships that is formed is much larger than when it is lesser.

The web of relationships that we have in the market is larger and my primary focus during my term as President is to increase our membership to that 100+ level.

Having said that, any business which is part of a forum thrives on holistic achievement and growth of all its members; the difference is usually felt more in a state like Goa.



Pavan Agni

Earlier, we had mining and tourism and off late, due to the real estate boom, a huge difference between the median and the average is something I look forward to bridging. I also hope to ensure that every member of the Chapter gets a good share of the pie of the business value, which is earned through the referrals that we generate in BNI Aparant.

**What legacy programs do you plan on continuing from your predecessors?**

Goa being the state that it is, we are the first and oldest Chapter here. We have members who have been with us right up from inception till date. We also have new blood that has come in, in the last few years.

**Over the last 14 years, we have had over 28 terms with 25 Presidents and plenty of initiatives have been taken up during these terms. When a Chapter is formed it starts with 15 or 20 entrepreneurs and then grows to a medium level size of 50 members. So the idea of reaching a critical mass of 100 members is essential, because when that happens the matrix of relationships that is formed is much larger than when it is lesser**

We have members in their early 20s and members who

are in their late 50s. There is an amalgamation of experience as well as innovation at BNI Aparant. Tradition combined with innovation is one of the bedrocks of BNI. With this in mind, the legacy I would like to have for our Chapter is a culture of camaraderie and bonding. Whenever there is a good bond between members and trust that is when we are free to share our networks with one another. I look forward to having a larger focus on the parameters of bonding. When we spend time and do business with various members of our Chapter we not only trust each other in the ways of doing business, but also as individuals. A lot of members have become friends and get along well with each other's families. This is something that I would like to build upon as a legacy.

**Who feature in your team at BNI Aparant and what strengths do they bring to the table?**

This is a leadership team consisting of six people which has a President, a post that I hold; Avinash Borkar, the Senior Director Consultant; Vishwesh Kamat, the Support Ambassador; Divyanand Deshbhandari, the Vice President; Dr Riddhi Sampath, the Secretary and Treasurer and Gifty Abraham, the Lead Visitor Host (LVH).

The Vice President is essentially tasked with handling the structural activities of the Chapter including memberships, renewals, and the systems. The Secretary/Treasurer is entrusted with handling the administrations, finances and making sure that the renewals as well as payments are handled in a proper manner.

The LVH is involved with handling the visitors; right up from the invitations till the time they are given an orientation to help them join the Chapter.



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# Venturing into new horizons with steely resolve

**Jai Ganesh Ispat (JGI) Group** unveils their new vertical with an aim of serving a number of industries with their wide range of customised steel products



Siddharth Goyal



TMT Bar



Structural Steel

**J**ai Ganesh Ispat (JGI) group, the leading steel suppliers in the region, has continued to innovate with their customised and prompt service for over 27 years. The company's constant endeavour is to provide genuine and best-quality steel products for various customer applications, including fabrication, consumer appliances, white goods, auto sector, real estate developers, infra building, Military Engineer Services (MES) projects, the barge and shipping industry, etc.

With a group annual sales turnover of over ₹500 crores in the financial year 2023-24 and sales volume of 80,000 tonnes, JGI adds value by innovation in the steel coil processing service center. The company is the authorised distributor of JSW Steels Ltd for Goa region and South India region since 2009.

With an aim to have a geographical presence in South India, Jai Ganesh Ispat

Metal (JGIM) Convertors was incorporated in September 2022 with its base located at Sri City, Andhra Pradesh. JGIM, a derivative of Jai Ganesh Ispat Ferro Alloys Private Limited, encapsulates and serves an array of industries like automotives, energy sources, appliances, infrastructure, solar, oil companies, panel industries, packaging industries, and so forth with their wide range of customised steel products.

The pedigree of the company enables it to reach the end consumers who require high degree of customisation, on time deliveries, accuracy and guaranteed services through its first green field project, a full-fledged state-of-the-art world class steel processing center with all the modern amenities at Sri City.

The JGIM steel processing centre, with a vision to bridge the gap between the primary coil manufacturers and the customised steel requirements of the end users, will play a

vital role in creating value added steel in the southern region of India.

The company currently caters to prestigious clients like Samsung, Blue Star, B/S/H, Havells, Voltas, Amber, Daikin, IFB and similar companies. With a firm organisational belief that skilled manpower is the backbone of the business, combined with modern technologies, latest systems and state-of-the-art equipment, JGIM endeavours to delight its customers with its services. Key processing services that would be offered include slitting, cut-to-length, blanking, profiling, customised packing, and warehousing.

"As Jai Ganesh Ispat embraces its vision, we endeavour to work hand in hand responsibly, continuously, and in a sustainable manner, ensuring that everything done today is for the benefit of Growing Our Tomorrow," says Siddharth Goyal, Managing Director. 🇮🇳



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**Panchamrutha has successfully supplied fortified rice** in the coastal belt of Karnataka, Goa and Dharwad district and has been actively involved in educating the consumers regarding health the benefits of fortified rice..

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TIFFANY D'LIMA MENEZES

# For The Love of Cookies

Tiffany D'Lima Menezes' venture **The Cookie Crumb Trail** is the go-to enterprise to satiate your sweet tooth

By ZENIA BRAGANZA

Passion for her work, a keen eye for detail and a bright entrepreneurial spirit describe Tiffany D'Lima Menezes, a cookie artist and founder of The Cookie Crumb Trail, one of the few bakers in India to specialise exclusively in cookies and cookie art. Be it a wedding, a birthday or a baby shower, Tiffany caters to all occasions and hand-crafts decorated themed cookies which are customisable to suit her clients' tastes and colour palettes. While baking is something that comes naturally to her, little did she know that her fond hobby would one day become her career and passion! Starting off by baking cupcakes and small cakes, Tiffany travelled to Doha, Qatar in 2018 to expand her skill set and to refine her cake decorating skills. While she was attending workshops on cake decorating, she chanced upon a certificate course on cookie decorating techniques and seizing the opportunity, Tiffany got certified from Squires Kitchen International School in cookie decorating techniques. Here, she realised that this was her calling and she would definitely like to work on cookie art in the future.

Describing her journey, Tiffany states that having a baby in the year 2020, in the midst of the global pandemic; saw her putting all cake orders on hold for a year. When she decided to restart her venture in September 2021, she knew she wanted to explore something new. That's when her search on Instagram led her to explore the creations of talented cookie artists all over the world and being inspired, she practiced and refined her skill set until she was finally ready to bake professionally. Being an alumnus of Goa Institute of Management and having a degree in business management has helped her combine the best of both the worlds to set up and grow her business.

Describing the cookies she



Tiffany D'Lima Menezes



curates, Tiffany states, “The designs, shapes and colours of each of the themed cookies are highly customisable and hence, I offer them in two flavours - chocolate and vanilla. Clients can convey their requirements to me – colour preferences, theme, shapes, etc., and I customise a set, with each cookie hand-decorated using royal icing or fondant. Many clients opt for names and dates to be added to the cookies as well, to make them even more unique.” She also offers chocolate chip cookies, and while these cannot be customised, this cookie is the favourite of the young and the old. Of late, she has also expanded her skill set to include floral cupcakes. Introduced and made exclusively available for Mother's Day 2024, these beautifully hand-piped petals of butter cream on cupcakes, are now available to order for any event.

Tiffany also curates unique gift offerings for most holidays – be it Christmas, Easter or Halloween. “Every holiday requires careful planning, and much thought goes into every offering – right from the design to the packaging - so that my clients get the best,” adds Tiffany. She has also

made customised cookies for destination weddings in Goa that have been kept as part of hampers in hotel rooms to welcome wedding guests. The possibilities in this segment are endless- right from beaches to convey the vibe of beautiful Goa, to florals customised with couple's names, Tiffany has it all.

Tiffany's customers are very special to her and, working on an order set requires her to pay special attention to every detail by the client; she remembers most of her client's names and their orders. “Weddings are very special to me, and every time I get the opportunity to work on a wedding order, I feel very grateful to be part of someone's special day. I have also worked on destination wedding sets, and it feels wonderful to convey the beauty of Goa (from beaches to palm trees) on cookies,” says Tiffany who feels special to be a part of any of her client's milestones.

Speaking about her work-life balance, Tiffany describes herself as “A mom by day, a cookie artist by night.” When she began taking orders for cookies, her son was merely a year old and she knew she never wanted to compromise on the time spent with him.

The only way to make this possible would be for her to spend her days looking after him and work on orders during the night. Three years down the line and Tiffany still works primarily late at night, after putting her son to bed, or very early in the morning before he wakes up. Finding a balance is indeed difficult, admits Tiffany, “But giving my son quality time and attention at this age when he needs me most is fulfilling, and I wouldn't have it any other way!”

While working on her cookies brings her happiness and joy like no other, Tiffany admits that carving a niche for herself while building her brand has been a daunting task. Being an entrepreneur comes with its own set of challenges- from social media and photography to admin work, Tiffany manages all of these and the obstacles that come along, on her own. She takes it as an opportunity to learn different aspects of handling the business and tries to get better every day. While growing her business and gaining recognition for her skills is her current priority, Tiffany is proud to be carving her own way through the field, her zeal for her work seeing her through 🍪



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AMANDEEP SINGH GROVER

# “Honesty and a relentless appetite for learning are paramount”

Amandeep Singh Grover elaborates on his role as General Manager of Hilton Goa Resort, Saipem and future goals for the property

By SYBIL RODRIGUES

Tell us about your journey. How did it all start?

Growing up, my passion was cricket; I aspired to be a cricketer. Yet, when my aspirations fell through, my coach recommended I consider hospitality, recognising my innate warmth and adeptness in engaging with others. Taking his advice, I ventured into hospitality 27 years ago, starting with a diploma in hotel management in Switzerland. Since then, I've been fortunate to work in various countries, including Switzerland, USA, Thailand, Oman, Maldives, and now India.

What do you think it takes to succeed in this industry?

In any field, honesty and a relentless appetite for learning are paramount. These qualities transcend industries, including hospitality. Being honest fosters trust and integrity, fundamental in any professional setting. Moreover, a continuous thirst for knowledge ensures growth and adaptability, acknowledging that learning is a lifelong journey. Success in any industry hinges on these principles. Additionally, a collaborative spirit, demonstrated through readiness to assist and collaborate with colleagues, amplifies effectiveness and cohesion within a team.

How has the year 2023 been for the hospitality industry?

The year 2023 presented a blend of challenges and successes, particularly notable in the tourism sector, which displayed significant recovery post-pandemic. This positive momentum extended into 2024. Despite the difficulties of recent years, 2023 marked a turning point, particularly beneficial for hoteliers. Various market segments flourished, with Goa emerging as a vibrant tourist hotspot due to increased



Amandeep Singh Grover traveler readiness. The year witnessed resurgence in travel enthusiasm, with many exploring options around Goa. Overall, 2023 proved to be a promising period, driven by rejuvenated tourism and successful ventures for those in the hospitality industry.

How has technology transformed the industry in 2023? What advancements have been made in contactless check-ins?

Technology is in a constant state of change, and it is crucial to keep up with the latest trends. At Hilton Goa Resort, our members can check-in to their room using the digital key through the Hilton Honors app. This is a seamless way of allowing guests access their rooms without having to walk around with a physical key every time.

At our resort, we also prioritise staying informed about advancements not only in the hospitality industry but also in technology's impact on tourism. With a youthful team, we strive to remain attuned to emerging developments.

The new, young traveler wants experiences and insta-ready content. What do you have in store for them?

Our resort offers an array of experiences tailored to meet the demands of the modern traveler. One of our standout

**“A collaborative spirit and readiness to assist and work closely with colleagues, amplifies effectiveness and cohesion within a team”**

features is the captivating views it provides. With spacious rooms boasting expansive balconies, guests can enjoy breathtaking views of lush greenery and flowing rivers, especially during sunset. These picturesque scenes are not only appreciated by our guests but are also highly sought after by travelers seeking unique and novel experiences. In addition to stunning views, we pride ourselves on offering innovative service. For example, we were among the pioneering hotels in India to introduce the popular flat croissants, catering to the evolving tastes of our guests. Furthermore, we curate distinctive experiences, such as our Zodiac-themed brunch, where guests can indulge in personalised offerings tailored to their star signs. Ultimately, our resort sets itself apart with its unparalleled natural beauty and unique offerings. We provide a refreshing environment that resonates with current trends, ensuring that every guest leaves with unforgettable memories that align perfectly with their desire for authenticity and uniqueness.

What are the key trends that have emerged in the hospitality industry?

In the dynamic landscape of the hospitality industry, several key trends have emerged, constantly evolving to meet the changing needs of guests. One prominent trend that persists is the emphasis on human interaction. At Hilton Goa Resort, prioritising guest interactions remains paramount, with significant focus on training our teams in soft skills to ensure exceptional

service delivery. Central to our approach is creating an environment where guests feel truly at home, reflecting in the positive reviews we receive online and underscoring the dedication of our team.

In tandem with the human touch, technology plays an increasingly integral role in enhancing guest experiences. Hilton has embraced innovations like the digital key feature, allowing guests to access their rooms conveniently through the Hilton Honors app, eliminating the need for physical keys. As technology continues to advance, Hilton remains at the forefront, continuously exploring new possibilities to further elevate guest satisfaction. While specific details of upcoming advancements remain confidential, it is evident that Hilton is committed to embracing innovation to provide unparalleled experiences for guest.

Share some of your secrets in keeping an engaged, safe, and happy team.

Creating an engaged, safe, and content team is simple for me. Transparency is key – no hidden agendas, a culture we have fostered since the hotel's inception. Encouraging questions, no matter how seemingly trivial, fosters clarity and trust among team members. Our leadership team maintains an open-door policy, welcoming discussions on professional and personal matters to support and develop our team. Nurturing talent and providing opportunities is our leadership ethos, resulting in a successful tenure with Hilton, a brand known for embracing this culture. This approach has kept me committed to Hilton for nearly a decade, a testament to its effectiveness.

What are the emerging markets




in the hospitality industry and what are the future goals for the property?

The rise of new markets, particularly the international market, is evident as global travel resumes, benefitting destinations like Goa. There's a noticeable increase in international tourists visiting the region. Additionally, corporate events and off-site meetings, which had slowed down previously, are now picking up pace, contributing to the tourism surge in Goa. This trend persists, bolstering Goa's status as a favoured destination. For our property, post-pandemic recovery involves solidifying our position as the top choice for guests in Goa. We aim to become the go-to option for travellers when selecting accommodations in Goa.

What advice would you give someone who wants to be a leader in the hospitality industry?

For those aspiring to become

a leader in the hospitality industry, my foremost advice is to never lose sight of the path you have traveled to reach this position. The journey from the ground level, starting at an entry position, holds immense significance. It is crucial not to forget your humble beginnings, as this keeps you rooted and grounded amidst growth. Often, as we progress, we tend to overlook the valuable lessons learned along the way. The transition from entry-level roles to managerial positions imparts invaluable insights. It is imperative to cherish and retain these teachings. Furthermore, never underestimate the importance of teamwork. Every task, regardless of its scale, contributes to the collective effort. Lastly, uphold honesty at all times. Integrity forms the bedrock of trust and credibility. Embrace honesty wholeheartedly, as it is indispensable in every aspect of professional life. 

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# FiiRE Skills: Skilling for Livelihood

FiiRE unveils their new division, FiiRE Skills which focuses on skill development and creating professional skilled manpower for local industries



FiiRE Skills at Old Presentation Convent School Premises, Margao



FiiRE Skills' students of the Food Production Course



FiiRE Skills' Nursing Assistantship students at Hospicio - South Goa District Hospital

The more we give importance to skill development, the more competent will be our youth, states Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India.

In today's turbulent environment of rapid change in terms of securing a promising future, the youth encounter numerous obstacles, young people face many challenges, including underemployment, unemployment, and a lack of possibilities. But there is a way out; to overcome these obstacles there is skill development.

The importance of skill development cannot be overstated because it not only helps people find better career prospects but also advances the nation's economy.

Skill development is crucial for the future of our youth. It holds the key to increased entrepreneurship, greater employment prospects, and economic progress.

Skill development is at the center of changes happening in education and labour markets amid the global mega trends, In the dynamic landscape of the modern global labour market, education and workforce development systems must become more personalised, accessible and continuous

throughout ones' careers—placing 'skills development' at the heart of these global transitions.

With this background, the Forum for Innovation Incubation Research and Entrepreneurship (FiiRE) is dedicated to meeting these global challenges through FiiRE Skills. The campus is in the heart of the commercial city of Goa, Margao, in South Goa.

FiiRE Skills is a dedicated division of FiiRE with prime focus on skill development and aims to create professional skilled manpower for the local industry in Goa, and across the globe at large. With the focus to empower youth through 'Skilling for Livelihood' FiiRE Skills offers skill development courses relevant to the healthcare, tourism and hospitality sector in Goa.

Their vision is: To evolve as a center of excellence for professional training by providing a holistic learning environment, thus ensuring the integral development of the youth, the Don Bosco way.

FiiRE Skills is known for its training framework, competency-based curriculum, emphasis on entrepreneurship/

personality development, focus on hands-on training and employability skills.

## Skill development courses

### 1. Nursing Assistantship

The Nursing Assistantship course is designed to train students to provide quality care of the patients, patient health and safety care in nursing homes and hospitals. It is designed to train individuals to provide essential healthcare support under the guidance of registered nurses. Graduates of this program gain the skills necessary to assist nurses in patient care, administer basic medical treatments, and ensure the comfort and well-being of patients. The inclusion of a special module in 'Emergency Medical Techniques' makes this course unique and adds an extra feather to the cap of the graduates of this program.

### 2. Food Production

Food Production is the discipline of hotel management focusing on food processing and preparation skills and techniques. The certificate course in Food Production is a short-term six-month course in which the first three months are dedicated to academic

studies and the final three months are rendered as an industrial training program or internship. The focal point of this discipline is drawn around food production. With the state-of-the-art infrastructure, laboratories, professional kitchen, dedicated trainers, FiiRE Skills is focused on imparting the best set of technical skills and knowledge, relevant to the current industry trends, as well as soft skills, to facilitate the overall personality development of their students, thereby giving them an edge over their competitors in their career.

### 3. Food and Beverage Service

This discipline focuses on imparting the necessary skill set required to serve as a steward in star hotels, restaurants, and fine dining including the ones aboard cruise ships. The certificate course in Food and Beverage Service is a short-term six-month course in which first three months are dedicated for academic studies, theory and practical, while the students will be engaged in internship during the final three months for hands-on experience in the hotel industry.



#### 4. Bakery and Patisserie

Bakery and Patisserie courses teach baking, pastry arts, confectionery, cake decoration, and essential business skills for running a bakery with the focus on food safety and hygiene. FiiRE Skills not only trains you to be a master baker but also equips you with the necessary skills to be self-reliant.

#### 5. Bartending

This course is for those who want to pursue a special career in Food and Beverage (F&B) hospitality, blending knowledge of drinks, mixology, and service styles. This course offers essential insights for aspiring bartenders. If to be the most 'trending bar tender' is the dream, then FiiRE Skills is the path to excel.

#### Programme Manager

FiiRE Skills is headed by Namdev Naik, Programme Manager at FiiRE - Goa. Naik



Namdev Naik

has immense experience of over 25 years in the field of skill and entrepreneurship development, human resource development and administration. He has trained more than 18000 students, thereby shaping their career paths. He is a certified CSR Professional (ICSI, New Delhi), specialising in the field of livelihoods and sustainability and has been playing a key role towards livelihood promotion through skill development.

He has successfully

implemented multiple versatile skill development projects like the United Nations Development Programme and Department of Science and Technology (UNDP - DST) Skills Project (training in food processing), Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) which focuses on skill development for youth and many more. He is the District Resource Person (North Goa) For the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme of Government of India. He has been successfully implementing skill training projects in the domain of healthcare, hospitality, electrical and electronics, as well as beauty and wellness, over the last two decades with the vision of creating a skilled and efficient ecosystem. With the expertise, experience and a dedicated

team of professional experts, FiiRE Skills is all set towards 'Skilling for Livelihood'.

#### FiiRE Skills Initiatives

FiiRE Skills has successfully implemented training programs like imparting technical counseling to around 950 students from the government industrial training institutes across Goa under the SANKALP Project, funded by Directorate of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship. FiiRE Skills has trained over 200 aspirants in skills for livelihood through skill development training in trades like beauticians, preservation of fruits and vegetables, phenol and soap making, and apparel design, to name a few. The students who have undergone training in nursing assistantship as well as food production have secured placements at reputed hospitals and starred hotels.

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MOJI FENI

# The 'Feni'tastic Brand of Goan Elixir

Reuben Ramos and Tanishq Palyekar's venture **Moji Feni** aims to preserve and promote the essence of Goa through its authentic Feni

By ZENIA BRAGANZA

With a mission to create and promote high-quality, home-grown alcohol brands that capture the essence of Goa, Reuben Ramos and Tanishq Palyekar founded Finally Friday Spirits Pvt. Ltd., a Goa-based alcohol branding company dedicated to celebrate the rich heritage and vibrant culture of the region through exceptional spirits. The duo launched the venture with a view to bring the unique flavours and traditions of Goa to a wider audience. One of the offerings of the venture is Moji Feni, a brand that was born out of their deep-rooted love for Goa and a desire to share its unique cultural heritage with the world. To achieve this, Reuben and Tanishq decided to create a premium brand with a unique recipe that honours tradition while incorporating modern techniques, a true delight to the senses. Moji, says Reuben "Means 'Mine' in Konkani and perfectly encapsulates our vision – creating a brand that is truly ours, a symbol of Goa, crafted for the people of Goa and beyond."

The primary ingredient in Moji Feni is the cashew apple, which is meticulously sourced from the quaint villages of Pernem. This region, renowned for its fertile soil and ideal climate, produces some of the finest cashew apples in Goa. The team, by working closely with local farmers, ensures that only the best cashew apples are selected for making the Feni, and also preserves the traditional methods that have been passed down through generations. Reuben and Tanishq's dedication to sourcing locally not only guarantees the exceptional quality of Moji Feni but also supports the local economy and community and as they work with local farmers and distilleries, the duo is proud to contribute to



the preservation of traditional practices and the sustainability of the region's agricultural heritage.

A lot of work goes into the making of the Feni, including an additional purification process after the final stage of distillation. Moji Feni is triple charcoal distilled and the makers have crafted a handmade charcoal filter specifically for this purpose. "Charcoal has natural adsorptive properties that effectively reduces unwanted odours and makes it smoother. This makes Moji Feni more approachable for those who might be sensitive to the traditional aroma of Feni," says Reuben. This also allows the team to make the

Feni more palatable to those outside the state who may not be accustomed to its traditional aroma. The brand's mission is twofold: to elevate the status of Goa and its iconic spirit, Feni, on the global stage. Feni, believes Reuben, has a rich history and a distinctive character that must be preserved while making it more appealing to a broader audience, something that the company always strives to accomplish.

Finally Friday Spirits Pvt. Ltd., takes pride in not only crafting premium Feni but also in exploring its versatility through unique and innovative cocktails. Their Instagram page showcases a variety of cocktail recipes, each designed to highlight the distinctive

qualities of their signature spirit. One of their standout creations is the 'Marie Me,' a cocktail that redefines the traditional Bloody Mary with a Goan twist. This unique blend features their signature Feni, tomato juice, Tabasco, and Worcestershire sauce. This melange creates a spicy, savoury drink that perfectly balances the bold flavours of Feni with the classic elements of a Bloody Mary, offering a refreshing and intriguing experience. Another of their offerings is the 'Moji-To,' a delightful take on the classic mojito. Elaborating on the beverage, Reuben says, "This cocktail combines our signature Feni with muddled mint leaves and lime juice, topped with soda. The Feni adds a unique depth to the refreshing mint and lime, making the Moji-To a perfect drink for any occasion." Moji Feni's versatility doesn't end there. Its unique profile offers endless possibilities for creativity and enjoyment, whether one is crafting a new signature drink or adding a Goan twist to a classic; Moji Feni can be experimented with and incorporated into a variety of brands and cocktails.

In line with their vision, the company's branding and packaging reflects their commitment to excellence and authenticity, designed to captivate and resonate with connoisseurs around the globe. The duo has collaborated with some of the finest designers to create a distinctive and premium label for Moji Feni which features beautiful hand-painted art. "This artistic approach not only sets our product apart on the shelves but also tells a story of tradition and innovation," adds Reuben. Sustainability is at the core of the team's venture and the packaging is crafted from eco-friendly materials that minimise environmental impact, so that the company not only creates a superior

product, but also contributes positively to the environment. Moji Feni resonates well with its customers and is currently available in more than a hundred stores all over the state.

At the recently organised Cashew Fest 2024, Moji Feni was the centre of attraction. The festival, organised by the Government of Goa, is an initiative aimed at promoting local brands and celebrating the rich cultural heritage of the state. Commenting on the occasion, Reuben says, “The Cashew Fest provided an incredible platform for us to showcase Moji Feni and connect with a broader audience. The government’s support for local brands was evident throughout the event, helping to highlight the quality and uniqueness of Goan products.”

While Finally Friday Spirits Pvt. Ltd. is a young and thriving brand, the journey thus far was



Tanishq Palyekar

no smooth sailing for Reuben, Tanishq and their team. The diminishing yield of cashew apples over the past few years has been a significant cause of concern for the company. This decline in production has impacted the availability of the primary ingredient needed to create this traditional Goan spirit, thereby threatening both the heritage and the livelihoods of those involved in its production. To overcome this hurdle, the company has initiated collaborative efforts with local farmers to plant




Reuben Ramos


more cashew trees, thereby, boosting the production of cashew apples while also supporting sustainable agricultural practices within the community. The limited market for Feni, which can currently be sold only within the state of Goa, is another hurdle that the company faces. “This limitation hampers the growth potential of the industry and limits the opportunity for Feni enthusiasts across India to experience this distinctive drink,” says Reuben who adds, “However, there is promising

progress on this front. The government is actively working to relax these regulations, striving to make Feni accessible throughout the country.”

This being said, the team aims to position Moji as a premium spirit that stands out in the global market by refining the production process and enhancing the quality of the Feni.

The company’s goal is to put Goa and its beloved Feni on the world map by celebrating the state’s rich heritage and sharing the authentic taste of Goa with spirits enthusiasts everywhere. “Moji Feni is not just a drink; it’s a testament to our passion for Goa, our respect for its traditions, and our commitment to innovation,” says Reuben who warmly welcomes everyone to join them in their journey and experience the essence of Goa like never before 🇮🇳





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SANDEEP PATIL

# Making architectural marvels speak

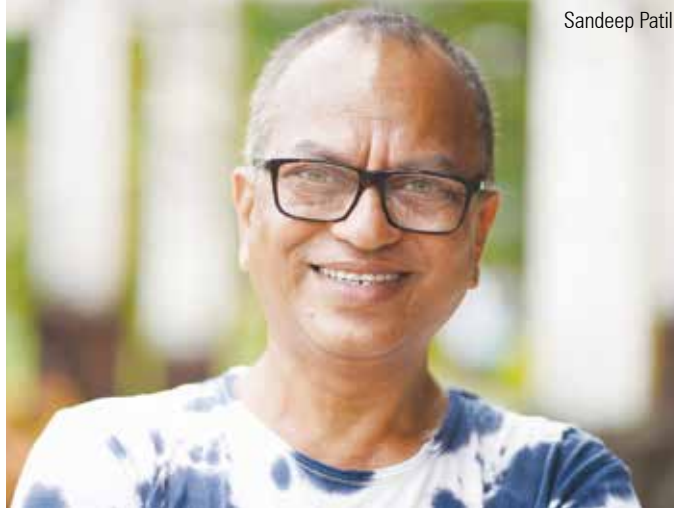
Sandeep Patil elaborates on his journey in the world of photography and finding his true calling

By SYBIL RODRIGUES

Sandeep Patil was born in a typical Goan family where his father was a government employee and his mother a housewife. His father had a dream that on completing his education, Sandeep would take up a government job in order to secure his future and that of the family.

As a young lad, Sandeep's career options kept on changing but the one thing that stuck with him was his love and desire for art, whether it was theatre, drama, music, painting, writing or dance; art was something that he enjoyed. He grew up hoping to excel in any one of these art forms, but things did not go as planned. He ended up graduating with a degree in Commerce and took up a job as an accountant in the private sector. Though he did not manage to shine in any art form, his desire and passion towards art was still alive in his heart. He then decided to take up photography as a career option. Back then buying a camera and film rolls was an expensive affair, but Sandeep's inner voice urged him to follow his heart.

In 1996, he began learning the intricacies of photography on his own and with very little material available at hand; his journey was like a treasure hunt in a forest. He bought all the possible books on photography



Sandeep Patil

including fashion magazines and devoured all material that could add value to his passion.

Amongst all the genres of photography it was fashion photography that appealed to him and he knew he wanted to be a fashion photographer. Back then, people desiring to take up fashion photography as a career had an option of going to the United States or London, in order to get a formal education in fashion photography while assisting established photographers; or get in touch with a professional fashion photographer and learn from him. Both options were impossible for Sandeep and he decided to move to Mumbai. Much as he had no clue about what he would do in the big city, he went ahead with his plans. After giving in

his resumé at different places, he finally landed up at the door step of Jagdish Mali, a well known name in the world of fashion and advertising.


From thereon, there was no turning back for Sandeep and he ended up working with prominent names in the industry like Israr Qureshi, Hari Mahidhar and Mangesh Pawar. It was his never-say-die attitude and his constant need to learn from the best that helped Sandeep achieve his goal. He considers himself fortunate to have these professionals as his mentors and was able to learn the real art of photography while also honing his skills.

Sandeep worked with famous celebrities from the fashion world and attained national as well as international exposure. He has also worked

with major international brands and fashion magazines.

As he continued learning he began to stand out in his work and finally decided to return to Goa and kickstart his career in fashion and advertising photography. Due to unforeseen circumstances he was not able to do so and began to focus on wedding photography. He continued with wedding photography for over a decade and his work was rated amongst the top ten in India. Although his work was appreciated on different platforms at the national level; Sandeep's heart was not in his work. Post covid, when the wedding industry took a hit, he began looking out for other options.

Sandeep began taking a keen interest in the rich heritage and architecture of Goa and felt that each architectural marvel wanted a story to be told. He took it up as a challenge and started dabbling in architectural photography. Sandeep's pictures make his structures speak out and reveal their beauty to the common man.

Sandeep finally found his true calling and has captured a number of villas and houses on camera. "My work gives me immense satisfaction and whenever I am able to make a house, hotel or villa speak out on camera, I know I am doing what I love," he affirms 





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# National Commission for Women holds Women Empowerment seminar in collaboration with V M Salgaocar College of Law




National Commission for Women (NCW) partnered with V M Salgaocar College of Law to organise a day-long seminar titled 'Rise and Lead: Young Women Pioneering Technology, Business and Public Life' recently.

Over 150 participants, including students, faculty, and experts, attended the event focused on women empowerment and gender equality.

The seminar featured presentations and discussions on various topics. Shalini Rastogi, Under Secretary, NCW, spoke about government initiatives for women, including digital literacy programs, drone pilot training for rural women for agricultural purpose, and financial schemes for women entrepreneurs. Prof Anup Kumar Maurya discussed the potential of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

and drone technology, while Prof Priya Onsker highlighted the importance of women's participation in decision-making roles. A seminar explored the achievements of women in various fields. Prof Dr Shabir Ali highlighted successful women in government, professions, and even space exploration. He also mentioned an all-female team receiving a patent for filtration technology.

Pranay Prabhugaonkar's session focused on the corporate world, explaining career structures and skills needed for success. He shared inspiring advice from young women entrepreneurs, emphasizing the importance of opportunity, seeking help, and purpose.

The seminar concluded with a question and answer session, leaving participants inspired and motivated. 

# BITS Pilani Goa Campus participated in ChemExpo 2024 at Mumbai

BITS Pilani, K K Birla Goa Campus participated in the prestigious ChemExpo 2024 held last month at NESCO, Bombay Exhibition Centre, Mumbai. BITS Pilani exhibited at the exclusive Technology Showcase Pavilion alongside IIT Bombay, ICT Mumbai, GreenChemistree Foundation and six CSIR labs.

Altogether 525 exhibitors exhibited their projects for over 25000 visitors. Dr Saurabh Patankar, Department of Chemical Engineering represented BITS Pilani at the ChemExpo.

ChemExpo India 2024 is a comprehensive showcase of Indian capabilities in the broad chemical industry. Exhibitors came from the Bulk, Fine and Specialty Chemical Industries, and include Indian as well as international companies.

Many professionals and experts in the field of chemical industry were happy to see




BITS Pilani's maiden stall at the chemical industry exhibition and to know about research activities and Work Integrated Learning Program (WILP) for working professionals at BITS.

BITS Pilani's marketing team led by Ayesha Kutay



designed the publicity posters providing information of research areas, placements and WILP program along with two brochures highlighting detailed information about the University and Chemical Engineering Department at

BITS Goa.

The ChemExpo India 2024 was a huge success and served as a good platform for showcasing BITS potential to the chemical industry and people working in the concerned domain. 

[www.businessgoa.in](http://www.businessgoa.in)



AUTHORS: T.N. HARI AND BALA SRINIVASA  
 PUBLISHER: PENGUIN PORTFOLIO

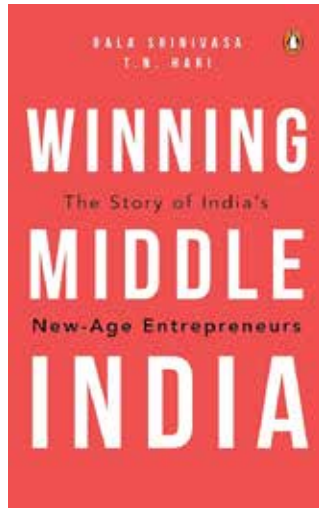
# WINNING MIDDLE INDIA: THE STORY OF INDIA'S NEW- AGE ENTREPRENEURS



Bala Srinivasa



T N Hari



This book is a story of India's startups, audacious founders, technology-led solutions and a new breed of Middle India-focused entrepreneurs who are reshaping some of the largest markets in the country. This is also a story of serendipity where a lot of stars have aligned in terms of India's choices with Aadhaar, Unified Payments Interface (UPI), its smartphone revolution, availability of venture capital and, most importantly, consumer adoption.

Is there a fundamental new catalyst that can significantly enhance access, affordability and quality of products and services to hundreds of millions of Indians? This catalyst is in the form of a new generation of start-up founders who are leveraging technology platforms, smart-phone access, and rapid digitisation of the Indian consumer.

These young founders don't carry the baggage of the past and are attracted to the opportunity of breaking open the massive market of Middle India-the next 400-500 Indians just below the top of the pyramid. This book is about this new and powerful force of change blowing across India – what it takes to harness this

and reshape the destiny of this country. *Winning Middle India* is a must read for anyone who is deeply interested in India's quest for prosperity. It sketches the beginnings of a grassroots movement where India centric innovation and problem solving is being led by young, tech-savvy entrepreneurs.

T.N. Hari is an angel investor, advisor and sounding board to numerous young entrepreneurs and startups. Hari has studied at IIT and IIM, and worked at an executive level with multiple start-ups/scale-ups. His strength and passion are in scaling organizations through clear thinking and relentless execution. LinkedIn identified him as one of the top voices in India for three years in a row (2016, 2017, and 2018). Hari is a prolific writer, and has co-authored four books before this one, most recently *Saying No to Jugaad: The Making of Bigbasket*.

Bala Srinivasa is Managing Director, Arkam Ventures. He earlier worked for Kalari as a Partner in 2015. His twenty-one years of work experience is spread across two successful start-ups and also as senior equity analyst covering the software technology sector.

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## Smita Jayakar speaks at Prabha Khaitan Foundation event

The Prabha Khaitan Foundation is a tribute to the esteemed Dr Prabha Khaitan, an acclaimed Indian author, poet, and entrepreneur. Established in 1980, the Foundation incorporates its enduring commitment to advancing education and preserving India's cultural heritage. With the guiding principle of *Karma hi Jeevan Hai* (Work is Life), the Foundation works towards creating a brighter future. The exclusive event, 'The Write Circle,' offered the audience to engage with renowned actor and author, Smita Jayakar. The 'Write Circle' provides readers a unique opportunity to engage with esteemed authors in an informal environment. Structured around the life and literary contributions of the author, the program provides an insightful exploration of their work. Following this structured discourse, attendees are invited to participate in an interactive session, fostering meaningful conversation between the author and the audience.


This well-crafted format ensures an enriching experience for all participants, blending literary appreciation with engaging conversation. The audience was treated to an exceptional evening in the company of Smita Jayakar, as she graciously recounted her life's journey, offering insights into her fascinating acting career and delightful



Smita Jayakar and Vaishali Joshi

anecdotes from behind the scenes. With warmth and humour, Smita engaged the audience, seamlessly integrating them into the conversation and interview. The interactive session proved to be a highlight, as she attentively addressed each query with wit, charm and motivation, creating an atmosphere of lively engagement and fellowship. With a collection spanning twenty-three blockbuster Bollywood movies, authorship of three impactful books, and engagements as a keynote speaker at TEDx events, she exemplifies versatility and depth in her craft.

Beyond her extraordinary acting career, Smita's journey encompasses a profound commitment to holistic healing, with certifications in 36 healing modalities. She shared her wisdom and talked about the importance of finding yourself for a peaceful healthy mind. The evening concluded with the distribution of Smita Jayakar's renowned book, *Before Tomorrow*, providing each audience with the unique opportunity to have their copy personally signed by the acclaimed actor and author. Smita graciously engaged in brief conversations with each guest, displaying patience and warmth throughout.

The event concluded on a high note, leaving each one of the participants undoubtedly satisfied with the charming and memorable experience. The event commenced with expressive remarks from Gaurapriya Pai Kane, setting the tone for the evening. Smita Jayakar's insightful interview, skilfully moderated by Vaishali Puranik Joshi, added a layer of depth to the proceedings. Gratitude resonated through Shruti Jaiswal Juwarkar's words, followed by the presentation of an exquisite Dokra art statue by Ranjit Philipose, Group Cluster General Manager of Taj. Hotel Cidade De Goa was the hospitality partner and *Lokmat Media* was the publicity partner. 

## 5th edition of Goa Chamber's Business Diva 2024 held



L to R: Clare De Souza, Melanie Rodrigues, Pallavi Salgaocar, Asha Arondekar, Rajkumar Kamat, Shashi Soni, Shrinivas Dempo, Sanjay Amonkar, Sandra Fernandes and Risha Hegde

Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) - Women's Wing jointly with - Forum for Innovation, Incubation, Research and Entrepreneurship (FiiRE) - Government of India and powered by Geno Foundation and Menino Regency conducted its 5th edition of Business Diva 2024. The Chief Guest was (Padma Shri) Shashi Soni, Chairperson, Hughes Precision and Guest Rajkumar Kamat, Founder, EP Kamat Group and Executive Director, BNI Goa was the Guest of Honour. The function was presided by Shrinivas Dempo, President, GCCCI.

Business Diva is a business idea competition for women and mainly focuses on innovative solutions to women centric

issues and solutions. The aim of Business Diva Competition 2024 is to impact and uplift more women entrepreneurs through entrepreneurship. The competition was held in three categories -Startup (Businesses in existence for less than 2 years), Scale up (businesses in existence for more than 2 years) and Self-help groups.


The welcome address was delivered by Asha Arondekar, Chairperson GCCCI-Women's Wing. Risha Hegde who represented FiiRE explained how the program was conducted over the last 2 months. Sandra Fernandes, Co-Chair, GCCCI-Women's Wing proposed the vote of thanks.

The function was compered by Clare De

Souza, member of GCCCI-Women's Wing. The winner in the startup category was Anasha Pereira; Supriya MV was the runner-up while the finalists were Swaroopa Naik, Christabel Menezes Pinto and Meena Vidhya Borkar Mascarenhas.

The scale up category saw Yojana Dinesh Fal Dessai as the winner and Shilpa Ramesh Vantekar as the runner-up. The finalists were Ashwini Pai Dukle, Sujata Kamat and Monalisa Singh. The winner in the self-help group was Pobrinha Carvalho, the runner up was Venecia Vaz George and finalists were Ratika Ratnakar Velip and Rajani Khandeparkar.

Shashi Soni showered praise on such business focus and rewards for women in business and also spoke of her inspiring journey from a seed of ₹10,000 to being felicitated with a Padma Shri in business. She also applauded GCCCI- Women's Wing for the excellent work done by them through various programs and congratulated the winners and participants.

The winners were given cash prizes, mementos and would be offered support by FiiRE to scale up their business. 



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# Copperleaf launches Mini Fish Thali



Copperleaf, known for its unique culinary offerings, has raised the level of excellence with the launch of its Mini Fish Thali. This delightful addition to their menu demonstrates Copperleaf's dedication to provide a diversified and memorable dining experience.

Known for its inviting ambience and attentive service, Copperleaf ensures that your experience goes beyond just the food. The warm and welcoming atmosphere of the

restaurant enhances the overall dining experience, making it a memorable affair for their patrons.

The Mini Fish Thali is crafted to perfection for solo diners seeking a satisfying meal and groups looking to share a culinary adventure at Copperleaf.

The Mini Fish Thali is a special offering available exclusively at Panaji outlets served only during lunch hours from Monday to Friday. From

succulent fish curry to crispy fried fish, each component is crafted with care, resulting in a symphony of flavours that delight the senses.

The highlight of the Mini Fish Thali is that the fried fish changes every day, depending on the availability of fresh catch from the market.



The introduction of the Mini Fish Thali is a response to the needs and preferences of patrons who desire a smaller portion size. Priced at an introductory offer of just ₹150/- (\*T&C apply and GST Extra), the Mini Fish Thali is a treat for your taste buds.

Copperleaf does not compromise on quality or portion size, making it a true value-for-money meal. Understanding the diverse preferences of its clientele,

Copperleaf offers this mini version alongside its other signature thalis, which include the Kingfish Thali, Chonak Thali, and Prawns Thali.

“At Copperleaf, our commitment to customer satisfaction reigns supreme, as we eagerly anticipate the opportunity to continue delivering excellence and dedication to our valued patrons,” says Sachin Pai Bir, Director of the popular restaurant chain **BC**.

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## The essence of Goa showcased at Arabian Travel Market Dubai 2024



The Goa Tourism Pavilion at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2024

The Goa Tourism pavilion set up at the Arabian Travel Market (ATM) Dubai 2024 has become the centre of attraction as buyers from around the globe are flocking to its premises.


Seeking to display Goa's diverse range of tourist attractions from spiritual tourism to its azure beaches,

including its lush green hinterland, pavilion number AS7259 located at Hall 7 showcased the multifaceted essence of Goa.

With an aim to highlight the holistic approach that fosters its vision for sustainable tourism, Goa Tourism, by exhibiting community based projects

and conservation efforts, set its sight on drawing attention to its distinctive approach to regenerative tourism.

Commenting on this unique tourism-centric event, Suneel Anchipaka, IAS, Director of Tourism, and Managing Director of Goa Tourism Development Corporation

stated, "The ATM Dubai event has ignited an exciting journey for Goa Tourism. It is heartening to see such enthusiastic engagement from visitors and buyers. We look forward to even greater levels of interaction and collaboration over the next few days of the event" 

## Tarun Samarthya Samman Puraskar by Rotary Club of Dona Paula



Standing L to R: Rtn Janvi Shai, Rtn Arya Kamat, Rtn Elaine Rodrigues, Rtn Paresh Lotlikar, Rtn Shivonne Gracias, Rtn Gaurav Kenkre, Rtn Siddhant Amonkar, Rtn Arushi Agarwal, Rtn Gaurav Pokle, Rtn Dr Sajal Kamat, Rtn Viresh Vazirani (Sitting) Neha Naik Khaunte, Kishore Shah, Nayantara Ray, Cynthia Gonsalves and Raghuvir Mahale

The Rotary Club of Dona Paula proudly honoured six outstanding individuals for their exemplary dedication to youth service and remarkable contributions to the community. As part of Youth Service Month celebrated in May, the Club presented the prestigious Tarun Samarthya Samman Puraskar at its weekly meeting recently.

The recipients of this esteemed award are Yuva Foundation, Nayantara Ray,


Vandita Lawande, Cynthia Gonsalves, Kishore Shah and Neha Naik Khaunte

These individuals have demonstrated exceptional commitment and leadership in various fields, including youth development, mental health advocacy, environmental sustainability, inclusive education, entrepreneurship, and gender equality. All the awardees spoke about their experiences of working with

the youth in empowering them. They have covered over 5 lakh children in Goa amongst themselves, across various projects right from mental health, youth activities, sports, to business counselling and education.

"We are delighted to recognise these remarkable individuals who have dedicated themselves to serving and empowering our youth. Their efforts are truly inspiring

and reflect the core values of Rotary. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to each of them for their outstanding contributions," said Rtn CA Gaurav Kenkre President of Rotary Club of Dona Paula.

"The Rotary Club of Dona Paula remains committed to supporting initiatives that uplift and empower young people, ensuring a brighter future for generations to come," emphasised Kenkre 



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## Asia: Bird's-eye view

The author describes a few unique characteristics of some South East Asian markets to gain an understanding of the Asian consumer

I believe the hoo-ha created around the complexity of Asian markets due to differences in culture, language etc. is legit to an extent. However, I believe there is merit in exploring a simpler view; one that highlights a few unique characteristics of each market and allows us to get a basic understanding of the Asian consumer.

Most strategists who I have discussed this idea of 'unique market characteristics' have not been excited about it. As they explained, "Clarity for the sake of it i.e. without the depth of understanding that Asia needs, is of no use". I disagree – there is merit in a simpler explanation of what makes an Indian an Indian, Chinese a Chinese, a Thai a Thai and so on. Such an understanding provides a simple starting point for brands to begin the journey to navigate the region. If already present in the region, it ensures that their repositioning and touch point experiences sync up with what the essence of each market is.

So here is my take on each market basis work done here and chats with insights and strategy professionals. Of course, open to your comments. Just hope that there is nothing below that anyone takes any offense to as that was never my intent.

**Singapore:** One interesting observation about Singapore is how our national anthem talks about progress and growth. This theme in the anthem stands out versus all other national anthems in Asia which largely glorify the history of that nation and/or the culture. Perhaps it is not surprising that progress and growth often manifest in Singaporeans as a desire to get the best of everything. You may hear of this as the 'kiasu' attitude (fearing of losing out) but it is less about the fear of losing, I believe, and more about winning on all fronts.

**Implication:** Doing business here, by far, is most challenging with clients, customers and consumers having high expectations and tough Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). If you want to dismiss us as a small market, think again – as we are probably what the rest of South East Asia will morph into at least in the service/tech sector. Therefore, learning to succeed in Singapore is what will help you keep your competitive edge in Asia.

**India:** The omnipresence of chaos, constraint on resources and the difficult living conditions most people face, keeps



being resourceful a survival need. The resourcefulness results in *Jugaad* (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jugaad>), the survival instinct gives rise to a *Chalta hai* (let us live with it) attitude and together they result in a different type of demanding market – one that has absolute disregard for process and discipline and believes and expects that everything is possible.

**Implications:** Businesses need to acknowledge this aspect about India and enable customisation in their value proposition. A one size fits all service may not succeed. Service propositions which particularly thrive on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are likely to fail in a country which struggles with people genuinely believing that even societal rules/regulations/process can be broken if the situation demands and that anything is possible.

**Philippines:** One outstanding trait of Filipinos is their friendliness – big smiles, welcoming personalities, and constant desire to be of service. Any foreigner meeting a Filipino can be assured of this warmth, and any local too anywhere in the world – it is the *kababayan* (fellow countryman) spirit. Such friendliness probably translates to deep empathy for a situation or a person. They are happy to follow the law if that is what it takes and they will happily bend the rules (if it can go unnoticed) to accommodate a friend. Another aspect of Filipino's is *Bahala na* meaning 'come what may or leave it to God', a lightly fatalistic attitude which is good in a way but may also result in a perceived lack of sense of urgency.


**Implications:** Being friendly and warm coupled with good command over English (on average versus other nationalities in the region), makes Filipinos a talent asset in delivering service value propositions. Notably, as customers, the *Bahala na* does

not necessarily make them more 'accepting' of service lapses – rather, they might just smile and walk away from you if you fail to delight in your service offer.

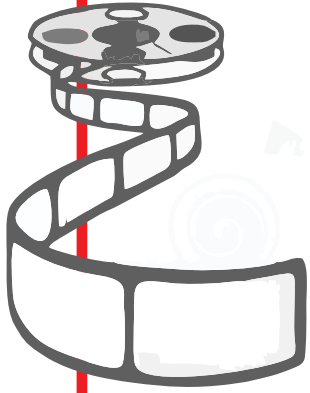
**Thailand:** *Sabai* (being comfortable), *mai pen rai* (don't worry, be happy) are guiding principles of Thai consumers. Thais greatly value *sanuk*, the idea of having a good time for its own sake. All this manifests as being non-confrontational. So it will be very unusual for a Thai to argue with you or express his/her discontent. They would either 'let it go' quickly or if it continues to manifest, they would walk away and you will never know why.

**Implications:** Notice the subtle difference here between the Filipinos who you may find also walks away from a bad service experience versus challenging the same. This may be driven by their subconscious acceptance that the 'service experience gap' they feel is at least partly on account of their own initial over-enthusiastic sign up for the service – having an inflated view of what it would do given all the warmth and friendless lens they bring to every interaction. The Thais walk away because confrontation is simply not in their genes.

**Korea:** One of the biggest inconveniences Koreans experience after going abroad is the waiting time when getting served. Be it dealing with public service institutions or any other process, speed is of essence and Koreans greatly value 'action'. They need to see agility and optimal processing time. Another unique characteristic of the market can be expressed as *Jeong* to be interpreted as 'warm and intimate feeling'. This is not just limited to relationships with family or close friends; it refers to unconditional favours to even those who you may not be close to. It means being a helping heart.

**Implications:** International service brands have to constantly review their processes and strive to be efficient. Front line staff needs to proactively find opportunities to show warmth. The former can be enabled with technology while the latter perhaps still requires human intervention. A successful Korean service delivery can be a great model for the rest of the world to understand how to strike a right balance between AI/tech enabled delivery and human intervention. More on this here: <https://clearstrategy.com/thinking/ai-or-die/> 

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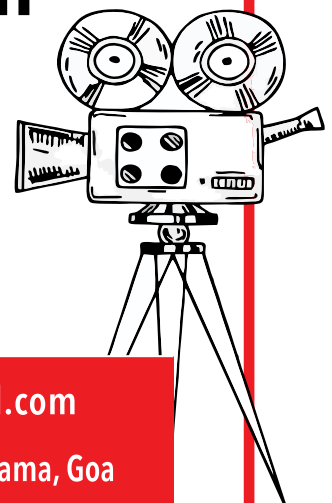
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## Eat humble pie, say what a good boy am I!

The writer elaborates on why entrepreneurs should be humble to ensure success in their venture

**W**e were watching a documentary on Disney+ Hotstar a couple of days ago called *Inside Tirumala Tirupati*. There was a reference made to the ritual of devotees tonsuring their heads before going for the darshan. It was said that this ritual was a symbol of shedding one's ego before going to meet god. And I said to myself: wouldn't it be nice if there was some equivalent ritual for people before they become entrepreneurs!

Because wily nily, your entrepreneurial journey will make you eat humble pie at some point in time or another. The sooner it is, the less damaging for the business it is. And it's not necessary that the effect is only devastating. As corporate history has shown us, many times it could lead to mind-blowing innovations. Walter Diemer was an accountant in Fler Chewing gum factory in Philadelphia in the 1920s. The management took a decision to cut costs by making its own gum base. Diemer was very unhappy with the decision as he felt that the quality of the chewing gum took a beating. He tried to reason with management on reversing the decision but the President shut him up by saying, you are just an accountant, what do you know about product or customer.

Diemer's ego was hurt and he started experimenting with gum bases at home. After several experiments, he invented a recipe that made the chewing gum elastic and not brittle. He test-marketed it at a local store and the chewing gums were sold out in no time. He gifted it to his management as he did not patent the recipe nor did he ask for compensation. Diemer's satisfaction was that he made the President eat humble pie by creating the iconic Wrigley's brand!

Why is ego considered bad in business? According to Sigmund Freud, human beings have three psychological states - the id is the foundation that encompasses all our wants, desires and fantasies, the super ego is the overhead structure that defines dos and don'ts, our moral compass as it were, and the ego is sandwiched between the two and learns to balance between what it wants and what is permissible by society.

In this sense, the term ego is not loaded with value judgement. It is just a state of being. But practically in all religions, there is a demand that ego be effaced for the good of society. When you say someone is egoistic, the synonyms that come to mind are selfish, aggressive, obsessive and maniacal. And as is evident, these traits are singularly repulsive in an entrepreneur who aspires to



Guy Laliberte said "I will combine the best elements of Broadway with gravity-defying physical acts." And the brand Cirque du Soleil was born and blew everybody's imagination away!

build an organisation.

How does this ego manifest in an entrepreneur? Firstly because the idea for the product is his, he has hubris that only he can build the product and only he can create an organisation around the product. His ego comes in the way of listening to sensible advice with respect to product features, customer segmentation, building partnerships, hiring competent teams and building a great workplace. The expression, my-way-or-the-highway has signaled doom for many a good idea. Co-founders who do not have clearly defined roles have fallen apart and damaged the company, thanks to this attitude.

Conversely, when entrepreneurs have had keen ears, they have succeeded in building phenomenal brands. Guy Laliberte wanted to start a circus company just when animal activists were raging against cruelty to animals. So he said, "I won't use animals in my circus. I will create an exotic vaudeville show full of physically daring acts." People said vaudeville is passe, people like song and dance. So Laliberte said "I will combine the best elements of Broadway with gravity-defying physical acts." And the brand Cirque du Soleil was born and blew everybody's imagination away!

Secondly, the ego manifests when a customer criticises his product. I have heard many entrepreneurs dismissing customers by saying: what does he know? He is an idiot. He does not know what's good for him (he includes she). It is quite likely that the customer does not know what's good for him. He did not know how his music-listening behaviour was going to be changed by a computer company called Apple or his

lifestyle would be rescripted by an online company called Swiggy. But the fact also remains that Band-Aid would not have been invented by Erle Dickson and sold to Johnson and Johnson had he not convinced the reluctant customer that an adhesive bandage was better than cotton-wrapped-in-gauze!

Thirdly, the ego manifests in relation to the partners. Rarely do entrepreneurs understand the intricacies of collaborative partnerships because the ego in the entrepreneur comes in the way of creating an equal relationship. He sees himself as the driver of the carriage and therefore the only important one.

Marc Andreessen who had developed Mosaic, the first browser for National Center for Supercomputing Applications left the organisation in a huff as he felt he did not get due credit as the driver of the carriage. James Clark who created the iconic Silicon Graphics (which created Jurassic Park) left his organisation in a huff as he fell out of favour with the investors. But the two collaborated and created Netscape which set off the internet boom on Wall Street.

Fourthly, the biggest ego hurdle is when it comes to the investor. The entrepreneur who sang *yes sir yes sir three bags full sir*, at the time of pitching for capital, after spending all the money, shrugs his shoulder like Humpty Dumpty and says: *All the king's horses and all the king's men cannot put me together again!*

The trouble is that every stakeholder in the entrepreneurial space has a fragile ego. But if the entrepreneur does not eat humble pie, his loss is greater and irreversible than all the other 🍷

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In Vitro Fertilization is a process of fertilization where an egg is combined with sperm outside the body, in vitro.

**ICSI**

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**IUI**

(IUI) is introducing husband's sperm into the uterus at time of ovulation incase of low sperm count.



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## Roadmap for the new Government

The writer lists out suggestions to be incorporated by the new government to achieve its vision of a developed India

Rishi Sunak, UK Prime Minister recently cited India's rise as an 'economic superpower.' He also said that "New and fast growing economic superpowers like India are significantly reshaping the global economy." He spotlighted the resilience demonstrated by the Indian economy as it successfully mitigated the risk of global economic downturn over the recent years, including the Covid-19 aftermath. This clearly shows that the economic growth of India is bullish and is currently the fastest growing economy in the world.

*Viksit Bharat*, or Developed India, is the vision of this Government and represents a complete blueprint for the country's prosperity. This vision will be a guiding principle for India during its *Amrit Kaal*. The vision encompasses various aspects of development, including economic growth, social progress, environmental sustainability, and good governance.

The four pillars of growth to achieve *Viksit Bharat* are *Yuva* (Youth), *Garib* (Poor), *Mahila* (Women) and *Kisan* (Farmers). The vision of *Viksit Bharat* is that of a prosperous *Bharat* in harmony with modern infrastructure and nature and giving opportunities for all citizens of all regions to reach their potential. The different aspects of *Viksit Bharat* are economic growth, environmental sustainability, social progress and good governance.

There is a need to prepare an ambitious, bold and transformative agenda to realise the goals of *Viksit Bharat*. Some of the suggestions made to achieve this vision need to be incorporated by the new Government immediately in order to keep up the tempo of growth.

**Agriculture** is the key for any country. India as a country is considered as the largest economy in the world as per the GDP data. The food demand is likely to increase by at least about 2.44% annually until 2047-2048. Hence the Government must make reformative policies to strengthen the agriculture and food processing sector to protect the demand and supply landscape of the agriculture sector and ensure food security and sustainable growth. Need to have the best planning to protect crops and grains from adverse effects of climate change.

**Logistics** is another parameter which will boost economic progress. As the Indian economy continues to grow and evolve, the importance of efficient and effective



**There is a need to prepare an ambitious, bold and transformative agenda to realise the goals of *Viksit Bharat*. Some of the suggestions made to achieve this vision need to be incorporated by the new Government immediately in order to keep up the tempo of growth**

movement of goods cannot be unnoticed. In today's inter-connected world, shipping and logistics stand at the heart of the economy, serving as crucial gateways for international trade and commerce. Especially for agriculture, a more robust mechanism for the cold chain needs to be strengthened at every corner of the regions across India. More international airports located at convenient areas will help promote exporting India products across the globe. It needs integration of technologies and advancements in intra-logistics, automation, warehousing, and transportation management.

**Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare** keep the country robust and healthy. Manufacturing and end-to-end supply chain management will emerge as pivotal components within the pharmaceutical industry. In today's competitive landscape, success hinges on the meticulous management of manufacturing operations and supply chain costs to optimise cost-to-serve ratios and minimise inventory levels, all while upholding the highest service standards. The Indian industry can become an integral part of the global pharmaceutical supply chain by making advancement of manufacturing technologies with specific focus on automation and digitalisation, building credibility in the global markets with a commitment to quality, embracing sustainable practices.

**Innovation and Research and Development (R&D)** will help the country to stay ahead in the race. Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) is an important component for the industry with respect to privacy of products. Duplicate products, especially

in pharmaceuticals and healthcare, are on rise, hence a more stringent mechanism is a must to track and stop this. Rational strategy must be incorporated.

**Women empowerment** will help achieve targets faster and easily. Capacity building for empowering movement is crucial. This will encourage industries to employ more women and give women a friendly work ambience. Importance must be given to education, skill training, and professional development of women, skilling them to empower and making them capable of becoming entrepreneurs independently.

**Energy transition and sustainability** is another key aspect in today's world. Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) is a framework used to assess an organisation's business practices and performance on various sustainability and ethical issues. Climate change is a worrisome factor for the world. In order to have sustainability and environment protection, this will give rise to demands for renewable energy like solar, wind and electronic vehicles. The demand for this will rise high hence the need for the right policy frameworks.

Automation through **technology** will be the need of the day to keep pace with the global standards. The developments in science, technology and innovation will make the country amongst the top scientific powers of the world. For the purpose of transforming the industries robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), nanotechnology, synthetic biology will play significant roles.

**Infrastructure** development has to keep pace bringing in investments and fueling growth. Infrastructure is the key driving



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# AI and the future of Goan economy

The writer elaborates on the potential of AI in various economic sectors in Goa and its social impact

The future of businesses is going to be impacted by technology including emerging technologies like AI, web3, 5G and more. To accelerate AI efforts by businesses, it is essential to forge strategic partnerships and alliances with technology companies and innovative startups and various stakeholders.

Collaborating with tech companies specialising in AI can provide businesses with access to resources, expertise, and technology infrastructure necessary for AI development and deployment. Partnering with academic institutions can facilitate knowledge exchange, talent development, and research collaborations in AI.

Engaging with industry associations and government agencies can provide businesses with networking opportunities, regulatory support, and access to new age technologies.

Additionally, partnering with incubators and accelerators can provide businesses access to startups that can provide tailored support and access to technologies and resources to accelerate specific growth and development in businesses.

Overall, forging collaborative partnerships across the ecosystem can create a vibrant AI innovation ecosystem encouraging growth and innovation in Goa.

The introduction of AI technology in Goa is expected to bring about significant changes in various aspects of society;

To begin with, AI has the potential to revolutionise industries such as healthcare, agriculture, tourism, and education, leading to improved efficiency, productivity, and quality of services.

For instance, AI-driven healthcare solutions could enhance diagnostic accuracy and personalised treatment, while AI-powered agricultural systems could optimise crop management and resource utilisation.



Similarly, AI applications in tourism could offer personalised recommendations and immersive experiences for visitors, boosting the tourism sector's competitiveness. Additionally, AI-enabled educational tools could provide personalised learning experiences and bridge gaps in access to quality education.

In conjunction with these opportunities, many are concerned about the social impact of AI in Goa; majorly, the potential displacement of jobs due to automation, particularly in sectors with routine tasks susceptible to automation.

This could lead to economic disruptions and exacerbate inequalities, particularly for vulnerable populations with limited access to education and training opportunities.

Moreover, there are ethical and privacy concerns related to the use of AI, such as algorithmic bias, data privacy violations, and surveillance issues.

To avoid these challenges, the government will ensure policies and regulations that warrant responsible AI development and deployment, fostering inclusive growth and safeguarding the

rights and well-being of Goa's residents.

Collaborative efforts involving the government, industry, academia, and civil society are essential to navigating the complex social implications of AI and harnessing its transformative potential for the benefit of Goa's society as a whole.

Plausible solutions entail raising public awareness and providing education on AI technology.

Ethical guidelines must be developed and implemented to ensure fair and responsible AI development and deployment.

Community engagement is crucial, involving local stakeholders in decision-making processes and addressing bias and discrimination in AI systems.

Strengthening data privacy and security regulations is crucial, along with conducting impact assessments to evaluate AI's effects on local communities.

Promoting inclusive AI development processes that reflect the needs of diverse stakeholders is also key. By implementing these strategies, Goa can ensure that AI innovations contribute positively to the well-being of its residents 🇮🇳

The writer is CEO of the Startup and IT Promotion Cell in the Department of Information Technology, Electronics and Communications of Goa. Email: dsprashantgoa@gmail.com

< Continued from page 48

force for India's vision of a \$35 trillion economy by 2047. The railway has been one of the most crucial partners in infrastructure development, gearing up for a high-speed network both for the passenger segment as well as for freight movement. This will expect more reformative policy and plans.

The productivity of a country's economy is closely linked to the proportion of educated workers, as they are better equipped to perform tasks requiring literacy

and critical thinking.

Countries worldwide are increasingly prioritising the development of **education** systems that can equip individuals with the skills needed in emerging industries, particularly in science and technology. The more skilled and knowledgeable employees a firm employs, the greater its production potential.

Economies that recognise education as an asset are often referred to as knowledge-

based economies. Given the evolving global work environment, specialising in a single field may no longer suffice, future workers will need diverse knowledge and skill sets.

The National Education Policy of 2020 has taken a practical and progressive approach to address employability and vocational training across all education disciplines. The government should ensure proper implementation of this new education policy 🇮🇳

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# Hybrid retirement: A new way of life

The writer elaborates on the concept of hybrid retirement and how one can pursue their passions while still working

In the traditional narrative of retirement, people envision a golden age characterized by leisurely strolls in the park, quality time with loved ones, and perhaps travelling across the world. Retirement symbolises an escape from the daily grind, a reward for years of hard work. However, the concept of retirement is undergoing a profound transformation in the modern era, giving rise to what is now known as hybrid retirement.

Hybrid retirement offers the freedom to choose when and how much to work, blurring the lines between retirement and career. No longer confined to the rigid constraints of traditional retirement, people are now embracing the idea of integrating work with their passions and personal pursuits.

One of the key advantages of hybrid retirement is the ability to pursue one's passions while still earning an income. Whether it is traveling the world, dedicating time to volunteer work, prioritising health and fitness, or starting entrepreneurial ventures, individuals have the flexibility to align their work with their personal aspirations. This fusion of work and leisure not only enriches their lives but also provides a sense of fulfilment and meaning.

However, to fully embrace the concept of hybrid retirement, proper planning is essential. Retirement planning should begin early in life, with a focus on building a robust financial foundation. By starting to save and invest from a young age, individuals can harness the power of compounding and secure a steady income stream for their future.

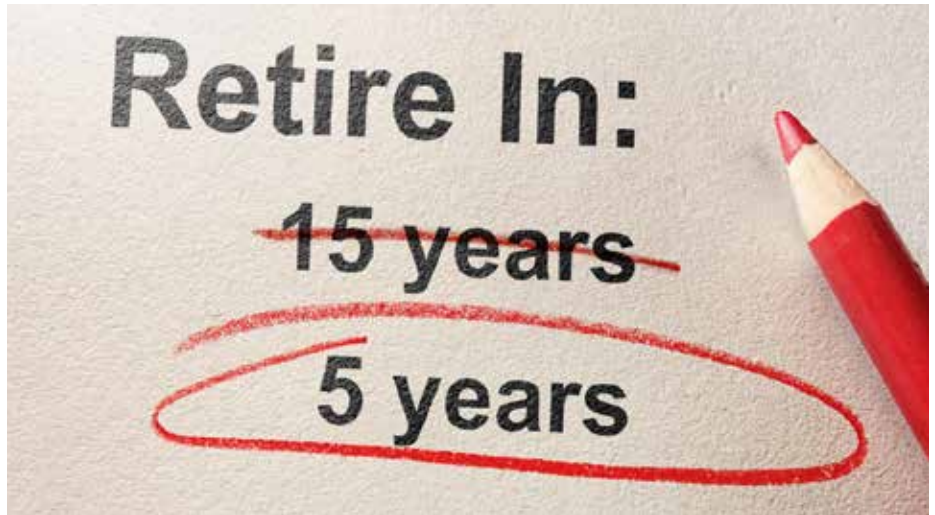
Making sound investment decisions involves a combination of factors which allows people to move forward with their hybrid retirement, and below are the factors that play a crucial role for the same.

## Right Product

Choosing the appropriate investment product depends on various factors such as your financial goals, risk tolerance, time horizon, and current market conditions. Whether it is stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate, or alternative investments, selecting the right product that aligns with your objectives is extremely crucial.

## Right Company

Investing in reputable and financially sound companies is essential for long-term



success. Conducting a thorough research on a company's financial health, management team, competitive positioning, and growth prospects can help mitigate risks and enhance the probability of favourable returns.

## Right Professional

Seeking guidance from qualified and experienced financial professionals, such as financial advisors or investment managers can provide valuable insights and expertise. A competent advisor can assist in crafting a personalised investment strategy, navigating complex financial markets, and making informed decisions tailored to your unique circumstances.

## Financial Imbalance

Neglecting any of the above parameters can lead to financial distress. For instance, investing in the wrong product or company without proper research or guidance can result in losses or underperformance. Similarly, relying solely on one's intuition or emotions without seeking professional advice may lead to suboptimal outcomes.

This can also lead to financial distress and retirement planning. Poor investment decisions can jeopardise not only your regular income but also your long-term financial security, including retirement planning. Accumulating wealth over time through prudent investing is essential for achieving financial independence and ensuring a comfortable retirement lifestyle.

## Healthy Work-Life balance

Cultivating a healthy work-life balance is

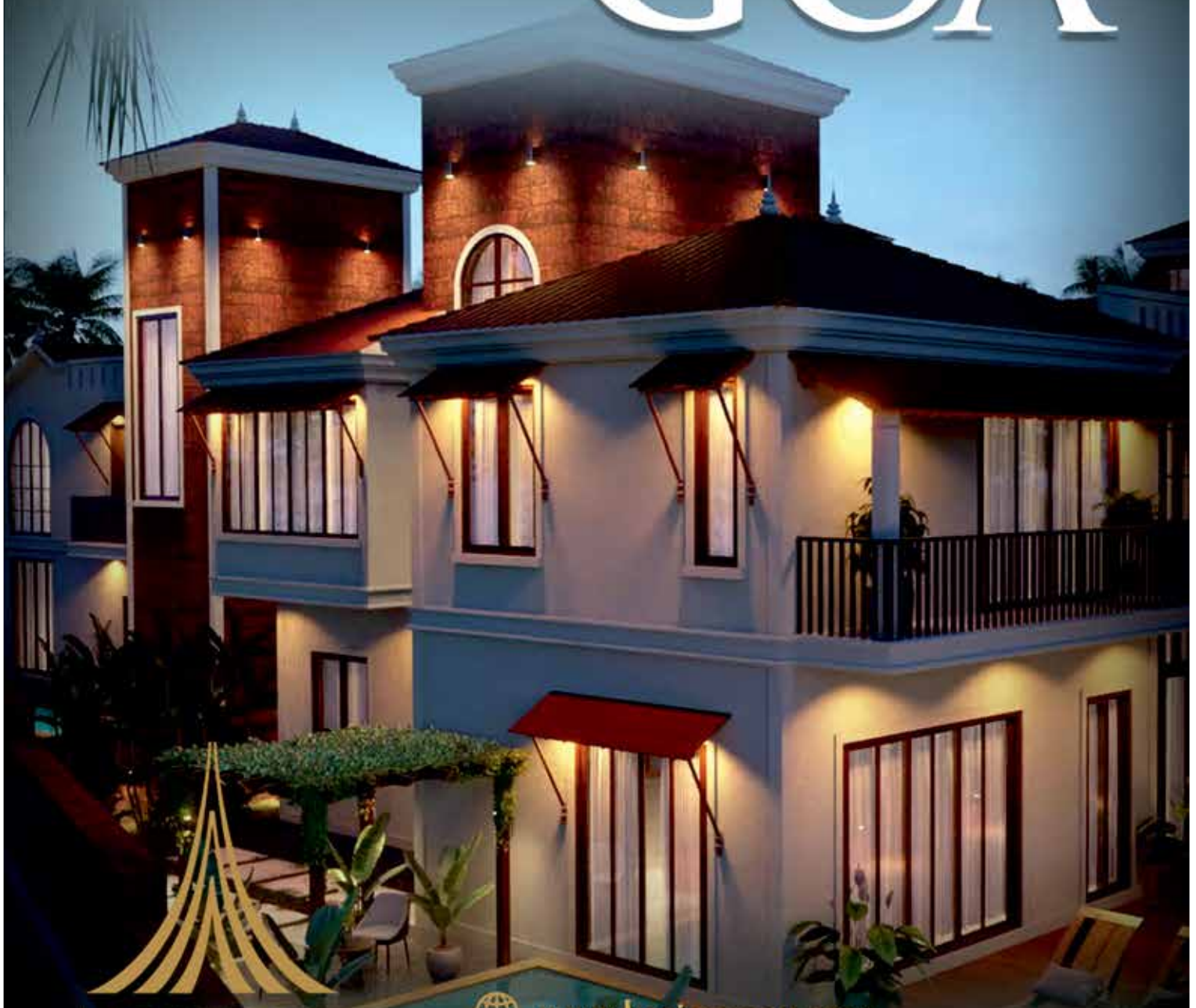
paramount for long-term well-being. In the pursuit of career success, many individuals neglect their personal lives, sacrificing time with family and friends in favour of professional advancement. If one follows all the above parameters then choosing a hybrid retirement option is very easy. Hybrid retirement encourages a more holistic approach, where work is seen as a means to support a fulfilling life rather than the sole focus of one's existence.

The golden years of retirement should be characterised by financial freedom and security. A well-crafted hybrid retirement fund provides the peace of mind to enjoy life to the fullest without worrying about financial constraints. Whether it is pursuing lifelong passions, embarking on new adventures, or simply savouring the joys of everyday life, retirement becomes a time of exploration and self-discovery.

## Conclusion

Hybrid retirement represents a new way of life – one that embraces the fluidity of work and leisure, prioritises personal fulfilment, and ensures financial security for the future. A well-balanced approach to fulfil hybrid retirement comprises of choosing the right product, company, and professional guidance. This is essential for successful investing and long-term financial well-being. By adopting a proactive approach to retirement planning, individuals can chart their own course towards a balanced and rewarding lifestyle. In the age of hybrid retirement, the possibilities are endless, offering a glimpse into a future where work and retirement seamlessly coexist. ■

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# Thrive on a good vibe, with heart and soul at the first JdV by Hyatt in India

Ronil Goa has been reborn as the foray of Hyatt's Independent Collection – JdV by Hyatt



Located in the popular North Goa vicinity on the iconic Calangute-Baga road, this boutique, pet friendly resort is a destination by itself. With a host of unique onsite experiences and activities, designed spaces, Indo-Portuguese architecture and contemporary touches, complimented by two stunning swimming pools, vibrant entertainment program, comfort classics inspired food and beverages and intimate event venues. Well connected to key tourist attractions as well as upscale shopping and entertainment areas, the hotel is easily accessible from both of Goa's airports- Dabolim International Airport and Manohar International Airport at Mopa.

The erstwhile Ronil Goa, which has a legacy of over 35-years, in its new avatar brings to life the quintessential Goan vibe through vibrant experiences against the backdrop of Indo-Portuguese architecture. Offering 135 chic rooms with private balconies, two swimming pools that are at the heart of the resort, spacious open wardrobes, complimentary mini-bar, signature Cedar Sandalwood bath amenities, comfortable beds and locally loved tea and coffee brands, the ambience ensures guests have a host of memorable experiences and feel at home. Inspired by the texture of shells, fluted wall panels are consistent across the resort, especially the guest rooms, to give patrons a rich feel.

The introduction of JdV by Hyatt in India caters to the leisure market and offers guests a chance to celebrate life while living in the moment. True to the JdV by Hyatt brand promise – "To celebrate the Joie de Vivre" – the dining options celebrate the joy of life with international classics as well as spirit-free and spirited beverages, complimented by intuitive service delivered by a welcoming team. At the property, one can enjoy experiences to suit every palate from small plates, classic cocktails or locally loved spirits at Patrão's located in the lobby; roasts and wood-fire pizzas, jacuzzis and sunken beds at the Hub – the outdoor bar with a swim up deck; or a farmhouse breakfast and comfort meals at the Ronil Bistro – where evenings are extra charming with a firepit and marshmallows by the pool. The resort offers an array of onsite activities which range from BBQ picnics in the garden or poolside to Karaoke after hours at The Loft or Sip and Paint sessions at the Garden. One can even head out to explore Goa's nightlife and enjoy a nightcap at Patrao's, once back in the early hours. Guests will find true relaxation at the 'Energy' and 'Tranquil' pools which offer a vibe that matches their names; an on-site DJ host and upbeat entertainment program, distinctive music offerings, a BBQ and pizzeria, a bonfire, jacuzzi and swim-up bar, as well as poolside dining and picnics.

These onsite experiences are designed to elevate a leisure state of mind and create the environment for guests to live in the now.

For gatherings, the resort's event spaces are spread across 5,446 square feet (506 square meters) and consist of Ronil Studio which includes a pre-function space, The Loft and the Garden. The residential-style venues are ideal for DJ events, intimate celebrations, ideation sessions, brand showcases and after-parties.

One can explore the wonders of Goa with the assistance of Ronil Goa's dedicated Experience Team comprising local insider experts or opt to zone out with curated playlists and noise cancellations headphones at Soul Station.

Choosing to shop for resort wear and souvenirs at the Hyatt Loves Local shop has its own joys. For the fitness enthusiasts, the 24/7 Stay Fit Gym is always available and an onsite spa is expected in the near future to keep our guests relaxed.

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**Prof Dharendra S. Katti is new IIT Goa Director**



Renowned for his ground-breaking contributions to research in biomaterials, tissue engineering, and drug delivery systems, Prof Dharendra S. Katti has officially assumed charge as the new Director at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Goa, succeeding Prof B.K. Mishra. The transition ceremony took place recently at the institute's premises.

On the occasion Prof Katti remarked, "I am deeply honoured to embark on this journey with the vibrant academic community at IIT Goa. My utmost priority is cultivating a culture of academic excellence, fuelled by innovation and research-driven progress." Prof Katti presents an array of notable affiliations with well-known international institutions such as Drexel University and Virginia University, USA. Prof Katti held the position of Dean of International Relations at IIT Kanpur, prior to his new appointment at IIT Goa 

**Alexandre Moniz Barbosa releases new book**


Having previously written books like *Touched by the Toe*, *Raw Earth* and *Kaddio Boddio*, journalist-turned-author Alexandre Moniz Barbosa released a new book *Colonial Sunset*, a fictional work of art that revolves around the forbidden love story of a Portuguese soldier and a Goan woman as Goa is on the verge of liberation. Based on a true love story, the book unfolds against the backdrop of Goa's liberation and is successful in creating the old world charm that takes the reader back to 1961. Barbosa's quest to better explore the pre-liberation period has led him to author this fictional work of art which, he feels, is the only way for the larger audience to gain a better understanding of the period. Having previously worked as an editor for leading newspapers, Barbosa's shift to creative writing brings out the avid writer in him which mesmerises readers and takes them back in time. The book recreates the setting of pre-liberation Goa, while keeping the story relevant to today's times 



**Rowena Kay Mascarenhas awarded the prestigious 'Woman of the Year 2024'**

IndUS Entrepreneurs (TiE) Boston Executive Director Rowena Kay Mascarenhas, a Goan hailing from Saligao, is the recipient of the prestigious 'Woman of the Year 2024' award in Boston.

Mascarenhas presents an illustrious professional experience spanning more than two and a half decades, with her career encompassing corporate, academic and non-profit sectors. Apart from her professional responsibilities at TiE Boston, she channels her time to volunteer at Direct Action for Women Now (DAWN) Worldwide, a Cambridge based non-profit organisation which works towards eliminating gender based violence and advancing gender equity. An advocate for sustainable development practices, Mascarenhas also volunteers on the Green Team of the neighbourhood SHCDC, which works with the state department to create awareness on the benefits of switching to green energy.

Apart from receiving this award for Non-Profit Leadership, Mascarenhas has also been named to the Top Women Leaders of Washington DC, 2024 and was also the recipient of the WILL Women Choice Award in 2021 




**IHCL appoints Ranjit Phillipose as Senior Vice President-Operations, Goa**



India Hotels Co. Ltd (IHCL) has appointed Ranjit Phillipose as Senior Vice President - Operations, Goa. A celebrated visionary for his outstanding achievements in opening new hotels and rebranding initiatives across the world, Phillipose brings a wealth of experience and exceptional hospitality leadership spanning three decades with IHCL.

Phillipose embarked on his professional journey in 1993 with IHCL at Taj Coromandel, Chennai. Over the years, he has showcased versatile skills and remarkable leadership acumen by spearheading pre-opening task forces in Mumbai, Seychelles and Mauritius. Building on his international portfolio, he has held key positions in London, as well as the United States, including Director of Rooms at The Pierre, New York and Hotel Manager at Taj Boston.

His first general management role as General Manager was at Taj Falaknuma Palace, Hyderabad and thereafter he went on to lead Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives as the General Manager. In his subsequent role, as Area Director - Goa and General Manager - Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Goa, he provided strategic leadership to the operations in the region. With his extensive experience across the organisation, Phillipose took on the role of General Manager - Taj Dubai and was promoted to Area Director UAE & Africa and General Manager - Taj Dubai. He played a crucial role in opening Taj Jumeirah Lakes Towers in 2019 and effectively positioning Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, The Palm, Dubai in key markets prior to being re-designated in 2022 as Area Director - Middle East & General Manager - Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, The Palm, Dubai.

He was featured in the *Forbes Middle East Top 100 Travel & Tourism Leaders 2023*. For seven consecutive years, he has been recognised by *Hotelier Middle East* in the Executive Power 50 List. He was conferred with International Achiever of the Year - Hospitality at the 2023 PATWA International Travel Award at ITB, Berlin. Phillipose has also received esteemed honours including the JRD Tata Award for Quality and Excellence 

**BUSINESS GOA QUIZ** 179  
Goa's Only Business Magazine

1. Which institution announced Risk Disclosure Framework for Individual Traders?

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2. Which term refers to the phenomenon when currency in circulation rising when digital payments are rising?

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3. Urban Infrastructure Development Fund (UIDF) is executed by which institution?

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4. Which company is the world's largest manufacturer of electric cars?

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5. Which is the first chipmaker to be valued at over \$1 trillion?

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6. Who is the author of the book *The Hard Thing About Hard Things*?

---

7. Which word, derived from the Danish word 'Leg Godt' which means 'play well' in English, forms the name of a popular toy brand?

---

8. The English name of which famous automobile brand translates to 'People's Car' in German?

---

9. Identify this industrialist who was recently awarded the Padma Award



**Answers to BG Quiz 178:** 1.Profit Margin 2.SAP 3.Gujarat Titans 4.Eco-Industrial Park 5.Arbitrage 6.Blueprint 7.Phil Knight 8.Shantanu Narayen, Chairman and CEO of Adobe Inc

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