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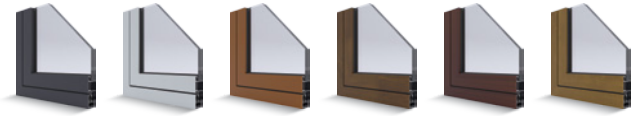

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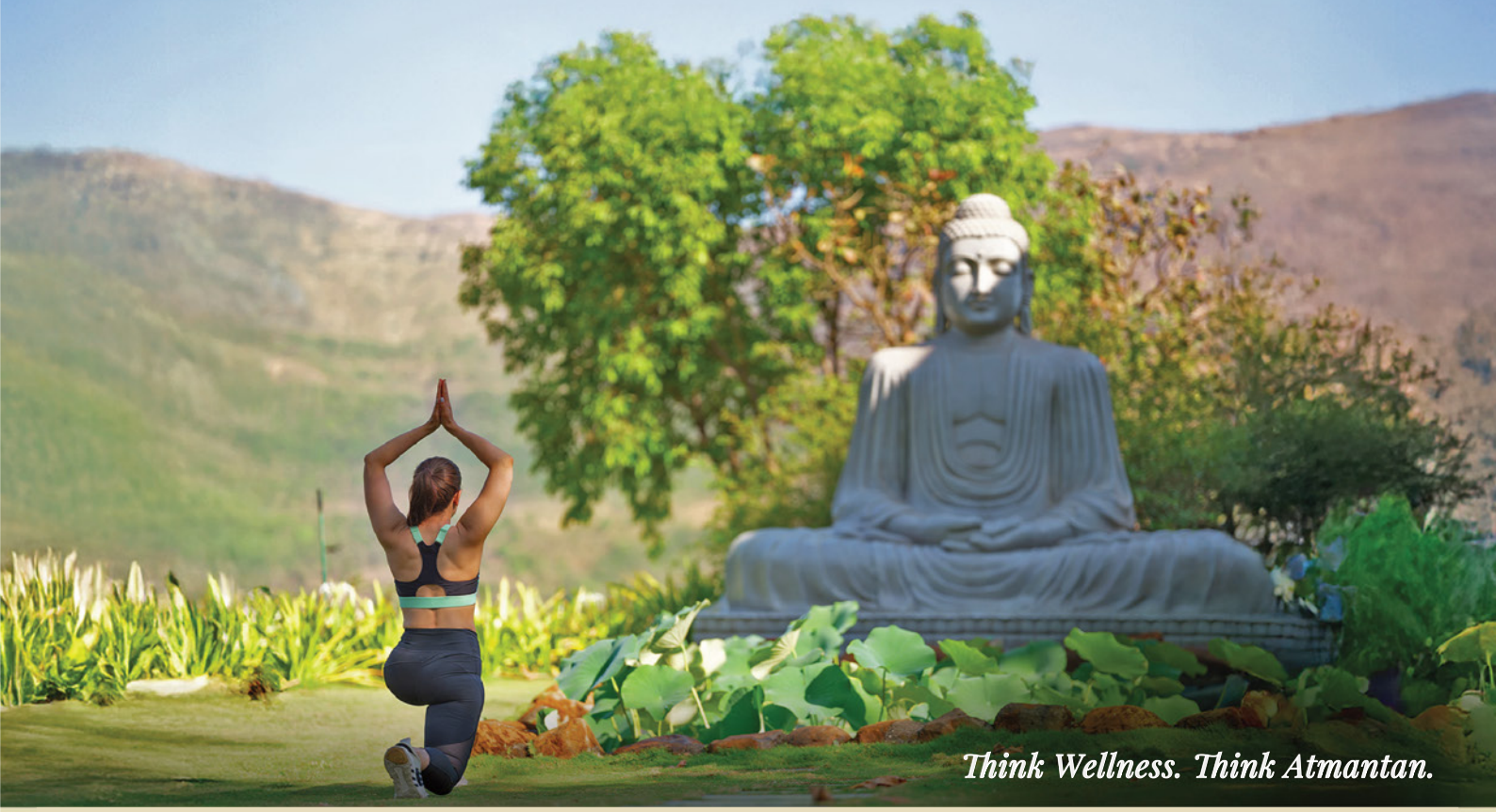

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INDIA

NEW DELHI: The Hub, Plot 66, Okhla Industrial Estate, Phase-III, New Delhi-110020

MUMBAI: Ganga Jamuna Sangam, A/901, 14th Road, Bandra West, Mumbai-400052

CHENNAI: No. 145, New 2, 8th Floor, Old, Nungambakkam High Rd, Nungambakkam, Chennai, Tamil Nadu-600034

KOLKATA: 1st Floor, 132A, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rd, Anami Sangha, Kalighat, Kolkata, West Bengal-700026

BENGALURU: 1203, 12th Floor, B Wing, Mittal Tower, M.G. Road, Bengaluru-560001

ASIA

THAILAND: 63 Athenee Tower, 21st Floor Wireless Road, Lumphini Pathumwan, Bangkok, Thailand 10330

SINGAPORE: 15 Scotts Road, #04-10, Singapore 228218

HONG KONG: Unit 1006, 10/F, Capital Centre, No. 151 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong

MALAYSIA: Mercu Aspire Tower 1, Unit 18-01 & 18-023, Jalan Bangsar, KL Eco City, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 59200

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK

UNITED KINGDOM
Chris Cutler
TTG Media Limited Friars House
160 Blackfriars Road London
SE1 8EZ England, United Kingdom
T: (44-20) 3714 4102
E: ccutler@ttgmedia.com

EUROPE
ITALY | GERMANY | FRANCE
Barbara Rebora
Italian Exhibition Group Spa
(TTG Italia) Foro Buonaparte
74-20121 Milano, Italy
T: (39-02) 8068 9242
E: barbara.rebora@iegexpo.it

NORTH AMERICA
Natalya Meytin
World Media Inc.19 West 36th Street,
7th Floor New York, NY 10018
T: 212-244-5610 Main
E: Natalyameytin@worldmediaonline.com

NORTH ASIA
SOUTH KOREA | JAPAN
SS Song
First Media Services Corp. #1514, Hwang Hwa B/D, 320,
Gangnam-daero, Gangnam-gu, Seoul, Korea 06252
T: (82-2) 363 3591 M (82) 10 5234 3590 F (82-2) 738 7970
E: fmsc3590@gmail.com, fmsc@unitel.co.kr

For editorial queries, write to *editorial.airindia@apxluxury.com*
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EDITOR'S NOTE

Like it or not, tech has seeped into every aspect of our lives and the next frontier of tech is artificial intelligence (AI). Many of us are already using AI—or being used by it. So, how much should we lean in?

Our Cover Story section dives into this. Actor and entrepreneur Vivek Oberoi talks about his 'wired' life; we debate if AI is influencing consumer behaviour; and we help decode modes of payment when you travel. Explorers should see our list of future-ready gear, our line-up of essential travel tools, and browse our curation of camera phones that let you capture memories to cherish long after the holiday.

While tech makes our daily life simpler and provides platforms to exchange perspectives, real life connections still have their own charm. In Bengaluru, there's a new trend emerging of people witnessing theatrical productions not in traditional auditoria but in intimate places. In Bukhara, Uzbekistan, the old Silk Route town is still buzzing with craftspeople trading ideas, skills, and stories. In Kolkata, French artist Thomas Henriot finds inspiration in the everyday, sketching on streets; passers by stop to watch and just by being present, blend into his work, creating an unspoken tie.

In Hyderabad, legacy lives in every bite of biryani and bonds are built over food. Elsewhere, Chef Manish Mehrotra talks about how he was fascinated by the culinary greatness of Japan. Talking about a different connection, actor and rugby player Rahul Bose shares his passion for the sport.

As Air India launches its 'Easy Connect' flights under the Government of India's 'Hub-and-spoke' framework, making travel more seamless beyond the metros, we are reminded that travel is ultimately about connection—between people, places, and cultures. Technology may make those connections easier, but it is the stories behind them that continue to inspire us.

Happy Reading!

– **Namaste.ai** Editorial Team

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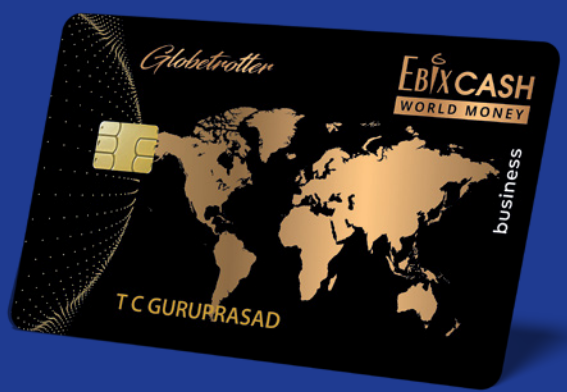

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On The Cover
Exploring cyberspace in a VR headset is one of the many possibilities of a tech-driven future

Cover image courtesy
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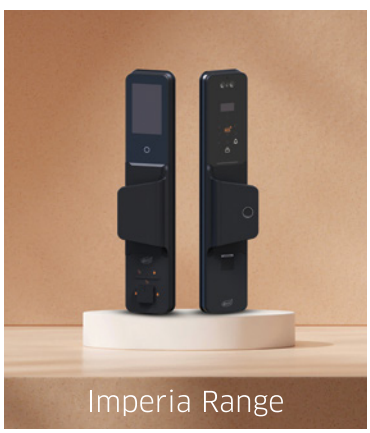
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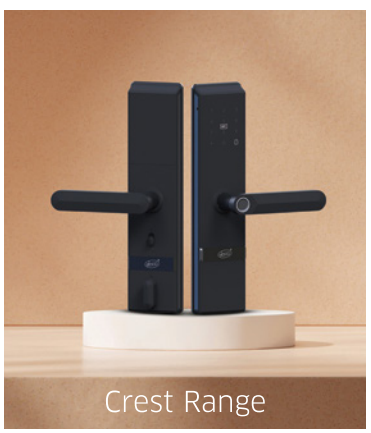
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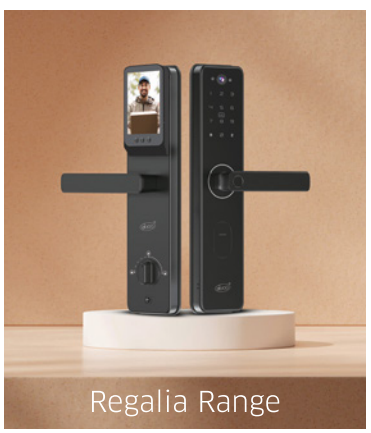
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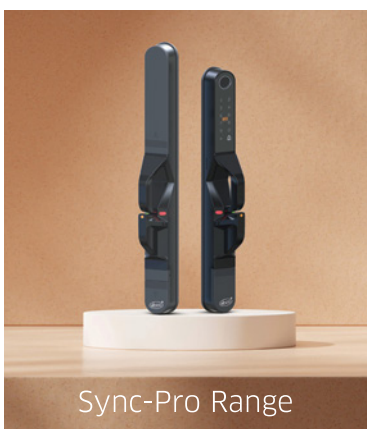
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CONTRIBUTORS

Vivek Oberoi
@vivekoberoi

An actor, entrepreneur, and philanthropist—Vivek wears many hats. Alongside over 40 films across 7 languages and an Emmy nomination to his credit, he has demonstrated admirable entrepreneurial acumen, steering multiple successful ventures. He is also an avid tech buff, integrating technology in almost every aspect of his life, which he talks about in this issue. **page 14**

Utkarsh Thakkar
@utkarshdthakkar

A Mumbai-based aviation enthusiast who enjoys every part of this sector—from taking photos and videos of aircraft to writing about the industry—Utkarsh lists the most useful gadgets to make any trip hassle free. **page 19**

Nikhil Chawla
@nikhilchawla

A content creator, traveller, and storyteller, Nikhil creates engaging narratives around technology, automobiles, and lifestyle. From testing the latest tech to driving across diverse terrains, his work blends curiosity with authenticity. He decodes the most efficient ways to pay during travel. **page 16**

Jinal Shah
@jinals89

A popular TEDx speaker and nutritionist, Jinal has worked with Rujuta Diwekar since 2012. She has spoken at several international conferences, government institutions, the Indian Army, IITs, and has been featured on BBC World. She offers easy-to-follow steps that will ensure you do not have to compromise on your diet and exercise routine when on holiday. **page 76**

Lesley Amol Simeon
@lesley_amol

Reluctant to give up one passion for another, Lesley is a Bengaluru-based artiste juggling his penchant for writing, acting, and singing. A journalist by training and an actor by passion, matters of history, culture, and the arts have long formed the centre of his work across disciplines. In this issue, he writes about the growing trend of performance artistes in Bengaluru choosing to stage their stories in intimate spaces. **page 30**

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"TECH IS NOT JUST A TOOL"

From wearable devices to spatial computing, **Vivek Oberoi** truly lives a life driven by technology

My fascination with technology

I remember being a student at Mayo College, watching the first home computers hum to life. There was this buzz; the realisation that a few lines of code could solve a complex, real-world problem. The fascination was never the hardware; it was the storytelling potential of the leverage it provides. Tech is the engine that has powered every pivot in my life—from my early days experimenting with software to building an entrepreneurial ecosystem. It is the difference between moving at the speed of tradition and leaping into the future. It is not just a tool; it is the wind beneath the wings of ambition.

Gadgets I cannot live without

My life is a constant blur across cities and industries, so my tools have to be frictionless. I wear a Whoop band—it is like having a coach on my wrist, providing high-fidelity biometric data that helps me optimise my performance without me ever having to hunt for a screen. In place of standard eyewear, I have moved toward custom-engineered smart frames that act as a discreet command centre; they allow me to stay connected to my world while keeping my eyes on the person in front of me. And, of course, my AirPods Pro is my daily armour. When they go in, the world fades away, and I am either deep in a blueprint or finding the soul of a new creative narrative.

Implementing tech in every aspect of life—from my home to my car

I have always believed that technology should serve you, not demand your attention. My home is designed with an intuitive automation layer—the lights and climate breathe with my schedule, creating an environment for me to recharge. On the road, I look for systems with high-level telemetry and clean, heads-up displays. I want the data but want to stay equally focused on the journey.

The AI prompts and models I use

I have moved beyond basic chatbots—I am looking for a partner in thought. Right now, I am utilising Claude 4.5 Opus for strategic reasoning; its ability to handle nuanced business logic is truly impressive. I also experiment with Grok 4.20 for real-time data and raw market sentiment.

One of my favourite techniques is something I call 'The Character's Compass'. I will feed a scene's emotional arc into the model

ON THE MOVE
"When I travel, I carry a portable high-speed AI hub. Whether I am in a lounge in London or at a site office in Ras Al Khaimah, it ensures my digital workspace is just as powerful and cinematic as my physical one."

LEFT AND RIGHT
The actor wears a Whoop band at all times; He uses AirPods Pro as an armour to tune out ambient noise.

and prompt it: "Identify the three deepest psychological blocks for this character and suggest five subtle, tech-augmented ways to bring that world to the screen." It is like having a 3am huddle with a brilliant acting coach, helping me find the pulse of a performance before the cameras roll.

Tech reviewers I follow

I value creators who see the intersection of design and engineering as an art form. Marques Brownlee is a staple for his aesthetic clarity and honest critiques. I also follow *The Verge* for their deep dives into how tech is reshaping the fabric of society. I look for voices that go beyond just talking about specs. I want to know how a product feels to live with. That is the same perspective I bring to my real estate projects. It is never just about the building but about the experience of the soul within it.

The tech I want to try

I am watching Spatial Computing very closely. The idea of digital and physical worlds merging is beautiful but it comes with responsibility. As these tools become more powerful, we have to be more vigilant. We are entering an era where you can automate almost any decision, and that is exactly where the danger lives. Technology can be a double-edged sword; it can be misused to manipulate or distance us from reality.

Stakeholders need to take care in how they build these brains, and users must stay sharp. My rule—tech should make you more human, not less.

Investing in tech companies

My investment philosophy is about backing people who solve problems with empathy. iScholar is close to my heart, using tech to bring world-class education to every corner of India.

Then there is Rotoris, which is a tribute to mechanical brilliance. We are using advanced, precision engineering to put Indian luxury watchmaking on the global map. It is about proving that our craftsmanship is second to none. With Solitario, we have embraced cutting-edge technology to create lab-grown diamonds that are indistinguishable from mined ones, making luxury ethical and accessible. I do not just invest for a return; I invest in tech that has a story to tell and a life to improve.

—As told to ***Mignonne Dsouza***

Left and right: Vivek Oberoi; Apple

THE BIG SPEND

Awareness about payment options, reward points, and grievance modes can help you stay ahead of the game when you travel

words by
Nikhil Chawla

Premium credit cards are ideal for high-value purchases during international travel

If you are an Indian traveller heading overseas, you likely already know that how you pay is becoming just as crucial as where you pay. FICCI cites a Future Market Insights report that states that India will remain one of the world's fastest-growing outbound markets for the rest of the decade, fuelled by higher disposable incomes, better flight connections, and a highly aspirational middle class.

The established playbook

Premium credit cards

For frequent international travellers, a premium credit card is probably still the best option. You rack up reward points and air miles on every transaction and also get perks like complimentary lounge access. Plus, there is the peace of mind from built-in travel insurance, delay protection, and emergency help. Crucially, they offer robust consumer protection if things go sideways.

Yes, you will pay a foreign exchange markup of about 1.5 to 3.5 per cent per transaction. But if your card gives you accelerated miles on international spending, that will frequently offset the fee when you redeem them for flight upgrades or hotel stays.

Take your pick from the following:

HDFC Infinia and Diners Club Black
Great for flight and hotel rewards, with a massive global lounge network.

Axis Bank Magnus and Reserve
Perfect for luxury hotel partnerships, international dining privileges, and experience-led rewards.

ICICI Emeralde Private Metal
Focused on lifestyle and offers concierge support.

American Express Platinum Charge
Elite choice for hotel status, curated global access, and end-to-end service.

RBL Bank Nova & Lumière
Tailored travel privileges for the globally mobile.

One massive advantage here is the chargeback. If a merchant overcharges you, a service is not delivered or you are a victim of fraud, your bank can reverse the transaction. Under Visa and Mastercard rules, you have up to 120 days to file a dispute. No other payment method has this level of safeguard.

Forex cards

Their biggest superpower? Locking in the exchange rate when you load the card, shielding you from volatility.

Some options to try in 2026:

Niyo Global: Zero forex markup, usable in over 130 currencies across more than 180 countries.

Thomas Cook Borderless Prepaid Card: Holds up to 12 currencies, making it ideal for European tours.

HDFC Multicurrency Platinum ForexPlus Chip Card: Supports more than 22 currencies and includes insurance cover.

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TOP AND BOTTOM
Carry cash because not all markets are cashless; Some credit cards offer perks like lounge access.

Wise: Near-mid-market exchange rates with transparent fees, perfect if you are jumping between currency zones.

The downside? You do not earn rewards, reloading mid-trip can be cumbersome, and they lack the robust consumer protection of a credit card.

The new frontier

Digital wallets and international UPI are where the real innovation is happening and where most Indian travellers still have questions. A digital wallet is an app on your phone—like Google Wallet, Samsung Wallet or Apple Pay (yet to come to India)—that securely stores your credentials. When you tap your phone to pay at a checkout terminal, it communicates via Near Field Communication (NFC) technology. The crucial detail is that your card number is never transmitted. Instead, the wallet generates a unique, single-use token for each transaction and the merchant receives this token.

There are three types of wallets:

Open wallets (Google Pay, Samsung Wallet): Linked to your bank account or credit card, and usable at any NFC-enabled terminal, globally. This is what most Indian travellers generally use abroad.

Semi-closed wallets (PayPal, Venmo): Accepted at specific merchant networks and useful for online purchases from international retailers.

Closed wallets (Amazon Pay, airline apps): Tied to a single brand, it is useful for loyalty points but not for spending.

By design, digital wallets are more secure than a physical card. Tokenisation means your card details are never exposed. There is zero risk of card skimming, a type of fraud common in tourist-heavy destinations. If you lose your phone, you can remotely disable the wallet. Plus, payments require biometric authentication so even physical possession of your phone does not allow someone to misuse it.

Remember, the safety net depends on where you are. Markets with mature regulatory frameworks—EU member states, Singapore, Japan, the UAE, and the UK—offer strong protection for digital payment users. In less-regulated markets, stick to a chip-and-PIN card or cash from bank-affiliated ATMs only.

And the big question: does it cost more or less than paying by card? Linking your credit card to Google Pay does not entail any extra fee.

Taking UPI global

UPI is now live in over eight countries, including the UAE, Singapore, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, France, Mauritius, and Qatar. It is growing fast, with

Open wallets like Google Pay are preferred by Indians travelling overseas

THE TRAVEL WALLET YOU SHOULD HAVE

Premium credit card: Use for flights, hotels, shopping, and any high-value purchases.

Digital wallet (Google Pay): Best for daily spends like cafés, transport, and small purchases.

Forex card: Ideal for long stays or destinations with exchange rate volatility. Use it as your primary ATM card abroad to avoid international debit card fees.

UPI: Great for quick, low-value payments in countries where acceptance and connectivity is strong.

Cash: Always carry a small amount of local currency. Not every market is reliably cashless—particularly parts of Africa, rural Europe or less-digitised South Asian destinations.

NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) actively integrating it into more countries across Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and Europe.

But does it actually save the customer's money? According to a report from CNBC's *Inside India* newsletter: "Traditional banks and forex providers typically mark up the exchange rate by 3 to 3.5 per cent—and are not transparent about it. You might see 'zero fees' advertised, but they're [providers] making money by giving you a worse exchange rate... [on top of] dynamic currency conversion fees, foreign transaction fees... [and more]." UPI international payments carry a lower markup—usually around 0.5 to 2 per cent—depending on the bank. Because the payment moves directly from your Indian bank account to the merchant without routing through a card network, you cut out one layer of intermediary cost.

But is it as seamless as UPI in India? Not quite. UPI international payments require a working data connection. If you are on a transit layover using spotty airport Wi-Fi, it may not function.

In addition, many banks still use OTP-based authentication for your first international transaction. If you switch to a local SIM abroad, receiving that OTP might fail. Moreover, even in supported countries, UPI is often unavailable at smaller merchants.

Can I reverse a UPI payment abroad if something goes wrong? This is a vital distinction for travellers. Under NPCI's updated chargeback rules effective July 2025, you can raise a dispute for unauthorised transactions, failed payments where money was debited or incorrectly charged through your UPI app, bank or the NPCI grievance portal. If you act within hours and the recipient's account still holds the funds, recovery rates can be high. However, unlike a credit card dispute where the bank provisionally reverses the charge while investigating, UPI disputes go through a bank-to-bank process that takes longer and offer no guaranteed reversal if the funds have already moved.

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GEAR UP

Heading out? Do not forget to pack these simple devices that will go a long way in making travel easy

words by
Utkarsh Thakkar

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Tracking devices like those from Apple make it easier to locate lost luggage; Noise reduction earplugs from Loop; A portable digital luggage scale; Bluetooth transmitters help stream audio without wires.

Clockwise from top: Apple; Loop; Shutterstock; Shutterstock

This is a great time to be a traveller. As airlines continuously upgrade their technology to make travel smoother, tech companies are building solutions to make journeys better.

1. Scale up: A portable digital luggage scale takes all the guesswork out of whether bags are overloaded. Some of them go beyond their obvious function, incorporating a tracker, flashlight, and even a tape measure. Others use kinetic energy to do the job, eliminating batteries from the equation altogether.

2. Do more: While universal travel adaptors have been a staple for a while now, a multi-device charging station is a handy tool to pack, considering how many devices one now carries on trips. Now found even at airports, they can charge smartwatches, earbuds, tablets, and phones—all at one go.

3. Always know: To make your luggage trackable, invest in AirTag, Tile Pro, and Galaxy SmartTag2 or similar devices from other brands and insert these into your suitcases. More so, since airlines like Air India allow you to upload your Property Irregularity Report (PIR) number onto their app. Then, once you share the tag location, use it to recover your lost baggage.

4. Stay connected: Once in the air, to consume In-flight Entertainment (IFE) with better sound and comfort, consider a Bluetooth transmitter for AirPods, earbuds or wireless headphones that allow you to connect your personal device to the IFE screen. If you would rather watch your own content, use noise-cancelling headphones and use a phone or tablet holder for hassle-free viewing. Finally, for silent sleep, pack earplugs like those from Loop or a travel headband with Bluetooth speakers to ensure you wake up refreshed.

IN THE FRAME

Take your pick from these top-performing camera phones, best designed to capture your travel memories

words by **Prakhar Khanna**

OPPO FIND X9 PRO

This is my favourite travel phone because it combines strong camera performance with long battery life. You get a versatile camera setup (50MP main, 200MP telephoto, and 50MP ultra-wide), paired with a huge 7,500mAh battery. So, it will not run out of charge in the middle of your day.

I have enjoyed shooting 3x zoom photos, portraits, macro shots, and low-light images because of pleasing-looking *bokeh* (background blur) and well-tuned camera processing. Neon lights appear lively in low-light shots and Master mode gives you more control over the photos. Other notable features include XPAN mode for one-of-a-kind panoramic shots, improved Hasselblad colour tuning, and 4K video conversion from Live Photos.

Why buy: Performs best in low light; ideal for portraits and concerts
Price: ₹1,09,999

VIVO X300 FE

More often than not, companies reserve the best camera hardware for their flagship phones, which tend to be on the bigger side. They are not the most handy devices and could be uncomfortable to use with a single hand. The Vivo X300 FE is built for those of us who want high-end cameras without going big on an Android phone. It is a compact device with a 6.31-inch AMOLED display that does not compromise on camera quality.

This phone has a 50MP main camera, a 50MP telephoto sensor with 3x optical zoom, and an 8MP ultra-wide angle lens. The resulting photos have vibrant colours, rich contrast, and a good amount of detail. You can expect to get excellent daylight shots and good-looking portraits with it.

Why buy: Small phone, big cameras
Price: ₹79,999

All images courtesy respective brands
Prices as is at the time of going to press

APPLE IPHONE 17 PRO SERIES

While this is generally regarded as an obvious choice, it is not usual for smartphone cameras to deliver uniform quality in colours with rich details and great dynamic range across all lenses. The new-generation Apple devices do so while also offering professional-grade editing flexibility with ProRaw images and ProRes Log video recording on its 48MP rear camera trio.

But the biggest upgrade is Apple's selfie shooter. The new 18MP Center Stage camera is arguably the best for vloggers who shoot using the front camera. You can hold the 17 Pro vertically and take horizontal videos with top-notch stabilisation, thanks to a new square image sensor.

Why buy: Consistent and reliable results
Price: ₹1,34,900

XIAOMI 17 ULTRA

Photos shot on this camera phone have a distinct personality with strong character, which incite emotions in a way that you will not find on any other smartphone. It pairs industry-leading camera upgrades (LOFIC HDR technology, continuous optical zoom from 3.2x to 4.3x) with Leica tuning to offer versatile optics.

The Xiaomi 17 Ultra is a photographer's delight. You get an array of well-tuned filters to choose from, alongside an innovative camera hardware that delivers rich detail, great dynamic range and a sharp, contrasting look. I recommend using the Leica Authentic mode for more dramatic shots with slightly under-saturated colours and a mild vignette.

Why buy: Photos with strong character
Price: ₹1,39,999

UPGRADE WITH THESE ACCESSORIES INSTEAD

If you do not want a new phone, you can still upgrade the capabilities of your current smartphone. I recently tried the TELESIN Master Grip Creator Combo for the iPhone 17 Pro and Galaxy S26 Ultra, and it gave me easy-to-use, magnetic accessories. The grip also doubles as a power bank. Alternatively, you can check out Moment lenses to expand the capabilities of your current Apple iPhone, Samsung Galaxy or Google Pixel phone. You can choose from Tele 58mm, Fisheye 14mm, Macro, Anamorphic lenses, and more.

TO AI OR NOT TO AI

While artificial intelligence has made planning easy, over reliance can lead to it influencing your behaviour and worse, data misuse

words by
Viraj Gawde

AI excels at speed, price prediction, real-time updates, and it does better at these than any human, so, technology is not the problem, unconscious use of it is

Planning a trip once meant hours researching between browser tabs—looking at blogs for inspiration, browsing sites for fares, and checking reviews for reassurance. Today, that process has been quietly replaced. You open an app, type 'weekend trip', give a budget, and within a minute, a destination appears with an assembled itinerary and recommendations.

That is the thing about artificial intelligence (AI) in travel. It has become a co-pilot for modern journeys.

When AI curates your journey

The most dramatic shift in modern travel begins before the journey does. Hours of research now condense into a single prompt. Platforms analyse your past bookings, browsing habits, and interests to suggest destinations before you have decided where you want to go. AI can now provide multi-day itineraries by considering your travel duration and adapting in real time if something changes.

Beyond planning, AI is now deeply embedded in bookings as well. Dynamic pricing tools scan millions of fare combinations across dates and routes. Airline websites personalise what you see based on your past preferences like seating choice, preferred departure time, etc. Hotels have also caught up with platforms using AI to suggest properties, room upgrades or bundled deals.

You trust the prediction because of the vast historical data behind it, and the confidence is convincing.

Your on-ground digital guide

AI does not stop at the planning stage. It becomes an always-available assistant on the ground. Translation apps interpret conversations in real time and navigation tools guide you in unfamiliar places. Restaurant suggestions, attraction timings, and weather and transport updates are

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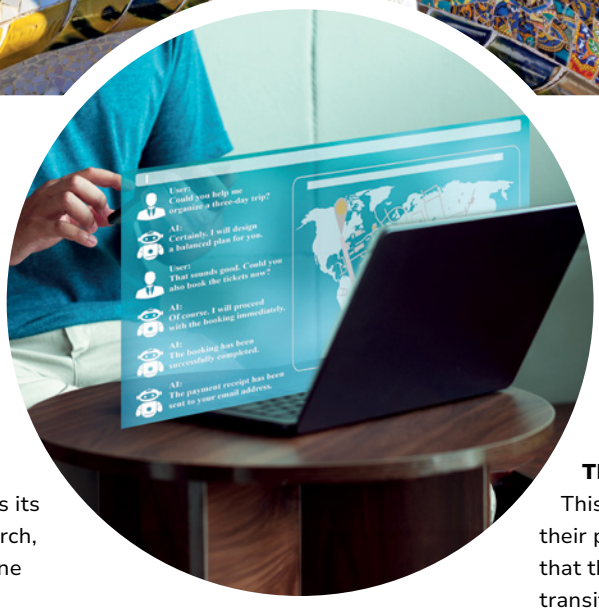

TOP AND BOTTOM
AI trip planners can design an itinerary in seconds; Beware of AI-generated phishing.

instantly delivered. AI concierges anticipate preferences and handle hotel requests before you even plan to interact with the staff. For tech-savvy travellers, this level of live assistance feels like having a constantly-updating guide.

The hidden trade-offs

For all its convenience, AI also has its fair share of trade-offs. Every search, click, and booking help the machine learn more about you. It builds a detailed profile and subtly narrows your options. Destinations that do not fit your patterns quietly disappear, not because they are not worth visiting, but because the algorithm decided you probably would not prefer it.

This is AI bias in its plainest form. The system optimises for engagement, not discovery; for conversion, not curiosity. And most of us never notice because the experience feels intuitive.

To work exceptionally well, platforms need a lot of personal data—location, travel history, payment preferences, etc. It may seem like a small trade-off, but that information could travel further than your itinerary ever will. As data misuse rises, AI-generated phishing now mimics with precision—fake booking confirmations, fraudulent cancellation notices, and cloned customer service chats that look entirely legitimate. AI-generated deception is hardest to spot in moments of urgency, on which scammers thrive, like a last-minute booking or flight change. Always verify directly with the hotel or airlines before acting on an unexpected communication.

Over reliance carries its own risk. Ask a platform about visa requirements, and it may deliver an answer that is out of date. Restaurant recommendations may favour paid algorithmic placements over organic ones.

When AI handles everything, travellers lose the instinct to navigate uncertainty.

The case for humans in the loop

This is where a travel agent earns their place back. A good agent knows that the cheapest flight has a six-hour transit and which hotel's sea view is better. They carry professional accountability and have supplier relationships that unlock options no algorithm can surface. For multi-city trips, group travel, and shifting visa rules, human judgement is not just convenient, it is protective. Agents also understand what AI cannot—that this trip is for a family reunion and getting it wrong is not an option.

Who is really leading the journey?

AI has made travel easier to plan, budget, and experience a place. But we need to ask: how much of the journey are we willing to hand over?

Leverage the tech. Just remember who is holding the ticket.

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POWERED TO EXPLORE

Future-ready tech accessories that are silently transforming the way we travel

words by **Jitendra Soni**

DJI OSMO POCKET 4P

This portable camera fits into any pocket for spontaneous, stabilised cinematic footage or photos during hikes, urban adventures or solo trips. A pocket-sized professional camera with a built-in 3-axis gimbal, it is designed for cinematic travel footage without bulky camera gear. Capture pro-level vlogs, landscapes, hands-free portraits, smooth walking shots, airport B-roll, street markets, and hotel tours with professional quality. It is arguably the highest-quality travel camera that can genuinely live in your pocket all day.

Price: US$525

EVEN G2 SMART AI GLASSES

Imagine walking through London or Dubai with directions appearing discreetly in your field of vision. No need to constantly pull out your phone for help. These glasses are among the most elegant smart options available today, featuring a near-invisible heads-up display embedded in regular-looking eyewear. It is designed to be unobtrusive, comfortable for all-day wear, and great for hands-free info. Its floating display is ideal for notifications, real-time translation, health tracking, and more. It even has a teleprompter.

Price: US$599

All images courtesy respective brands
Prices as is at the time of going to press

ANKER PRIME 26K POWER BANK

This is a premium, ultra-high-capacity intelligent portable power station designed to comfortably satisfy multi-device hardware ecosystems while on the move. It delivers a massive 26,250mAh capacity with a maximum simultaneous output of 300W across three ports. It features a built-in digital telemetry screen that displays real-time power draw and remaining charge time. It can charge a MacBook, a DJI camera, a phone, a smartwatch, drones, tablets, and earbuds during long-haul flights. For digital nomads and content creators, power anxiety simply disappears.

Price: US$230

MOONWALKERS AERO

An ideal companion for frequent travellers, this offers a range of 6-7miles per charge and is ideal for covering massive airport terminals, train stations or city exploration without exhaustion. These AI-powered electric shoes allow you to walk at running speed, reduce fatigue on long walking days, ease heavy luggage transfers, and make jet-lagged sightseeing far more efficient while staying sidewalk-friendly. While these will not teach you to moonwalk like MJ, their adaptive AI might make you feel like you are gliding effortlessly through an airport terminal or a sidewalk as if you have stepped straight out of a futuristic music video.

Price: US$999


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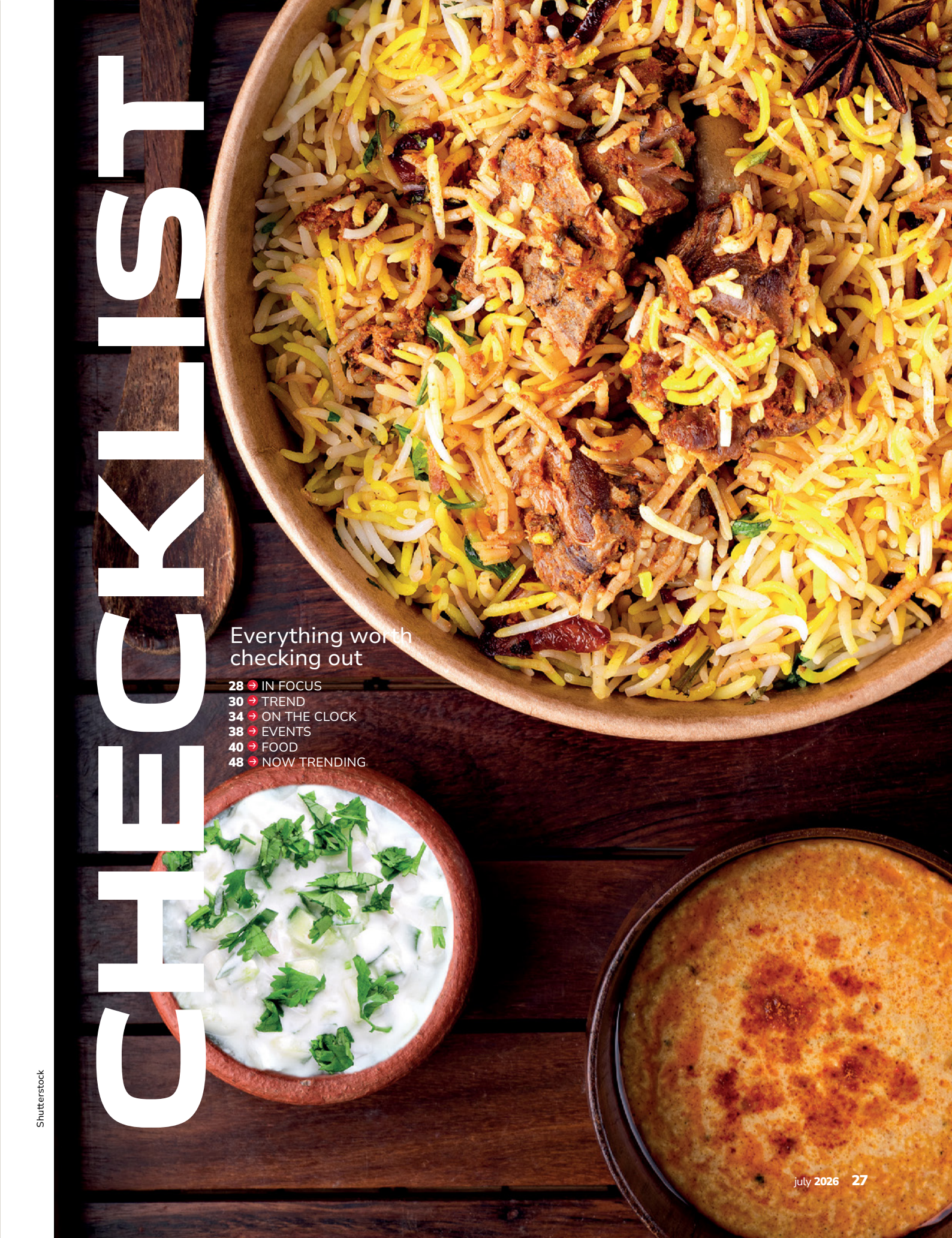
CHECKLIST

Everything worth checking out



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GAME TIME

Head to Wimbledon for the oldest tennis tournament in the world

words by **Mignonne Dsouza**

From its iconic grass courts to the strawberries and cream dessert, Wimbledon combines the best of British culture along with world-class tennis action. The tournament will see last year's men's singles winner, Jannik Sinner, and 2025 women's champion, Iga Świątek, return to defend their titles. While former title-holder Carlos Alcaraz has had to drop out owing to a wrist injury, another former winner Serena Williams, is making a comeback.

Whatever the line-up, some things will never change. It is not just the players who observe a dress code at Wimbledon. Spectators, too, are 'encouraged' to wear smart casual attire and eschew dirty sneakers and ripped jeans. The atmosphere is also decorous, with crowds mostly maintaining a respectful silence, all of which has made Wimbledon the Grand Slam tournament to be seen at.

That is most clearly seen in the celebrity quotient, with stars like Tom Cruise, Idris Elba, David Beckham, Priyanka Chopra Jonas, and of course, Catherine, Princess of Wales, who is a royal patron of The All England Lawn Tennis Club (AELTC), making appearances in the Royal Box. As the tournament is one of the few that offers same-day tickets, true fans always have a shot at watching the action live.

Women's final: 11th July;
Men's final: 12th July
wimbledon.com

TOP AND BOTTOM
Wimbledon is arguably the most famous of all the Grand Slam tournaments; The pairing of strawberries and cream is an iconic Wimbledon delicacy.

GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to London from Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru.

Getty Images

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A SPACE ODYSSEY

In Bengaluru, theatre performances are migrating from traditional auditoria to newer, more intimate locations

words by **Lesley Amol Simeon**

TOP AND BOTTOM
A show in progress by Our Theatre Collective; OffStage - Grounds For Practice hosts many events, including theatrical performances.

On the rooftop of the Bäcker & Charlie bakery, theatre maker and educator Nisha Abdulla is putting together a new performance space, Slo. While this, like others, will seek to invite artistes, encourage artistic collaborations, and build a community, Abdulla aspires to do all of that without the formality typically associated with established venues in the city, like Ranga Shankara, Jagriti Theatre or Bangalore International Centre (BIC).

Bengaluru, like other cities, is witnessing a 'third space' renaissance—a return to formats that allows audiences the comfort of enjoying performances without entering formal establishments. Today, theatre thrives in smaller spaces for a variety of reasons—from tight budgets and accessibility to the liberty to choose themes.

A shifting perspective

Traditional venues (with audiences seated in front of a stage) are still popular. But for a while now, performance art collectives like Last Page Collective, Adavi Arts Collective, The Self Centre, Kathalyst, The Ennui Collective, and Qabila, among others, are increasingly taking their stories and scripts to smaller, black box venues (a simple room with flat floors, no dedicated seating, and no fixed stage). Such spaces allow them greater room to push creative boundaries. This is a win-win scenario for performers and audiences. "If we rely only on people finding regular performance spaces, it does not bridge the existing fissures in our society," stresses Abdulla, adding that the exercise to making theatre productions venue agnostic and accessible is aimed at engaging as diverse an audience as possible.

Top and bottom: Our Theatre Collective; OffStage - Grounds For Practice

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LEFT AND RIGHT
The Strangers' Choir workshop at Shoonya; DamnGood Studios rents out spaces for events.

THE VENUES

- **Our Theatre Collective** *instagram.com/ourtheatre.collective*
- **Oorkathe** *instagram.com/oorkathe*
- **Shoonya** *instagram.com/shoonyaspace*
- **OffStage** *instagram.com/offstageblr*
- **DamnGood Studios** *instagram.com/damngoodguys*
- **MISF!T Studio Space** *instagram.com/misfit.studiospace*

GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Bengaluru from Mumbai, Delhi, and London.

Smaller venues also cater to an overwhelming factor in the theatre-making journey—money. Although performing in smaller venues does not completely take the financial burden off—there is still money to be spent, budgets to be tightened, and grants to fight for—it does take some heat off. Perhaps, this concern also lends to artistes adopting a design-first approach. Theatre performances hosted in intimate spaces rely heavily on set design that is portable, cost-effective, and accessible. This, in turn, lends to artistes focusing on improv, gearing them to adapt to different spaces and audiences.

New beginnings

In addition to being relatively cost-effective, Bengaluru-based theatre maker and co-founder of The Ennui Collective and Last Page Collective, Samragni Dasgupta opines that one of the major factors drawing artistes and audiences to black boxes is how intimate they feel. "In a black box, audiences are as much a part of the story as the performers," she points out. This perhaps explains the ease of it all—spaces like Shoonya Centre for Art & Somatic Practices, DamnGood Studios and OffStage - Grounds For Practice, for instance, host regular programming of workshops, performances, and movie nights, among other events. So, if theatre were to be added to the mix, passers-by looking in could glance at the schedule and sit in for a performance. "We wanted to create a space that enables artistes to explore their craft without having to navigate the rigid outlines of bigger institutions," says Parth Bhardwaj, one of the four co-founders of OffStage.

It is perhaps the comfort that also allows theatre makers to explore the discomfort that confronting certain themes and subjects brings. For example, Abdulla's *We Push The Sky*—a one-actor play that explores how political differences impact friendships—begins with tea being served to the audience and ends with the actor joining the audience for a discussion. While the play has been staged in traditional theatres, narrating such stories in community centres and black boxes allows for gentler engagement.

So are such venues a stepping stone for theatre makers before they take their productions to larger venues? Far from it. "People said theatre is a dying art 100 years ago; they say it even today. The reality is that theatre has managed to grow because of its continuously changing forms and mediums," says Dasgupta.

Black boxes and intimate spaces naturally enable this effort. Smaller venues—even those carved out within larger establishments like galleries—run parallel with larger venues, offering completely different experiences and creating space for diverse discourses. Moreover, for Abdulla, the next step is to make alternative spaces free of cost. "While this is tricky to achieve, we are taking it slow," she signs off.

Left and right: Shoonya; DamnGood Studios

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The Kronborg Castle in Helsingør is popular around the world as the setting of Shakespeare's Hamlet

ECHOES OF ELSINORE

With a legendary castle steeped in Shakespearean lore and an immersive museum, Helsingør (Elsinore) is a charming day trip from Copenhagen, Denmark

words by **Ami Bhat**

09:00AM
A royal welcome
Helsingør Railway Station

Arrive at what was once called Denmark's most beautiful railway station when it opened in 1891. With stunning spires and a chandelier-lit lobby, it is now a protected national heritage site. Statues of Hamlet and Ophelia, made by Danish artist Rudolph Tegner, greet you to their town.

10:00AM
Lanes of yore
Gl. Færgestræde, Stengade, and Sound Dues Residences

Embark on a walking tour along the cobblestone paths to the aristocratic stone mansions of the wealthy 16th century merchants. The Gothic inscriptions, Latin engravings, and stepped gables ease you into the world of Hamlet and speak of a time when this town was one of the wealthiest in the country.

11:30AM
Stones and spirit
St Olai's Church and Carmelite Priory

Drop by this Church whose oldest sections date back to the 13th century. See the Gothic arches and a Renaissance altarpiece. Right across is Carmelite Priory and St. Mary's Church, some of the best-preserved medieval buildings in Northern Europe.

01:00PM
Native nibbles
The Patio

Break for lunch at this charming café located in one of the lesser-known courtyards of Elsinore's old street, off Stengade. The homemade sourdough sandwiches, *smørrebrød* (the famous Danish open sandwich), and lemon tarts are not to be missed. If you like to go with the flow and be surprised, try their dish of the day with a glass of elderflower juice.

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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Smørrebrød *is a famous Danish open sandwich; Helsingør Railway Station; A display of historic vessels at the M/S Maritime Museum; The statue of* HAN, *the city's ingenious response to* The Little Mermaid.

DO MORE:

1/ Kulturhavn Kronborg: This lively waterfront is home to *HAN*, Helsingør's answer to Copenhagen's *The Little Mermaid*.

2/ Øresund Aquarium: Discover fish, sharks, squids, lobsters, and other marine animals at this small saltwater aquarium.

3/ A ferry to Sweden: It takes less than 20 minutes across the Øresund strait to Helsingborg. Departures are every 15 minutes and bikes are welcome on board.

GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Copenhagen from Delhi.

02:30PM
Mark of the sailor
Skibsklarerergaarden

Hop over to this historic late 18th-century building that served as the residence of a maritime broker. Now, an interactive museum, it offers a glimpse of life in a Danish port town in the 18th and 19th centuries. Staff in period attire and engaging games complete the picture.

03:30PM
To be, without question
Kronborg Castle

Sign up for a guided tour of this UNESCO World Heritage Site to discover the very halls where Hamlet's dilemma echoed. Pace the battlements, linger in the 62m Hall of Dance (the banqueting hall), then descend into the 'casemates' to find the statue of Holger the Dane—Denmark's legendary (and mythical) national hero.

06:00PM
Into the deep
M/S Maritime Museum of Denmark

An award-winning architectural marvel, the M/S Maritime Museum is as remarkable for its build as for its content. Films, interactive games, and personal accounts of life at sea bring Denmark's seafaring legacy to life—engaging visitors of all ages.

07:00PM
Last catch of the day
Stengade Street

The markets and shops here are a treasure trove of bottles of Snaps, Danish pastries, and antiques that are worth taking home. You will also get to chose from a wide variety of cheese, including Havarti and Danish blue cheese. Browse at leisure, pick up a souvenir or two, then end the day at Københavneren over a well-earned local brew.

M/S Maritime Museum: Visit Copenhagen; Rest: Shutterstock

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Shashi Bhushan Singh, Secretary, National Jute Board

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From premium tote bags and contemporary lifestyle accessories to stylish handcrafted products with modern, handy designs, jute has become a fashion statement for a generation that values both aesthetics and environmental responsibility. Durable, biodegradable, reusable, and naturally elegant, jute perfectly aligns with the growing demand for eco-conscious yet aspirational living.

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WATCH PARTY

There is a plethora of activities to choose from this month

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SUMMER FUN

BACHPAN FEST

Mumbai, Maharashtra

2nd-12th July

This festival (for ages 1.5 to 15) will see the Studio Theatre and Cube play host to Indian folk and western classical music performances, art and craft workshops, and robotics, mime, and creative writing interactive experiences.

nmacc.com

BRUSH STROKES

HAIKU OF A STILL MIND

Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Till August 2026

The exhibition at Bespoke Art Gallery explores stillness as an active presence, where repetition becomes rhythm and viewers are invited to engage through slow observation.

website-artlogicwebsite2569.artlogic.net

TOP NOTE

MALHAR & THE SEA

Benaulim, Goa

24th-26th July

Blending music, art, and hospitality, this year's line-up includes artistes like Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar, Ustad Shujaat Khan, and RaGa Sisters (Ranjani and Gayatri), along with a musical theatre by Danish Husain and a photo exhibition by Rohit Chawla.

malharandthesea.net

Clockwise from top: NMACC; Getty Images; Bespoke Art Gallery

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BIRYANI

All paths lead to biryani in Hyderabad. The culinary crown jewel has two distinct schools—the first is a dum-cooked *kacchi* variety that seals raw marinated mutton and parboiled basmati together with whole spices under a dough-laced lid. This is slow cooked until the meat surrenders its juices into the rice. The second, *pakki* style, uses pre-cooked components that are layered. *Salan*, made with peanuts and sesame seeds in a spicy tamarind gravy, serves as a tangy-spicy counterpoint, completing the ensemble.
Where to try it: Hotel Shadab, Madina Circle, Charminar, Ghansi Bazaar

8 dishes TO TRY IN HYDERABAD

The 'City of Pearls' combines a Nizami culinary soul with the quintessential staples of Andhra cuisine

words by **Chandreyi Bandyopadhyay**

IRANI CHAI AND OSMANIA BISCUITS

Brewed on a dual-vessel system, this chai is a thick, aromatic legacy of communities that once travelled from erstwhile Persia to the city. It is prepared in two separate saucepans—a strong tea decoction in one and a slow reduction of full-fat milk in the other—and mixed together only just before serving. Creamy in texture and delicious in taste, the addition of *khoya* (thickened reduced milk) gives it a custard-like body. Butter-rich, mildly sweet Osmania biscuits are an inseparable accompaniment.
Where to try it: Cafe Niloufer, Red Hills, Lakdikapul

Top and bottom: Getty Images; Shutterstock

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LUKHMI
Hyderabad's anytime snack is this flat deep-fried pastry with a decidedly refined pedigree that is wholly different from a samosa. With its refined flour shell, crimped at the edges with precision, and a filling of minced mutton (cooked with ginger, chilli, and whole spices) stuffed in a casing thinner than its triangular cousin, this renders a crisper bite. Served as a starter at weddings and feasts, it was originally a Nizam-era snack but never really a street food, as restaurant owners in the Old City will tell you with slight despair. It is best eaten with a steaming cup of Irani chai.
Where to try it: Pista House (multiple outlets)

MARAG
Traditionally, celebratory meals in the city begin with this slow-simmered mutton broth built from tender, bone-in cuts cooked at a near whisper of heat with whole spices—green cardamom, cloves, peppercorns, ginger, and garlic. The pot is set over low heat and left alone for several hours. Collagen from the bones dissolve, producing a dish that has a silken, almost glassy body. Often finished with fried onions and fresh coriander, this is a nourishing soup for any climate. However, during Ramzan, the city pivots to *haleem*—a slow-pounded union of wheat, lentil, and mutton, sprinkled with almond flakes.
Where to try it: Chicha's, 6, Awabs Residence, AC Guards Rd, Veer Nagar, Lakdikapul

PATTHAR KA GOSHT
Thin fillets of mutton—marinated overnight in raw papaya paste, yoghurt, and aromatic spices—are cooked directly on a granite slab (hence, the name). Legend has it that it was traditionally the flat stones lining the palace armoury floors heated from beneath by live coals that served as the origin of the technique. The rock distributes heat evenly, drawing out moisture slowly, yielding meat that is tender yet faintly charred. A true rendition (eaten streetside) would have deep smoky flavours, but the tenderness of the meat and the balance of spices can also be found at fine dining restaurants.
Where to try it: Aiwan-e-Khas By Shadab, Madina Circle, High Court Rd, Charminar, Ghansi Bazaar

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Artist's Impression

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BAGHAAR-E-BAINGAN

Small eggplants are slit and stuffed with a dry masala made with roasted coconut, peanuts, sesame, and spices. This is then cooked in a tamarind-spiked gravy, which has already been cooked in oil tempered with mustard seeds, curry leaves, and dried red chilli. The technique of *baghaar*, or perfumed hot-oil tempering, is a signature technique of Telugu cuisine. Structurally, it builds up the aromatic base for many dishes of the region, and very few vegetarian dishes carry the depth of layered fat, acid, and spice in a single spoonful the way this delicacy does.

Where to try it: Adaa in Taj Falaknuma Palace, Engine Bowli, Falaknuma

KHATTI DAL

The Telangana flavour palate is dominated by a distinctive sourness, derived from different agents like tamarind, sorrel, and even raw mango (in season). A simple lentil preparation using *toor* dal (pigeon peas), cooked soft, is sharpened with tamarind and finished with a tempering of dried red chillies, curry leaves, garlic, and mustard seeds crackled in oil or ghee. It cuts across the richness of a full Hyderabadi meal with deliberate acidity, functioning as a palate corrective with its tart note.

Where to try it: Dine Hill, 10-5-5/2/ 4 To 5, One Downing Street, Masab Tank

GONGURA PACHADI (CHUTNEY)

Sorrel leaves are cooked briefly to reduce its astringency. They are then ground with green chillies and garlic, followed by mixing in hot oil already tempered with mustard and dried red chilli. This is the city's most eloquent acknowledgement that its culinary identity has always been plural.

Where to try it: Theta Theta Telugu, Jubilee Hills

Clockwise from top left: Taj Falaknuma Palace; Shutterstock; Shutterstock; The Leela Hyderabad

GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Hyderabad from Mumbai, Delhi, and Tirupati.

QUBANI (KHUBANI) KA MEETHA

Dried apricots are soaked overnight until swollen and then slow-simmered with sugar until the pulp collapses into a rust-coloured compote of honeyed intensity. The apricot kernels are cracked and used as a garnish—an act of kitchen thrift elevated to elegance. Served warm or chilled with a dollop of fresh cream or a spoonful of custard, this is a Nizami dessert that requires almost nothing to be extraordinary and yet completely enamours guests after a rich meal.

Where to try it: Adi at The Leela Hyderabad, Banjara Hills

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RERA WEBSITE - WWW.UP-RERA.IN/PROJECTS I PROJECT LAUNCH DATE: 17.01.2024 I PROJECT COLLECTION BANK A/C DETAILS- BANK NAME: HDFC BANK LTD., BRANCH: ANSAL FORTUNE ARCADE K -BLOCK SECTOR-18 I A/C NAME: STARCITY BUILDERS AND PROMOTERS LLP RERA COLLECTION ACCOUNT ACE YXP
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Artist's Impression

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THE GOVERNOR HOUSE OPENS IN AMRITSAR

Why: For a layered experience where heritage meets modern cuisine in a fine-dining setting. **Where:** *Circuit House* **Highlights:** *Kale Ka Saag, Rampuri Taar Gosht, Durban Potato Curry, Kinnow Grove, The Governor's Paloma*

THE SHAPE OF WATER

Amrapali Jewels' latest *Sarovar* collection beautifully captures the myriad moods of the ocean through gemstones and Victorian detailing, all set in high-grade silver with gold accents.

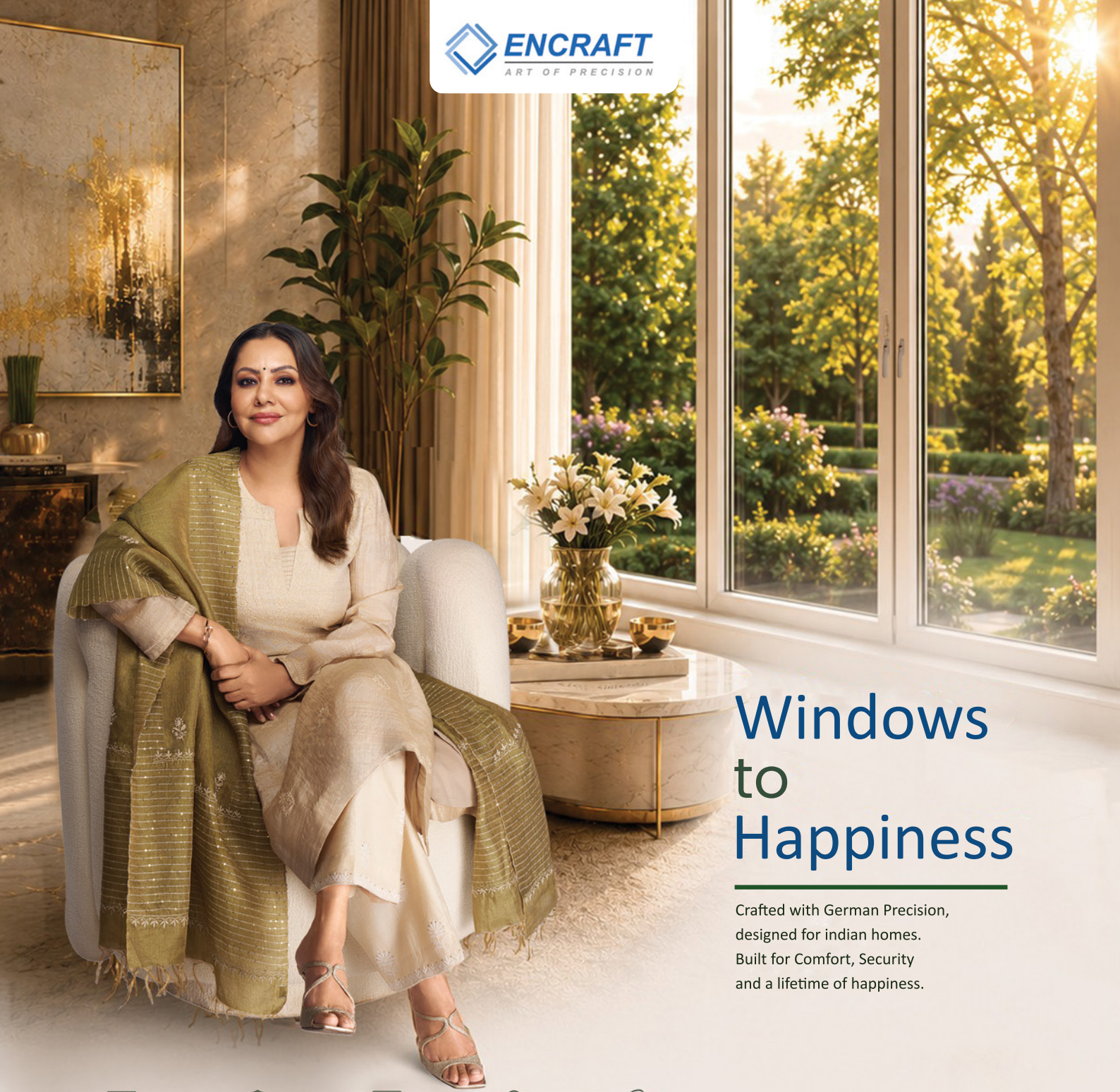
MODERN COUTURE

Connect with nature through outfits from *Nature's Geometry*, the S/S 2026 collection by Megha & Kalpesh. Choose from airy linens, lightweight denims, and more, featuring appliqué and *dori* embroidery.

RYU OKA ARRIVES IN LADAKH

Why: For pan-Asian flavours from Japan, Korea, Thailand, China, and beyond, in the lap of the Himalayas. **Where:** *The Grand Dragon Ladakh* **Highlights:** *Mongol Wrapped Tofu, RYU OKA Clay Pot, Truffle Fried Rice*

All images courtesy respective brands



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MALAKA SPICE'S NEW INDONESIAN MENU

Why: For authentic flavours of the archipelago.
Where: *Siddharth Chambers, Pune*
Recommendation: *Dadar Jagung (Javanese corn fritters), Karedok (vegetables in peanut dressing), Ayam Geprek (smashed fried chicken with sambal). On till September 2026*

ROOTED IN FUNCTION

Chennai-based leather and canvas brand The Postbox uses sustainable practices to craft a pragmatic design aesthetic. This collection has an interesting mix of sylish duffle bags, slings, organisers, backpacks, totes, and more.

THE JOY OF CHILDHOOD

House of Fett's *Cotton Candy* SS '26 transforms childhood fashion fantasies into wearable joy—light-as-air silhouettes inspired by candy floss celebrating Indian bodies, bold self-expression, and the simple pleasure of dressing for oneself.

DARYAGANJ GOLD DEBUTS IN INDIA

Why: For a trip down memory lane, with a generous dollop of modern fare on the side.
Where: *Aerocity, Delhi.*
Recommendation: *India Gate Avocado Bhel Puri, Mushroom Ram Ladoo, Palak Patta Chaat, Salmon Tikka, Gucci Pullao, Nargasi Kofta*

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SOUL

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Poddar Nagar in Kolkata serves as the muse for this work rendered in ink and brush on bamboo paper

"Kolkata is Home"

French artist **Thomas Henriot** pens an ode to the city he has been living and working in for almost two decades

Art Centrix Space and Thomas Henriot

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I always had a natural attraction towards India, and I arrived in Benaras in 2004, on Holi. What a meeting it was with the country! I lived there for two years—bathing in the Ganga and working along the ghats. There, I understood that my work is similar to a meditation process. They would call me 'painter babu' and I was convinced India will take care of me and look after me. I was young, only 24, so, this impacted me profoundly.

I came to Kolkata in 2005 and the first thing I noticed was the people. They were incredibly warm and welcoming. In 2012, I was invited by the Basu Foundation for the Arts to do a residency in India. This gave me unlimited access to the Basubati Palace in Kolkata, and I have been painting it for 13 years. It is a mix of architecture and nature, my favourite subject.

The streets are my studio

I have mainly worked in public spaces and my first area of interest is always the street. It makes the space, and the people around it, part of the process. It feels special to sit and sketch on the road for 10 hours. I start quite early, when the coconut sellers and sanitation workers are beginning their day. They are the poorest of the poor yet they offer me water and pay for my tea.

I work in narrow lanes with homes on either side so it is literally like entering someone's house. And I am always deeply conscious that I should not be disturbing someone. On the contrary, the women come out of their homes and insist I drink water and eat. I do not eat for 10 hours because then I feel sleepy and cannot concentrate. They genuinely worry for me.

I choose to work there because it improves my process. The people's involvement in my art, that cannot be recreated. And it is fantastic—every day I meet the same people. The coconut seller comes every morning with his *beedi* and sits next to me. He wants to recognise the context and follow my progress, and I sort of want him to. It becomes something we share.

Indians, in general, are curious people. They click pictures of my work and even come back with their families. They have no access to art or probably have not seen art being created like this, let alone by a foreigner. Someone once told me that these people do not see the beauty around them but my art is making them see it.

Once, I remember, they had to create a bamboo structure for an event and they built the entire thing around me without asking me to relocate. And I became part of the context.

TOP AND BOTTOM
Basubati Palace tapestry work on gold and polyester; Thomas Henriot collaborated with Kolkata's Hatibagan Sarbojanin to create artwork for their 2025 Durga Puja pandal.

Top: Art Centrix Space and Thomas Henriot; Bottom: Rupak De Chowdhuri

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A day in my life

I always seek the ghats and it is the first thing I painted in Kolkata. I sketch near Baghbazar and Shobhabazar or I go to old north Kolkata, close to the river [Hooghly]. I look for ghats close to Kamarhati as I find that area sacred and it always draws me. Every morning, I take a cab or bike and I go to Baghbazar to eat the best street food—*poori sabzi*—from a small corner shop, and they do not alter the spice level for me. I love it! Breakfast has everything I need for the entire day.

When I return home to Jodhpur Park (dwellings provided by the Basu Foundation for the Arts), I spend an hour writing about my day. I do not cook, so sometimes for dinner, I order a Bengali fish preparation. At times, I go to Abar Baithak (a popular Feluda-themed cafe), a meeting point for all sorts of intellectuals—artists, writers, musicians—for their coffee. I may be the only foreigner there but people do not look at me differently. This says a lot about Kolkata. Sometimes I go to Rabindra Sarobar park to take a walk and I am a regular at the Tollygunge Club too.

I know that some people find the city very noisy but I don't hear the noise. It is also the safest city I know. When I reach Kolkata, I can just relax. You can walk through the city in the middle of the night and nothing will happen—it is safer than Paris. In Kolkata, if anything happens, thousands of people are there to help me. I believe Delhi and Mumbai are for business, and Kolkata is for creation. I feel especially understood in this city. I know my place is here.

TOP AND BOTTOM
Henriot is always drawn to ghats like this one on the banks of the Hooghly river; In January 2025, he was invited to paint inside the Indian Museum in Kolkata.

Giving back

Around 2011, I met Brochier Soieries, a silk manufacturer from Lyon, France, and this led to a project where a team of engineers worked on a high-tech loom on technology created specifically for this, to take thousands of gold threads and weave my work using Jacquard techniques. This exhibition (which included many pieces on Kolkata), *The Weight of Light*, debuted at Art Centrix Space in Delhi this April. My aim was to gift one of the pieces to a Durga Puja pandal as what better way to give back to the city that has given me so much. And in 2025, I was able to collaborate with architect, scenographer, and curator Sayantan Maitra Boka to design the Hatibagan Sarbojanin pandal. We created the aesthetic of the pandal and worked with six young Bengali artists to make it come to life. Another project close to my heart was also through him—he asked me to travel to the Sundarbans to help create an economy for the women there. Climate change has driven the men away to find jobs, so it is just the women and children left behind. The fist time I met them, they had just returned after collecting plants to use for food and medicine, and I realised that their knowledge is amazing. So, instead of teaching them something new, I created a motif from those plants, which they then painted on textiles. As an artist, my purpose is to show people how art can be included in daily life to make it better.

Instinctively, I do not want to bring back anything from Europe to India in terms of art styles or technique. There is already so much richness here.

—As told to ***Geetika Sasan Bhandari***

GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Kolkata from Mumbai and Delhi.

Top: Shutterstock; Bottom: Art Centrix Space and Thomas Henriot

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BUKHARA'S LIVING Traditions

In Uzbekistan's cultural heart, centuries-old crafts, Silk Road legacies, and everyday life intertwine seamlessly

words by **Neeta Lal**

The first glimpse of Bukhara came to me in shades of sand and turquoise—the desert sun softening centuries-old bricks, the domes shimmering like scattered jewels against a vast Central Asian sky. But it was not just beauty that mesmerised me; it was the quiet hum of continuity.

In Bukhara, history does not sit behind glass—it breathes, works, and whispers through every alley. Recognised by UNESCO as a Creative City of Crafts and Folk Art in 2023, Bukhara wears its legacy proudly. As I stepped into the old city, I felt the echoing pulse of the Silk Road—not as something lost but as something enduring. Traders may no longer arrive in caravans, but the spirit of exchange—of ideas, skills, and stories—remains deeply embedded.

Lyabi-Khauz (Hauz): Where craft and community converge

I began at Lyabi-Khauz, the city's social

'Souvenir' comes from the French word, meaning remembrance

Mirl Arab Madrassa: Getty Images. Plates: Getty Images and Shutterstock

LEFT AND RIGHT
The luminous blue-domed Miri Arab Madrassa in Bukhara is one of Uzbekistan's most stunning buildings; Traditional pottery in vibrant hues.

heart. Framed by mulberry trees and centuries-old madrasas, the square felt timeless. I lingered by the pool as artisans set up their wares, their hands moving with a confidence inherited via generations. One elderly woman embroidered a *suzani* (traditional Central Asian handcrafted textile), her needle dancing across the fabric in patterns that appeared meditative.

When I paused beside her, she looked up and smiled. "This is not just decoration," she told me, her fingers never still. "Every pattern carries blessings—for weddings, for homes, for life. My mother taught me, and her mother taught her… we remember through them."

TOP AND BOTTOM
Traditional Oriental dolls from Bukhara are good gifts to carry back; Local bazaars are the best places to buy colourful suzani *carpets from.*

Nearby, a young man worked a loom, weaving silk threads into luminous *ikat* patterns—ancient motifs finding new expression. Watching him, I realised how seamlessly the past folds into the present here, each generation adding its own layer, like a palimpsest, to an unbroken tradition.

Bazaars: The hub of traditions

Moving deeper into the bazaars, I found myself surrounded by a riot of texture and colour. Under the domed trading halls, stalls overflowed with hand-embroidered textiles, intricate ceramics, and carved wooden boxes. Each object seemed to carry a story—of lineage, of patience, of pride. I paused often, not just to admire, but to watch. Here, craftsmanship was not a performance; it was daily life.

A rhythmic clang of metal led me to the copper market, where artisans hammered sheets into bowls and pitchers. The sound rang out like a heartbeat—steady, deliberate. Sparks caught the light as one craftsman polished a vessel until it gleamed like liquid gold. He looked up, wiped his brow, and smiled. "My grandfather worked here, and his grandfather before him," he said. "Tourists come and go but for us, this is life. Every day we make something that outlives us."

And then there were the madrasas—majestic, contemplative, and quietly grand. I wandered through the courtyards of Miri Arab Madrassa and Ulugh Beg Madrassa, their façades adorned with geometric tiles that seemed to shift colour with the sun.

Beyond sites: An evolving city

As I spent more time wandering, I began to notice the quieter rhythms of daily life—women bargaining over spices, children darting through alleyways, and the aroma of oven-fresh bread from neighbourhood bakeries. In a small courtyard, I watched rounds of *non* (bread) being slapped expertly onto the walls of a clay *tandoor*, emerging golden

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TOP AND BOTTOM
A sculpture of a popular fictional character in the old town centre of the city; Hand-painted, wood-carved Uzbek boxes are special keepsakes.

A CRAFT LOVER'S GUIDE TO BUKHARA

In the city, shopping is not about souvenirs, but about stories you can carry home. Start in the trading bazaars. Look for hand-embroidered *suzani* textiles—each motif symbolising protection, prosperity or love. Silk *ikat* is another must. These vividly-patterned fabrics are still woven on traditional looms.
Stop by the copper workshops, where artisans hammer, engrave, and polish vessels using techniques passed down generations. Nearby, ceramic stalls showcase earthy glazes and intricate patterns inspired by nature and history. Seek out hand-carved wooden boxes or jewellery featuring traditional Uzbek filigree. Many artisans are happy to explain their process.

and fragrant. Food here, like craft, felt deeply tied to memory—simple, sustaining, and shared.

Later, I paused at a teahouse tucked into a shaded corner near Lyabi-Khauz, for a cup of green tea as the afternoon stretched lazily on. Conversations flowed around me in Uzbek and Tajik, punctuated by laughter and the clink of porcelain cups. It struck me how hospitality here is not performative, but instinctive. Even as a visitor, I felt folded into the fabric of everyday life.

One evening, I climbed to a quiet vantage point as the sun began to dip, watching the city shift colour—from burnished gold to deep amber, and finally to dusk blue. The domes and minarets formed a jagged silhouette against the horizon and for a moment, time seemed to collapse in on itself. It was easy to imagine caravans arriving, scholars debating, artisans working by lamplight—scenes that felt distant, yet somehow linger.

In that fading light, the textures of Bukhara felt even more pronounced—the roughness of ancient bricks, the cool smoothness of tiled walls, the soft rustle of textiles in the evening breeze. It reminded me that this city is experienced not just through sight, but through touch, sound, and scent—an immersive tapestry that reveals itself slowly to those willing to linger.

As evening fell, I returned to Lyabi-Khauz. The air cooled, the light softened, and the city seemed to exhale. Locals gathered, children played, and somewhere in the distance, the faint echo of hammer on metal continued. It was then that I understood—Bukhara is not a relic of the Silk Road. It is its living, breathing heir.

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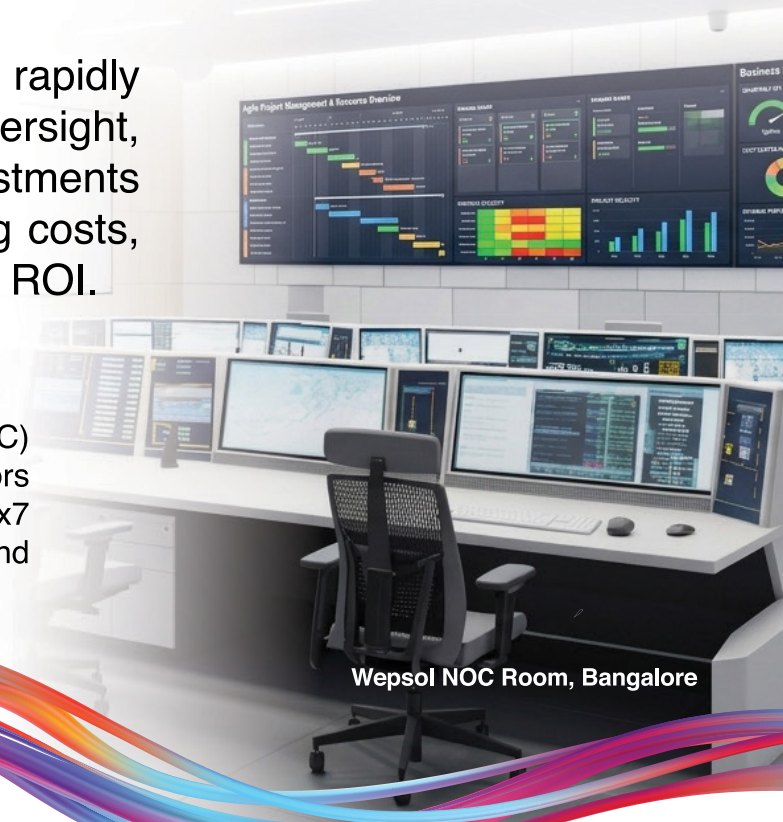

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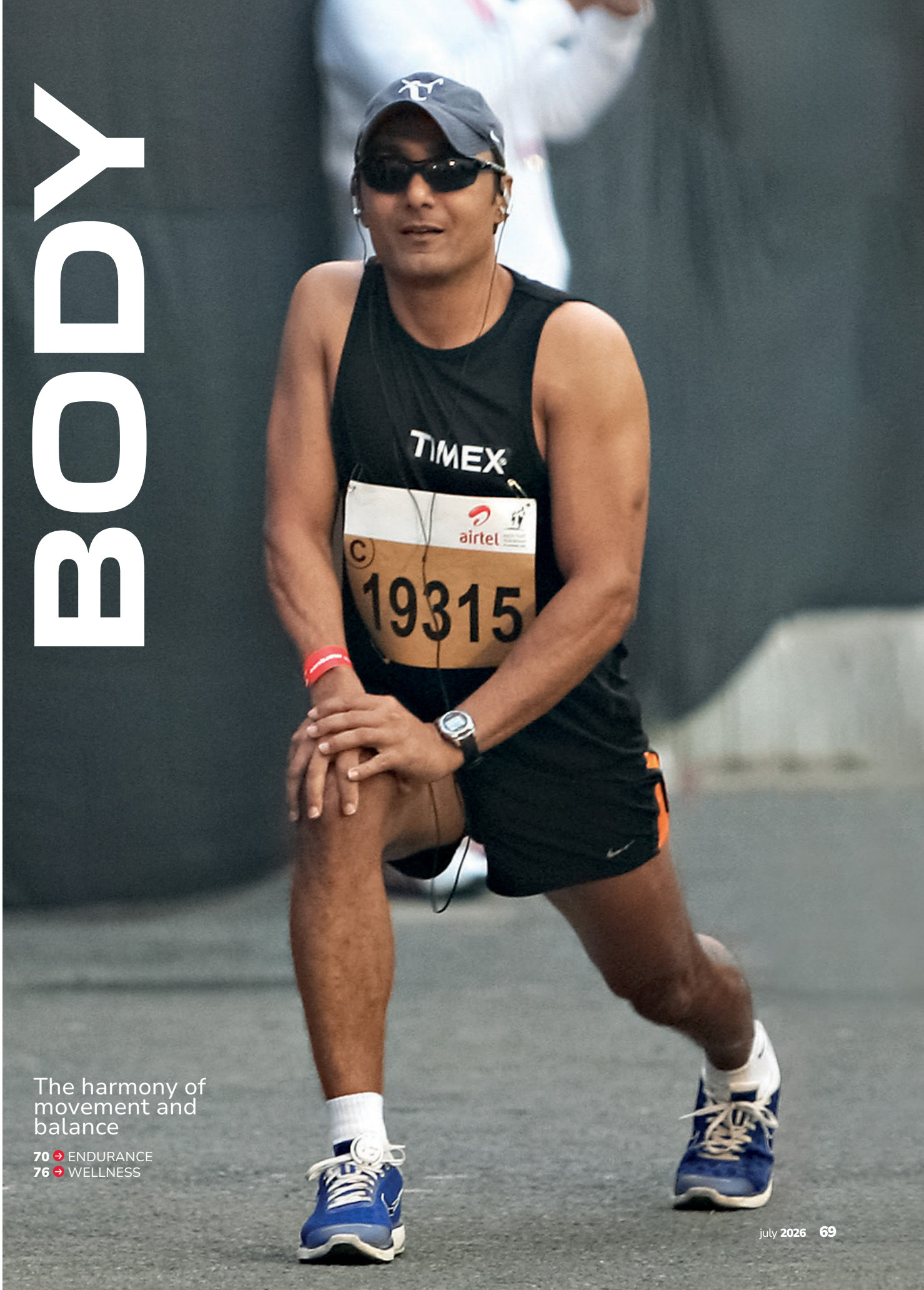

The harmony of movement and balance

Getty Images

"RUGBY TEACHES YOU TO NEVER HAVE AN EGO"

Actor Rahul Bose talks about his passion for the sport and the future of the Rugby Premier League

words by
Shrabasti Anindita Mallik

The actor is currently the President of the Indian Rugby Football Union (Rugby India)

You discovered rugby at a time when it had very little visibility in India. What drew you to it?
Growing up, there were only two schools in the country where rugby was taught—one in Calcutta [present-day Kolkata] and the one I went to, the Cathedral and John Connon School [Mumbai]. We were encouraged to play all sports, and I took to rugby for all the wrong reasons *(laughs)*. Every time I was injured, girls would come to check up on me, and as a young boy, I enjoyed that attention.

What was the rugby ecosystem in India when you started out? How have you seen it evolve?
India was not recognised as an official rugby-playing nation then. So, during the best years of my rugby life, I was not playing for the country. I made my debut at 31 in 1998, as part of the first team that played the first ever test match for India, and I played for 11 years after that. At that time, it was very amateurish. We had a foreign coach, but we couldn't pay him enough, and there was no question of psychologists or nutritionists. Players weren't paid either. On the contrary, we paid out of our pockets, but we had the zeal, and we did everything happily.

Today, we not only pay all our national players but also those who attend the national camp. Now, the sport has become completely rural. Even in urban areas where the sport is being played, it's restricted to the economically depressed areas. We've had three Indian international players [boys] from the slums of Kolkata, and four international and three national players from an economically disadvantaged neighbourhood outside Jaipur. We've had 14 international players from a tiny tea garden estate called Saraswatipur in West Bengal. Today, we have tribal kids from all over the country and players from the absolute bottom of the socio-economic pyramid, playing excellently.

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Delhi-based Shikha Yadav, the Captain of the Senior Women's team, became the highest-paid Indian woman player at the Rugby Premier League (RPL) Season 2 auction in May 2026

Why is the sport not pursued as fervently in urban areas?
The reason is twofold. Over the past 25 years, urban India has gravitated towards sports like badminton, tennis, chess, and squash, which offer greater visibility, role models, and clearer career prospects. Rugby, lacking comparable success and heroes, has struggled to attract young players.

At the same time, the sport found fertile ground in rural and tribal India. A breakthrough came in 2006 when students from Odisha's Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences won an international school tournament, prompting the federation to expand rugby across the hinterland. Today, it is played in 322 districts across India, with much of its growth occurring outside major cities.

Tell us about the Rugby Premier League (RPL).
The RPL has been created for three reasons: visibility, infrastructure, and livelihoods. For years, rugby struggled to attract broadcasters because it lacked sponsors, and sponsors because it lacked television exposure. The RPL has helped break that cycle, bringing the sport to mainstream audiences and reintroducing it to urban India.

The league is also creating rugby ecosystems in six cities, with franchises investing in grounds, coaching, sports science, and player development. At the same time, it is generating opportunities for players, coaches, physiotherapists, nutritionists, and other staff. Top players are earning significant sums, while increased visibility is helping create promising pathways in the sport.

Ultimately, the long-term goal is to strengthen the talent pipeline and help India become internationally competitive, with Olympic qualification a key ambition.

How far along are we with regard to qualifying for the Olympics?
India's Senior Women's Rugby Sevens team is currently ranked 6th in Asia. Since Olympic qualification is determined through continental rankings, the team needs to break into Asia's top 2 to secure a berth. So, in five years, by mid-2031, we should climb four places. Simple. And our men will follow in 2036. If realised, it would be a landmark moment because in over six decades, the only team sport that has participated in the Olympics from India has been hockey.

How are athletes like [Captain] Shikha Yadav redefining what is possible for Indian women in rugby?
Everything she does redefines it. The way she looks after her body and how she learnt to lead a bunch of women into victory, despite the kind

Rugby India

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of constraints she's faced in her own family and community, is commendable. What she, and every other female rugby player, brings to the sport is something we, as men, can't bring. She's a remarkable sportsperson and human being. In Shikha's success, you see the success of psychology, strength, and conditioning. And it is women like her who will take us into the Olympics.

How has the sport helped shape the person you are today?

It's an amazing sport and has taught me to face my fears and channel that feeling constructively. It has brought me to the realisation that you can't do anything alone; you need people around you. By nature, I'm an individualist, but this game has smashed it into my body that if you play alone, you're going to die. Quite literally. So, I have now become much more of a team player than I was. Moreover, it teaches you to have a hot heart and a cool head, and to never, ever, have an ego. It has also taught me to channel my aggression correctly. It helped me learn how to address acute physical pain, day after day, and how to emerge from adversity, because in rugby, you're constantly getting injured. You cannot mull over one injury and think that it's the end of the road. No. You get up and keep playing. That's why I always say: rugby has taught me more about life's ups and downs than my parents.

Speaking of injuries, you have continued filming through some serious ones. What has helped you navigate these injuries and setbacks?

First of all, you should never be an actor and a rugby player. It is really harrowing. It was during my international rugby career, 1998 to 2009, that I did some fine films—*Jhankar Beats*, *Chameli*, *Everybody Says I'm Fine!*, *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer*, *Shaurya*. So, it was harrowing for me to play because every single game was potentially career ending. Not my sporting career, my film career *(laughs)*.

The two do not meet, and there is very little in common between them. As an actor, you're taught to focus deeply on yourself; it's the opposite in rugby—you must focus on the game. They're like oil and water; they don't mix. I used to walk into the changing room two hours before an international game and would be taking off make-up in slow, concentric circles, while my teammates were putting on bandages and getting ready. They would look at me and ask, “What the hell are you doing?” And I would say, “I'm just having a moment. Sorry.” *(laughs)* I mean, it's crazy. It was a schizophrenic life.

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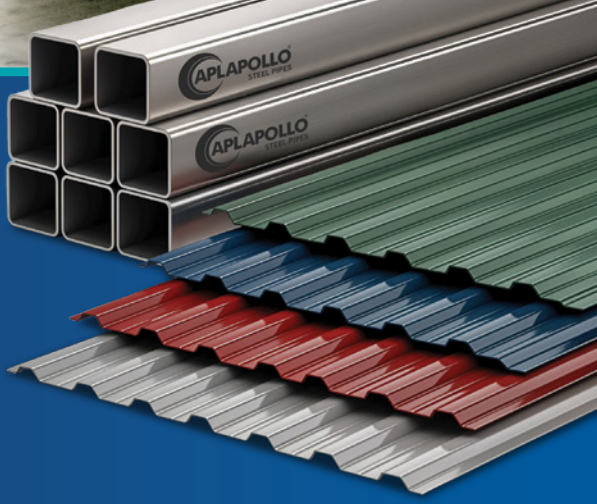

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STAY ON TRACK
EVEN ON A HOLIDAY

Nutritionist Jinal Shah shares doable pointers on how to ensure you make the right food and exercise choices when on vacation

What is a holiday without good food? A lot of fond memories of any destination we visit are associated with the meals we ate there. And often, we underestimate the power of food on vacation to rejuvenate us.

However, no one wants to come back from a holiday feeling heavier and unhappy. But long or back-to-back flights, jet lag, changes of time zones, and unfamiliar foods can cause a plethora of health issues. This is why planning is key. Making a few wise food decisions can go a long way in ensuring a holiday is all about the lovely memories. And always remember that 'guilt' is fattening—not food.

Here are some tips that will allow you to fully soak in the destination, enjoy the holiday, and not come back wanting another vacation to recover from the current one.

START WELL

- Carry one salty and one sweet homemade snack (like puris or ladoos). This will serve as a great mid-meal option for a 4-5pm snack.
- When you board your flight, adjust your watch to the local destination time and plan your sleep accordingly. Half your battle is won here.
- Try to stay away from excessive tea and coffee, and stay well hydrated with water. Flights are dehydrating, so avoid alcohol, colas, and packaged juices. Choose cooked meals over ready-to-eat ones.
- On reaching your destination, keep an eye on your water intake.
- Factor in a workout (*surya namaskars*, yoga or cardio) within 12-24 hours of landing.

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PLAN THE DAY SMARTLY

- Eat a fresh fruit or a handful of mixed nuts within 10-15 minutes of waking up. This will replenish the body and help to keep acidity, bloating, headaches, and cravings at bay.
- At a breakfast buffet, first look at the full spread. Then opt for a main dish like eggs and toast, beans on toast or a hot Indian preparation. Select one treat if you want. Do not walk around while eating.
- For breakfast and lunch, try to sample the local delicacies for an authentic experience. Rice meals work well for dinner.
- If you choose to drink, remember to eat first. Have a glass of water between every two drinks. Avoid mixing drinks.

TREAT THE KIDS RIGHT

- Set your kids a good example by first eating well yourself. Say no to ultra-processed and packaged foods and say yes to local fare. However, since you are on holiday, let them choose one meal a day where they can eat whatever they want.
- Steer them towards healthy options like freshly-made pizza, macaroni, noodles, etc. For the other meal, make them choose something traditional.
- Allow them one dessert on alternate days. But avoid sugary treats at night.
- Avoid letting them have screen time when you are eating a meal.

FOCUS ON MOVEMENT

Walk! Ditch escalators and elevators once you land. Your legs will thank you as sitting for long hours is dreadful for them. For exercise, *surya namaskars* work best during travel. Do three sets; it won't take more than 10 minutes, and is equivalent to a good full-body workout. A holiday abroad involves a lot of walking that can lead to aches, cramps or swelling. So, as you end the day, try *supta padangusthasana* to relax your lower back, knees, and ankles.

SPECIFIC TIPS FOR BUSINESS TRAVELLERS

- Make a travel kit that includes a box of nuts, a water bottle, and a small container of ghee.
- Hydrate smartly, instead of indulging in tea or coffee in meetings; opt for *nimbu sharbat*, coconut water, and buttermilk.
- Cashews are a great option to eat in between meetings, to start the day, and even to end the day. They also work as a stress buster because of their amino acid profile.
- Before going to bed, take a drop or two of ghee and massage the soles of your feet for 30-40 seconds. This ensures restorative sleep, settles one's *vata*, and reduces gas, bloating, and constipation.
- Pick hotels that offer gym access and yoga mats.

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FLEET
Take a look at our aircraft range that flies you across the world
p 86

ROUTES
We present our latest global connectivity, offering you unparalleled access worldwide
p 87

PARTNERS
Through our Codeshare and Interline partnerships, we try to bring the world closer
p 96

MISCHIEF MANAGED

Air India's long-haul flights are now more fun for the little ones, thanks to the Cloud Chasers programme

HAPPY KIDS, HAPPY JOURNEYS

It is rarely easy for a parent to make an airplane ride fun for kids. But not for long. Enter Air India Cloud Chasers, a joy-filled programme designed to spark imagination, encourage learning through play, inspire curiosity about the world, and create happy travel memories for young flyers. The best part? The Maharaja will appear as an adventurous and imaginative companion for the children, guiding them through their journey of discovery.

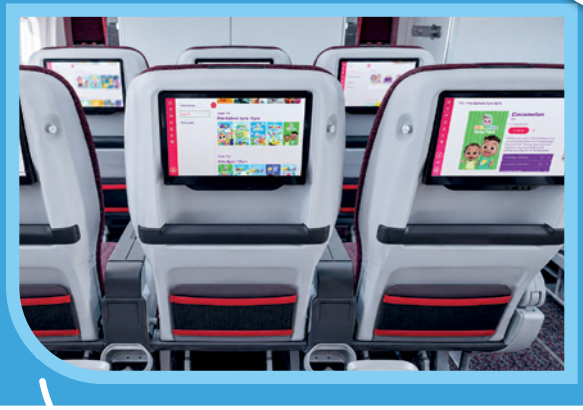
AIR INDIA CLOUD CHASERS

PLAYFUL KITS

To keep kids (aged 3–9 years) engaged on long-haul flights, Air India will provide a vibrant new Activity Kit featuring exciting puzzles, games, and more.

PERSONALISED FIRST FLIGHT CERTIFICATE

Mark your kid's first flight milestone with Air India's redesigned First Flight Certificate. Signed by the Captain and crew, it features a whimsical new design—this one is for keeps.



CURATED IFE

The 'Kids Zone' on Air India's Vista inflight entertainment, with hours of educational and animated content, and interactive games, is sure to keep kids entertained.

ELEVATED POURS

It is easy to raise a toast when a beverage selection is this good. Discover Air India's best offerings

A refreshed beverage selection is something to cheer about. And Air India's new offerings are already proving popular, with clear favourites emerging across all cabin classes. Guests flying First Class have been savouring a premium selection, including Charles Heidsieck Brut Réserve Champagne (which won Silver in the Business Class Sparkling Wine category at the Business Traveller – Cellars in the Sky Awards 2026), Albert Bichot Pouilly Fuissé, Hennessy VSOP, and Aberfeldy 21 YO.

Business Class travellers have been giving their votes to Château Teyssier, Albert Bichot Moulin-à-Vent, Aberfeldy 16 YO, Roku, Rampur Double Cask, Tequila Reserva 1800 Anejo, Baileys, and Birra Moretti. Premium Economy passengers have been enjoying choices like Villa Sandi Il Fresco DOC Prosecco, 2024 Shaw + Smith M3 Chardonnay, and Heineken, while Economy guests have been enjoying their pours of Château du Monthil, Bombay Sapphire, Absolut, and Kingfisher Ultra.

"Paired with the revamped menu, the beverage choices provide guests with a dining journey crafted with care and passion," said Rajesh Dogra, Chief Customer Experience Officer, Air India.

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* Upcoming

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OUR WINGS

A look at the aircraft in Air India's fleet*

Airbus A319
04

Airbus A320neo
94

Airbus A320ceo
04

Airbus A321ceo
13

Airbus A321neo
10

Airbus A350-900
06

Boeing 777-300ER
19

Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner
09

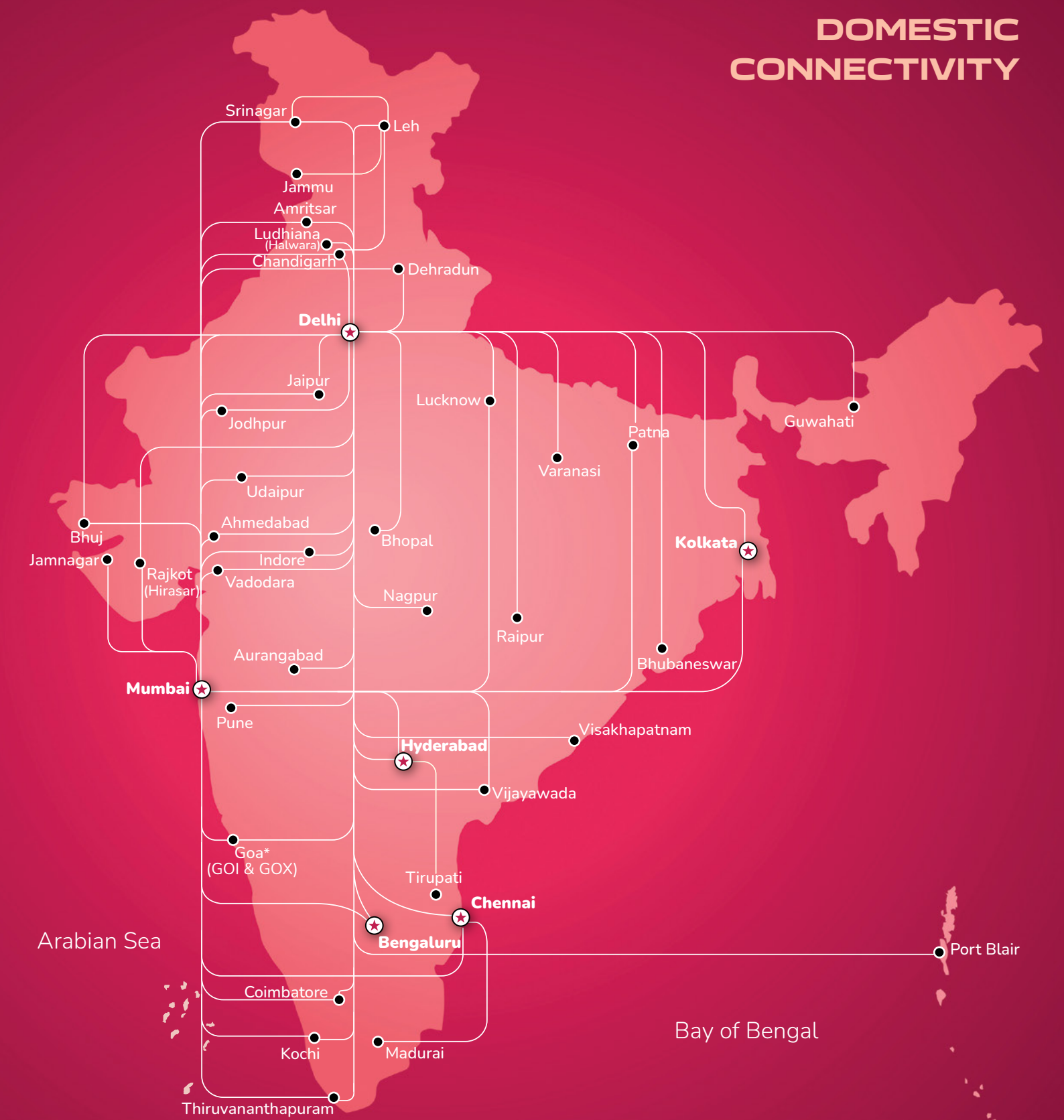
Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner
26

FLEET STRENGTH
185

*Total number as on 18th June 2026;
This fleet count is exclusive of Air India Express
(Air India Group's low-cost carrier)

AIR INDIA

DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



*Mumbai-Goa is operational via GOI; Delhi-Goa is operational via GOI (DEL-GOX is currently under temporary suspension)

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This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India

Route map as on 11th June 2026

AIR INDIA

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Air India flies non-stop to 41 destinations across five continents from multiple Indian cities (pinned on the map of India)

Europe

Amsterdam (AMS)	DEL	
Copenhagen (CPH)	DEL	
Frankfurt (FRA)	DEL	BOM
Milan (MXP)	DEL	
Paris (CDG)	DEL	
Rome (FCO)	DEL	
Vienna (VIE)	DEL	
Zurich (ZRH)	DEL	

UK

Birmingham (BHX)	DEL	ATQ	
London			
Gatwick (LGW)	ATQ	AMD	
Heathrow (LHR)	DEL	BOM	BLR

North America

Newark (EWR)	DEL*	BOM
New York (JFK)	DEL	BOM*
San Francisco (SFO)	DEL	
Toronto (YYZ)	DEL	
Vancouver (YVR)	DEL	

Middle East

Dammam (DMM)		BOM
Doha (DOH)	DEL	BOM
Dubai (DXB)	DEL	BOM
Jeddah (JED)	DEL	BOM
Riyadh (RUH)	DEL	BOM
Tel Aviv (TLV)	DEL*	

Connect beyond Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru to over 50 Indian destinations with Air India and Air India Express. Please turn to page 91 to see domestic route connectivity via Air India Express.

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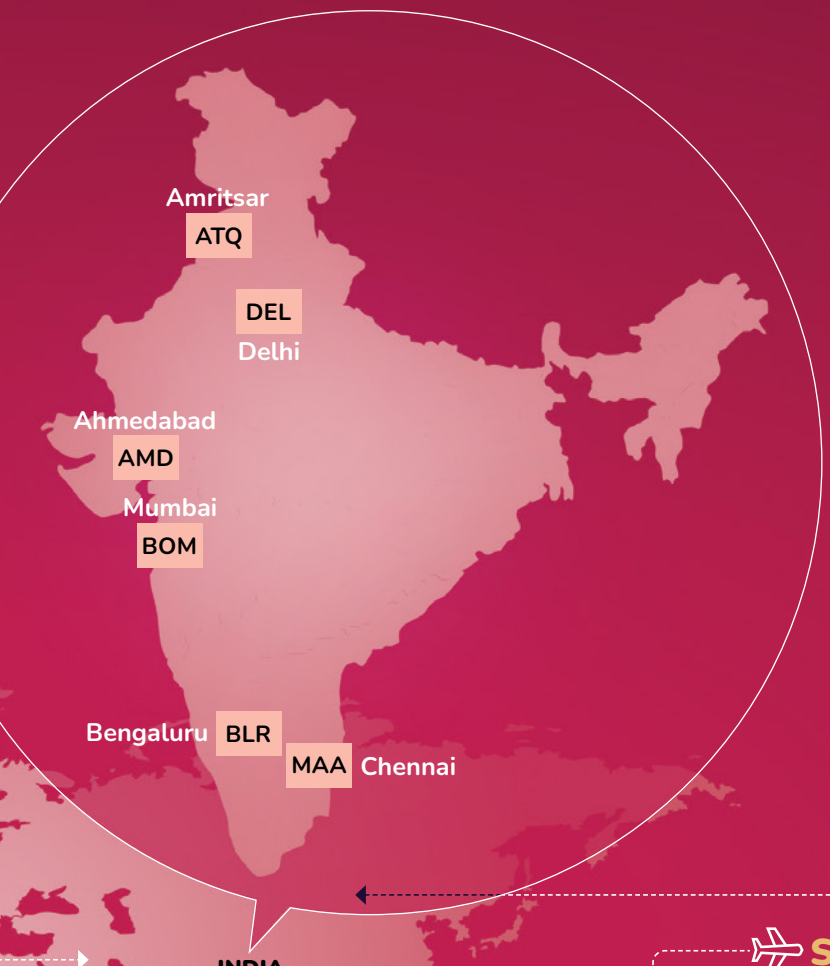
This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India
Route map as on 11th June 2026
*Currently under temporary suspension



Far East

Hong Kong (HKG)	DEL	
Seoul (ICN)	DEL	
Shanghai (PVG)	DEL*	
Tokyo (HND)	DEL	BOM

South East Asia

Bali (DPS)	DEL	
Bangkok (BKK)	DEL	BOM
Hanoi (HAN)	DEL	
Ho Chi Minh City (SGN)	DEL	
Kuala Lumpur (KUL)	DEL	
Manila (MNL)	DEL	
Phuket (HKT)	DEL	
Singapore (SIN)	DEL	BOM MAA*

Australia

Melbourne (MEL)	DEL
Sydney (SYD)	DEL

Indian Subcontinent

Colombo (CMB)	DEL	BOM
Dhaka (DAC)	DEL	
Kathmandu (KTM)	DEL	
Malé (MLE)	DEL*	
Yangon (RGN)	DEL	

Africa

Mauritius (MRU)	BOM

ABOARD AIX

A look at the aircraft in Air India Express' fleet*

Airbus A321neo

04

Airbus A320neo

12

Airbus A320ceo

10

FLEET STRENGTH
104

Boeing 737-800 NG

25

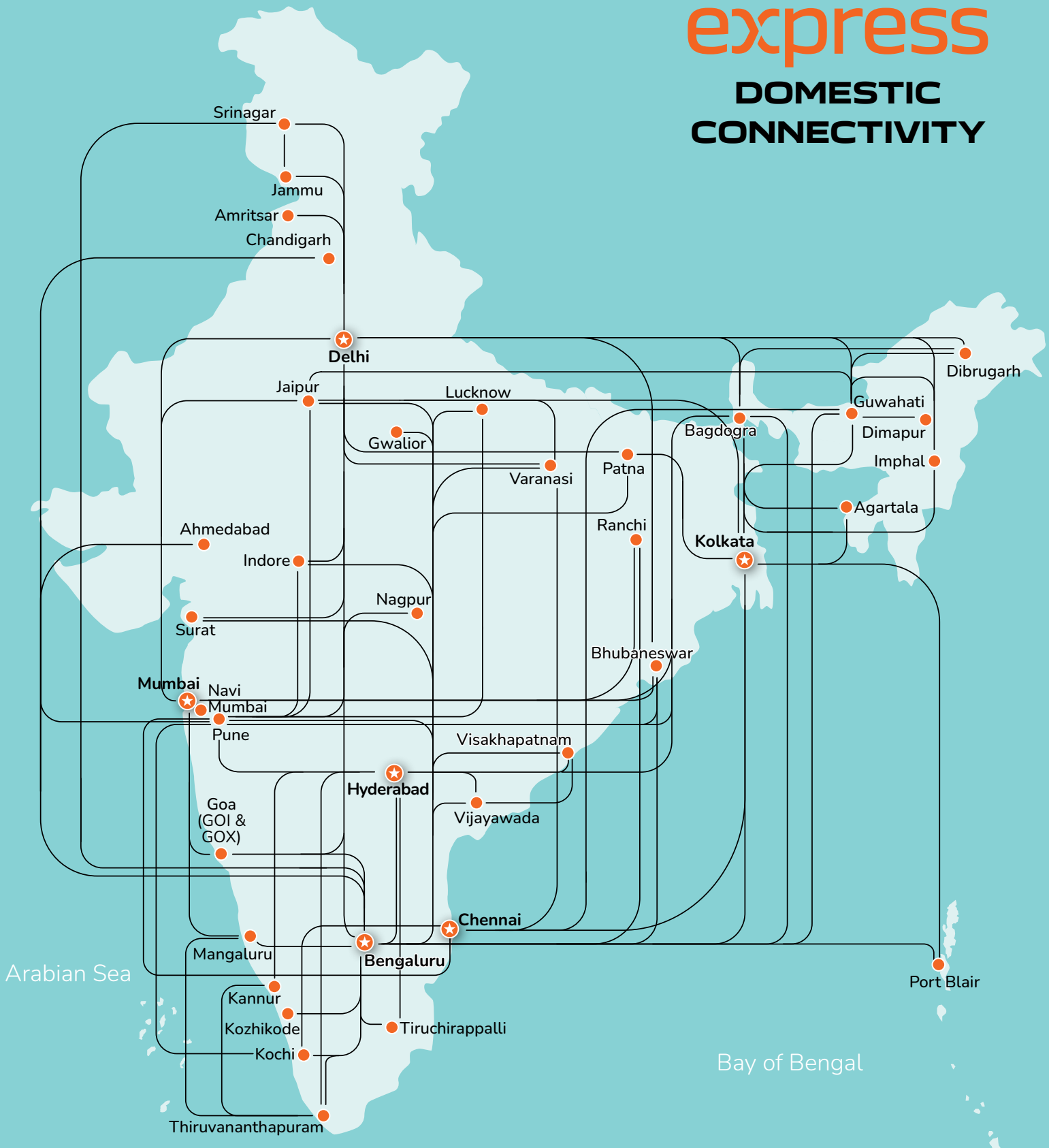
Boeing 737-800 Max

53

*Total number as on 10th June 2026

AIR INDIA express

DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



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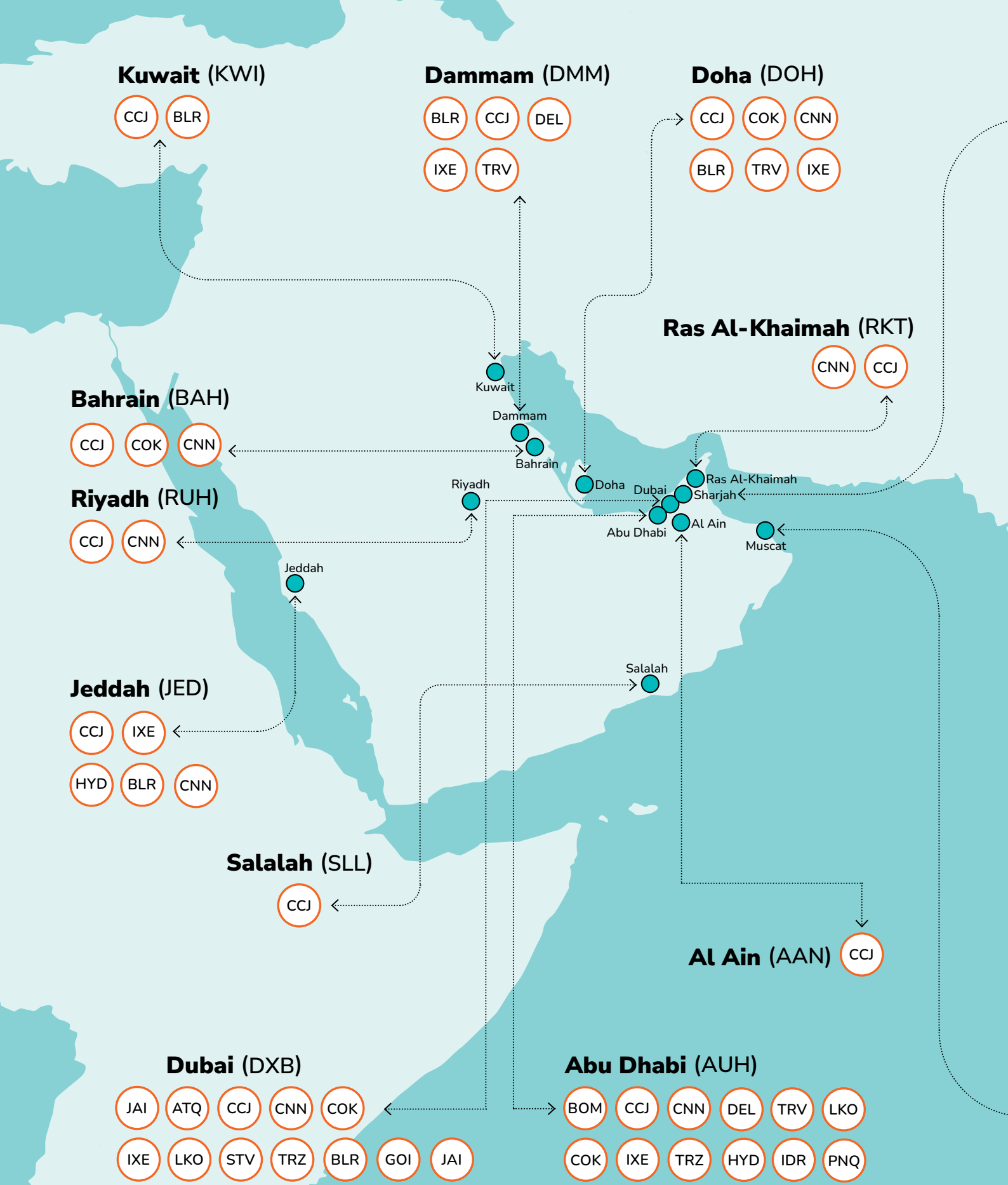
Route map as on 15th June 2026



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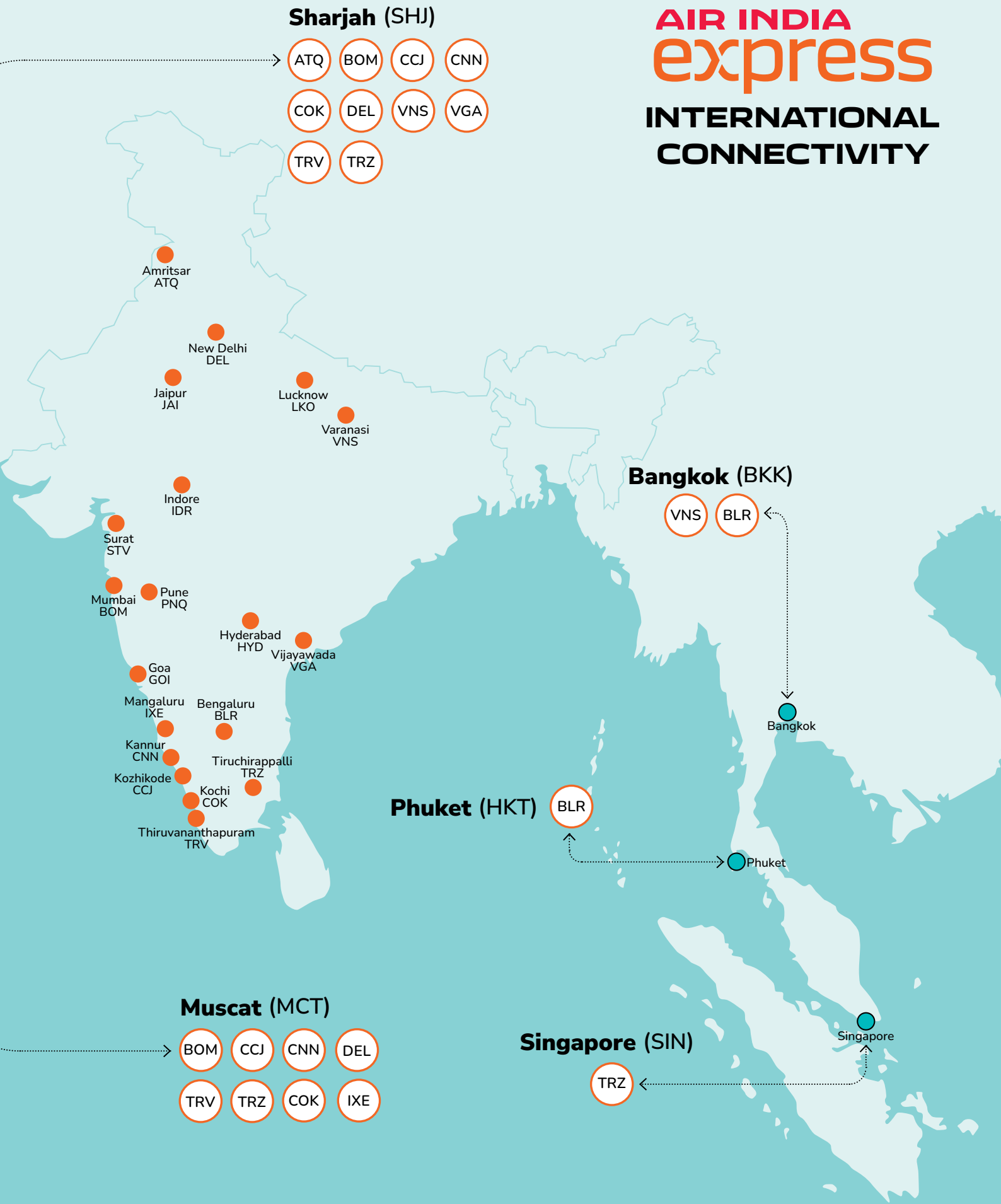
Air India Express International Network as on 15th June 2026

AIR INDIA express

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

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Codeshare and Interline partnerships as on 18th June 2026

Map not to scale; For representation purposes only

PLAN A TRIP TO CATCH A FIFA WORLD CUP 2026 MATCH

Fly non-stop to New York, USA, from Delhi with Air India

Take a connecting flight to Miami with our Interline Partner, Delta

Book a taxi or take a bus to Miami Stadium

WHY VISIT:

Of the 25 FIFA World Cup 2026 matches scheduled in July, including the final, 3 will be played at the Miami Stadium—3rd July, 11th July, and 18th July (Bronze Final). So, if you decide to spend a day or two in the city, do not miss Miami's 'Original Street Art Museum', Wynwood Walls. The vibrant murals here have been created by more than 130 fine artists and graffiti writers from around the world, covering over 62,000sqft of wall space.

Miami Stadium and FIFA World Cup trophy: Getty Images; Rest: Shutterstock

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YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE

REGULATORY INFORMATION FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS LANDING INTO INDIA

विदेश से कोई भी सैटेलाइट फोन भारत में लाने की अनुमती नहीं है।

Carrying any satellite phone from abroad to India is not permitted.

MISSION LIFE

मिशन लाइफ़, जिसे माननीय प्रधान मंत्री श्री नरेंद्र मोदी द्वारा शुरू किया गया है, पर्यावरण की सुरक्षा और संरक्षण के लिए लोगों को प्रेरित करने वाला एक वैश्विक जन आंदोलन है। इसका मकसद लोगों को पर्यावरण के प्रति जागरूक करना और उन्हें पर्यावरण की रक्षा के लिए कदम उठाने के लिए प्रेरित करना है।

Mission LiFE is a global mass movement, launched by Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, to inspire people to protect and conserve the environment. Its purpose is to make people aware of the environment and motivate them to take steps to protect the environment.

AIR-SEWA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने अपने एयर-सेवा पोर्टल को अपग्रेड किया है जो उपयोगकर्ताओं को ऑनलाइन शिकायतें जमा करने, ट्रैक करने और भारत में हवाई यात्रा के बारे में जानकारी प्राप्त करने की अनुमती देता है। सेवा संबंधी किसी और जानकारी के लिए, आप *airsewa.gov.in* पर लॉगिन कर सकते हैं।

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has upgraded its Air Sewa portal that allows users to submit and track grievances/ complaints online and get information about air travel in India. For any further service-related information, you can login to *airsewa.gov.in*

DIGI YATRA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय द्वारा प्रमुख हवाई अड्डों जैसे दिल्ली, बेंगलुरु, वाराणसी, पुणे, कोलकाता, विजयवाड़ा, हैदराबाद, अहमदाबाद, मुंबई, जयपुर, लखनऊ, गुवाहाटी, कोची और अन्य के लिए, डिजी यात्रा की सुविधा शुरू की गई है। डिजी यात्रा ऐप डाउनलोड करके खुद को नामांकित करें, और इन हवाई अड्डों पर बिना रुकावट के यात्रा का अनुभव करें।

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has introduced Digi Yatra facilities at major airports, including Delhi, Bengaluru, Varanasi, Pune, Kolkata, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Kochi, and others. This platform aims to provide a seamless, hassle-free experience for travellers. To avail of this facility, simply download the Digi Yatra app and complete your registration.

PROHIBITION OF AERIAL/ GROUND PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY, AND CARRIAGE OF SENSORY EQUIPMENT – SECURITY GUIDELINES AT DEFENCE AIRFIELDS

(IAF JUAs - Joint User Airfields)

हवाई अड्डों पर और उड़ान संचालन के दौरान, विशेष रूप से 10,000 फीट से नीचे हवाई और ज़मीनी फोटोग्राफी और वीडियोग्राफी पर प्रतिबंध है। यह प्रतिबंध टर्मिनलों, विमानों और हवाई अड्डे के आसपास के क्षेत्रों सहित विभिन्न स्थानों पर लागू होता है, जैसे की:

•टर्मिनल के अंदर; •विमान तक, या विमान से दूर जाने वाले वाहनों में; •विमान के बाहर; •लैंडिंग के दौरान; •हवाई अड्डे पर; •पुशबैक, टैक्सीइंग, टेक-ऑफ के दौरान, और जब विमान 10,000 फीट से नीचे उड़ रहा हो।

Please be informed that aerial or ground photography and videography are strictly prohibited at all times during a passenger's travel, including when he or she is inside the terminal; in vehicles en route to or from the aircraft; outside the aircraft; during landing; at the airport; during pushback, taxiing, take-off, and while the aircraft is flying below 10,000 feet.

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भारत सरकार द्वारा भारतीय पासपोर्ट एवं ओसीआई कार्ड धारकों के लिए ट्रस्टेड ट्रैवलर प्रोग्राम शुरू किया गया है। अब आप *ftittp.mha.gov.in* पर केवल 30 सेकंड में निशुल्क पंजीकरण करके स्वचालित ई-गेट से तेजी से इमिग्रेशन प्रक्रिया पूरी कर सकते हैं।

We are pleased to inform you about the Government of India's Trusted Traveller Programme for Indian passport and OCI card holders. You can now complete your immigration quickly through automated e-gates by registering at *ftittp.mha.gov.in* – it's free and takes just 30 seconds.

FOR FLIGHTS ARRIVING IN DELHI (DOMESTIC FLIGHTS OPERATING FROM TERMINAL 2)

हम आपको सूचित करना चाहते हैं कि 26 अक्टूबर से प्रभावी रूप से, चार अंकों वाली आंतरिक उड़ान, जिनके नंबर 'AI 1500 से 1999' के बीच हैं, टर्मिनल 2 से संचालित होंगी। यदि आप एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की उड़ान से कनेक्ट कर रहे हैं, तो कृपया टर्मिनल 1 पर जाएं। टर्मिनलों के बीच हर 10-मिनट में फ्री शटल बस सेवा उपलब्ध है, टर्मिनल 2 और टर्मिनल 3 के बीच यह सेवा उपलब्ध नही है। दोनों टर्मिनलों के बीच पैदल चलने का समय 10-मिनट है। आपके आगमन पर यदि किसी प्रकार की सहायता की आवश्यकता हो, तो कृपया हमारे ग्राउन्ड स्टाफ से संपर्क करें।

Effective 26th October, domestic flights with 4-digit numbers starting from 'AI 1500 to 1999' will operate from Terminal 2. If you are connecting on Air India Express, please proceed to Terminal 1. Free shuttle buses are available every 10 minutes between terminals, except between T2 and T3, which are connected by a convenient 10-minute walk. Should you require any assistance upon arrival, please feel free to approach our ground staff.

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Chef **Manish Mehrotra** was most impressed by the simplicity of Japanese food, proof that great ingredients need very little else

AN UNFORGETTABLE MEMORY

I travelled to Japan and what made the country so special was its attention to detail, hospitality, and craftsmanship that seemed to be present everywhere. Every destination offered something unique. It left a lasting impression on me and I hope to return someday.

MY LOCAL EXPERIENCE

We visited Sensō-ji Temple in Tokyo before making our way to teamLab (an art collective), which was an incredibly immersive experience. We then headed to Shibuya Crossing and were completely awestruck by its scale and energy. Kyoto offered a completely different atmosphere—we visited Nara Park before enjoying *shabu-shabu* in the narrow alleys of Pontochō.

A FARE TO REMEMBER

In Tokyo, we ate at a Michelin-starred tempura restaurant in Kamimeguro, where we happened to be the only two people in a seven-to-eight seater. The next day began at Tsukiji Outer Market, where we ate the freshest sea urchin right on the street followed by Wagyu skewers. This was probably the most impressive food memory from the entire trip.

I RECOMMEND

In Osaka Ikeda, we visited the Cup Noodles Museum and got the chance to customise our own noodle bowls.

— As told to ***Veenu Singh***

Manish Mehrotra: Self; Rest: Shutterstock

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