

## **My Experience of Autumn in Northern Germany**

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Bremen has a small airport but it has the airport nearest to Bremerhaven on the North Sea. Since the re-unification of Germany, the whole area has undergone a boom.

Frankfurt in the state of Hesse has Germany's biggest airport. In Frankfurt, skyscrapers punctuate the skyline. It is also a major financial hub.

Germany has been through two World Wars, ending up on the losing side of both with its attendant diminishing of territory. But one has to admire the resiliance of the country of Otto von Bismarck who have again made their land one of the leading nations of the world. Today, Germany can easily rival France as a top tourist destination and Berlin is second only to London as the preferred location of startups in Europe.

Autumn in the countryside of northern Germany, as I encountered it on the road from Bremen to Bremerhaven, is pleasantly cool, if a tad bleak. Intensive mechanised farmlands, interspersed with wooded areas, welcomed me to this part of the world. I could sense the upcoming elections to the Bundestag, but the muted campaign was a world apart from the dictators masquerading as politicians romping around before any election in India.

Bundesrepublik Deutschland is the official name of Germany and the decades of co-existence of communist East Germany and capitalist West Germany has resulted in a Germany that is somewhat more decentralised than most European nations. Much of Western Classical Music has been produced by Germany and its Germanic neighbour, Austria. Martin Luther initiated the Protestant movement at Wittenburg in the state of Saxony-Anhalt and Austria was at the vanguard of protecting Christian Europe against the Ottoman Turks after the Ottoman Turks led by Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent defeated Hungary at the Battle of Mohacs in 1526.

Although the Protestant movement started in Germany, Germany has a large population of Roman Catholics and Cologne in western Germany is the headquarters of the German Roman Catholic Church and Austria is predominantly Roman Catholic.

Goethe is arguably one of Europe's greatest literateurs and the superb paintings of Albrecht Durer are well known. On a different track, afloat in the Baltic Sea, Rugen Island is Germany's biggest island.

Why has Germany made it big when India is languishing almost a century after becoming independent? Give it a think.

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