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EDITOR'S NOTE



As the discerning traveller seeks out undiscovered vistas and immersive experiences, powered by nudges like easy visas and convenient connectivity, the east opens up exciting possibilities.

That's why in our Cover Story, we look to the east, increasingly becoming the region of choice for outbound travellers from India. Dive into Hanoi with a father-daughter duo as they detail their trip, and feast your eyes on some breathtaking sights from Vietnam. Exploring the country has become easier with our non-stop connectivity to both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City, so you can fly in to one city and out from the other. If you're a foodie, read our story on how top chefs in Hong Kong are opening casual eateries to take their fine dining fare to a wider audience. Rounding off the section is a nostalgic trip through Victoria, Australia—koalas and all!

In Seoul, a fishing enthusiast delves into how the hobby is actually about stillness and discipline. Another popular hobby is buying souvenirs, but we deliberate whether it is about collecting or holding on to a feeling. The Body section this month pivots to how you can deploy physical asanas to develop a mind that does not fracture under stress—something all of us grapple with.

Elsewhere, explore Chennai through eight iconic dishes, carve a single-day itinerary from our Kuala Lumpur guide, and plan a holiday to Venice to view art at the Biennale. Or use our Rome feature as a guide to discover hidden gems to eat and shop.

Air India recently welcomed the first retrofitted B787-8, back after a nose-to-tail refresh. The 11-year-old aircraft is transformed with new livery and cabin interiors. We also announced huge changes to the Maharaja Club Loyalty programme, making it easier for you to accrue points and access tiers, making your travels easier and more rewarding! Happy Reading!

— **Namaste.ai** Editorial Team

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FRAME BY FRAME

Vietnam reveals its splendour in multi-hues and textures

The Art of Effortless Arrival

- Amit Khanna,
Times Black ICICI Bank Cardholder



“ TRUE LUXURY ISN'T ABOUT ACCESS, IT IS ABOUT OWNING YOUR TIME ”

The Math of the Modern Nomad

For a frequent flyer, the greatest currency isn't just the capital you deploy, but the perks that your card offers to make your journey seamless. What drew me to Times Black was its unapologetic focus on the traveller. Booking flights and hotels isn't just a line item; with accelerated reward points, it becomes a strategic advantage.

But the real masterstroke?

The 1:1 conversion ratio to Air India's Maharaja Club. In a market where transfer ratios are often diluted, seeing my points translate directly into my next long-haul flight on the national carrier feels like a rare win for transparency. It ensures that the rewards from my business travel directly fuel my personal travel.

Beyond the Velvet Rope

We all know the “going out” audience in India is evolving. They don't just want a table; they want the right table. Times Black understands this social currency. Whether it's being part of the high-octane opening parties or gaining entry to marquee events like the Times Food & Nightlife Awards, the card acts as a permanent “plus one” to the city's inner circle.

Frictionless Frontiers

However, the true test of a premium card happens before you even leave your house. We've all felt the dread of visa paperwork. The “Visa at Your Doorstep” service where biometrics and documentation are handled in the comfort of your home is the kind of service I didn't know I needed until I couldn't live without it, thanks to Times Black.

And then there is the arrival

There is a specific kind of calm that comes from knowing a chauffeur-driven Mercedes is waiting at the curb to whisk you from the tarmac to your next meeting. It turns a commute into a transition, a moment of solitude in an otherwise noisy world. The Times Black app makes

In the world of gastronomy and global capital, luxury is a word so lavishly overused that it has begun to lose its radiance. For me, true luxury is not a product, but the absolute command of one's time. It is the ability to move from a boardroom in Singapore to the opening night of a new kitchen in Delhi with one's rhythm unbroken. Anything that dissolves the friction of logistics is, to me, the purest expression of luxury.

redeeming benefits effortless for me. From curated events to an infallible concierge that secured sold-out tickets for my favourite comedian, Max Amini, the experience is seamless. If you were to carry just one card in your wallet, this is the one.

Amit Khanna

Founding Partner, Nisaba
Founder, Amaya Growth Fund
& Amaya Ventures

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A TRAVELLER'S TALE
Jewellery designer Farah Khan Ali's sojourn in Rome

On The Cover
Incense sticks artistically bundled together to dry, in Quang Phu Cau, Vietnam

Cover image courtesy
Daniel Kordan

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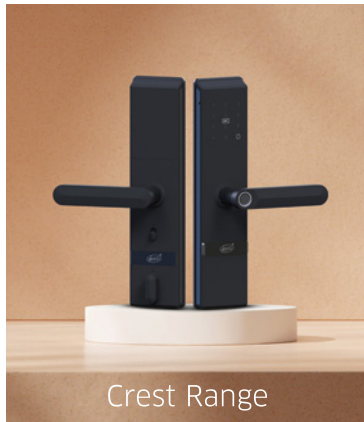
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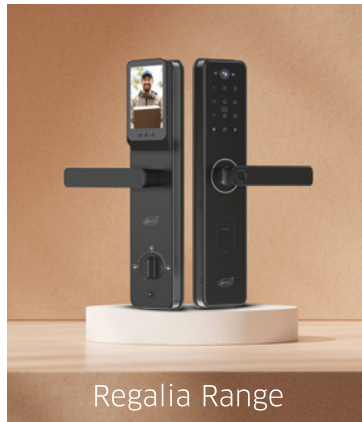
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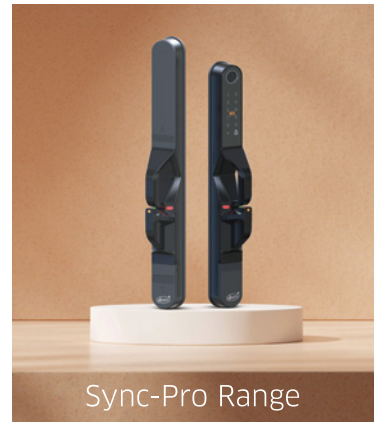
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A Delhi-based independent journalist and content creator with over 17 years of experience, Satarupa loves exploring the local culture and food scene while travelling. She has written for Washington Post, BBC, Vice, Esquire, and more. She chronicles her adventures in Hanoi with her 71-year-old father. page 16



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A credit card strategist and founder of Reward Points Club, a concierge service for HNIs, Aly has spent over 10 years mastering reward systems and knows how credit cards can be leveraged. He explains the changes made to the Air India Maharaja Club's loyalty programme. page 96



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Shifting Perspectives

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Getty Images



THE MANY LIVES OF HANOI

Over a few days in this Vietnamese city, chaos gave way to charm and revealed a place rich in history, flavour, and unexpected moments of connection

words by **Satarupa Paul**

The Huc Bridge over
Hoàn Kiếm Lake

Getty Images



TOP AND BOTTOM
Hanoi Train Street has many cafés by the tracks; The author in the city.

You will have to walk the rest of the distance; the car cannot go any farther. It is the weekend, and people are out on the streets.” Our driver points to the barricades, apologising profusely. We had expected Hanoi to be winding down at this hour (it is around 10.30pm), and much of it is in fact quiet, as we drive in from the airport. But as we near the historic Old Quarter, the energy hits us all at once. The narrow lanes are packed, with two-wheelers jostling for space alongside pedestrians drawn out by the bustle of the weekly night market.

We get off the cab and drag our luggage through the crowd—not the kind of arrival you want when travelling with your 71-year-old father. Our aparthotel, though, is tucked away on a quieter, leafy lane just steps from Hoàn Kiếm Lake, the centrepiece of the Old Quarter. Bags dropped, we step right back out, curious to see what all the fuss is about. Within minutes, we are enveloped in the aromas of smoky grilled meats, skewered seafood,



savoury crêpes, pork buns, and cheese coin pancakes. Our initial annoyance dissolves into excitement, and as we sit by the lake, hands full of street-side indulgences, we know Hanoi is going to surprise us in the days ahead.

A lesson in history

Powered by bánh mì, we set off on a private tour the next day. St Joseph’s Cathedral, with its Neo-Gothic spires and weathered grey façade, stands in contrast to the surrounding buildings. A short drive into the French Quarter brings us to the Hanoi Opera House, its pale-yellow façade and grand columns a reminder of the colonial past.

Hanoi’s history stretches back to 1010, when Emperor Ly Thai To chose this site—then called Thang Long—as his capital. It evolved through successive dynasties before the French reshaped it in the late 19th century. Later, it emerged as the nerve centre of North Vietnam during the Vietnam War, all the while holding its ground—something that still shapes the resilience and pride of its people.

At Ba Dinh Square, a vast plaza flanked by imposing government buildings, including the Presidential Palace and the National Assembly, we stand where the revolutionary leader Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam’s Independence in 1945. This is also where the revered leader lies in state at the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum; the atmosphere inside the stark granite structure hushed and orderly. As we walk through the complex, my father slips into the role of historian, bringing Ho Chi Minh’s life and legacy alive



STYLISH STAYS

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Lotte Hotel Hanoi: Rising 65 storeys against the skyline, this property boasts a rooftop bar, a Michelin-starred restaurant—Tim Ho Wan—and the Evian Spa.

Hotel Château de Hanoi: Just steps from Hoàn Kiếm Lake, this is a charming boutique stay.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Ha Long Bay is a good day-excursion from Hanoi; Bánh mì is a staple of Vietnamese cuisine; St Joseph's Cathedral.

with a depth that surprises even our guide, and reminds me where my own fascination with history stems from.

Of trains and pagodas

“What is so great about a bridge? Can we not skip it?” my father asks, clearly flagging, as we head to Long Biên Bridge. Minutes later, he is happily posing for the camera, the rusted iron structure stretching behind him across the Red River. Built by the French in the early 20th century, it still carries a steady rhythm of motorbikes, cyclists, and the occasional train.

By the time we reach Tran Quoc Pagoda, a light drizzle has set in. The red-and-gold tower rises from a small islet within West Lake, its reflection shimmering in the water. Believed to be Hanoi's oldest pagoda, it exudes a calm that feels almost meditative.

A short drive away, the One Pillar Pagoda is small yet symbolic, rising out of a lotus pond. As the day winds down, we find ourselves at the Insta-famous Hanoi Train Street, seated at a tiny café by the rail tracks with condensed milk-laced Vietnamese coffee in hand, as a train brushes past with a closeness that feels both surreal and exhilarating.

Slow encounters

Having covered the must-sees, we slow down with a full-day cruise of Ha Long Bay. An early morning shuttle takes us to the harbour, with a stop at a pearl farm en route. Soon, we are aboard a ship, gliding through emerald waters dotted with limestone karsts as we tuck into a buffet lunch. The day unfolds at a measured pace—exploring the stalactite and stalagmite caverns of Sung Sot Cave, kayaking through hidden lagoons, and climbing Ti Top (Titop) Island for sweeping views.

On our final day, we ease into the rhythm of the Old Quarter, more at home in its chaos. We wander

through storied streets—Hàng Bạc with its silver artisans, Hàng Gai's silk boutiques, and Hàng Mã's paper offerings. We revisit bowls of pho, warm buns called *rotis*, and loaded bánh mì, before raising a final toast with cold beers on the pub-lined Ta Hien Street. A fitting goodbye to a city that had begun to feel like our own.



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Hanoi from Delhi.*



* The new services to Hanoi will operate five times a week, complementing daily flights to Ho Chi Minh City. This provides greater flexibility to travellers who intend to visit Vietnam with open jaw itineraries, i.e. entering from Hanoi and exiting from Ho Chi Minh City or vice versa.

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Shane Osborn's
Mayura wagyu
brisket 'bap' with
gherkin and hot
mustard mayonnaise
at Servo

FROM TASTING MENUS TO TUESDAY BURGERS

At the cutting edge of Hong Kong's restaurant scene, there's room for both fine dining and experiences that, though no less innovative, are far more informal

words by **WINNIE CHUNG**



Servo's
homemade
'chook' pie and
house salad

The reign of the multi-hour tasting menu, once the undisputed pinnacle of dining out, is no longer the sole destination for the discerning palate. Today's diners are strategic, seeking not just flavour but genuine joy—demanding accessible experiences that deliver excellence without the lengthy commitment and stiff formalities of expensive tasting menus.

This trend is being supercharged by Gen Z, a demographic now wielding significant influence. For them, a great meal is intrinsically linked to digital ease, personalisation, and social connection, favouring vibrant, shareable plates in relaxed spaces designed for regular enjoyment, not just rare occasions.

In Hong Kong, savvy chefs are responding by opening vibrant, lower-priced venues that focus on singular, regionally-inspired cuisines or expertly crafted casual classics. These spaces

are laboratories of accessibility, proving that exceptional ingredients and culinary intelligence can thrive in a relaxed setting.

This wave of casualisation doesn't signal the end of fine dining; rather, it highlights a splintering of the market and a clarification of purpose. The exquisite tasting menu becomes a rarer, more special occasion, while the thriving everyday culinary scene becomes richer, more diverse, and deliciously within reach.

But this movement isn't merely about chasing Gen Z trends or economic necessity, though those factors play a part. As Susan Jung, author of *Kung Pao and Beyond: Fried Chicken Recipes from East and Southeast Asia* and a well-respected food critic and writer points out, it's fundamentally about "creative expansion".

Chefs such as Vicky Cheng, known for his innovative Chinese-French fusion at VEA and refined Cantonese at Wing Restaurant, and Vicky Lau of

the elegant TATE Dining Room and soy-inspired Mora, constantly develop ideas that don't fit their flagship concepts. These new ventures allow them to express different facets of their culinary personalities, free from the constraints of their original, often highly conceptual, restaurants.

Cheng's shift began at home. He found himself cooking more for his family and friends—making fresh pasta for his daughters, barbecuing chicken on the rooftop. These dishes, born from genuine daily pleasure, had no place on his fine-dining menus. "My girls loved pasta... my friends would say, 'Your pasta is actually really good,'" he says.

This personal craving led to Medora, a restaurant serving hearty pasta, juicy burgers, and smoky barbecue chicken. It's not a scaled-down version of his flagship, but a different proposition entirely, focusing on comforting, repeatable food. "It was never meant to be extremely innovative," Cheng states. "It was meant to be always a very



comforting food that you want to eat over and over again.”

Similarly, Lau found inspiration from her travels through (China’s) Yunnan province, which sparked a passion for its naturally-flavoured ingredients. Her resulting venture, Jija, embraces a bistro-style ethos centred on the fresh, bold, and often sour-spicy flavours of the region. “It’s a nice break to not have to think about the plating and really focus on the flavour,” she notes, enjoying the shift towards a more instinctive, communal style of cooking.

For Shane Osborn, the mastermind behind the sophisticated Arcane, the move towards accessibility was both a personal preference and a market response. His café-wine bar, Servo, channels the relaxed Australian café culture, offering coffee, toasted

sandwiches, and classic pies. “I also drink coffee, and I also like having a good breakfast and a good toasted sandwich,” Osborn admits, highlighting the simple desires behind the concept.

He also observes a post-pandemic reality: “Disposable incomes have been squeezed. People still want to go out and eat good food, but they don’t have the same kind of disposable income.” Servo provides a high-quality, value-driven experience designed for regular, weekly visits rather than annual celebrations.

Cheng, Lau, and Osborn aren’t the first Hong Kong-based chefs to introduce these concepts, of course. For instance, the one-Michelin-star Louise, in the hands of Chef Loic Portalier, converted its downstairs bar to La Terrace in July 2024. More casual,

it has proven popular for its vibe and reasonably priced à la carte menu.

The growing trend isn’t a matter of just lower prices but a new philosophy of casual excellence with its own core tenets. First, the commitment to ingredient quality is non-negotiable. With Lau’s Jija, the premium ingredients come with the promise of no MSG. At Medora, the burger features Australian Wagyu, the chicken is fresh local yellow fowl.

“We’re not here to serve you the cheapest Brazilian chicken,” Cheng asserts. The innovation lies in application: a premium blue lobster’s tail might grace a tasting menu at VEA while its claw enriches a casual pasta, ensuring quality and reducing waste.

Second, the experience is engineered for comfort and frequency. The goal is to become a regular haunt. Jija is designed as a ‘vibey’ space for big groups—even the name Jija is a Cantonese colloquialism for ‘cheerful chatter’—while Servo thrives as a neighbourhood hub.

Lastly, these concepts act as a vital gateway. As Jung notes, a fantastic meal at Servo, Medora or Jija builds trust and can inspire a customer to eventually save for the flagship experience. “They’re getting a taste of the food by these famous chefs,” she



TOP AND BOTTOM

The interiors of Jija, helmed by Chef Vicky Lau; Crispy Chicken Roulade with truffle sticky rice and sweet corn, at Medora.

FACING PAGE

(left and right) Jija's sweet shrimp and pineapple; The 'Not so' rocky road at Servo.



says, “and that might inspire them to save for a special-occasion meal.”

Crucially, this isn’t a dilution of brand but a diversification of expression. The chefs vehemently reject the idea that these are simply “affordable versions” of their flagships. The cuisines are intentionally distinct: Medora’s comfort food versus Wing’s Cantonese; Jija’s Yunnan-inspired sharing plates versus TATE’s French elegance. “The only way you can dilute your brand is if you serve sub-par food and drink,” Osborn adds.

Adds Jung: “Nobody is going to mistake these restaurants; the cuisines are not at all alike, so you can’t compare them in that way. If I were to review

the more casual restaurants, I wouldn’t compare them against the flagships because they’re so different.”

This shift aligns perfectly with a global generational change. Gen Z views dining as a key social experience—a ‘third space’ for connection. They’re value-driven, adventurous eaters who crave authenticity and bold flavours, delivered with digital ease and a relaxed vibe. Chef-led casual concepts, offering quality on more accessible terms, are perfectly attuned to this zeitgeist.

Consequently, the role of fine dining is becoming more sharply defined as the domain of the true special

occasion. “There are always going to be celebrations,” Cheng affirms. The curated, theatrical tasting menu remains a unique form of storytelling and artistry, reserved for moments that demand that particular magic.

“There’s been a lot of talk about the end of tasting menus, but I hope they don’t go away,” says Jung. “I don’t think fine dining is dead, but not everyone can afford it. In the hands of skilled chefs, I really think they have their place. They’re a great way for chefs to show off who they are and what they can do, that diners won’t necessarily see if they randomly pick their own dishes à la carte,” says Jung.

Ultimately, this trend points towards a portfolio model for culinary success. For chefs, it allows creative expansion, financial resilience, and a deeper connection with their community. “If I just keep doing what I’m doing, I will not learn and I will not grow,” Lau observes, seeing diversification as essential for both personal and business development.

For diners, it enriches the entire ecosystem. One can enjoy a world-class chef’s craft in a brilliant sausage roll at lunch, share vibrant Yunnan plates with friends on a Tuesday, and still reserve that transcendent tasting menu for a landmark anniversary.

The future of dining isn’t a battle between casual and fine. It’s the celebration of a spectrum of excellence, where quality and intention are the constants, whether the setting calls for a linen napkin or a paper one. This great relaxation is making the world of good food more welcoming, varied, and alive than ever before.

WONDERS OF VIETNAM

The country boasts several diverse gems. We give you a visual treat so you can explore and make the most of its stunning sights

An aerial photograph showing a vast expanse of dark blue ocean. A large, curved area of bright green and turquoise water is visible, representing fishing nets. The nets are spread out in a pattern that resembles a large flower or a series of connected loops. The water's surface is textured with small waves and ripples.

RHYTHM OF THE NETS

The fishing nets in Phú Yên—a coastal province in central Vietnam—are traditionally used to harvest anchovies. They often look like large ‘flower nets’ in bright hues of green, blue, and turquoise.

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OF PEACE AND PRAYERS

For some spiritual solace, head to Tran Quoc pagoda, located on an islet within West Lake in Tay Ho district. It is the most ancient of all pagodas in Hanoi.



AWAY FROM THE CACOPHONY

The country is as much known for its fast-paced cities as it is for slow travel. Mountains, beaches, and forests offer peaceful escapes from the frenzy of the city, where all you need to do is let your eyes take in the verdant surroundings and watch people go about their day. Like these locals making their way through a field of sedge grass, a material used for weaving mats, in Quang Nam.





PIÈCE DE RÉSISTANCE

A highly Instagrammable spot, the Golden Bridge is a 150-m-long pedestrian structure that rises above the Thien Thai gardens at the Bà Nà Hills Resort near Da Nang. For uninterrupted vistas, visit in the wee hours of the morning, before it gets crowded.

WHERE PETALS DRIFT

As the Mekong Delta floods between August and November, local women make their way into the river to harvest water lilies. During these months, visitors from near and far arrive to witness the harvest. The pink flowers and the harvesters in colourful clothes and nón lá (traditional conical hats), contrasted against the blue water create a visual treat for photographers.





A RIDE TO REMEMBER

An aerial view of colourful basket boats in Hoi An. You can try this much-loved activity, where you will be taken through leafy coconut groves in round, woven bamboo boats that were traditionally used by local fishermen.

LUMINOUS CRAFT

Hoi An (a UNESCO world cultural heritage site) is popular as the 'city of lanterns', and has kept alive a centuries-old tradition, with colourful, silk-covered bamboo creations decorating the Ancient Town. On the Hoi An Lantern Festival, held on the 14th day of every lunar month, thousands of paper lanterns are released on the Hoai River and visitors are encouraged to join.



Travel Back IN TIME

An eventful journey across the Australian state of Victoria was both nostalgic and full of adventure

words by Henna Shah



The past is the father of the present." Agatha Christie's words, spoken in my grandfather's voice, reverberated in my ears as we stepped into the charming Miss Marple's English Tearoom, nestled in the mist-veiled Dandenong Ranges of Victoria, Australia. Inspired by Christie's beloved sleuth, the Tearoom felt like a page from the very stories my grandfather once read aloud to me, with its wood-panelled interiors, floral tablecloths, and shelves lined with porcelain teapots. As I gazed through the rain-speckled panes, fingers curled

around a warm chai latte, something within me stirred. It was 19 years to the very day since my grandfather passed. But within that parlour, with its scones and clotted cream, I found a doorway back to the time spent with him.

Earlier that morning, my husband Yash and I had boarded the Puffing Billy, a vintage steam train that winds its way through the fern-draped slopes between Belgrave and Lakeside. With our legs dangling freely from the open carriage and the rhythmic chug of the engine, we felt time gently roll back to when we were kids, riding a toy train and waving at our parents who

waited on the sidelines. Mirroring that memory, there was a shared joy in the way passers-by paused to wave at the Puffing Billy and its gleeful passengers, almost like an unspoken tradition.

Getting off at Lakeside, we met our private tour guide Rob, who was waiting with an umbrella to shield us from the soft drizzle. Settling into the car, wrapped in the warmth of the heater, we began our scenic drive through the Yarra Ranges National Park, where a tapestry of late-autumn foliage painted the landscape amber. Nearing Cement Creek Redwood Forest, Rob turned to us with a smile and said,



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
The Puffing Billy Railway is one of the world's oldest surviving narrow-gauge steam railways; Visitors can enjoy a plethora of activities at Sovereign Hill; The author and her husband at Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park.

"My daughter often calls this place the Enchanted Woods." Rising before us were towering trees, one of the rare California Redwood forests outside California, an awe-inspiring grove that felt like an extension of Enid Blyton's *Faraway Tree* series. We spread out a picnic mat and lay under the canopy of the majestic Redwoods.

A step back in time

With the spell of magical realms lifting, we arrived in historic Ballarat, stepping into the 1850s at Sovereign Hill, a living museum that recreated the Victorian Gold Rush era. Costumed volunteers





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Miss Marple's English Tearoom pays homage to Agatha Christie's famous lady detective; A Pimlico Pastie; The beaches along the Great Ocean Road offer breathtaking vistas.

stayed perfectly in character—from a convict-turned-miner hiding a striped shirt under his vest to waitresses in white aprons and bonnets at the New York Bakery, serving Devonshire tea. Our guide, Gary, led us past horse-drawn carriages and a candy maker hand-rolling raspberry lollies, to a bowling alley where wooden balls clattered against pins beneath a sign that read: 'Don't mix bowling and grog'. At the river, Yash panned for gold and, to his delight, uncovered glinting flakes, his own little keepsake of the trip.

It had been a while since I visited a wildlife sanctuary, and the Moonlit Sanctuary Wildlife Conservation Park brought back vivid memories of summer holidays spent at the zoo. Here, that sense of wonder returned as I gently stroked a sleepy koala nibbling at eucalyptus leaves and hand-fed kangaroos that rested their clawed paws on my arm. But nothing compared to what awaited us at Phillip Island right after dusk. The coastline came alive with tiny penguins emerging from the sea and waddling across the sand to their burrows after a full day of fishing. In that moment, it felt as if my favourite cartoon, *Pingu*, had stepped off the screen and into the real world.



The serenity of childhood memories gave way to a sudden surge of adrenaline at the Phillip Island Grand Prix circuit. I climbed into a go-kart for the first time since college. As the engine roared to life and the wind pressed against my helmet, for a few electrifying moments, I was 17 again.

Our time in Victoria drew to a close with a road trip along the Great Ocean Road, whose winding cliffs, crashing waves, and sun-drenched vistas had been living in my imagination ever since I watched *Salaam Namaste*. Two decades later, I stood here not just living my Bollywood dream but travelling back in time to relive the magic of childhood fantasies and rediscover a part of myself that I had long forgotten.

STYLISH STAYS

The StandardX, Melbourne: Located in Fitzroy, it offers excellent proximity to eclectic dining and shopping.

Melbourne Marriott Hotel Docklands: Enjoy a relaxed vibe, a rooftop infinity pool, and access to the Free Tram Zone.

1 Hotel Melbourne: Come here for a sustainable Yarra riverside stay.



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Melbourne from Delhi.



CHECKLIST

Everything worth checking out

- 34 ➔ IN FOCUS
- 38 ➔ TREND
- 44 ➔ ON THE CLOCK
- 50 ➔ FOOD
- 56 ➔ GUEST BOOK
- 60 ➔ EVENTS
- 62 ➔ NOW TRENDING
- 66 ➔ BOOKS





Detail of Ranjani Shettar's work for the India pavilion at the Venice Biennale's 61st International Art Exhibition

ROOTED IN MEMORIES

Dr Amin Jaffer, curator of the Venice Biennale's India pavilion, reflects on the theme that home is not a fixed place but one shaped by rituals and experience

words by **Shrabasti Anindita Mallik**

Tell us about curating *Geographies of Distance: remembering home for the India pavilion*.

Working in the world of culture and living partly in Venice, the Biennale plays an important role in my life. The pavilion has been a collaborative effort, with partners Isha Ambani (Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre) and Sunil Munjal (Serendipity Arts) wishing to showcase contemporary art from India in Venice. After consideration, we decided that better than staging a collateral project, it would make sense to support an Indian national pavilion, and approached the Ministry of Culture accordingly.

Inspired by the overall Biennale

theme, *In Minor Keys* by Koyo Kouoh, I developed a proposal that drew on the emotion of remembering home—a home that no longer exists or is far away. The idea was inspired by India's rapid urban transformation, which sees neighbourhoods, towns, and cities redeveloping at a rapid pace, and by the condition of the Indian diaspora, who maintain close links to their country despite geographic challenges.

Geographies of Distance looks at the idea of home not as a fixed place, but as something shaped by memory, rituals, and personal experience. The artists reflect on themes of distance, displacement, and change, both within India and across the diaspora.



Dr Amin Jaffer

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checklist in focus



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Sumakshi Singh's embroidery work for the Biennale; Alwar Balasubramaniam's artwork; Skarma Sonam Tashi (right) working on his piece for the event.

How do the artworks engage with the theme of *In Minor Keys*?

For me, *In Minor Keys* is reflected in two ways. Firstly, through the materials used—fragile, organic, and handmade—which are not industrial or indestructible, nor do they require complex processes for production. On the contrary, they feel close to nature and human touch. Equally important, the pavilion touches on home—a theme that demands introspection and reflection about who we are, where we come from, and where we feel we belong. In an environment that is rapidly changing—demographically, economically, technologically—we sometimes find ourselves far from our place of origin. While we advance through life, welcoming change and opportunity, we also pause to reflect on what has been lost. This balance between change and memory reflects the idea of *In Minor Keys*.

What new can a visitor expect?

Visitors will experience the theme of *In Minor Keys* through elements of land, architecture, and nature. The pavilion offers a sense of India's civilisational continuity, with materials and forms that are rooted in Indian culture. The experience of the pavilion is designed to encourage introspection, prompting visitors to reflect on their own idea of

home, whether as a physical place or an emotional state.

Tell us about the artists exhibiting.

The India pavilion will showcase five artists from across the country, each spotlighting a distinct perspective.

Delhi-based artist Sumakshi Singh has recreated her grandparents' home in Delhi using thread and embroidery. The now-demolished house held deep personal meaning as the centre of her family. The work is especially meaningful as it also reflects the tradition of stitching and embroidery practised by the women in her family.

Alwar Balasubramaniam (Tamil Nadu) works with soil, drawing attention to the earth and its connection to memory and place, observing how fragile this element is, which we take for granted. Skarma Sonam Tashi focuses on the architecture and ecology in Ladakh, observing how traditional domestic houses—made

BIENNALE DATES: 2026

61st International Art Exhibition
9th May-22nd November

54th International Theatre Festival
7th-21st June

20th International Festival of
Contemporary Dance
17th July-1st August

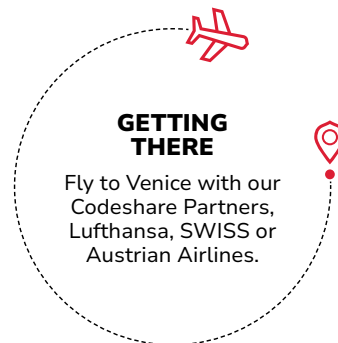
83rd Venice International
Film Festival
2nd-12th September

70th International Festival of
Contemporary Music
10th-24th October

of local materials and integrated into nature—have been replaced by industrialised buildings.

Working in rural Karnataka, Ranjani Shettar's works are inspired by floral forms, reflecting the role that nature plays in Indian cultural and ritual life. Delhi-based Asim Waqif uses bamboo to create a structure that suggests scaffolding—symbolising change, growth, and the future. His work reflects the idea of transition, where the past gives way to what is yet to come. It also captures the balance in India—between strong cultural roots and a forward-looking mindset.

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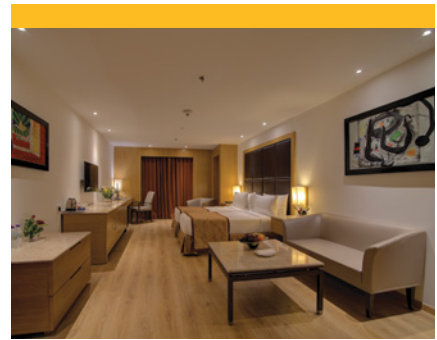
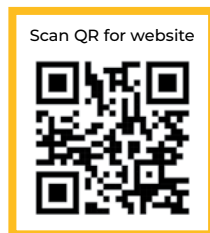
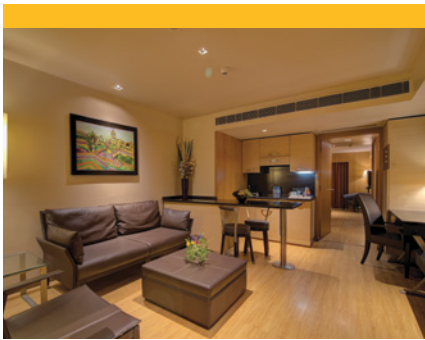


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BRINGING UP THE PAST

Indian cuisine is digging deep into its roots for inspiration. Is this a moment of rejuvenation?

words by
Nikhil P Merchant

Chukh Paneer at Loya,
Taj Palace, New Delhi

Loya, Taj Palace, New Delhi



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Lahori Sajji from Ikk Panjab; Prawn bharta at 6 Ballygunge Place, Kolkata; Palang Chingri Bharta at the same restaurant.

The world over, cuisine—much like fashion—is highly cyclical. And whichever direction you look, Indian cuisine is in renewal mode. Calibrated through the lens of nostalgia, it is celebrating regional cooking techniques, rewarding local ingredients, and firmly shining the spotlight on forgotten dishes that deserve their moment in the sun.

NORTH: Showcasing micro-cuisines

Delhi still carries the whiff of migration and kitchens that were rebuilt in the wake of Partition. The city’s dining map bears an imprint and over time, butter-laden gravies, tender meats, and the scent of charcoal came to define what the world calls ‘north Indian food’, often at the cost of Punjab’s legacy-driven micro-cuisines.

With the launch of restaurant Ikk Panjab that celebrates the state’s culinary heritage across cities like Delhi, Gurugram, and Chandigarh, founder Rajan Sethi seeks to redress that imbalance, spotlighting the under-represented, both in terms of

techniques and dishes: *sajji* (slow-roasted whole lamb or chicken with minimal spices), *aloo vadiyaan*, and *khatti masar dal*. “The menu is not merely a collection of dishes but an amalgam of journeys. The aata chicken has small-town origins in Kotkapura, a town near Malerkotla, while the lesser-known *kibti* chicken was prevalent on Patiala’s ceremonial tables,” shares Vernika Awal, food researcher and brand head of Ikk Panjab. “It is fond nostalgia, yes,” Sethi concurs. “But it is also about identity—a living, breathing cuisine that continues to build bridges every time it travels.”

Similarly, Loya at the iconic Taj Palace, New Delhi, revives ancient techniques that form the foundation of the North’s cooking—*dhungar* (smoking), *baghar* (tempering), and

dum (slow cooking). Here, dishes like Sepu Wadi, Chukh Paneer, and Gosht ki Lazeez Pasliyan shine a renewed light to everyday staples of the region.

EAST: Reinterpreting flavours

West Bengal’s foodscape is one of plenitude. It draws pride from the fact that it is among the few regions that truly adapted cuisines of its borderlands; the colonial cosmopolitanism of then Calcutta synergising with the agrarian rhythm of the Ganges delta.

In Kolkata, chefs and custodians continue to reinterpret that legacy. At 6 Ballygunge Place, Chef Sushanta Sengupta curates a menu drawn from historic Bengali cookbooks and Vaishnav literature, reviving traditional recipes like Pur Bhora Doi



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Banana blossom fritters (vazhaipoo vadai) at Royal Vega, Chennai; Kaduneem at Aragma, Pune; Reshma Mane's bharlela vanga—a modern take on a traditional dish.

Potol (stuffed pointed gourd) and *bhertas* (mashed vegetables and/or meat), celebrating a culinary heritage where simplicity is the highest form of sophistication. QP's (originally Kewpie's) used to channel then Calcutta's matriarchal kitchens where Rakhi Purnima Dasgupta once served thalis on earthenware plates and banana leaves, guiding guests through the six *rasas*—essential tastes of a Bengali meal. It continues to serve traditional dishes like Kosha Mangsho (slow-cooked mutton), Paneer Paturi (cottage cheese steamed in banana leaf), and Gondhoraj Chicken (prepared with local, fragrant *gondhoraj* lime).

Hotel Tarun Niketan in the city is one of many rustic eateries that started in the early 1900s to provide home-style Bengali meals, and still offers the day's catch, preserving a fragment of Bengal's gastronomic conscience.

SOUTH: Celebrating diversity

Think of South India, and you can immediately conjure up the aromas of lentils in sambar masala, pearl onions, and drumsticks. But the region's culinary legacy goes far deeper. Royal Vega at the ITC Grand Chola, Chennai, revives royal recipes through Ayurvedic principles, using traditional techniques. Their Arusuvai Virunthu menu, with dishes like Vazhaipoo Vadai (crispy

fritters made from banana blossoms), Mangai Pappu (lentils cooked with mango), and Thengai Sadam (coconut rice), captures the essence of traditional, regal South Indian kitchens in a modern setting.

Chef Shri Bala, a food anthropologist who curates immersive dining experiences across hotels, emphasises the return to ancient techniques—stone-braising meats, tempering with herbs and black pepper instead of red chillies, and sourcing ingredients true to their historical provenance.

Taking the flavours of the rest of the region to Hyderabad with Simply South is Chef Chalapathi Rao, who highlights the regional diversity of millets, local greens, breads (like *pathiri*), and wedding fare like *panasa pottu koora* (jackfruit skin dish). He adapts dishes from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu. "Tradition," he notes, "is well preserved through honest preparation, even if the presentation feels modern."

WEST: Highlighting regional fare

Away from the metros lies the core of Maharashtra's culinary extravagance. Chiplun, Ratnagiri, and Sawantwadi brim with local Malwani eateries, while the southern Sahyadris celebrate mutton from Satara to Kolhapur.

Reshma Mane brings Kolhapuri food into focus through her curated dining experiences in Mumbai, showcasing the subtlety beneath the spice with dishes like *dahi mutton*, *chicken kale sukkha*, and dumpling filled with *bharlela vanga*, a modern take on a traditional dish. Kolhapuri cuisine, she says, thrives on *terroir* and seasonal ingredients rather than the red-hot, oily stereotype.

At Aragma in Pune, founder Poornima Somayaji curates hyper-local ingredients like *karvand*, wood apple, and fresh turmeric shoots, delighting her diners with stories to bridge these ingredients. The restaurant uses foraged greens and introduces unique spice blends into lesser-known regional dishes. Their *kaduneem*-inspired creation—bitter neem leaf oil paired with *jowar* noodles, fennel-onion sauce, and drumstick (or prawns)—transforms a childhood dish into a refined dining experience.



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A CITY OF CONTRASTS

Soak in the energy of Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's multicultural capital, where heritage charm and modern spectacles thrive in impressive harmony

words by **Advaita Raut**

The Sultan Abdul Samad Building in Dataran Merdeka

🕒 07:00AM

Spiritual morning

📍 Batu Caves

Located on the northern fringe of the city, these millennia-old limestone caves are a striking force of nature. Home to a golden statue of Lord Murugan, it is advised to get here early to admire this ancient landscape as you ascend the flight of 272 multicoloured steps that lead to the temple.

🕒 09:00AM

Breakfast halt

📍 Brickfields

Kuala Lumpur's Indian enclave was once believed to be a brick manufacturing area. Today, it is a cultural hub; its streets are fragrant with fresh flowers and *pisang goreng* (banana fritters), a must-try at the Brickfields Pisang Goreng food stall. Refuel with masala *dosai* and filter coffee at MTR 1924, a long-standing fixture here.

🕒 10:30AM

Heritage walk

📍 Dataran Merdeka

The historic site where Malaysia declared its Independence in 1957, this square boasts iconic buildings that stand as testaments to the country's heritage. A towering flagpole marks the spot where the flag was first raised. Visit the nearby National Textile Museum.

🕒 12:00PM

Artisanal trove

📍 Central Market (Pasar Seni)

Before it became the cultural and shopping hub it is today, it began as a wet market in 1888. Now, it is a treasure trove of Malaysian handicrafts, with shops selling everything from batik wraparounds and rich traditional kites to tribal and native arts and souvenirs. Just outside is Kasturi Walk, where you can sample traditional Malay snacks.

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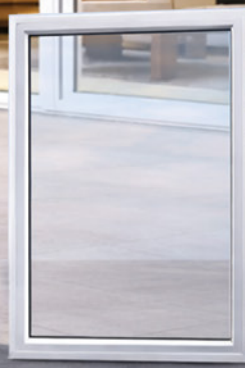
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STYLISH STAYS

- 1/ Park Hyatt Kuala Lumpur:** Nestled in the imposing Merdeka 118, this offers an elevated stay with enviable city views.
- 2/ Tian Jing Hotel:** This boutique property in Chinatown boasts 15 rooms that blend Chinese architecture and Malay elements.
- 3/ KLoé Hotel:** Located close to Pavilion KL, this urban retreat features 85 rooms, a living room stocked with books and art, and a swimming pool.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Street food stalls at Jalan Alor market near Bukit Bintang district; The Petronas Twin Towers; Pisang goreng is a traditional delicacy; A lantern-lit alley in Kwai Chai Hong.



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Kuala Lumpur from Delhi.

🕒 02:00PM
Backstreet nostalgia
📍 Kwai Chai Hong

Amid Kuala Lumpur's modern skyline lie hidden alleys like Kwai Chai Hong, or 'Little Demon Alley'. This restored, lantern-lit laneway in Chinatown features vivid shophouses, eye-catching murals depicting scenes from the 1960s, and indie cafés and bars.

🕒 04:00PM
Retail therapy
📍 Suria KLCC

Nestled at the foot of the gleaming Petronas Twin Towers, the city's premier shopping destination spans six storeys and features international designer labels like Prada, chic K-fashion brands like Mardi Mercredi, and Malaysian brands like Vincci. Book lovers should not miss Kinokuniya, which boasts a wide range of titles.

🕒 06:00PM
Skyline views
📍 Kuala Lumpur Tower

This skyscraper pierces the sky at 421m. The best sights are from its open-air Sky Deck (at 300m), which offers uninterrupted vistas of the Petronas Twin Towers, the shiny grandeur of the Merdeka 118, and, on clear days, the Titiwangsa mountain range.

🕒 08:30PM
Malay delights
📍 Bukit Bintang

From purchasing goods at Pavilion KL to indulging in rejuvenating spas at Berjaya Times Square—this area has something for everyone. Head to Changkat Bukit Bintang, a buzzing strip packed with neon-lit bars and pubs. For dinner, visit Capitol Cafe for *nasi lemak* or Syrian restaurant Damascus Bukit Bintang for delectable shawarma.

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8 dishes TO TRY IN CHENNAI



From fermented-batter fritters to a Burmese noodle dish, the city's food culture is ancient, layered, and satiating

words by **Insia Lacewala**

➔ KUZHI PANIYARAM

A popular breakfast dish in Chennai, it uses a fermented batter similar to that of idli or dosa and is poured into a dimpled iron pan. They turn out as small, bronzed spheres that are crisp where the metal touched them and pillowy within. This savoury snack, spiked or tempered with mustard seeds, curry leaves, and finely-chopped onion, is served alongside coconut chutney and a thin, pungent gunpowder oil.

Where to try it: Rahul Kuzhi Paniyaram, Pichu Pillai Lane, Vinayaka Nagar Colony, Mylapore




➔ THENGAJ POLI

Poli is festival food in Tamil households, made for Ugadi, Ganesh Chaturthi, and weddings. And the *thengai* version, stuffed with fresh-sweetened coconut and jaggery filling, is the most elemental of its kind. The outer layer is a paper-thin refined flour dough, stretched and filled by hand, then cooked on a *tawa* slicked with ghee, until golden and slightly blistered. Eaten warm, the *poli* releases its sweetness slowly, the coconut still faintly fragrant with the ghee pooling at the edges.

Where to try it: Karpagambal Hot Boli and Chats, Vinayaka Nagar Colony, Mylapore



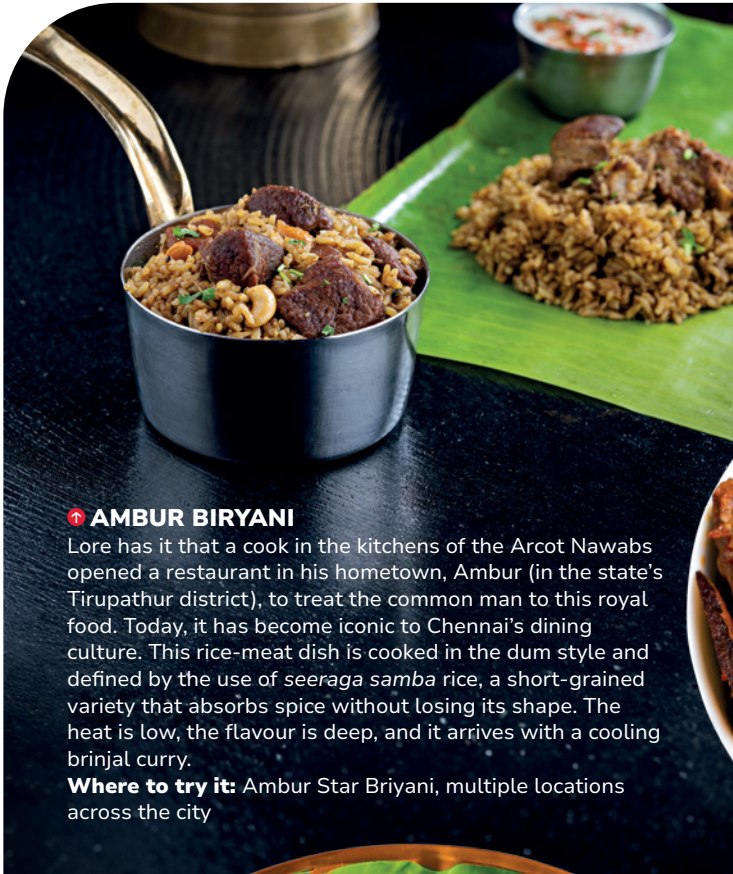
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↑ **AMBUR BIRYANI**

Lore has it that a cook in the kitchens of the Arcot Nawabs opened a restaurant in his hometown, Ambur (in the state's Tirupathur district), to treat the common man to this royal food. Today, it has become iconic to Chennai's dining culture. This rice-meat dish is cooked in the dum style and defined by the use of *seeraga samba* rice, a short-grained variety that absorbs spice without losing its shape. The heat is low, the flavour is deep, and it arrives with a cooling brinjal curry.

Where to try it: Ambur Star Biryani, multiple locations across the city

↓ **MUTTON CHUKKA**

Chukka means 'dry' in Tamil, and this dish earns the name. Mutton on the bone is cooked slowly in an iron *kadhai* with onions, tomatoes, and a medley of spices until every trace of moisture has gone and the masala has seized around the meat in a dense, darkened crust. The dish is said to have originated in Madurai and Chennai makes a version that stays close to the original.

Where to try it: Seematty, Ragupathi Nagar 8th Street, Nanganallur



← **LUNCH MEALS**

In Chennai, thalis are simply called 'meals', and across the city you will find restaurants serving hearty vegetarian lunch spreads. A typical meal features generous servings of rice accompanied with local vegetables, sambar, rasam, yoghurt, *appalam*, and a touch of sweetness, traditionally laid out on a banana leaf. Over time, menus have evolved to reflect the city's coastal bounty. Many places now offer seafood meals that showcase the day's fresh catch, with an array of prawn, crab, and fish preparations that highlight the region's flavours.

Where to try it: Southern Spice, Taj Coromandel, Nungambakkam

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➔ **ATHO**

This savoury treat is believed to have arrived in Chennai with the Burmese Tamil community that settled here, and it has never left. The dish—flat wheat noodles tossed with shredded cabbage, fried onion, crushed crackers, chilli, lime juice, and a savoury sauce—is technically a street snack but is nothing less than a full meal. Its signature texture is soft, crunchy, tangy, and oily all at once, in every forkful. You will not find it quite like this anywhere else in India.

Where to try it: Ibrahim Atho Shop, opposite Tea Topia shop (at the back of the General Post Office)

FILTER COFFEE

No meal in Chennai is complete without filter coffee. Brewed in a traditional steel *davara*-tumbler set, South Indian filter coffee is a double-decoction affair—strong chicory-blended coffee dripped through a perforated filter, then pulled through hot milk with a deftness that raises a fine foam. The ritual of the pour, tipping the liquid between tumbler and *davara* to aerate it, is as much the point as the coffee itself.



➔ **KOLA URUNDAI**

The origin of these deep-fried mutton balls, many believe, is in Thanjavur, where the Maratha dynasty (who ruled between the 17th and 19th centuries) left behind a culinary legacy documented in the archives of the Saraswathi Mahal Library. These balls are prepared by mixing minced mutton with fennel, dried chillies, a whisper of *kalpasi*, and a host of other spices, and tying them with banana fibre (the traditional way). The skill is in frying them so they remain crisp and intact.

Where to try it: Manjal, Kasthuri Estate, 3rd Street, Poes Garden



➔ **KEERAI VADAI**

The humble vada has been a part of Tamil foodways for more than a millennium. The *keerai vadai*, a variation of the traditional tidbit, is a popular evening snack in Chennai, where *urad dal* batter is mixed with fresh greens, like spinach or moringa leaves, and fried. It is best served hot with coconut chutney.

Where to try it: Mylai Karpagambal Mess, Vinayaka Nagar Colony, Mylapore



GETTING THERE

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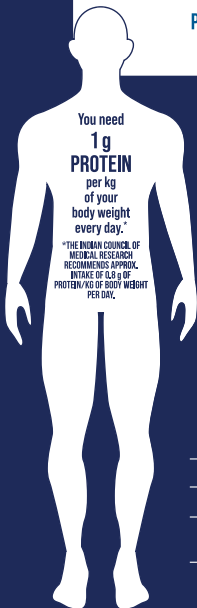
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SPOILT FOR CHOICE

Customised menus, home-style food or a meal at the mall—take your pick from many options

Travel can make food decisions a little hard—unless you are staying at Svelte Delhi, a member of Radisson Individuals, which offers guests a well-connected base in Saket. Since it is housed in Nexus Select CityWalk mall, it has many dining options to choose from but should you want a homely experience,

you can request for induction plates in the room, which also boasts a microwave oven and a refrigerator. The hotel also designs custom menus if you want to enjoy home-style cuisine, as you relax and watch something on the 55-inch TVs. You can also step outside to enjoy city views from the rooftop swimming pool.



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ABOUT TIME

Check out a fashion exhibit, a light show, and a horse race this month



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→ ↓ STYLE ON THE GO

Elevate your summer look with Charles & Keith's latest *Delfina* line that comes in vibrant colours ranging from midnight blue to tan, and sand to black. The signature detail of the line is a shiny lock buckle, which is inspired by dolphins.



→ TOMO KEI OPENS IN BENGALURU

Why: For a traditional Nikkei dining experience.

Where: Sheraton Grand Bengaluru Whitefield Hotel & Convention Center

Recommendations: Peruvian Pisco Toast, Chaufa Rice, Leche De Tigre Blend, Jalapeño Miso Cod, Signature Saltado



→ WATCH THIS

With limited-edition mechanical and automatic timepieces, the brand-new Rotoris hopes to build India's watch legacy. It has introduced five collections—*Auriqua*, *Monarch*, *Astoria*, *Arvion*, and *Manifesta*. Each features Swiss-level specifications.



↓ THE LANGUAGE OF DESIGN

Shantnu & Nikhil's latest collection, *Modern Ceremony*, reaffirms the *maison's* authority in ceremonial couture while articulating it for a contemporary audience. It features corseted constructions and sculpted drapes (for brides), and asymmetrical draped kurtas and statement belts (for grooms), among other eye-catching designs.





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↑ **KIMIKAI OPENS IN GURUGRAM**

Why: To taste a new chapter in Asia's culinary storytelling, with influences from Japan, China, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, and India. **Where:** One Horizon Centre **Recommendations:** Tomato / Salmon Carpaccio, Spicy Yellow Tail Gunkan, Portobello Nan Ban, Agedashi Tofu, Vegetable / Lamb Gyoza

↓ **WELLNESS AT HAND**

Step into a world of rejuvenation at Atmantan as it offers Ozone Therapy. Applications include Ozonated Water, Ozone steam bath, Breathing ozone through oil, Ear Insufflation, and more. The benefits are numerous: anti-ageing, healing of nervous system disorders, and healing of chronic kidney disorders, among others.



↑ **HOW YOU DOIN'?**

This one is for every *FRIENDS* fan. Swiss Beauty, in partnership with Warner Bros. Discovery Global Consumer Products, has brought forth this limited-edition make-up range, featuring moisturisers, make-up removing wipes, press-on nails, and more.



← **TO ITALY, WITH LOVE**

Designer Rajdeep Ranawat's latest collection Orvieto is an ode to an Italian village. The line captures the architectural grandeur of the Duomo di Orvieto and draws from the area's ceramic pottery tradition.



↑ **ALL THAT GLAM**

Protecting your eyes while maintaining elegance just got easier with Dolce & Gabbana Devotion's latest Spring / Summer 2026 collection in a wide range of designs and colours, including black, 'havana', transparent pink, and more. Available as both optical frames and as sunglasses.



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GROWTH STORY

Former Managing Director of Tata Elxsi, **S Devarajan** shares anecdotes and personal experiences, tracing the company's success



What prompted you to narrate the story of Tata Elxsi? How long has it been in the making?

This is a Tata company story that has never been told. It rose like a phoenix to become the technology powerhouse in the Tata group. And since I was part of that journey of making Tata Elxsi succeed, I decided to tell that story to the world. I was invited by Penguin Random House to write the story and the process took me about 15 months.

How did this book shape up?

This book is entirely conceived and written by me drawing from my personal experience in Tata Elxsi. I have also included anecdotes I



gathered from discussions with a few early founders. Being one of the first computer companies founded by an Indian in the

United States, it covers the origin of the company and its fantastic journey through the years.

What lessons can readers learn from Tata Elxsi in entrepreneurship, sales, marketing, strategy, and other areas of management?

Entrepreneurs, leaders, and aspiring young professionals looking to take their organisations to the next level should have a very clear vision and a purpose in mind. From there, focus on how to get there. Be genuinely passionate about what you are aiming for. Always chase your dream. Be a team player—run as a team, never solo. You will succeed.

What part of the journey do you think was the hardest?

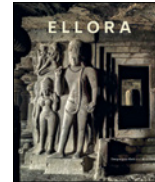
It has to be the starting point. One has a bunch of ideas which one then puts to work with the confidence that it will pay off and with faith in the team that it will succeed. Trusting oneself to do the right thing is as important as being humble and grounded. Let success touch your heart—you will achieve more.

Who are the authors you derive inspiration from? Do you have a favourite work of literature?

Currently I am reading history—more Indian than global. I enjoy reading William Dalrymple, Peter Frankopan, and Charles Allen. Reading [Yuval Noah] Harari is always awe-inspiring.

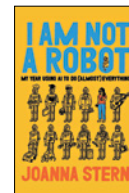
—As told to **Shrabasti A Mallik**

NEW ON THE SHELF



ELLORA (Deepanjana Klein and Arno Klein)

The book looks at the historic rock-cut temples and the influences they drew from each other and surrounding regions.
Mapin Publishing; ₹3,960



I AM NOT A ROBOT (Joanna Stern)

Informative, funny, and a tad concerning, this book is an account of the author's year-long experiments with AI.
*HarperCollins Publishers
₹2,752*



BENEATH MAGNOLIA SKIES (Mona Chettri and Prava Rai)

This endearing anthology offers a peek into the lives of women from Sikkim and Darjeeling Hills, capturing moments of solace and strength.
Zubaan Publishers; ₹695



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THE POWER OF RESTRAINT

Aparna Kaushik translates timeless elegance into modern calm, crafting a home of balance and understated refinement

There are spaces that impress, and then there are those that stay with you long after you leave. The work of Aparna Kaushik belongs firmly to the latter. Every line, volume, and transition carries her unmistakable signature, an artistry that whispers luxury through restraint, precision, and emotion. Guided by the timeless principles of proportion and symmetry, her designs draw from classical sensibilities while embracing a distinctly contemporary spirit.

Facades and interiors alike exude a sense of permanence and poise, crafted with a balance that feels both grand and intimately human.

True luxury lies in precision

For Kaushik, design is an act of orchestration of light, material, and emotion. From homes to private jets, her spaces read like compositions, where proportion, texture, and line carry intention. She believes that refinement is not measured in scale, but in harmony—in the dialogue between marble and shadow, where silence feels elevated.

Poise through proportion

Kaushik's work is defined by a rare sensitivity to balance, spaces where proportion becomes poetry. Her designs are guided by harmony, precision, and a





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT:
A spiral staircase made using intricate ironwork; The interiors of Gulfstream G700 were designed by Kaushik.

FACING PAGE
(top and bottom) Kaushik designs facades that exude a sense of permanence and poise; She is the founding principal and designer of her eponymous multi-disciplinary design firm.

“As a designer, I do not appease a certain trend or a certain culture, but that which is eternal in all of us.”

—Aparna Kaushik, architect and interior designer

deep respect for timeless order, yet they unfold with a contemporary lightness that feels effortless. Every line is intentional, every volume thoughtfully measured, resulting in environments that exude quiet monumentality.

Throughout her projects, Kaushik’s design sensibility reveals itself through balance. There is a measured cadence to how spaces connect, how textures shift from smooth to tactile, how natural light accentuates form. What makes her work extraordinary is not just its scale or finish, but its composure. She designs with a rare

sensitivity to how architecture feels as much as how it looks. Her approach transcends trends, instead celebrating a modern Indian luxury defined by harmony, timelessness, and calm. From grand facades that echo timeless rhythm to intimate interiors bathed in soft daylight, the home embodies equilibrium in its purest form. It is at once a monument to artistry and a sanctuary of peace—crafted not merely to be seen, but to be felt.

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HOOKED BY A FISH

While it demands discipline, attention, and stillness,
angling is more than just a sport. It is humbling
and almost meditative

words by **Jairaj Singh**

*Tirthan Valley
in Himachal
Pradesh is fed
by cold glacial
waters that
sustain wild trout*



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A fly rod and reel are just the means to cast, hold the line, and stay connected to the river

TIRTHAN TRAVEL GUIDE

Season: Trout angling is open from 1st April to 31st October

Best time to visit: April-June and Sep-Oct are the best months

Access: Visitors typically approach the Larji-Aut-Banjar side

Licence: A fishing licence, issued by the Department of Fisheries Himachal Pradesh, is mandatory. Many local stays can arrange it

Method: Trout fishing is by rod and line only, without nets or traps

Stay options: Raju's Cottage, Gone Fishing, Himalayan Trout House

It began with a conversation, many moons ago. My father sat me down one evening and told me that if I was truly interested in catching fish, I would first have to learn to read the river. Read the river?

Well, not the way one reads a book or a map, but the way you read silence.

Up until then, I had considered fishing or angling—as many do—to be a hobby that tilted heavily on luck. You cast your line in anticipation that something would bite. At best, it was a test of patience; at worst, it was an excuse to spend time outdoors, by the river.

But my father knew better. Fishing, he said, was not about catching fish at all. It was about understanding the water—the riffles, the runs, the eddies, and the tail out—to get a sense of how the river flows, where it slows, and, most importantly, where

the fish hide. It was about paying attention. He then walked over to his bookshelf and pulled out a slim volume on river reading.

Soon after, we made our way to Tirthan Valley in Himachal Pradesh, on the edge of the Great Himalayan National Park. I had been coming here since I was an infant, but this was the first time I was visiting not as a fishing enthusiast but as a student of water.

The Tirthan river, fed by glacial melt and shaded by ancient pine, oak, cedar, and fir, was a living, breathing thing. Cold, clear, fast-moving—it twisted its way down the mountain like a silver ribbon, broken occasionally by boulders and eddies. It is the kind of river where wild brown and rainbow trout, introduced by the British over a hundred years ago, still rise.

At home, we had always

marked the seasons by when the fishing equipment came out, packed with gear that looked as though it belonged in another era. Spools of line, cork-handled rods, tins of flies and spinners. There were photographs—my brother, cousins, and I crouched on mossy rocks, our fathers in the background, staring deep into the water.

Anglers, I have found, are keepers of oral tradition. Around the fire in the evenings, they trade stories with the same reverence others reserve for myths and memories. The fish always get larger, the casts more dexterous, and the rivers more wild, rapid, and free.

By early morning, we would be on the road. The drive to Tirthan Valley from Delhi is long—12 hours if you take breaks. I remember dozing in the back seat, my father humming songs, my mother whispering travel





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prayers as we wound up into the hills. By dusk we would arrive in Larji, where the Sainj, Tirthan, and Beas rivers meet. The air would be cooler, the city noise long behind us, replaced by the sound of running water.

The knacker journey would soon be forgotten. Only to be replaced by hours of standing under the sun and clouds, feeling the cool mountain breeze coursing its way through the valley, lost in the music of the river. It is nothing short of meditative.

But more than that, it is humbling. As we grew up, we learned to fish better and to watch the water for signs. You cast upstream, mend your line to avoid drag, and hope the fly falls on the water naturally, like an insect

would. Most of the time, it does not. The trout ignores you. Or worse, inspects your fly and rejects it.

In doing so, it gives you something rare in today's world: an encounter with mystery. Because despite your knowledge, gear, and perfect cast, the fish may not bite. There is no hack. Only intuition. And surrender.

One of the lesser-known truths about river fishing is that it is deeply ecological. Trout are sensitive creatures. They demand cold, oxygen-rich water, a balanced aquatic ecosystem, and minimal human interference. That the Tirthan river still has them is no small miracle, although with ad hoc construction and tourists dumping garbage, one wonders for how long.

Fishing here is about noticing where the river deepens and where the current slows into gentler seams. It is about the quiet thrill of spotting a rise, the grace of a well-timed cast, and the split-second when line, light, and life align.

Even now, when people ask me what draws me to the river, I hesitate. Because how do you explain a love that is made of silences? Or the strange way in which the river, with all its movement, teaches you to be still?

Fishing is not an escape. It feels like a return. To the rhythms of water, the discipline of slowness. To the feeling that beneath the surface, something wild still moves, more ancient than all of us.

LEFT AND RIGHT
The author has learnt over time that while waiting on a fish can be frustrating, it is richly rewarding; Brown trout are now among the region's most prized cold-water game fish.



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THE LANGUAGE

OF *Souvenirs*



Often, what we carry back from a trip is not a mere object. It is an emotion

words by
Shalaka Kulkarni

Every journey asks for a return gift, even if the road never says it out loud. A few decades ago, my father travelled frequently for conferences during his PhD days, and I measured his trips by what he brought back—a shell from a coast or a keychain—something that proved he had been somewhere and missed me.

The word *souvenir* itself carries this instinct within it. Coming from the French word for remembrance, it originates from the Latin *subvenire* (to come to mind).

My grandfather's last gift to me was a collection of *vibhuti* (sacred ash) from all his pilgrimages. In many Indian homes, this act persists: a relative returning with *prasad*, *kadas*, and threads wrapped in devotion, tying faith to the wrist and memory to the moment. Long before souvenirs were lined up in shops, pilgrims carried back water from the Ganga, soil from sacred lands, pressed flowers from temple courtyards—small proofs of presence that said 'I was here', and that is something that has stayed with me.

Then travel changed, and with it, memory. Souvenirs became objects you could buy—postcards, bookmarks, keychains, fridge magnets, handicrafts,

'Souvenir' comes from the French word, meaning remembrance



LEFT AND RIGHT

Today, no trip is complete without bringing back some kind of keepsake; Beaded bangles from Kenya.



The Japanese culture of *omiyage* is about bringing back the right thing.

miniature monuments, local textiles, sealed packets of spices, and even airport chocolates that taste like departure lounges. Duty-free is what we ask for now.

Tourist streets began to mirror each other across continents, lined with shops that sell memory in predictable forms. 'I heart (city name)' is a classic that started with New York.

Today, souvenir shopping is built into the economics of travel. Travellers often spend a significant portion

of their budget on retail, and those last-minute moments of spending the remaining local currency have almost become a ritual.

This behaviour has also been absorbed by global brands in interesting ways. Like Starbucks and Hard Rock Cafe have built collectible ecosystems around place-based identity, with city-specific merchandise that travellers actively seek out and display. And yet, some cultures refuse to let keepsakes become generic.

Hunting for vintage leather bags in Kyoto recently, I realised how much Japan really spoils you. The Japanese culture of *omiyage* is about bringing back the right thing. Each region offers something hyper-local, often seasonal, and always considered. Beyond *omiyage*, there is an entire ecosystem of personalisation. You can walk into a small workshop and leave with a ring engraved within minutes, a stamp carved with your name, a charm that feels strangely specific to you. It does



LEFT AND RIGHT

The author bought this hat and postcard in Texas, the US; She purchased this quirky poster from Vietnam.

not feel mass-produced, even when it is part of a larger system. It feels like the place has acknowledged you.

Elsewhere, the language changes, but the intent remains. In Morocco, carpets are sold with stories woven into every thread. In Italy, ceramics carry patterns that outlive generations. In Southeast Asia, textiles are a part of the geography you can wear. In Kenya, bead work became a symbol of identity in a post-colonial world. In India, handicraft co-operatives revived traditions that had nearly disappeared.

Souvenirs, at their best, are commas. Somewhere between commerce and culture lies the deeply personal act

of collecting and holding on to. Some people collect stamps, building entire worlds through philately. Other private archives consist of coins, boarding passes, books, stamps or even hotel room cards tucked into diaries.

Often, what we carry back is a feeling, a conversation, a fleeting connection. Pop culture has always understood this instinct, whether it is Selena Gomez singing about a moment you can keep or Avril Lavigne asking if she can keep someone as a souvenir—the idea remains the same.

For me, that archive looks slightly different. I collect heart-shaped objects digitally. I have built a photo museum of "spotting hearts everywhere I go". A recent favourite is a heart-shaped

guitar pick, which brings me to the tension we now live with.

We have never been better at capturing memories but I wonder if we are worse at holding on to them. There was a time when photo albums were curated, revisited, and lived with. Today, our lives sit in endless cloud storage, a bottomless pit of thousands of burst photos, and only a few make it to Instagram. Memory has become abundant and in that abundance, strangely disposable.

Souvenirs try to resist that. Especially when they are handed from one person to another. These objects gather dust, they fade, they age but they insist on presence.

In an era where your phone backs up every mundane Tuesday and the internet remembers the world for you, choosing to carry something across oceans becomes an act of love and perhaps, real analogue rebellion.






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HEALING THE RESTLESS MIND

The principles of yoga hold the key to becoming resilient, calm, and stress resistant

words by **Dr Varun Veer**

Just as breath never stops from birth until death, the mind never stops either. Even during sleep, it continues to work. Restlessness is the very nature of the mind.

In the present age, it is not just the human body that has grown weak, the mind has weakened too. There is an old saying that captures this perfectly: in earlier times, houses were made of mud and unbaked clay, but the people were strong and resilient. Today, the houses are built of concrete and steel, but the people have become fragile.

Why are we so stressed?

The stress that has woven itself into our daily existence is largely a consequence of our choices and circumstances. The hunger for rapid achievement and the desire to gain everything in the shortest possible time has left us exhausted. Competition has isolated us; we have grown so accustomed to striving alone that even living together under one roof begins to feel like a burden. To free the body, mind, and emotions from stress, it is essential to make the principles of yoga an integral part of daily living.

A mind more restless than ever before

Compared to previous generations, today's mind is far more helpless. The primary reasons for this are a lack of patience, an absence of forgiveness, and an excess of ego. In earlier times, people lived close to the land. They consumed pure water, breathed fresh air, and ate grains, fruits, and vegetables grown in clean soil. Life held peace. There was no frantic race to acquire more than what was

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Dr Varun Veer

With a Master's degree and a Doctorate in Yoga, Dr Veer has over three decades of experience in studying, teaching, and sharing yogic science globally. The founder of Life yoga in Delhi, he has served as a governing body member of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and is associated with Pure Yoga International, Hong Kong.



needed. There was no hurry in growing crops, in cooking food or in eating.

Today, everything is instant. Crops are laced with chemicals to grow faster and in greater quantity. Food is cooked and eaten quickly, because no one has time. In the relentless pursuit of achievement, physical and mental illnesses take root.

Practise makes perfect
Asanas (posture)

The body holds a great deal of stress, and movement is one of the most direct ways to release it. The seated spinal twist—taking both hands first to the right and behind you, then to the left, holding for one minute—can

be practised even on a chair. A standing version is equally accessible—feet about a foot apart, arms extended forward, then swung to the right and behind, then to the left. The same twist can also be performed lying down. *Surya namaskar*, when practised slowly with deep, long breaths, also gently calms the mind rather than stimulating it. *Kampan kriya* is done sitting in *sukhasana* with both arms raised upward and shaken gently, creating a vibration along the spine that helps release negative emotions.

Pranayama (breathwork)

The breath is perhaps the most direct bridge between

the body and the mind, and working with it, intentionally, can produce immediate results. In *Pranojas kriya* you breathe in and hold your breath for 30 seconds, then breathe out and keep your breath out for 20 seconds; this full cycle is done three times. With this, we indirectly attempt to still the mind, and through practice, the mind does become still.

Bhastrika pranayama is more vigorous: the breath is drawn in and released outward at a rapid pace for one minute, followed by one minute of quiet stillness as the breath slows and settles, repeated three times. This practice instantly dispels mental disturbances and

The author corrects the posture of a practitioner, and says that movement is one of the most direct ways to release stress held in the body



DID YOU KNOW?

Practising *Manasik Tapasya* (mental austerity) helps to dispel restlessness and stress from the mind. This is how you can do it:

- Try and be truthful
- Think kind thoughts
- Restrain your mental impulses
- Do not lean towards fraud and deceit, and try to keep your conduct above board

stress. Practitioners often find that the body feels as though it no longer craves breath, and the mind feels as though it no longer craves thoughts. Mental chatter quiets immediately.

Kumbhaka pranayama, which involves breath retention alongside deep inhalation and exhalation, is also highly beneficial.

Dharana (concentration)

Whenever stress arises, the mind must be redirected, and *Trataka kriya* is exceptionally effective. Through *Trataka* (the gaze), the mind is anchored to a single point so that it cannot wander. Practising this for even a few minutes brings steadiness and calm. Chanting the sound of *Om* works differently but with equal potency—

while chanting, one should consciously feel the vibration it creates in the spine and the brain. The resonance of *Om* dispels negative emotions from the mind.

The profound power of emotional mastery

A disciplined mind holds on to necessary thoughts and releases unnecessary ones. An immediate reaction to every action reveals a lack of patience and that is the signal that your mind needs to be steadied. Through patience and the spirit of forgiveness, you can strengthen your inner resolve and willpower.

A measure of your mental resilience

While there is no quantifiable measure, the principles

of yoga offer a deeply personal way to gauge it. Notice how quickly you react to a situation (rather than responding with patience), observe how long your mind can hold steady during *Trataka* or how naturally your breath settles after you practise *Bhastrika pranayama*.

These are not numbers on a scale but are honest reflections of where your mind stands. The less you are rattled by the circumstances around you—whether in your food, the air, your relationships or your thoughts—and the more you can return to stillness through practice, the stronger your inner resilience has grown. In this tradition, resilience is not measured. It is lived.

TOP AND BOTTOM

Breathwork, when done with intention, is most beneficial for the mind and body; The Lifyogya centre in Delhi.

SUMMER EDIT

Beauty blogger **Shalini Kutti** decodes the make-up and skincare essentials that get her through the hotter months

● **My go-to skincare products for the Indian summer**



Lightweight watery deo: I like Necessary Amber Wood Natural (roll-on) Deodorant

A good SPF that does not pill under make-up: d'Alba White Truffle Waterfull Essence Sunscreen SPF 50+ is really good



Lightweight multipurpose spray: d'you inbalance Soothing Milky Tonic helps hydrate the skin



Shalini Kutti
A beauty creator, Shalini has a robust community on social media where she shares her make-up finds and simple tips.

A gel-type moisturiser: Physiogel Hypoallergenic Daily Moisture Therapy is good for barrier health, is super lightweight, and acts like a sleeping mask

● **Cool off**
If my skin is severely sensitive (due to any sort of inflammation), I use fresh aloe vera from the plant—it instantly calms my skin.



Aloe vera and cucumber: Shutterstock; Shalini Kutti; Self; Rest: images courtesy respective brands

● **Beauty products that I switch to in the heat**



A fixing spray to keep make-up from budging. **L'Oréal Paris Infallible 3-second Transfer-Proof Setting Mist** is awesome for its price point and efficacy



A loose setting powder becomes really important for keeping make-up in place. Of late, I have been loving the **By Terry Hyaluronic Pressed Hydra-Powder**

● **My summer skincare routine**

A mist, hydrating serum, moisturiser, SPF, and lip balm—I tend to keep things simple and straightforward

Sunscreen: Yay or nay

If you are using actives regularly or laying about in the sun, then I think sunscreen becomes super important. Indoors, I use **SPF 30 (Episoft AC)**



Keeping my skin moisturised inside out

I usually include a lot more hydrating foods like buttermilk, coconut water, and even cucumber in my diet

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p 99 ↑

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

p 110 ↑

THE ONE-STOP APP

I have been heavy testing Air India's iOS 26 app recently and it performs on many parameters

words by **Riaan Jacob George**

As an extremely frequent flyer, who clocks almost 20 flights a month, an airline's phone app is probably the most important touchpoint of my experience with the airline. In 2026, an airline's app is not merely there to help you book tickets on your phone, it summarises the entire flight experience from start to finish—booking, check-in, boarding pass, live flight status, real time notifications, and loyalty programme engagement, when required.

After having multiple international airline apps on my smartphone, I can, without exaggeration, say that Air India's app is really well designed and optimised for all the above parameters. No surprise, then, that the home-grown app was featured on Apple App Store's Design showcase, a couple of months ago.

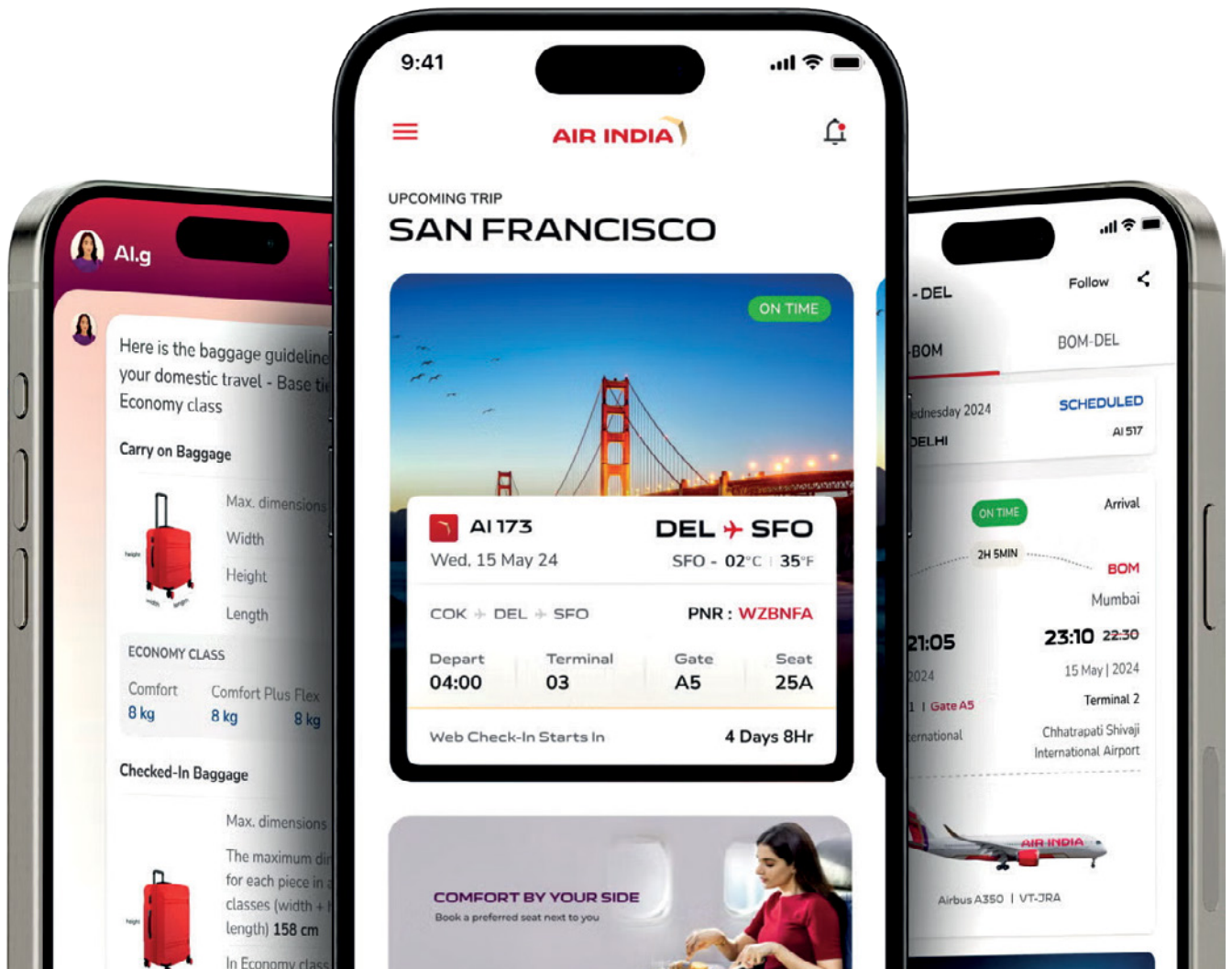
Design forward

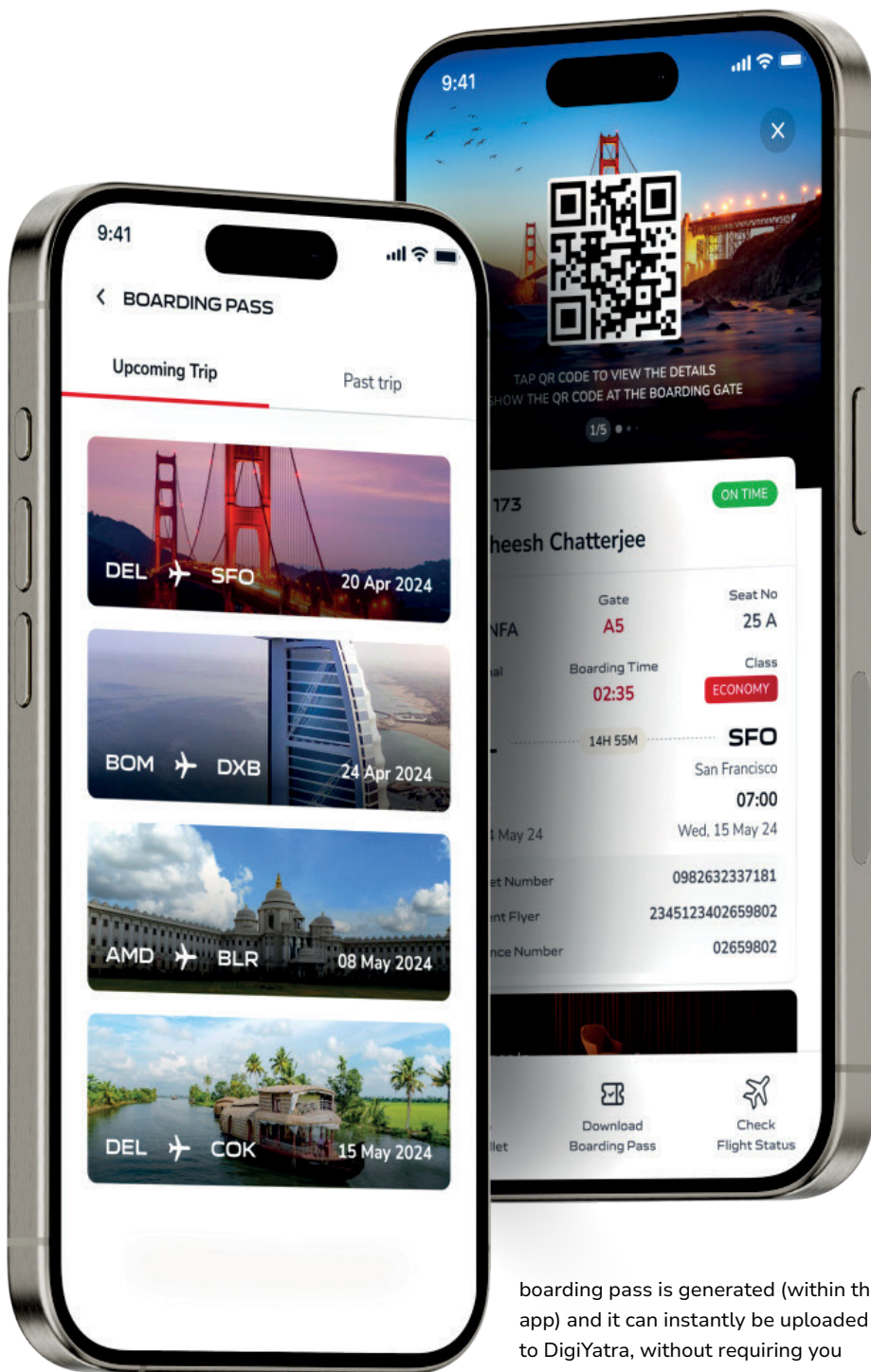
Throughout my monthly frequent travels, I use the Air India app heavily. For starters, the overall design of the

user interface gives it a lifestyle angle—almost making it look like one is scrolling through a travel magazine app. I use the app on my iPhone so, Apple's iOS 26 shines through with the Liquid Glass on the refreshed Home Screen, making it easy to scroll between the different functions with that signature graphic feedback of the Liquid Glass.

Ease of navigation

Booking a flight is an absolute breeze, with the app showing multiple classes, promo codes, payment options in not





more than a couple of simple steps, significantly simplifying the booking experience. The standout feature on this app, for me, would be the direct compatibility with DigiYatra. Once you check in for your flight on the app, the

boarding pass is generated (within the app) and it can instantly be uploaded to DigiYatra, without requiring you to screenshot it, exit the airline app and re-upload it on DigiYatra. A game changer! Saving your boarding pass to Apple Wallet is also just one button away. The Flight Status button, which comes with your virtual boarding pass, is also impressive, giving real-time updates of aircraft type and registration, previous flight details and live status

like taxiing, boarding, inflight, etc. I definitely recommend to all those reading this review to use the DigiYatra compatibility feature and the Flight Status button more frequently, as they are often overlooked. Turn on your live notifications and have all your flight updates seamlessly delivered to the lock screen of your phone.

Loyalty tracker

Being a Maharaja Club Platinum member, I need to have all my loyalty programme information under one tab. Within the app, I do navigate my Maharaja Club activity statement, tier points, upgrade vouchers, and other benefits associated with the programme.

If you are a frequent flyer and have multiple upcoming Air India flights, I would also recommend using the My Trips tab, where, with your PNR, you can add your upcoming trips and make modifications and choose your preferences, all within the tab.

Packed with seamless and extremely user-friendly features, the Air India app is simple, practical, and highly recommended.

TAKE A LOOK

A quick mention for the Explore India tab on the home page of the app, powered by Apple Intelligence, featuring multiple Indian destinations and recommendations on their must-see highlights.

MAKEOVER, MAHARAJA STYLE

The eagerly-awaited retrofitted B787-8 aircraft is back after a complete nose-to-tail cabin refresh, the first of many to follow

words by **Geetika Sasan Bhandari**



Close on the heels of unveiling its first made-for-Air India Boeing 787-9 in January this year, Air India has just showcased its first retrofitted B787-8, which is back from Boeing's Modification Center at Victorville, California, USA. This is the first of the 26 widebody aircraft from the B787-8 fleet, which will undergo a complete nose-to-tail cabin refresh, with the entire process expected to finish by end-2027.

Step inside and you will find it hard to believe that this is an 11-year-old aircraft. The transformation has converted the twin-class layout to a modern three-class configuration with brand new seats and a world-class IFE system, powered by QLED HDR touchscreens.

Business Class now offers 20 private suites in a 1-2-1 layout with sliding doors, a 42-inch pitch, and a fully-flat 79-inch bed. Premium Economy has 25 seats in a 2-3-2 layout with a 7-inch recline and a 6-way headrest plus calf

and leg rests. Economy has also got a big bump up in look and feel with 205 ergonomically-optimised seats in a 3-3-3 configuration.

New carpets and curtains, overhead bin panels, and refurbished laminates are some of the visible and tangible touches that tie in to offer a comprehensive experience. Mood lighting in the alleys that can be adjusted to suit circadian rhythms and multiple window settings—all help to elevate the flying experience.

The galleys have also been overhauled with new ovens and chillers, aimed at enhancing the reimagined food and beverage menus. All the eight lavatories on board have been taken out and completely modified—with even their laminates undergoing a refurbishment—before being reinstalled by Boeing.

Apart from the interiors and the livery, new components have been added—where needed—to bring the aircraft health to a good standard. The VT-ANT is now as good as new!

IN NUMBERS

The refurbishment took **12,825** man hours over **45** days using

475
metres of fabric for new seats across cabins

167
metres of synthetic leather

169
metres of carpet

646
litres of paint





The new changes make it easier for travellers to gain elite status

A RESET THAT WORKS

Air India's new Maharaja Club changes are solid steps in the right direction

words by **Aly Hajiani**

For the longest time, airline loyalty points programmes either felt too complicated or just not worth the effort. But the new update rolled out by Air India for Maharaja Club members actually makes points usable, and that is the biggest win for travellers.

The most exciting point is regarding domestic redemptions. You can now fly

routes like Mumbai to Goa for just 3,000 points. That is crazy value. It means that instead of hoarding points forever for one big trip, fliers can actually start using them regularly. This makes the whole idea of earning miles way more practical for everyday travel.

Even internationally, there are some really strong sweet spots. Destinations like Bali and Mauritius,

which are usually expensive routes, are now around 12,000 points. These are destinations people actually want to go to, and making them this accessible will change how people look at planning trips with points.

Then comes the big one—the US routes. Air India is already one of the most convenient ways to fly direct from India to the US, and pricing these



TOP AND BOTTOM
The Maharaja Lounge offers a premium experience; Maharaja Club members stand to gain a host of additional benefits.



flights at around 40,000 points is a big deal. When you factor in non-stop convenience and time saved, this is easily one of the most valuable updates for travellers.

Another underrated but important change is how much easier it is to hit elite tiers like Gold and Platinum. Earlier, it felt like a grind; now, it is far more achievable. And that matters because status is where the real benefits kick in, as it includes upgrades, priority services, access to The Maharaja Lounge, and a smoother overall experience.

At the same time, Air India, as an airline, is clearly trying to step up. One can see improvements across the board,

especially with their premium lounges in cities like Delhi and Bengaluru. These lounges now actually feel premium and are at par with global standards, which adds a lot to the overall experience, if you travel frequently.

What I like most is that the changes actually match how people travel today. More flexibility, more practical redemptions, and real value instead of just theoretical benefits. Overall, this is not just a small update. It is a proper reset in how Air India is thinking about loyalty. If they continue building on this, Maharaja Club could genuinely become one of the most rewarding programmes for Indian travellers.

FASTER PROGRESSION THROUGH MEMBERSHIP TIERS

PLATINUM TIER:

Now requires **60 flights** (previously 90) including a minimum of **12 Air India Flights**

GOLD TIER:

Now requires **45 flights** (previously 60) including a minimum of **8 Air India Flights**

SILVER TIER: Now requires **20 flights** (previously 30) including a minimum of **4 Air India Flights**

GREATER FLEXIBILITY ON AWARD FLIGHTS

Platinum members can cancel or reschedule free of charge up to **2 hours before departure**

Gold members can do so up to **7 days before departure**

Silver members can do so up to **30 days before departure**

OUR WINGS

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

Airbus A319



05

Boeing 777-300ER



19

Airbus A320neo



94

**Boeing 787-9
Dreamliner**



08

Airbus A320ceo



04

**Boeing 787-8
Dreamliner**



26

Airbus A321ceo



13

Airbus A321neo



10

Airbus A350-900

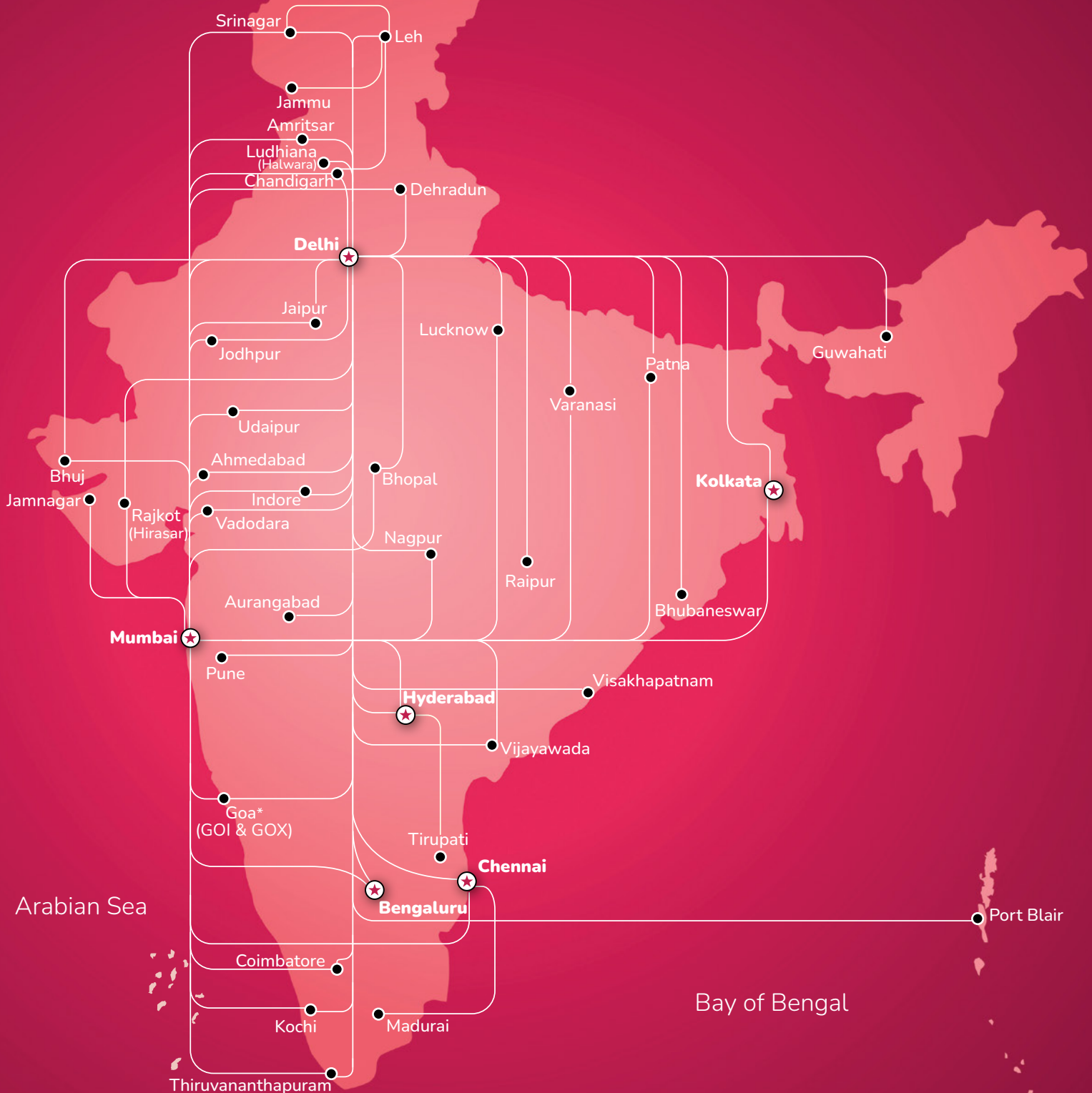
06

**FLEET
STRENGTH
185**



*Total number as on 7th April 2026;
This fleet count is exclusive of Air India Express
(Air India Group's low-cost carrier)

DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



*Mumbai-Goa is operational via GOI; Delhi-Goa is operational via GOI and GOX

Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only

This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India

Route map as on 9th April 2026

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Air India flies non-stop to 42 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
<u>London</u>			
Gatwick (LGW)	←.....→	ATQ	AMD
Heathrow (LHR)	←.....→	DEL	BOM BLR

North America



Chicago (ORD)	←.....→	DEL	
Newark (EWR)	←.....→	DEL	BOM
New York (JFK)	←.....→	DEL	BOM
San Francisco (SFO)	←.....→	DEL	
Toronto (YYZ)	←.....→	DEL	
Vancouver (YVR)	←.....→	DEL	

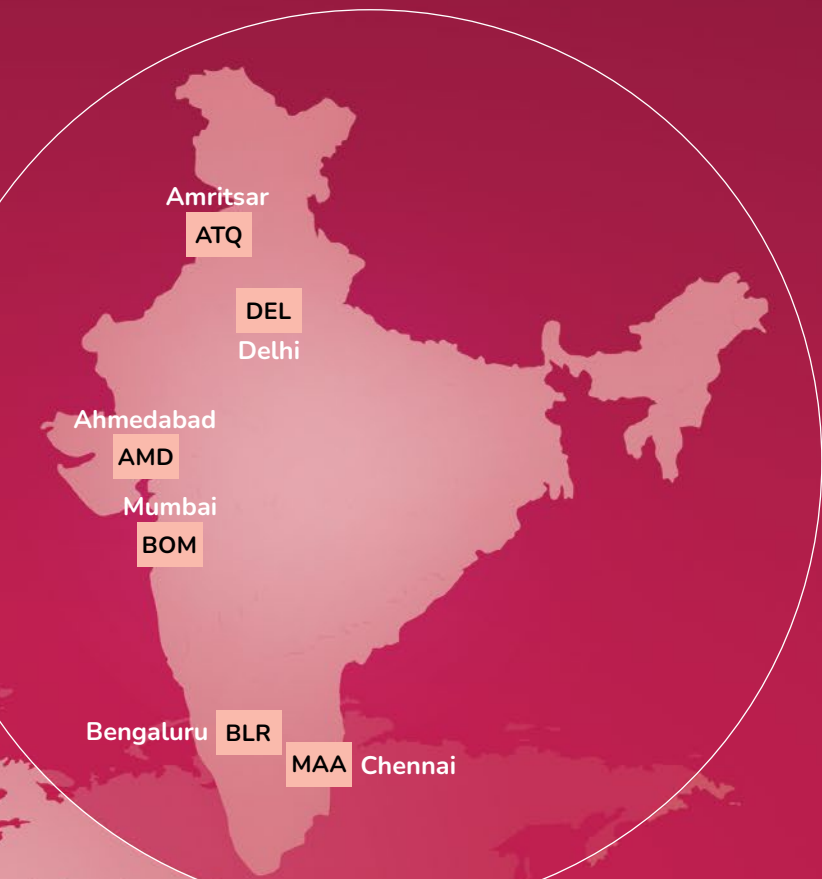
Middle East



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 105 to see domestic route connectivity via Air India Express.

Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only
 This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India
 Route map as on 9th April 2026
 *Flights to Tel Aviv are currently suspended



 **Far East**

- Hong Kong (HKG) <-----> DEL
- Seoul (ICN) <-----> DEL
- Shanghai (PVG) <-----> DEL
- Tokyo (HND) <-----> DEL

 **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

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ABOARD AIX

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

**Airbus A321neo**
04

**Airbus A320**
23

**Boeing 737 NG**
26

**Boeing 737 Max**
52

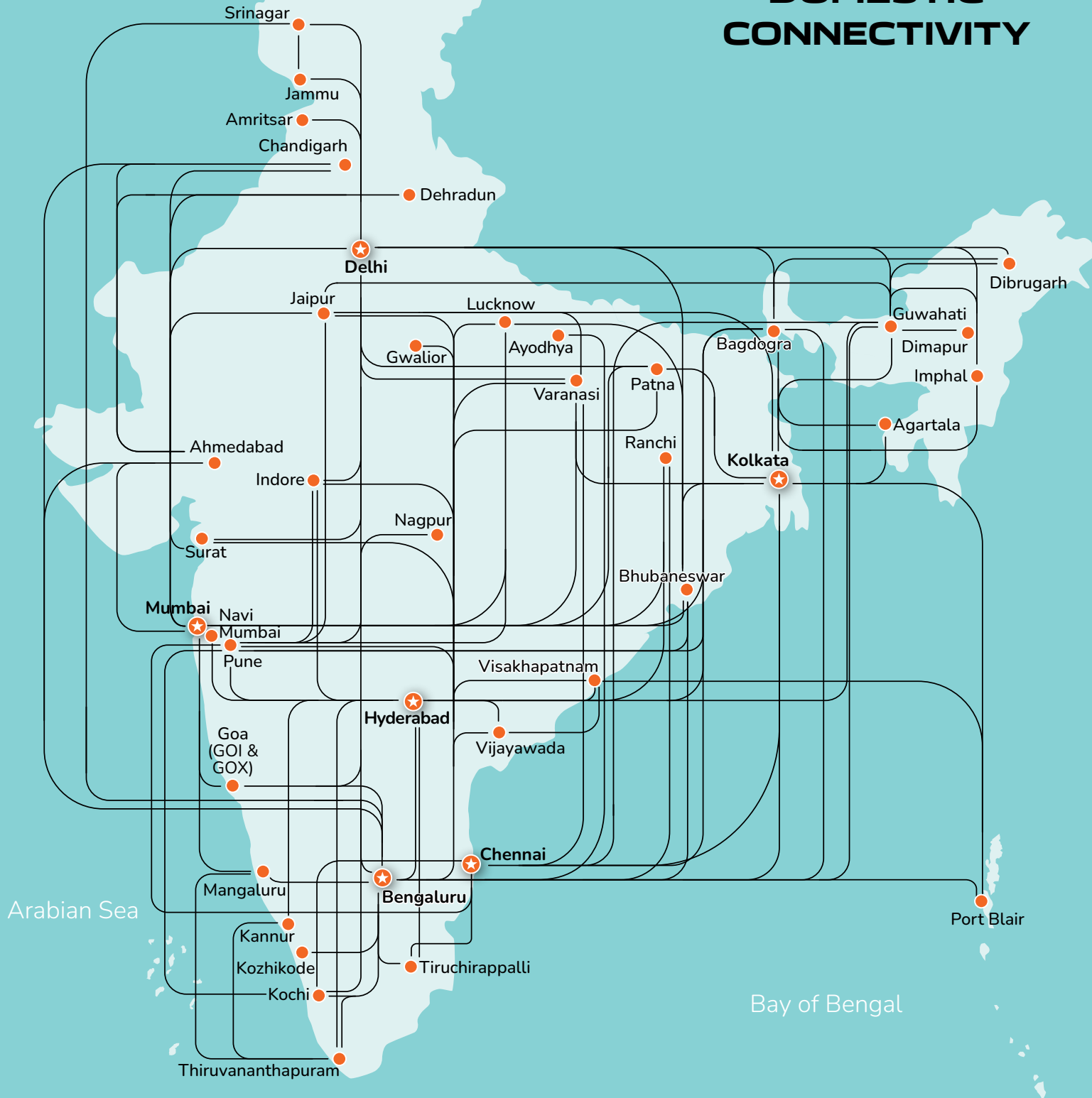
**FLEET
STRENGTH**
105



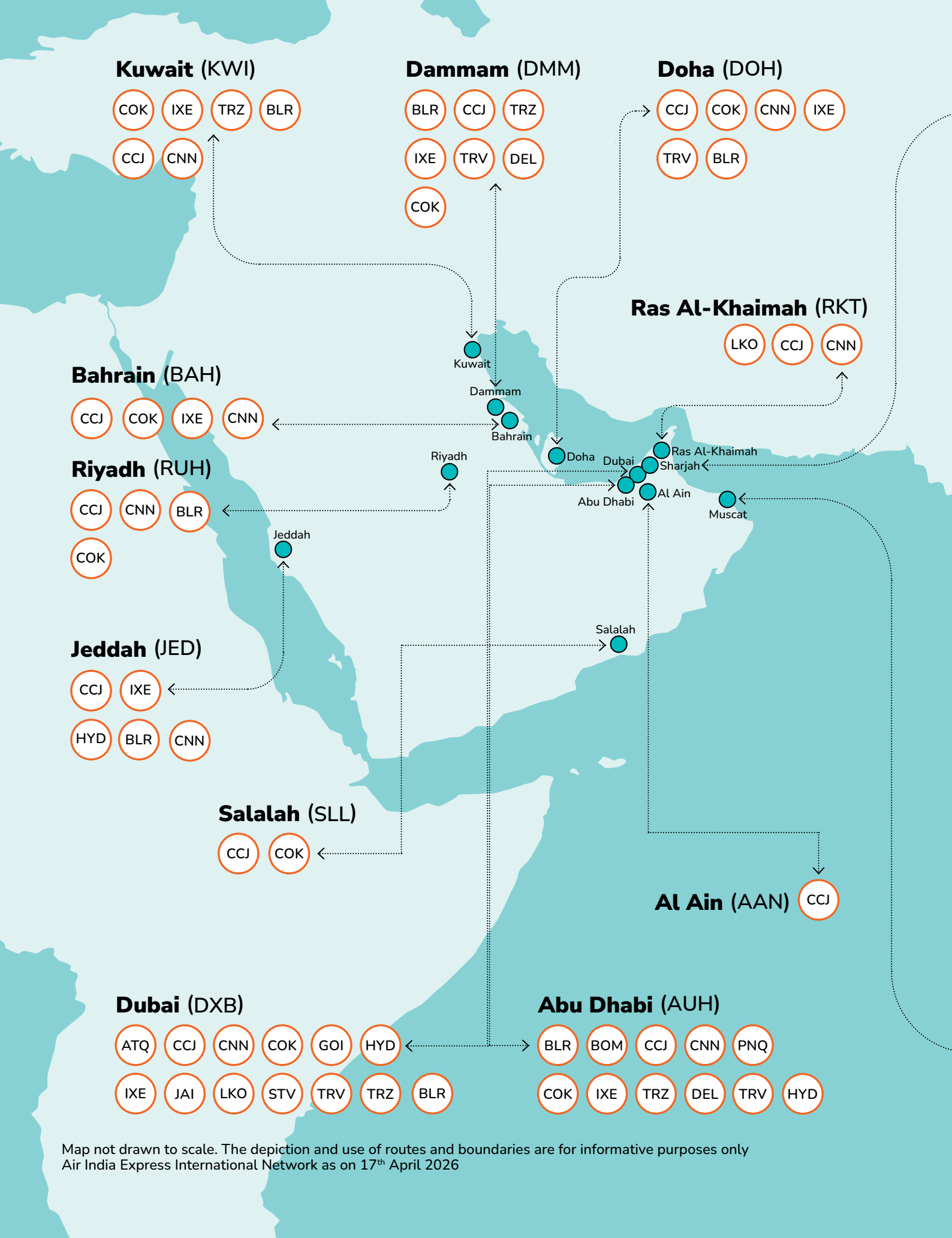
*Total number as on 17th April 2026

AIR INDIA express

DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



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- COK
- IXE
- TRZ
- BLR
- CCJ
- CNN

Dammam (DMM)

- BLR
- CCJ
- TRZ
- IXE
- TRV
- DEL
- COK

Doha (DOH)

- CCJ
- COK
- CNN
- IXE
- TRV
- BLR

Ras Al-Khaimah (RKT)

- LKO
- CCJ
- CNN

Bahrain (BAH)

- CCJ
- COK
- IXE
- CNN

Riyadh (RUH)

- CCJ
- CNN
- BLR
- COK

Jeddah (JED)

- CCJ
- IXE
- HYD
- BLR
- CNN

Salalah (SLL)

- CCJ
- COK

Dubai (DXB)

- ATQ
- CCJ
- CNN
- COK
- GOI
- HYD
- IXE
- JAI
- LKO
- STV
- TRV
- TRZ
- BLR

Abu Dhabi (AUH)

- BLR
- BOM
- CCJ
- CNN
- PNQ
- COK
- IXE
- TRZ
- DEL
- TRV
- HYD

Al Ain (AAN)

- CCJ

Map not drawn to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only
 Air India Express International Network as on 17th April 2026

AIR INDIA express

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

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- ATQ BOM CCJ CNN
- COK DEL IDR VNS
- TRV TRZ VGA

Kathmandu (KTM)

- BLR

Bangkok (BKK)

- PNQ VNS BLR

Phuket (HKT)

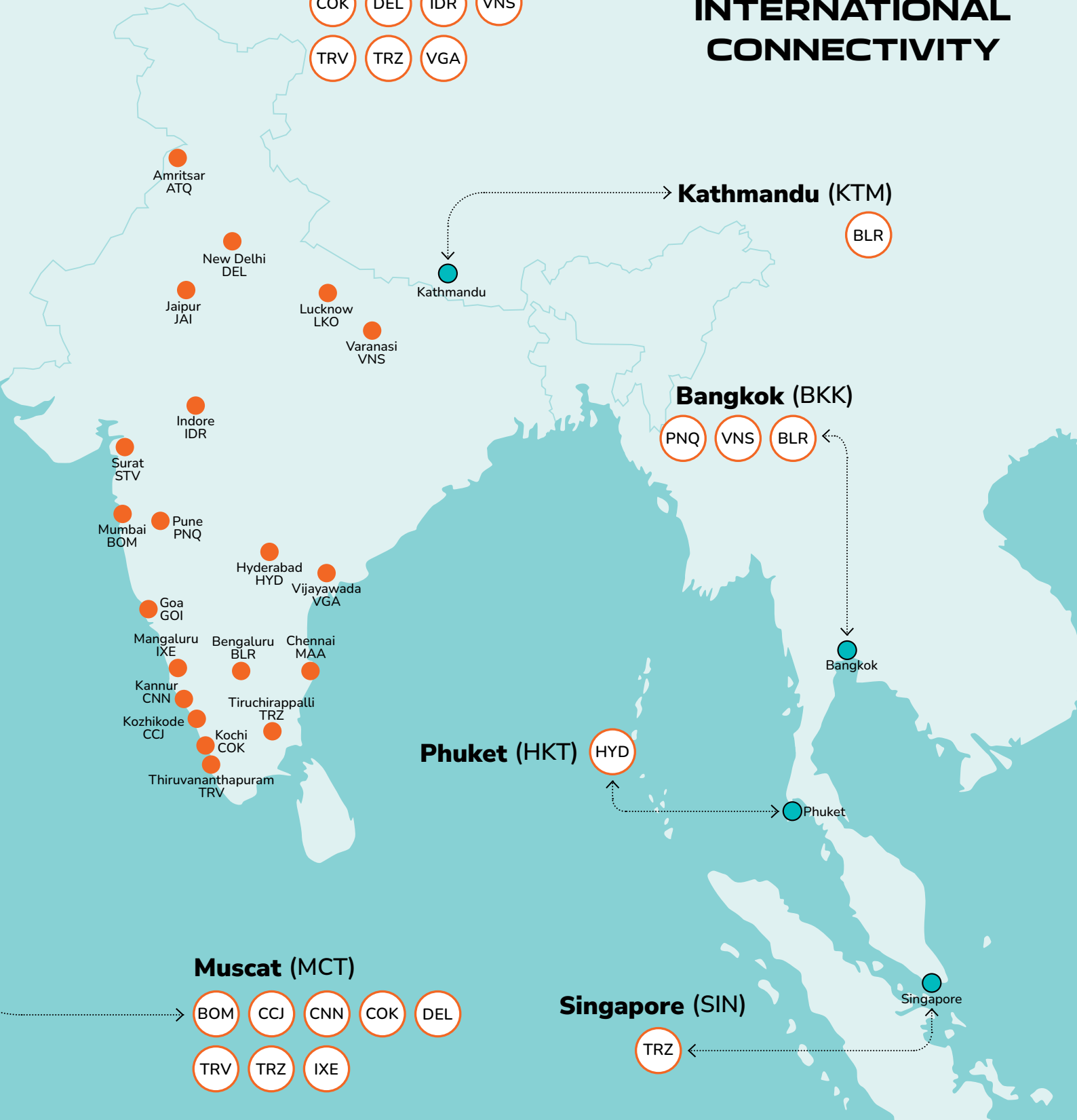
- HYD

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Muscat (MCT)

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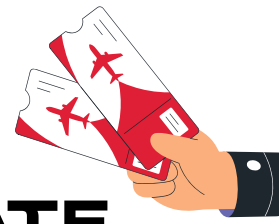
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| Aegean Airlines | China Airlines | Japan Airlines | Qatar Airways |
| Aeroflot | China Eastern Airlines | Jeju Airlines | Royal Brunei Airlines |
| Air Cambodia | China Southern | JetBlue | Royal Jordanian |
| Air China | Condor | JetStar Australia | Rwand Air |
| Air Europa | Cyprus Airways | Juneyao Airlines | Scandinavian Airlines |
| Air France | Delta | Kam Air | Scot |
| Air Seychelles | Emirates | KLM | Shenzhen Airlines |
| Air Tanzania | Etihad Airways | KM Malta Airlines | South African Airways |
| Alaska Airlines | Fiji Airways | Korean Air | Starlux Airlines |
| Avianca Costa Rica | Finnair | Kuwait Airways | Thai Airways |
| Avianca Ecuador | FlexFlight World Ticket | Lufthansa City Airlines | Turkish Airlines |
| Azerbaijan Airlines | Flydubai | Malaysia Airlines | Uganda Airlines |
| Bangkok Airways | Garuda Indonesia | Maldivian | United |
| Batik Air Malaysia | Gulf Air | MIAT Mongolian | Vietnam Airlines |
| Biman Bangladesh | Hahn Air | Myanmar Airways | Virgin Atlantic |
| British Airways | Hainan Air | Nepal Airlines | Westjet |
| Brussels Airlines | Hong Kong Airlines | Oman Air | |
| Bulgaria Air | Iberia | Philippine Airlines | |

*Both Codeshare and Interline Partners
Codeshare and Interline partnerships as on 16th April 2026



PLAN A TRIP TO SEE THE STATE MUSEUM OF APPLIED ARTS



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*Seasonal route

ABOUT THE ATTRACTION:

When it was built in the 1930s as an exhibition of works by master craftsmen of the country, it was called the Museum of Handicrafts. In 1977, it received the status of a state museum and was transformed into what it is today. The Museum houses an enviable collection of over 7,000 of the best works of masters from the beginning of the 19th century to the present, including ceramics, jewellery, gold embroidery, national clothing, carpets, miniatures and paintings on wood, musical instruments, and much more.



Take a taxi to the State Museum of Applied Arts, Tashkent, Uzbekistan



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REGULATORY INFORMATION FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS LANDING INTO INDIA

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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, बंगलुरु, 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 अड्डों 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, टैक्सीडिंग, 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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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 होगी। 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 नहीं 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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MEMORIES FOR LIFE

I have been coming to Italy since my 20s and it is one of my most favourite places in the world. I have a lot of Italian friends and even speak a little of the language. My love for the country stems from its rich culture and history, and also, because it is inspiring. Recently, I was in Rome; I admire the city for its art and architecture, particularly the areas around the Spanish Steps, Fontana di Trevi, and the Colosseum. I have visited these attractions so many times over the years but each time I go there, I come back with a new memory.

MY LOCAL EXPERIENCE

Close to Rome is Sabaudia, a popular coastal town with an authentic vibe. Also, what I love most about the country is that you can shop from local artisans because the design aesthetic is so rich. All the shops around the Spanish Steps and the Fontana di Trevi are wonderful, especially the smaller Italian brands.

A FARE TO REMEMBER

Italian food is fabulous because it is lightly cooked and you can taste the richness of the vegetables, meats, and fish. I also eat all the pizza I can get my hands on, especially *pizza al tonno*. I equally enjoy truffle pasta and desserts that are lemon flavoured. I love eating at smaller restaurants; in fact, my Italian friends ask me not to post about them! Osteria del Pegno is a wonderful non-touristy restaurant offering authentic Italian fare. But on my last holiday, I had a meal at Zuma, which was excellent.

— As told to **Mignonne Dsouza**

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