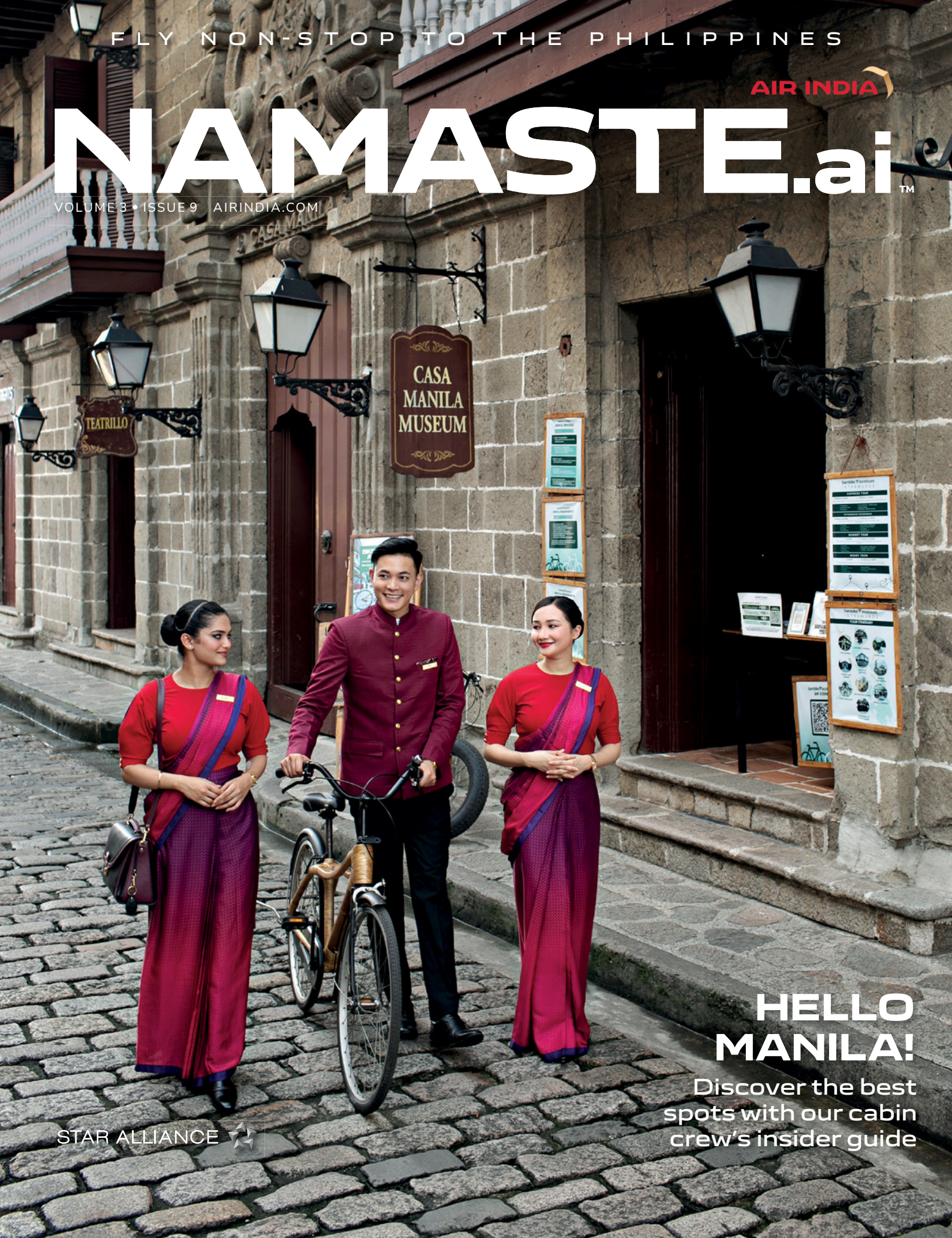


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Burda Media India Private Limited is a company of The Hubert Burda Media Group

Hubert Burda Media India

Chief Executive Officer BJÖRN RETTIG

Burda International Holding GmbH

LEGAL ADDRESS Hubert Burda Platz 1, 77652 Offenburg, Germany

POSTAGE ADDRESS Arabellastrasse 23, D-81925 Munich, Germany

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Manila, the capital of the Philippines, is a bayside city on the island of Luzon



p 14

As a global airline with Indian warmth, we are constantly forging connections between India and the world, one new destination at a time.

This month's Cover Story celebrates this journey with our newly-launched Delhi to Manila non-stop flight that connects India with the Philippines. We bring to you the city's living, breathing art spots and museums, highlight recommendations from an insider on the best restaurants and cafés to frequent, and, in a refreshing twist, introduce both iconic heritage hubs and offbeat gems in Manila through the eyes of our cabin crew.

As we advance in our transformation journey, bringing you better connectivity and service, we also bring you stories that hinge on change—Ran Baas, The Palace is an award-winning restoration project in Patiala that embraces modernity while retaining legacy. In Goa, we explore Panaji where a quiet resurgence has been underway as the capital positions itself as the new hub of cuisine and culture. The ubiquitous garment of India, the sari, is constantly adapting, and we present our take on the evolution of this six-yard wonder. Acclaimed mixologist and bar owner Yangdub Lama talks to us on the big changes in India's alco-bev space—he says a fierce pride in local has propelled the narrative. On a personal level, yoga trainer Payal Gidwani Tiwari says the biggest shift you can make is to develop the habit of gratitude and practise it every single day.

As the year almost draws to a close, we showcase two destinations that could help you firm up your year-end travels. Seoul, where ancient temples sit in perfect harmony with tall skyscrapers, and Colombo, where we shine a light on the coastal country's spectacularly-flavoured cuisine.

On that delectable note, happy reading!

— **Namaste.ai** Editorial Team

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The Air India crew (in Manila) with a jeepney, a popular mode of local transport in the Philippines





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The Air India crew explores the Intramuros area on a Bambike

Cover image courtesy

Air India

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➔ Cynthia Meera Frederick

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An American by birth, Cynthia has been based in Punjab for almost two decades. A heritage enthusiast working with several of India's erstwhile royal families, she co-authored *Prince, Patron and Patriarch: Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala*. Besides travel and cultural interests, she is an advocate for the adoption and protection of Indie dogs and lives with 18 canine companions. She writes on Punjab's first 5-star property that has been meticulously restored. **page 66**



➔ Payal Gidwani Tiwari

@payalmanish7775

Mumbai-based Payal is a popular Bollywood fitness and yoga expert, practising and teaching for the last 25 years. She has three books to her name: *From XL to XS*, *Body Goddess*, and *Own the Bump*. Yoga aside, she loves to dance and travel, and sometimes, her favourite thing is to do absolutely nothing. She writes on the power of gratitude. **page 84**



➔ Yangdup Lama

@thespirtedmonk

A distinguished bar owner, entrepreneur, and author with almost three decades of experience in the alco-bev industry, Yangdup is recognised as one of India's foremost bartenders. Among the numerous accolades and awards to his name, one of the biggest is his inclusion in the 'Bar World 100' list by Drinks International magazine (UK), making him the first Indian to receive this recognition. He pens his thoughts on the changing dynamics of India's alco-bev scene. **page 26**



➔ Sumana Mukherjee

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A Bengaluru-based journalist, Sumana is a writer and editor with over 30 years of experience at The Indian Express, Forbes India, and Mint Lounge, among others. After a seven-year stint with an IT major, she now writes independently on food, textiles, literature, and culture. She travels for food when not catering to the demands of a 12-year-old dachshund. She chronicles how the quintessential sari has evolved. **page 54**



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AT A GIVEN TIME
WILL BE ALLOWED
INSIDE THE
CASA MANILA
MUSEUM

Paint OUTSIDE THE LINES

Discovering Metro Manila's evolving art scene is a great way to explore the city and immerse in the Filipino pop culture

words by Kathryn Timonera



The Art in Island mixed media art museum aims to give visitors a deeply engaging experience

Walking into Art in Island for the first time, I had no idea I would end up spending my afternoon pretending to tightrope on cliffs, hop on the back of a dragon or get 'eaten' by a painting at this trendy mixed media art museum in Quezon City. The art itself? Super cool. But what really pulled me in was how much the place loved to switch things up. It is like a mini version of Manila itself: never standing still and always ready to surprise you.

That is when I realised: Manila has a lot of creativity as long as you know exactly where to look. Of course, there are places of historical significance but there are also non-mainstream creative and interesting spaces where you get to play around; venues that allow you to become part of the art. It is a lot more fun than just looking at stuff behind glass.

Where art refuses to sit still

The capital of the Philippines has a flourishing art scene that is loud, interactive, and a little wild. Art in Island remains one of my favourite spots because there is no such thing as 'look but do not touch' here. You can pose with the funny and weird paintings, play around with the lights or lie on their bean bags in a huge indoor dome-like room that projects different moving abstract art pieces. This immersive experience makes you feel as if you are in a different world.

If you enjoy playing tricks with your eyes, go visit Space & Time Cube+ in Pasay. The rooms are filled with mirrors, lights, and illusions that completely mess with your sense of direction. Every area here transports you and lands you in the centre of a sci-fi movie. They have different out-of-this-world displays, rooms filled with artistically-designed lighting, and a space-themed experience.



TOP AND BOTTOM
Space & Time Cube+ has light and holographic displays and breathtaking LED tunnels; The Mind Museum features over 250 interactive exhibits.

FACING PAGE
(top and bottom) The Dessert Museum in Pasay; Pinto Art Museum.

WHERE TO STAY

The Henry Hotel Manila

At this retro gem in Pasay, vintage style meets cool, leafy courtyards. It has an old-school charm that just feels good.

Hotel Celeste Makati

Located right in the middle of Makati's art and food scene, this boutique hotel mixes European flair with warm Filipino hospitality. It is cosy and close to everything.

The Peninsula Manila

This is a Makati legend, luxurious without being stuffy, and always comfy after a day of city exploring. Plus, their lobby bar is the kind of spot you will want to brag about.

Another fun artsy place to visit is The Mind Museum, a hands-on heaven for science lovers, in Bonifacio Global City (BGC) in Taguig. They turn atoms and black holes into cool, hands-on exhibits. You will find yourself picking up new things without even realising it.

A cultural feast for the eyes

If you are looking to experience Filipino culture and colours, Lakkay Museo in Ayala Malls Manila Bay (in Parañaque) is a literal highlight reel of the Philippines. You can enjoy local delicacies, try on traditional clothes, and take pictures in rooms with different Filipino-themed displays. It is really interactive and you will learn something about the culture without feeling like



you are in school.

For dessert enthusiasts, Pasay's The Dessert Museum is like candyland. It is basically a living fantasy because each room is an Instagram paradise with sweet treats. There are donut swings, marshmallow clouds, and slides that will dunk you in a pool of dessert plushies. The air is filled with the scent of sugar, and even adults exit

with smiles on their faces.

For a more conventional yet contemporary vibe, Finale Art File in Makati and MO_Space in BGC showcase modern art. These galleries are the pulse of the city's art scene—edgy, thought-provoking, sometimes a little weird but always interesting. The artists are not just painting about the city, they are using it as their canvas.



Finally, if you want a good view along with your art, ArtSector Gallery & Chimney Café 360° in Binangonan (outside Metro Manila) is the right spot. You get a good view of the lake on one side, the city skyline on the other, and modern art all around you.

Manila has this wild, friendly energy, and you just cannot help but get swept up in it. Every mural, every quirky space has this playful, restless vibe that keeps the city moving. Art happens everywhere, and the idea is to play along.

PINTO ART MUSEUM

Interactive art and experiences are a few of the many fun activities you can do in Metro Manila. But if you are into contemporary art and would love to learn more about Filipino culture without touristy chaos, this museum is the place to be. Located in the historical pilgrimage city of Antipolo, its collection features works by local artists.



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GETTING THERE

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GOURMET EXPERIENCES

Filipino flavours, world cuisine, and a vibrant party scene—
find all this and more in and around Metro Manila

words by **Michael Agassi**

*Filipino cuisine derives
inspiration from its
indigenous population,
as well as from
global flavours*

Locavore

This is traditional cuisine with a twist. I like how they have reinvented the usual Filipino dishes into something amazing, like the Sinigang (usually a soup dish) into a sizzling plate with lots of gravy. There is also Fried Oyster Sisig (sisig is pork, but they use oyster instead) and a street food platter that offers a combination of the most interesting food people usually buy on Manila's streets.

Bonifacio Global City (BGC)

El Chupacabra

Offering a varied selection of tacos, it also has beers and, of course, margaritas. I particularly love the Baja California Fish taco—flaky and succulent fried fish nuggets, filled with creamy slaw and topped with a zesty signature sauce, wrapped in a soft tortilla. The Camarones a la Diabla taco is also a must try.

Makati City

Wildflour Restaurant

This upscale chain has amazing food and coffee,

featuring French-American cuisine. At its various outposts, you will find everything—from breakfast staples to sandwiches, roast chicken, rice bowls, and more. Dinner options include imported steaks, and catch-of-the-day fish alongside an extensive wine and liquor selection. My favourites here are their delicious Cronuts (dulce de leche, hazelnut, tiramisu, and strawberry) and the Chorizo and Gambas.

*Locations across
Metro Manila*



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
A platter of 'holiday hams' at Wildflower; Café 32nd St. is a Korean-inspired café; El Chupacabra offers a wide variety of tacos; Buccaneers Rum & Kitchen is said to have the largest selection of rum in the country.

House of Wagyu Stonegrill

This has the best steak in town; it just melts in your mouth. You can cook a Wagyu steak on a stone grill in front of you (hence the name). All the steaks come with a soup, vegetables, and potato sides. Very satisfying, especially when paired with their wide offering of wine and cocktails. If you are with a companion who does not enjoy steak, the restaurant does offer seafood.

Shangri-la Plaza

Crosta Pizzeria

This made it to the list of the 50 best pizzerias in the world (curated by Italy's

50 Top Group), so how can you not stop here? Offering sourdough-style round pizzas, as well as vegan options, this is one of my favourite spots for comfort food. Order their Every We Trufflin' and upgrade to the Creamy Spinach Stuffed Crust—I truly believe this pizza can compete for the best in the world.

Liberty Center, Salcedo Village, Makati

Buccaneers Rum & Kitchen

If you are on your own in Manila or with a small crew, this is the bar to head to. Even if you do not know anyone here, you are sure to make friends by the end

of the night. It is known for having the largest selection of rum in the Philippines. I always sit by the bar.

Poblacion

The Palace Manila

This is the place to head to for a rocking time.

Reservations are highly recommended and there are four party venues to choose from—Xylo, Revel, Clubhouse, and Yes Please—besides Medusa, the supper club. Book a VIP experience, enjoy the bottle service, and dance the night away.

Bonifacio Global City (BGC)

Café 32nd St.

This is open till midnight and features a slow bar where baristas lovingly craft the perfect cup of coffee. There are Korean-inspired beverages on offer too, but what makes the place stand out are their 'coffee raves'. Held in the afternoons and evenings on weekends, these feature a DJ and are the best way to combine a coffee fix and great music.

BGC



MICHAEL AGASSI
(@michaelagassi) wears many hats—an actor, entrepreneur, influencer, and a freediving instructor. Popular for several TV shows, Agassi is well-entrenched in Manila's F&B scene and recommends the best places in town.

MANILA MOMENTS

Air India's cabin crew uncovers offbeat experiences, inviting travellers to explore the city with a fresh perspective

photographs by **Patrick Mateo**



Air India's non-stop flights from Delhi to Manila, launched in October 2025, have made the Philippines more accessible now than ever, connecting travellers on Air India's Airbus A321neo. The visa-free entry for Indian citizens makes it even easier to explore Manila's eclectic charm—from bustling street markets to the charisma of Intramuros. Air India's cabin crew takes you on an engaging journey, including must-visit locations and insider discoveries. Fasten your seat belts!



STROLL ALONG DOLOMITE BEACH

Officially the Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach, this offers spectacular skyline views. The man-made white sandy beach and the adjacent baywalk are perfect for leisurely strolls and people-watching. Cabin Executive Ayushi Bedi (third from left) says: "This is a great place to watch the sunset."



◀
**SEE INTRAMUROS
ON A BAMBIKE**

Spanish-era architecture, historical spaces, and cobblestone streets come together to form the fabric of this 400-year-old walled city. Cabin Crew Thounaojam Prabin Singh says, "A bamboo bike tour is a unique and eco-friendly way to discover the place's rich heritage."

▶
**ENJOY LOCAL
DELICACIES AT PASIG
RIVER ESPLANADE**

The crew enjoys Puto Bumbong, a steamed rice cake, served warm, often on a banana leaf, and topped with grated coconut, brown sugar, and butter. Cabin Executive Rahul Gandhi shares: "We tasted a refreshing lemonade, made with the local calamansi lemon. It is a must try."





◀ DISCOVER OLD-WORLD CHARM

Casa Manila is a reproduction of a 19th-century bahay na bato (stone house) representing a blend of Spanish colonial and Filipino architectural elements. This museum offers a glimpse into the opulent lifestyle of the Filipino elite during the Spanish colonial period. Says Cabin Executive Rahul Gandhi (extreme left), "It is an immersive way to experience the city's colonial history and customs."

INDULGE IN 'DIRTY' ICE CREAM ▶

A traditional coconut milk-based ice cream, it may have got the 'dirty' nickname courtesy mothers (to deter kids), but it is hygienic! "Popular flavours are avocado, mango, cheese, and ube [purple yam], and it is usually served in a cone or a bread bun," says Cabin Executive Ayushi Bedi (centre).





▲ VISIT THE COUNTRY'S OLDEST STONE CHURCH

The San Agustin Church is a UNESCO World Heritage Site renowned for its exquisite Baroque architecture and historical artefacts. Cabin Crew Mousumi Nandy (second from right) suggests, "The best time to visit is during the cooler hours of the morning or late afternoon. This also allows for a more serene and reflective experience."

▼ CONNECT WITH NATURE

Manila is blessed with many green areas, including Paco Park and the riverside urban Arroceros Forest Park, where one can escape the city's chaos. Featured here is the Chinese Garden (in Rizal Park). Cabin Crew Dipa Pangambam says, "This is a true hidden gem."



▲ EXPLORE THE 'TREE OF LIFE'

The National Museum of Natural History exhibits the rich biological and geological diversity of the Philippines and is a must do. Cabin Crew Dipa Pangambam (left) explains, "The 'Tree of Life' structure here is absolutely stunning and represents all the unique ecosystems in the Philippines."



◀ **WALK THROUGH THE
WORLD'S OLDEST
CHINATOWN**

Binondo is said to have been established in 1594 and boasts Taoist temples, Chinese restaurants, and eclectic street art. Cabin Crew Thounaojam Prabin Singh says, "You will find traditional artefacts here and lots of Chinese-inspired trinkets." It is also great for street food.

▼ **VISIT AN ICONIC MONUMENT**

Rizal Park is home to the Rizal Monument, which is a shrine for Filipino nationalist José Rizal. The crew wrapped up their visit by paying tribute to the Philippines at this special location, and cannot wait to welcome you on board Air India's non-stop flights to Manila.



CHECKLIST

Everything worth
checking out

- 26 → DRINKS
- 34 → EVENTS
- 36 → ON THE CLOCK
- 40 → FOOD
- 46 → BOOKS



WHAT IS BREWING?

A sense of pride in local and the desire to take the India story forward have changed the alco-bev narrative

words by **Yangdup Lama**

There has been a drastic change in the course of the last 10 years. Whether it is somebody making a new form of alcohol in India, whether it is the trade (bartenders, bar owners or the people in the F&B business) or the consumers—there has been a strong mindset shift. Earlier, anything that was Western was premium and you paid extra for it. Along with that, now, there is an awareness, a stronger acceptance, and a lot of pride about what is local.

Everyone wants to take the Indian story forward, highlighting local ingredients and taking inspiration from culture, history, and tradition. There is excitement from our side and also from a global audience. I have experienced this myself. Whenever I travel, every time I narrate an Indian story with the drinks that we do, the buy-in is much stronger.

But India is so diverse and bountiful, I think we have to really deep dive and go local. Like my bar (The Brook, in Gurugram) is mountain-inspired but that is not the whole of India. Similarly, there are bars where the drinks derive inspiration just from the coffee region of India. We did one collaboration with Makaibari Tea Estate in Darjeeling, just talking about the country's teas. There is

Ananth Kumar

TOP AND BOTTOM
Siachen Sip at The Brook is a gin with a wild rose; Maggi Point references the Maggi joints at hill stations, and uses the famous masala.

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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

The author sips arak, a home-distilled barley wine, in Ladakh; A workshop conducted by Cazulo Premium Feni in Goa guides guests on what foods pair best with feni; The mahua flower can be eaten fresh, dried, or fermented to make alcohol.



so much pride when you bring all these local stories together.

What is next? In India, you can go on and on, deriving inspiration from stories, culture, local produce, and history. Look at Indian food; while we indulge ourselves in gravy dishes once in a while, we are okay to pay extra for a modern, futuristic food experience that maintains the essence of the dish but gives it a spin. Today there is so much science and art in food, from the producer's story to the way the chef has applied technique to make the dish and the way it is presented. The whole thing is an experience by itself. It is similar in the alcohol space. Pickling and fermentation are also traditional methods in food that are now being used in mixology.

We are now okay to pay extra for a premium whiskey or gin produced in India. Look at gin. You are not just making it and packaging it well and then working on marketing and distribution. You are also telling the Indian story through the gin... the botanicals used and where you get the best lime or the best juniper. You are bringing out those stories. People are not drinking gin today to get drunk but to sip on something that has more than just alcohol in it. That is how the mindset has changed.



There is a lot of discovery too. In August, my team and I went to little villages in Ladakh to understand local ingredients. And these are not typically cocktail ingredients. Nobody thought that a traditional butter tea could be converted into a cocktail. But we did. We did not know Ladakh had a Horsemint or a local rhubarb or a wild mulberry. We got the mulberry in dried form and when I tasted it, there were notes of caramel, so we made a nice shaken cocktail using that. When we narrate the story to our guests, that makes it wholesome.

Palates have also matured with exposure. As Indian consumers, we are

now travelling for food and beverage, not for shopping. And we are not travelling just to New York and London; Indians are travelling to the interiors of, let's say, France or going to an unknown place in Europe for a local experience. The way we travel opens up our minds.

When it comes to local liquors though, there is still a long way to go because we have policy restrictions. But India has a major home-brewing tradition. Where there are indigenous people, there will always be a local alcohol —right from an *apong* to a *chhaang* to a *tari*. I tried *mahua* some 15 years ago in a tribal village. There are now one or two brands of *mahua* which are being commercially bottled. Like *feni* from Goa. It is much like tequila.

Now, tequila has been there for a long time, but when every producer of the spirit spreads the awareness about 100 per cent agave, it becomes a



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
The author discovered a spinach strongly resembling mustard at Tsogsti village, Ladakh; Indian gins use a variety of botanicals to infuse flavour; Cashew, from which feni is made.



stronger narrative.

In the future, I feel bigger action will come from lesser-known areas—the way regional cuisine is gaining prominence. But it is not so easy with alcohol because you may forage for ingredients but then you have to convert it all into a glass.

Food and beverage tourism is also going to be big. So, people do not come to India now to only look at palaces. There is a newer offering—and different areas have a distinctive food culture.

For example, across the Himalayas, you find *gurans* (also called *buransh*), a pinkish flower, rich in nectar. Towards

northern India, the nectar is converted into Buransh sherbet. But in eastern Himalayas, because of the tribal culture, it is turned into alcohol. The same local produce is used differently in different cultures, within the same region, in the same belt. That is the richness of this country, waiting to be explored.

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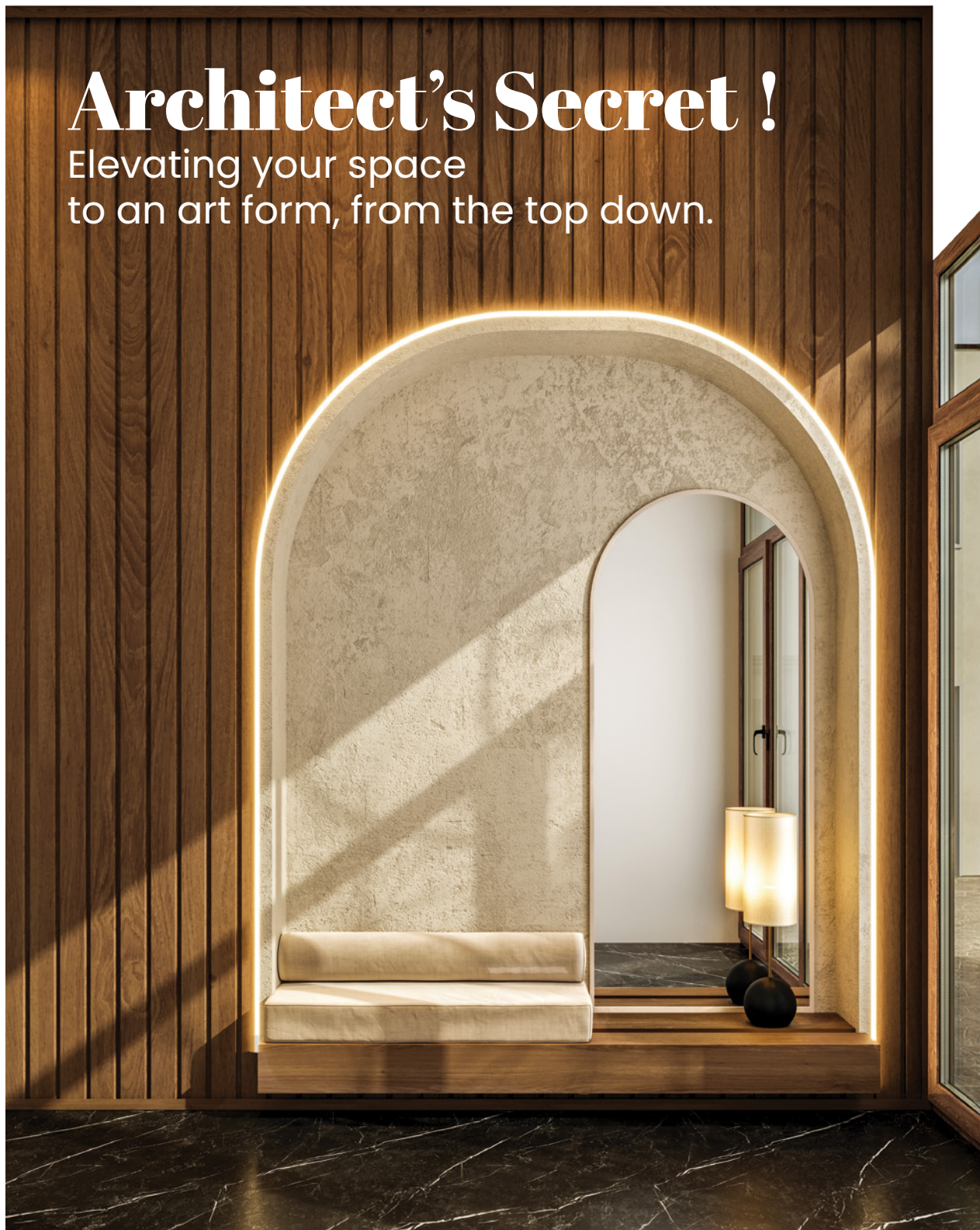
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17th–21st November

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🌐 dubaiairshow.aero



DRAMA BUZZ
DELHI THEATRE FESTIVAL

📍 **Delhi, India**
14th–16th November

The 6th edition features Pankaj Kapur, Naseeruddin Shah, Anupam Kher, Lillete Dubey, and Makarand Deshpande, among others. The plays will be held in Delhi's Siri Fort Auditorium, NCUI Auditorium, OP Jindal Auditorium, and Gurugram's Aarum Conventions.

🌐 delhitheatrefestival.com



BOOK THIS DEHRADUN LITERATURE FESTIVAL

📍 **Dehradun, India**
14th–16th November

The 7th edition will feature a session with Justice DY Chandrachud, a round-table with Nandita Das and Leena Yadav, along with a stellar line up of numerous noted speakers, including Shobhaa De, Bhawana Somaaya, and Usha Uthup.

🌐 dehradunliteraturefestival.com



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📍 **Austin, Texas, USA**
7th–9th November

Expect live-fire cooking, hands-on grilling, and an exalted list of names at the Chefs Showcase. Highlights include local chefs John Bates from Interstellar BBQ and Ali Clem of La Barbecue, and Chef Diego Galicia from San Antonio-based Mixtli (all Michelin-starred restaurants).

🌐 austinfoodandwinefestival.com

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A TRIP FOR THE SEOUL

Regal palaces, trendy fashion, futuristic skincare, vibrant nightlife, and world-class cuisine—all seamlessly come together in this city

words by **Ketki Gadre**

🕒 08:00AM

Morning stroll

📍 *Cheonggyecheon Stream*

Once a natural stream, later an elevated highway, and now a lively waterfront, this area has seen a lot of change. Today, it is a serene spot with restored bridges, historical artefacts, and rich biodiversity. In summer, it transforms into an outdoor library. During festivals, the stream-side comes alive with art installations, cultural exhibits, and interactive displays.

🕒 09:00AM

Americano fix

📍 *Hollys*

No matter the season, Koreans swear by their Iced Americano—it is almost a cultural ritual, and when in Seoul, it is only fair you join in. Grab a cup, add an egg sandwich, and find a table overlooking the gentle flow of Cheonggyecheon Stream. It is the perfect way to start your morning, post the stroll.

🕒 11:00AM

Vantage point

📍 *N Seoul Tower*

Zip up 236m (approximately) on a cable car on Namsan Mountain, for a stunning 360-degree view. This is one of the city's most iconic landmarks to take photos from and a popular location in many K-dramas. Visitors can also leave a love lock at the base plaza or head up to the observatory to soak in views of historic shrines, iconic towers, and the Han River.

🕒 01:00PM

K-drama fantasy

📍 *Gyeongbokgung Palace*

This 14th-century architectural marvel is the grandest of Seoul's royal palaces. Stroll through its sweeping courtyards, admire ornate pavilions, and watch the colourful Palace Royal Guard Changing Ceremony. Travellers can also book a photo shoot wearing a *hanbok* (traditional Korean dress) here.

The N Seoul Tower offers panoramic views of the city



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**CLOCKWISE
FROM RIGHT**

Cheonggyecheon Stream is a public modern recreation space; Gyeongbokgung Palace at sunset; Hollys' chocolate tiramisu is a must try; Hollys is a popular coffee chain; Bukchon Hanok Village is full of traditional charm.



**GETTING
THERE**

Air India flies non-stop to Seoul from Delhi.



STYLISH STAYS

1/ Rakkojae Seoul Main Hanok is a 140-year-old traditional house with a serene courtyard, elegant wooden interiors, and a timeless glimpse of Joseon-era living.

2/ voco Seoul Myeongdong by IHG is a tranquil property situated at a convenient location for all the tourist attractions, with stunning views of N Seoul Tower.

3/ Sofitel Ambassador Seoul blends French elegance with Korean charm, offering luxurious rooms, fine dining, and stunning skyline views over Seokchon Lake and Lotte World Tower.

🕒 03:00PM

Old-world charm

📍 Bukchon Hanok Village

This neighbourhood preserves the charm of old Seoul with its maze of narrow lanes and graceful traditional houses. The highlights are its Eight Scenic Views, including that of Changdeokgung Palace, Wonseo-dong Handicraft Road, and the Gahoe-dong area.

🕒 05:00PM

Café hop

📍 Ikseon-dong Hanok Street

In Seoul, cafés go far beyond caffeine; they are immersive spaces with eye-catching aesthetics. In Ikseon-dong, hopping between them doubles as a way to explore the neighbourhood. Try the warm salt bread at Jayeondo Salt Bread or a slice of matcha cake at Cheong Su Dang Bakery. Each spot is a concept space, with seasonal menus and iconic treats.

🕒 07:00PM

Retail therapy

📍 Myeong-dong

Korea and skincare go hand in hand, and this is the hub of it all. Shop beauty finds at Olive Young, pick up household goods and stationery at the 12-storey Daiso or browse flagship fashion stores. For a different indulgence, explore the buzzing Myeong-dong street food market.

🕒 10:00PM

Soulful bites

📍 CU Ramyun Library

A hearty bowl of ramen (or *ramyeon*) is the best way to end the day. While every convenience store in Seoul stocks local favourites, this Hongdae shop takes it up a notch with over 225 varieties. Alongside popular Korean brands like Shin, Jin, and Buldak, it also has a range of beverages on offer (banana milk, strawberry milk, coffee, and tea).



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8 dishes TO TRY IN COLOMBO



From fiery street eats to nostalgic colonial recipes, these dishes capture the vibrant flavours and culinary culture of Sri Lanka's bustling capital

words by
Raul Dias

➔ KOTTU ROTI

Sri Lanka's answer to the stir-fry, *kottu roti* or *kotthu*, is a chaotic medley of chopped *godamba* roti (a thin flatbread), vegetables, egg, and your choice of meat. It is all thrown together on a hot griddle, then drizzled with an even hotter chilli sauce. The dish is greasy, comforting, and always customisable. Often eaten late at night, it is Colombo's go-to fast food, relished by its spice-loving locals.

Where to try it: Hotel De Pilawoos, Kollupitiya

➔ KIRIBATH

Generally served in homes, this dish translates to 'milk rice'. The rice is cooked with coconut milk until creamy, then cut into diamond-shaped pieces. It is traditionally served for breakfast or on auspicious days with *lunu miris* (a chilli-onion relish). This truly is simplicity steeped in symbolism and a perfect sweet-savoury vehicle to mop up spicy curries with.

Where to try it: Upali's by Nawaloka, Cinnamon Gardens



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→ LAMPRAIS

A legacy of Sri Lanka's Dutch Burgher community, and literally meaning 'lump rice', this is a banana leaf-wrapped bundle of *samba* rice topped with mixed meat curry (chicken, mutton, pork), sweet *seeni sambol* (onion relish), fried ash plantain, a dry brinjal *pahi*, and two *frikadels* (Dutch lamb meatballs). Steamed together, it is both flavour packed and a deeply nostalgic Sunday lunch favourite.

Where to try it: The Dutch Burgher Union, Cinnamon Gardens



→ KALU DODOL

This is a sticky, dark brown fudge made from coconut milk, the local *kithul* palm jaggery, and rice flour. It is laboriously slow-cooked over a wood fire, which gives it a smoky flavour. The dish is said to have deep roots in Javanese-Sri Lankan trade links.

Where to try it: Variety the Sweet Shop, Dehiwala



→ LOVE CAKE

Dense, nutty, and perfumed with rosewater and nutmeg, love cake or *bolo di amor* is a semolina-based treat believed to have Portuguese origins. Similar to a Middle-Eastern *basbousa*, it is made with cashews, semolina, and spiked with rum or the local coconut liquor called arrack. What sets it apart is the addition of candied winter melon called *puhul dosi* that gives it a chewy texture and floral sweetness.

Where to try it: The Fab, branches across Colombo





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↑ EGG HOPPERS

A quintessential Lankan breakfast, egg hoppers (or appam) are bowl-shaped, rice and coconut milk flour crêpes with an egg cracked in the middle just before serving. Crisp edges, soft centres, and usually served with sambols or a mild curry, they are one of the best ways to kick-start your Colombo morning.

Where to try it: Palmyrah Restaurant at Renuka City Hotel, Kollupitiya



↻ DEVILLED CHICKEN

Spicy, tangy, and slightly sweet, this pub-style, Sino-Lankan classic is a close cousin of the South Indian Chicken 65.

Prepared with crispy-fried chicken chunks tossed in a wok with soya sauce, vinegar, onions, capsicum, and fiery red chillies, it pairs perfectly with a side of beer and beach time.

Where to try it: Curry Leaf at Hilton Colombo Fort

↓ JAFFNA CHILLI CRAB

This fiery curry is a northern Sri Lankan staple that has found its way into Colombo's dining scene. Here, fresh lagoon crabs are simmered in a potent mix of roasted Jaffna curry powder, fresh ginger juliennes, chopped garlic, tamarind, and chilli, resulting in a rich, spicy gravy that seeps into the cracked crab carapace to flavour the sweet flesh. Topped with a garnish of fresh moringa leaves and best enjoyed with rice or hoppers, it is a messy, hands-on feast.

Where to try it: Ketam House, Bambalapitiya



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TOP FIVE READS

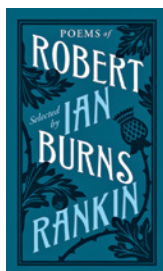
Scottish novelist and three-time Booker nominee, **Andrew O'Hagan** on the books he enjoys the most



BLEAK HOUSE
(Charles Dickens)

This is a penetrating book about how society works and I love the way it reminds readers of how the interconnectedness of our lives is a kind of poetry.

Macmillan Publishers; ₹674



SELECTED POEMS
(Robert Burns)

Burns is a people's poet who is intimate with both the human heart and the human mind. I have found him to be a great companion through my reading life.

Penguin Random House; ₹4,022



THE LITTLE PRINCE
(Antoine de Saint-Exupéry)

A beautiful tale, it is a masterpiece for all ages and all time.

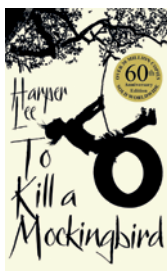
Farshore; ₹658



THE STRANGE CASE OF DR. JEKYLL & MR. HYDE
(Robert Louis Stevenson)

A great book offering psychological insight into human motivation.

Warbler Press; ₹1,344



TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD
(Harper Lee)

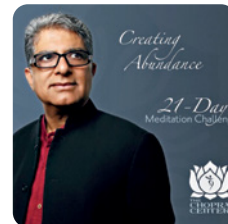
I love how subtly the eyes of childhood suddenly open up areas of adult concern.

Arrow; ₹450



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LEFT AND RIGHT
The vibrant
Fontainhas
neighbourhood;
Lobster tail with
seafood jambalaya
at Janot.



EMBRACING THE NEW

The Goan capital of Panaji has reinvented
itself as a gourmet and cultural
powerhouse

words by
Vivek Menezes

Not too far from
the crowds
and chaos that
now define

Goa's increasingly populated tourism landscape, there is one remaining island of opportunity to sample the original charms that have made India's smallest state famous in the first place. Venture into Panaji—the oft overlooked, tiny, and tranquil capital city on the Mandovi river—and you will find an amazing concentration of some of the best restaurants, bars, cafés, musical venues, and culture centres in the country. The trend has been building for years, ever since the International Film Festival of India relocated here in 2004, but accelerated dramatically after the pandemic. What's more, and highly unusual, is that it's mostly home-grown talent that has put their hometown on the fast track to international recognition.

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THE ART OF FADO

Down the Mandovi riverfront, you will find Madragoa (a one-of-a-kind concert venue created by visionary Orlando de Noronha) that has become the premier showcase for the most miraculous development in Goa's renaissance. Being hailed as the world's first *fado* and *mandó* (19th-century music genres) house, it has celebrated *fadista*, Sonia Shirsat, and her many students (the Portuguese say Goa is now the best place to learn this art form) in the most intimate setting, in an outpouring of soul that stops time and nourishes the spirit.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
The bar at Praça Prazeres; One can learn the art of fado at Madragoa; Makutsu is the brainchild of Chef Pablo Miranda.

restaurateur, Pranav Dhuri has created a contemporary culinary landmark just around the corner from the iconic 100-year-old Café Tato opened by (and named after) his great-grandfather. That original family establishment remains beloved for small plates of classic Goan bhajis with puris or the ubiquitous *pao*, but Dhuri has updated that tradition into the 21st century ('petisco' is the Portuguese word for tapas) with brilliant, modern Goan dishes built from a deep love and respect for seasonal ingredients from local farms and fishermen.

Dhuri is only one of an entire generation of young stars who has emerged from Panaji, training at the finest institutions in India and abroad, and choosing to return home to pursue their dreams with great consequence for the tourism landscape. Furthermore, this entire cohort is impressively collaborative, with a shared vision that combines pride in their roots and a burning desire to do the right thing by their hometown. As the outstanding Chef Pablo Miranda—he is the same age as Dhuri and from the same family as the great artist-

illustrator Mario de Miranda—told me when he started his terrific *yakitori* 'den', Makutsu, "These streets are filled with stories, and the other restaurateurs here are friends. We always look out for each other. The place has changed a lot over the years; it may not be the Goa it was many years ago but it is the Goa it is becoming. And if we cannot guide it in the right direction, then what kind of son of the soil would I be?"

Makutsu is an almost unbelievably small space in the dense, atmospheric Latinate streets of the original five wards of

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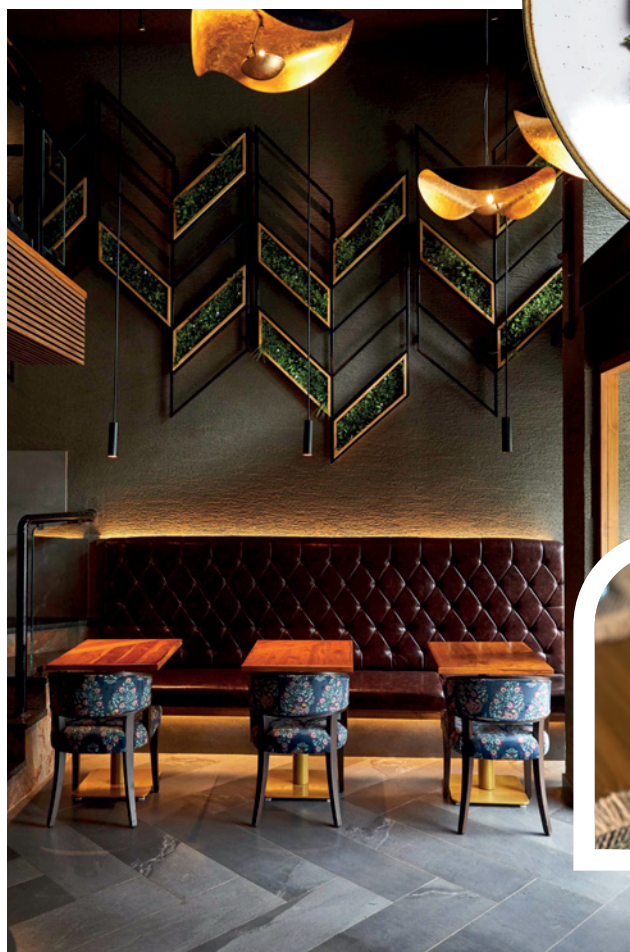
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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Stylish interiors of Petisco; The Herb & Nut Crushed Polenta at Petisco; Larder + Folk; An urrak cocktail and a Negroni, at Janot.

WHERE TO STAY

WelcomHeritage PanjimInn

This iconic 130-year-old family mansion offers 24 quaint rooms and a rooftop pool in the best location in Fontainhas.

Hospedaria Abrigo de Botelho

Although located in the heart of the Latin Quarter, this family-run guest house is tucked away in a quiet corner.

Surya Kiran Goa

Housed in a 100-year old Portuguese villa on the Mandovi bank, it blends old-world charm with modern amenities.

Panaji, spilling up from the Mandovi riverfront along the poetically-named Rio de Ourem (the 'river of gold', which is actually a tidal creek separating the historic city from the high rises of the Patto business district). Here, it is possible to stroll from São Tomé through Corte de Oiteiro, Fontainhas, and Mala to Portais in just half an hour, but I highly recommend stopping and sampling the trendy and traditional restaurants, cafés, and bars along the way: Chef Ralph's phenomenal European fare at Praça Prazeres, Chef Moina's wonderful Japanese-inspired

healthy cooking at MO's, Chef Priyanka's world-class bakery and café Larder + Folk, and long-time local landmarks Venite, Caravela, Horse Shoe, and Joseph Bar, ending at Buland Shukla's unique For The Record, which combines this multi-talented maven's love for vinyl records, and fermented foods and drinks.

Now, the bar is being set even higher in other parts of the city. Chef Avinash Martins and Tiz Lyngdoh opened Janot, a stylish glass-fronted space overlooking the river atop the Panjim Gymkhana. Janot represents another avatar for Panaji, aligned

with the state's expanding aspirations to set new benchmarks, custom-made for the 'high season' from November to March, with its series of important cultural events like the International Film Festival of India, Serendipity Arts Festival, Goa Arts and Literature Festival, Goa Open Arts Festival, and several others.

In those months, it is hard to beat the scene along the Mandovi and other locations. So, on your next trip to Goa, take some time out to discover Panaji's new, changed vibe—you will not be disappointed.



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Folds OF THE FUTURE

As the sari evolves with every drape and style, it continues to weave together India's past and present

words by **Sumana Mukherjee**



French designer Jean-Paul Gaultier's take on the sari at the Paris (Haute Couture) Fashion Week in 2017

Last month, for the first time ever, I found myself coveting a gentleman's wardrobe. He was wearing a silk kurta, for which I spared hardly a glance. No, my eyes went straight to the vintage *gharchola* he had draped as a *veshti*, the Indian male garment usually seen in whites and creams. This one, though, was a deep red, squared in *zari* and picked out in the finest *bandhani*, their whites indicating the knots that had been tied in the fabric before the handwoven length was dip-dyed in *madder* (dye). It was the quintessential Gujarati wedding sari but, instead of being made in de rigueur silk, it was crafted in cotton, instantly elevating it into a connoisseur's pick. I promise, it was only the knowledge that the sari was well appreciated for its beauty and rarity that made me relinquish all thought of possession.

It was not the first time I had seen a man don the sari; one only has to scroll through Instagram for many such sightings. While it would be a reach to say men's acceptance of this legacy garment will be its saving grace, the adoption indicates that the perception of the sari is changing, from a flat six yards worn by women in the ubiquitous Nivi drape (tucked in right to left, pleats in the centre, the decorative end over the left shoulder) to a fabric of endless possibilities.

The shift began, I think, with the #100sareepact in 2015, an agreement between two Bengaluru-based friends to drape the sari 100 times over the year. Ally Matthan, a businesswoman, and Anju Maudgal Kadam, a communications professional, believed that urban women were increasingly relegating the sari to occasion wear, something like the Japanese kimono. The pact looked to normalise the sari, and within a week, thanks to social media, it took on a pan-India face, with women posting their saris and stories with a fervour no one could have foreseen.

The viral trend, of course, was limited to a certain, smartphone-friendly section of Indian society but it quickly



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LEFT AND RIGHT
Sari stylist Winny Narayan sports a quirky drape; *The Sari Series* documents sari styles, and this is the Kuncha drape of Odisha.

helped the sari become aspirational again. Most interestingly, the trend developed sub-branches: handloom was a big one but so were easy-to-drape saris in such fabrics as organza and chiffon. Sharp marketers figured that not every girl had a mother or aunt to help them with the six yards, and they came up with the

stitched sari. Purists turned purple—the sari is, at its millennia-old essence, an unstitched garment—but young graduates sighed in relief as they dressed for their convocation by hitching a hook to an eye at the waist and watching the pre-pleated sari fall as their mum’s had.

It is, in a way, a homecoming: inspired by

India’s brocades and silks, Western designers like Jean-Paul Gaultier, Alexander McQueen, Marchesa, and Dior have long fashioned garments that included long skirts, cinched waists, and often a drape over a shoulder in a hat tip to the sari. Top Indian designers have responded with the sari-gown, using traditional

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fabrics to sculpt modern silhouettes.

Even as local markets spin off copies of the sari-gown, the most interesting culture-resets for me have been at the street level, diligently recorded on social media. Insta-influencers like as Pooja Jagadeesh and Winny Narayan have shown the world how to update the drape without the restrictions of the underskirt and tailored blouse necessary for the Nivi style, pairing the sari with crop tops, sneakers, shirts, espadrilles, boots, jackets—everything that works for a

contemporary life, from the boardroom to the beach. Best of all, they do not require the sari to be mutilated in any way, and the next time around, it can be worn completely differently.

Just as writers must know the rules of grammar before they can break them, innovators have based their takes on recent efforts to document the indigenous ways of draping the sari. Prominent among these is The Sari Series, a how-to digital anthology of 83 ways of wearing the sari—from the Addugundaram drape of



Andhra Pradesh to the Warli drape of Maharashtra.

The focus on the sari, evident in documentation—be it scholarly and/or on social media—has inevitably reflected in the art and craft of weaving, and not always for the good. Already, connoisseurs notice that the patterns and motifs are getting bigger and bolder (read, easier to capture on camera). Overconsumption, too, is a significant worry, with fast-fashion brands selling inexpensive synthetic saris for reel-makers, often to be discarded after a single wear.

In the warp and weft of the history of the sari though, I think these will be mere blips. The sari, the most democratic of garments, as much at ease on a Bollywood big screen as on the agriculturist in the paddy field, is part of the fabric of India, an inextricable part of its identity.

LEFT AND RIGHT
Sonam Kapoor wears this Ekaya Banaras sari in a contemporary style; The new Air India uniform combines style and functionality.

OUR TAKE

Unfamiliar with the new sari? Look around you—your cabin crew is wearing one. Created by designer Manish Malhotra, the uniform offers several options. Besides a ready-to-wear sari, to be worn with a blouse, women crew members can wear the saris with pants. The uniform mirrors a harmonious blend of Indian heritage with 21st-century elegance and comfort.

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BY NIRMAL SALVI



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RAISE A TOAST

India's only Master of Wine, Sonal C Holland, reflects on her path-breaking career and her memoir, *One in a Billion*

words by Arunima Mazumdar



The author
in the cellar
of Château
Margaux
in France

What motivated you to pursue the Master of Wine title?

At 33, I left my role as Director of National Sales for a NASDAQ-listed Fortune 500 company to reinvent my career. That is when my attention was drawn to the wine industry in India, which was still in a nascent stage. At the time, there were no qualified wine experts in the country. So, I decided to build my career in this field and set my sights on earning the highest title: the Master of Wine, a distinction earned by fewer than 500 people in the past 75 years.

Tell us about the journey.

I started by studying at the Wine & Spirit Education Trust in London (the Diploma in Wines and Spirits course) before enrolling at the Institute of Masters of Wine in the UK. I had to pass rigorous theory papers covering every aspect of wine, from how grapes are grown to how wine is made, marketed, and consumed. I had to blind-taste 36 wines over 3 days, identifying their grape variety, origin, style, winemaking, quality, and their commercial appeal. I also submitted a 10,000-word research paper that contributed to the growth of wine as a global industry. Over six years, I cleared all the exams to achieve the title in 2016, becoming the first and only Indian to do so.



Artist's Impression

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LEFT AND RIGHT
Wine is seen as a socially acceptable drink; Holland's memoir was published this year.

How did writing this memoir come about?

I have made it my mission to popularise wine. This has included launching India's first wine academy (to make wine education accessible), creating a blind-tasting competition to shape consumer choices, and guiding global brands on entering India successfully. It has been my privilege, over the last couple of years, to build a wine culture in this country, since it barely existed before. That same mission inspired me to publish *One in a Billion*, which captures my journey of reinvention, resilience, and rising beyond what was expected.

How do you see the alco-bev industry growing in India, especially wine?

Wine is seen as a symbol of success, luxury, and sophistication. It is also socially the most acceptable drink and perceived to have health benefits. No other alcoholic beverage enjoys this trilogy of appeal among consumers in India, and this has worked in the favour of wine. Its popularity will only grow as it continues to be celebrated in films, embraced at weddings, and poured at corporate soirées. The coming decade will further transform wine's appeal from an enjoyable beverage to a cultural experience.

INDIAN WINES TO TRY

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Chardonnay: It can be a challenging grape to cultivate in India, yet this expression has clearly thrived. Oak ageing lends a gentle vanilla aroma that beautifully complements its creamy texture.

Fratelli J'Noon: Created in collaboration with renowned vintner Jean-Charles Boisset, this refined red is built for the world stage. Luscious black fruit flavours and a silky texture have earned it critical acclaim and the appreciation of wine lovers, along with a string of international and domestic awards.

Grover Signet Amphora: Made in terracotta amphorae, this wine is a sophisticated red with notes of blackberry and liquorice.



You have written about women representing an important demographic that consumes wine in India. Have you seen this trend shift over the years?

According to the *India Wine Insider*—our white paper research on the latest consumer and market trends—an equal number of women and men drink wine. Women, especially in smaller cities, are increasingly choosing wine, as it is considered socially more acceptable due to its softer image and the perception of having health benefits. I see this trend now moving from Tier 1 cities to Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities of India.

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REGAL RESTORATION

A royal city reclaims a prime position with the addition of Punjab's first five-star luxury palace hotel

words by **Cynthia Meera Frederick**

The lighting brings the architectural facets of the Central Courtyard to life

Patiala is back on the global stage. A century ago, its storied name carried worldwide renown, conjuring up the fabulous lifestyles of its magnificent ruling maharajas. But over time, save for Punjabis and a few history lovers, widespread recognition of its glorious past quietly dwindled.

However, the spotlight shines once again upon this regal city, thanks to the Apeejay Surrendra Park Hotels' (ASPH) triumphant restoration and adaptive reuse of the Ran Baas complex. Enshrined within the ancient confines of the majestic Qila Mubarak, cocooned inside the old walled city, it is now re-imagined as Ran Baas, The Palace, Punjab's first five-star luxury heritage hotel. The property's extraordinary metamorphosis, from heartbreaking neglect to breathtaking splendour, has helped usher in a cultural, tourism, and economic renaissance for the city.

Rather fittingly, as part of this citadel's once royal abode, dating from the 18th century, the Ran Baas was initially used as a guest house before becoming the Maharani's residence (thus acquiring its name). Once again, it serves as a welcoming






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mind evolve

haven for guests, manifesting a fresh embrace of heritage wedded to a sublime sense of extravagance.

Opening a year ago to acclaim across the board, Ran Baas, The Palace is a coveted Relais & Châteaux property and boasts a Michelin Key. Additionally, it was named one of the World's Most Beautiful Hotels 2025 by the prestigious Prix Versailles, making it India's only property meriting this UNESCO-sanctioned honour this year. The Prix Versailles' motto, 'Inspiration, Progress, and Inclusion', succinctly sums up the genesis behind the property's revitalisation. It also stands appropriate to have garnered so many imprimaturs direct from France: 'Luxe, Calme, et Volupté', the French

expression translating to 'Luxury, Calmness, and Pleasure', perfectly encapsulates the property's serene, indulgent, and highly-sensory guest experience, which has made this a new top destination for visitors.

Beyond the unparalleled level of sumptuousness, a palpable level of sensitivity and authenticity exudes from the project. Under the diligent aegis of ASPH's Chairperson, Priya Paul, who, undaunted by the magnitude of the project and compelled to return to her roots in the 'Land of Five Rivers', made a conscious effort to assemble a team comprising talented Punjabi diaspora, including the esteemed conservation architect Abha Narain Lambah. Collectively, their dedication serves as an

evocative love letter to their ancestral homeland.

Spectacular old-world architecture, set against contemporary features, centres the building's high-voltage opulence. A dramatic exterior, replete with open courtyards, flowing fountains, graceful domes, and *chhatris*, is an embracing sight to behold. Accommodations, each all-suite, are themed on gemstones associated with the once-famed royal *toshekhana* (treasury)—brilliantly appropriate, given the precious ambience found within. An unerring eye for detail ensures that the inner spaces are sumptuously imbued yet elegantly restrained. Great respect is reserved for the interior mélange of architectural components: cusped arches,



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Phulkari embroidery is a traditional Punjabi craft; The Patiala Bar showcases royal recipes of the maharajas; Embellished juttis, especially from Patiala, are very popular.



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TOP AND BOTTOM
Sheesh Mahal or the Palace of Mirrors was commissioned by Maharaja Narinder Singh; A statue of a former maharaja stands in the city's Baradari Garden.

EXPLORE

•Patiala's vast **Qila Mubarak** with a multi-layered history, is one of the finest forts in all of Punjab. Nearby, the elegant royal cenotaphs offer a poignant tribute to past rulers.

•Traditional arts and crafts, plus delicious Punjabi street snacks abound within the old walled city. Afterwards, take a stroll in the sprawling **Baradari Gardens** before heading to the **Shri Kali Devi Temple**.

GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Chandigarh from Delhi, Mumbai, and Leh.

gleaming *sheesh* work, and intricate frescos—highlights of Rajput, Sikh, Mughal, and Pahari design—to project a seamless confluence of modern and historic elements that define the property.

The perpetual buzz the hotel generates leads to a rediscovery of Patiala, even rekindling a new-found sense of Punjabi pride. Invariably, this has created a greater appreciation of Punjab's time-honoured folk art and craftsmanship traditions. Just outside of the Qila Mubarak's massive ramparts is a labyrinth of stalls and shops brimming with Punjabi ware. A new influx of visitors cannot resist picking up colourful *juttis*, *parandis*, and intricately-embroidered *phulkari* work, which has given a measurable boost to a once-struggling crafts sector.

In addition, a distinct cultural shift has taken place here. Classical Hindustani music lovers (from across the country) recently convened



at the hotel for a three-day spectacle that paid homage to the courtly legacy of the Patiala gharana. This is one of numerous such initiatives, and with a level of patronage on par with the erstwhile princely rulers, Paul is committed to making the property a hub to showcase Punjab's rich artistic customs.

With the state's identity also tied to its popular cuisine, it would be inconceivable not to mention that the in-house restaurant Atth (meaning 'eight' in Punjabi) showcases specialities from eight regions across the land. Recipes from Patiala's royal kitchens are given pride of

place, but hearty dishes from the agrarian hinterland are equally refined with a reinterpretation in spirit with the hotel's adeptness in innovation.

The transformation has been a game-changer for the socio-economic development in Patiala, spurring additional urban renewal initiatives. While the Shri Kali Devi Temple is being developed as a major religious and tourist centre, the Rajindra Lake is also slated for a makeover. Such promising measures will further augment the city's visibility and standing.

At the heart of it, Ran Baas, The Palace has been a munificent return gift to the community. But the success of its evolution lies in projecting and transmitting the heritage and culture from Patiala's previous generations to the present. Borrowing from a celebrated past, the debt is paid back with lavish interest, the reward being that Patiala again reigns supreme.

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Myth	Soft paneer means pure paneer.
Fact	Loose paneer may look soft and fresh but often contains poor-quality ingredients that make it seem soft without the nutrition of real paneer.
Myth	Locally made paneer is healthy.
Fact	Locally made loose paneer is often made without hygiene checks, standard processes, or a printed manufacturing date, so its freshness and quality are never guaranteed.

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Mindful travel with kids ensures they grow up to become responsible, empathetic global citizens

words by **Saahil Kalvani**

“When you travel with your children, you are giving them something that can never be taken away—experience, exposure, and a way of life.” – Pamela T Chandler, educator and author.

I could not agree more. Travelling is more than just seeing places; it is embracing new cultures, ideas, and gaining a better understanding of our interconnectedness. It teaches children lessons that cannot be found in textbooks or online media. Travelling with my now 8-year-old nephew, Yugant, changed my approach from ticking off a bucket list to finding deeper meaning and leaving a positive impact.

INTERCONNECTEDNESS OF LIFE

When planning trips, involve kids at every stage. We allocate tasks amongst family members to research unique

aspects of the place we are visiting. For instance, we organise fun games like researching the animals and plants that can be found there, in addition to local dishes. On a recent trip to Sattal, Uttarakhand, our guide was pleasantly surprised by how many birds the children could identify in a region home to over 500 species. Their observation of a forest fire further north in Majkhali, a remote town near Ranikhet, broke their hearts. This experience gave them a profound understanding of ecosystems and the impact of climate change.

At another homestay, a colonial property in Udhagamandalam (Ooty), Tamil Nadu, we learned that all proceeds from our stay go toward maintaining their affiliated day centres. When we interacted with specially-abled children and abandoned elderly people at the day centre, we were assured the funds were being used for a genuine cause.



TOP AND BOTTOM

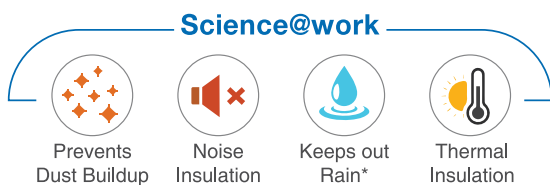
Spending time in a natural surrounding encourages observation; The author's nephew in a dense cedar forest in Old Manali.



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
When kids visit forests, they learn to love nature; Looking up at tall trees at The Baradari Palace, Patiala (Punjab); Playing outdoors beats playing on a screen.

A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

I always look for a local guide, as there is no better way to experience a destination than through the eyes of someone who lives there. They reveal a side of their world you would otherwise miss. On a trip to Pelling, Sikkim, our homestay host taught us *chungi*, a traditional game like hacky sack played with a simple ball made of rubber bands. The goal is to keep it off the ground using only your feet. The children loved it, spending hours kicking the ball around with local kids and completely forgetting about their screens.

When it comes to food, we have a strict policy: we eat local meals for most of our stay. Observing other children eating local cuisine (usually with the host family) naturally encourages the kids to join in, even if they initially ask for familiar food. Homestay food is usually made with warmth and hosts are always accommodating, like toning down spice levels.



BONDS OF MUTUAL RESPECT

India is known for its incredible hospitality, and guests are often given royal treatment. However, this does not mean we should make unreasonable demands. Simple courtesies like a 'please' and 'thank you' followed by a smile are essential. Children pick up these lessons and emulate this behaviour. When staying at a hotel or a homestay, we do our best to leave the rooms as we found them—a simple way of showing respect and appreciation

RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- Be conscious of fellow guests. Keep your volume low while speaking and ensure the kids avoid playing in common areas.
- Teach children to leave the room neat and tidy, just as they found it.
- 'Please' and 'thank you' go a long way. Inculcate these habits.



for our hosts. As a family, we ensure used crockery and cutlery are placed in designated areas, beds are tidied, and garbage is properly disposed of. By observing us, it is now ingrained in the kids to treat the homestay or hotel as their home and follow house rules.

We love conversing with the staff taking care of us, learning about their hopes and aspirations, and sharing details about our city lives. Addressing them by name and enquiring about their families always makes their eyes light up. Over the years, many staff members have continued to keep in touch, wishing us during festivals and birthdays. Some local guides and drivers have even invited us to their homes for tea. I am grateful for these experiences, as they allow us to develop heart-to-heart bonds and learn about different cultures in a simple but impactful way.

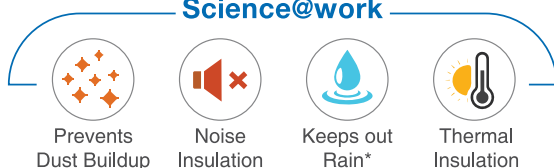


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REFINED TRAVEL

Fostering respect and courtesy in the skies

words by **Riaan Jacob George**



As a frequent flyer, I have witnessed several maladroitnesses of airline passengers and awkward inflight situations. I could fill reams with tales of mid-air social disasters—the lady giving herself a pedicure during a dinner service, a young corporate blissfully unaware of body odour, the CEO who lavishes the entire cabin with details of his loud telephone negotiation, an unabashed frequent flyer who presses the call bell every couple of minutes to summon the flight attendant, and, most recently, the large wedding party who were loud and made a nuisance of themselves. Since we are all in this together, here are some tips to keep in mind on the next flight.

PLEASE DO

- Always use headphones or earbuds when consuming mobile content.
- Wipe down the basin and leave the washroom in a clean state for the next user.
- Return your tray to the cabin crew neatly, without causing a mess.
- Leave your seat just the way you found it, as a courtesy to the next passenger.

PLEASE DON'T

- Have loud conversations. Fellow passengers may be trying to rest or work.
- Stand in the aisle for a long time when passengers are boarding.
- Rush for the doors before the crew announces that it is okay to exit the plane.

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movement and
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GOOD VIBRATIONS

Sound healing is an ancient science that is gaining urban popularity for its ability to release toxins and induce deep relaxation

words by **Geetika Sasan Bhandari**



A Tibetan singing bowl is used to create positive sound and energy

As I lay down on the yoga mat, for my first-ever sound healing session, I tried to keep my mind and body open. I had not sought it out; instead, it was organised for our group, and I was happy to explore it. Our practitioner, Shanto, the founder of Dhyana Shanto SAMA, a centre for sound healing and mindfulness in Goa, explained that this is a guided meditation, and the key is to just relax and let the

sounds wash over you. As we lay in silence, he started to use different instruments—a planetary gong, Himalayan singing bowls, and similar sound tools, but within 15 odd minutes I began to feel a pain in my lower back, which travelled down my leg. I resisted fidgeting but could not lay still; the pain intruded into my thoughts and for the rest of the session, I was very uncomfortable.

Feelings of disappointment swept through me; I always thought I was fairly fit, but

IN WATER

Since our bodies are largely composed of water, an aquatic sound bath is considered very effective. The medium transmits vibrations quite efficiently, allowing the frequencies to reach our cells rather quickly. We are also weightless in water, which makes the session rejuvenating.

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a Shavasana had made me more uncomfortable than a difficult asana. In an attempt to rationalise my utter failure at deriving benefit from the session, I decided that my body was sending me a message: my back needed strengthening. Despite my strength training and freehand exercises, my back was obviously still vulnerable. I then credited the session for allowing me to shut off the noise and tune into my body to listen to what needed attention.

However, when I chatted with Shanto months later and narrated my experience, he simply asked me if the pain lingered post the session. When I said it did not, he said: "Some places need

attention [like my back] but much deeper work happens mystically. We hold emotions in different places so the pain was possibly because your body was releasing pent-up emotions and stress." After all, one of the key benefits of sound healing is to restore balance by aligning and harmonising the body's energy centres or chakras.

Gobsmacked, I decided to delve into it further. Sound healing is an ancient practice, "a simple yet powerful way to heal the body, mind, and spirit," says Shanto, whose spiritual journey started at the age of 24. Non-intrusive, this modality takes you into a deep state of relaxation very quickly, and it works for all age groups, body

types, and fitness levels. Which explains its growing popularity in cities and in corporate workplaces. It is especially good for people in a vulnerable emotional state. "At our core, we are all energy and every cell in our body is vibrating. So, sound healing reaches cells faster, and by using therapeutic sound frequencies, we can promote overall well-being," he adds. Not only is it able to induce a state of deep relaxation, reducing stress and anxiety, but it can also help improve focus and mental clarity, aid in the body's natural healing processes, and help you connect with your inner self.

Intrigued, I signed up for a second sound bath session,

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
A Naad yoga session in progress with Pragya Singh, where participants lie in a hammock; Shanto explaining how sound bath healing releases toxins; A session in water is considered quite efficacious.

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TOP AND BOTTOM
Tibetan singing bowls
are used by many
practitioners; A range of
instruments can be used
for a healing session.

this time in a hammock, at Lifyoga in Delhi. Designed to mirror the safety and security of a womb, the hammock also allows sound to access you from all sides (and work on your root chakra) as you are suspended in the air. After a brief period on the mat, where our practitioner Pragya Singh explained that some people cry, feel dizzy, and are unable to speak post a session because energy entering or leaving the body can shake

you, we were helped into the hammocks. Here, it is practised as Naad yoga (yoga of sound), an age-old practice that uses sound and vibration for transformation. “This modality facilitates the release of energy and toxins—both physical and mental—thereby strengthening the body’s healing mechanisms,” says Singh, who uses crystal bowls, chimes, tuning forks, Tibetan singing bowls, and gongs. As I lay in the

hammock, the last sound I remember was of the ocean. When I woke up, I felt I had been asleep for hours though I realised it was all of 10-12 minutes. Never good at power naps, I was amazed at how I went into such a deeply peaceful state so quickly, waking up relaxed and calm.

The increasing popularity of sound baths can also be attributed to the fact that they require very little from participants. They are easy, convenient, and involve no intrusion. But the benefits are immense; when blockages are opened up and toxins released, there is a sense of lightness of being—emotionally and physically—and a clarity of thought that helps invigorate the mind.

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THE GRATITUDE SHIFT

In a world that trains us to see what is missing, noticing what is present brings about a profound change

words by **Payal Gidwani Tiwari**

Focusing on what you are grateful for increases your happiness quotient

What if the question is not “Why me?” but “What now?”

After 25 years of teaching yoga, I have watched people arrive at their mats carrying the same weight—anxiety disguised as ambition and exhaustion dressed up as productivity. They ask me about poses and breathing techniques, but what they are really asking is: “How do I stop feeling like I am falling behind?”

The answer is not what they expect. It is not a harder practice or

a stricter routine. It is gratitude—not as a nicety, but as a deliberate shift in perception that rewires how we experience everything.

When ‘Why Me?’ Becomes the Only Question

We live in an age where the chase never ends—for success, perfection or validation. When difficulty strikes, we instinctively ask: “Why is this happening to me?” But we never wait for an answer. We are too busy moving, achieving, proving.

Here is what I have learned from thousands of students: Gratitude does

not change what we have. It changes how we see what we have. And that shift—from scarcity to abundance, from lack to presence—changes everything else from within.

This is not toxic positivity. It is not pretending problems do not exist but choosing to notice what is working while accepting what is broken.

The Science of Seeing Differently

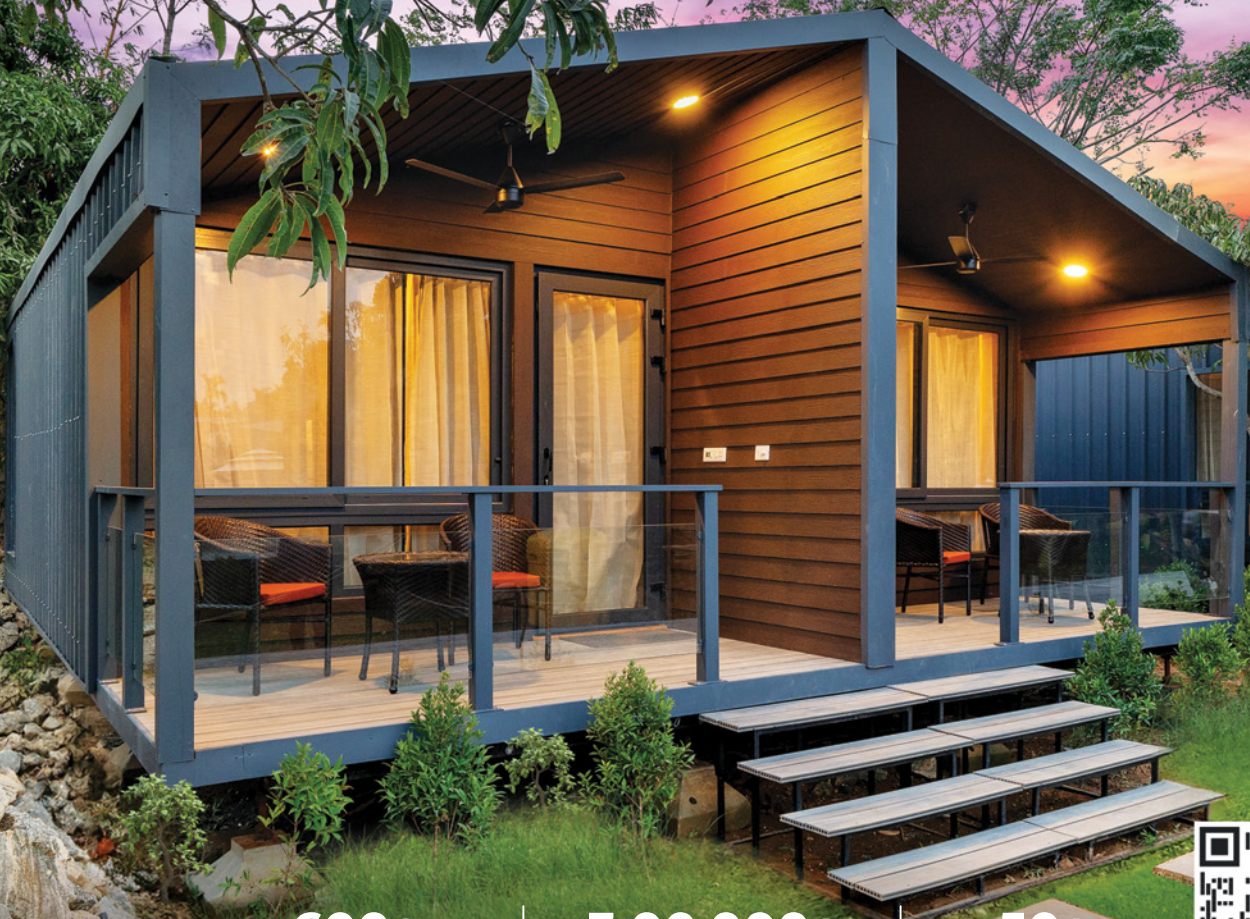
Gratitude is not just philosophy—it is biology. Research shows that practising gratitude

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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Sending dear ones thoughtful messages, without an agenda, is gratifying; Always remember to thank someone who has genuinely helped you; Keeping a journal of gratitude is a great daily practice.



consistently rewires the brain. People who regularly focus on what they are thankful for report higher levels of happiness, lower stress, better sleep, and stronger immune systems.

Your brain has a negativity bias—it is wired to scan for threats and problems. That kept our ancestors alive, but today, it keeps us anxious. Gratitude

is the practice that retrains that scanner.

The Miracles We Overlook

Each breath that sustains us. The body, which has a natural healing ability. Blood flowing silently through our systems. Sunrise and sunset. Trees, rain, and wind. Human connection—the ability to laugh, love, empathise, and communicate.

These are not poetic abstractions. They are biological facts happening right now as you read this, 30,000ft above the ground.

When we pause and honour these simple truths, something shifts. Life becomes richer not because circumstances changed, but because we slowed down enough to witness it rather than just live through it.

Three Daily Gratitude Practices

Morning—the First Five Minutes: Before reaching for your phone, name three things you are grateful for: A full night's sleep. The body that woke you. The coffee you are about to drink. This is not about being profound—it is about noticing the ordinary machinery of your life that works without you asking.

Midday—Random Acts of Noticing: Smile at a stranger. Help someone. Thank a colleague genuinely. This is gratitude in motion. They shift your attention from what you need to what you can give.

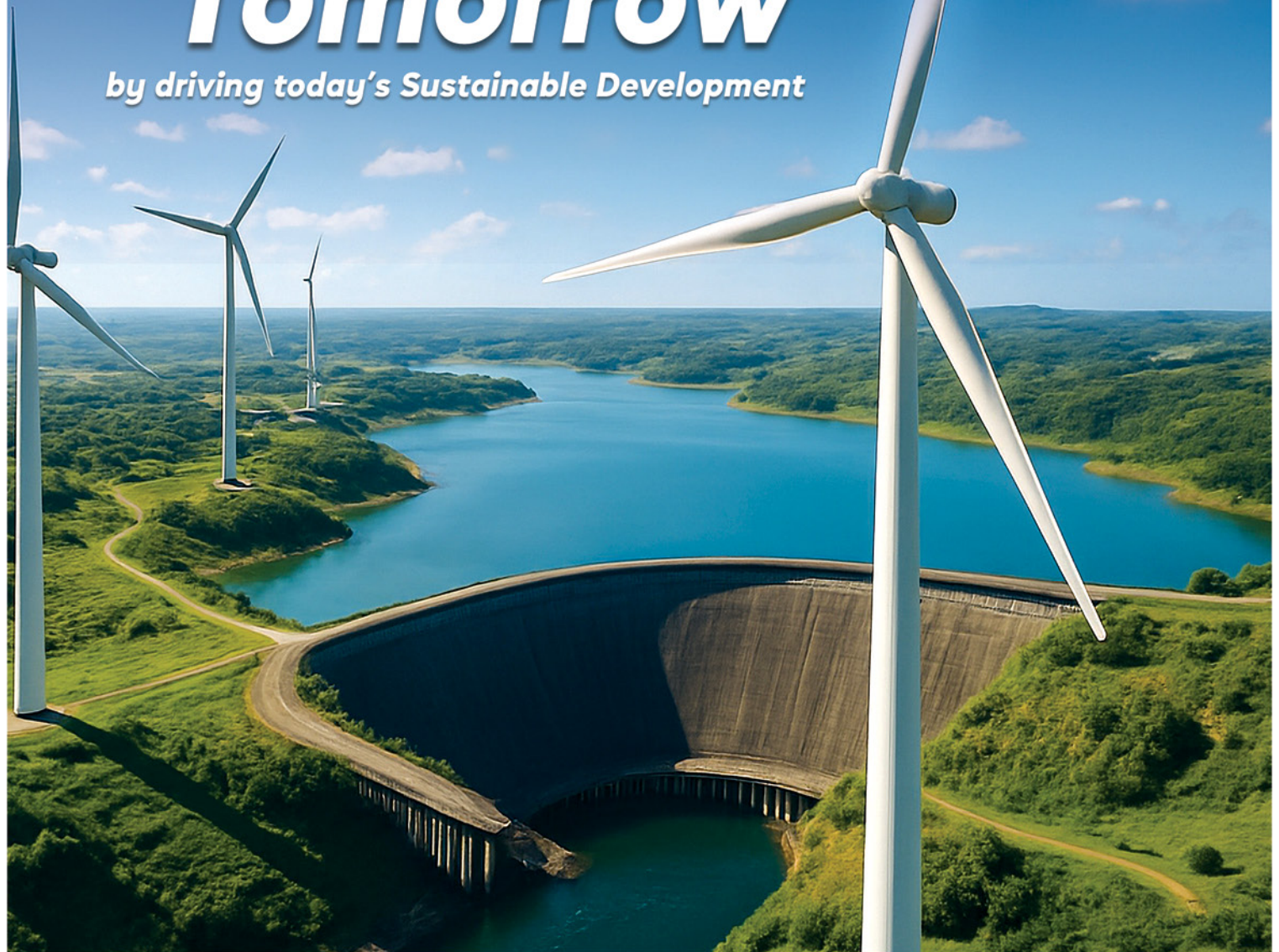
Evening—The Before-Bed Review: Recall one challenge and one success from your day. Not to judge, but to ask: "What did I

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FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHT FOR H1 FY26

Disbursements

₹ 1,15,470
CRORE  **27%**

Net Interest Income

₹ 10,608
CRORE  **15%**

Net Profit

₹ 8,877
CRORE  **19%**

H1 FY26 vs H1 FY25



FIVE GRATITUDE PRACTICES FOR YOUR JOURNEY

- Begin meals with silence or a breath of thanks—it shifts digestion from stress to ease.
- Notice three things you can see, hear, and feel right now—it grounds you in the present.
- Text someone to say “thinking of you” with no agenda—connection is a two-way gift.
- Walk barefoot when you land from a flight—physical grounding amplifies mental gratitude.
- Keep a one-line gratitude note on your phone—review it when turbulence (literal or metaphorical) hits.

*Saying a silent prayer
before every meal
makes it joyous*

learn?” This practice turns your day into a teachable moment.

Gratitude as Self-Awareness

In over two decades of teaching, one truth stands above all others: loving yourself deeply is the biggest gift. But you cannot

love what you do not know.

Gratitude requires honest self-observation—noticing your emotions, thoughts, and patterns without judgement. It is holding up a mirror that shows you who you are, not who you think you should be.

We are so caught up in the daily chaos that challenges often take the front seat and blessings take the back. The shift happens here: Even this shall pass. There is something to learn here. That is not denial—it is choosing to see difficulty as temporary and instructive.

Once you develop gratitude toward the smallest things with a positive mindset, the chaos settles. Not because life gets easier, but because you get steadier. You become peaceful, content, joyful

from within, and attract what matches that energy.

The Four-Breath Reset

Here is something you can do right now, in your seat: Close your eyes. Take four deep, conscious breaths. Notice how your racing thoughts begin to slow. Your emotions settle. A pause creates stillness. You cannot control what happens but you can control the pause between what happens and how you respond.

Make it a ritual. With even a slight pause, clarity is born.

The Choice in the Chaos

Here is the truth that took me years to learn but takes seconds to forget when I am overwhelmed: You cannot wait for peace to feel grateful. Gratitude creates peace. You do not wait for everything to settle before feeling grateful. You choose gratitude in the middle of chaos. The moment you say, “I am grateful for this breath, for this moment”—even when everything feels wrong—something stops. The spiral slows. You remember you are not just surviving; you are here, aware, and capable of noticing.

Gratitude is not a condition—it is a choice. It is radical because the world always tells you to focus on what is broken. It is powerful because it changes your internal climate when you cannot change the external circumstances.

YOUR AIR INDIA



FLEET

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

p 98 ↑

ROUTES

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

p 103 ↑

PARTNERS

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

p 112 ↑

TOP AND BOTTOM
Ottimo at West View offers breathtaking vistas of Delhi's green belt; This rooftop restaurant exudes the charm of a colonial dining room with polished stone walls and wrought iron chandeliers.

DINE WITH A VIEW

Delhi-based entrepreneur **Kalyani Chawla** picks out the capital's prettiest eateries with gorgeous vistas

CIRRUS 9, THE OBEROI

With sweeping views of Lutyens' Delhi and the historic Humayun's Tomb, accompanied by some of the best cocktails in the city, this rooftop bar is unparalleled. My favourites are the Whiskey Sour, the Dirty Martini, and the spicy edamame.

Dr Zakir Hussain Marg

OTTIMO AT WEST VIEW, ITC MAURYA

Being an avid reader myself, the stacked books in this rustic, old-world restaurant lend a charming, cosy vibe. An uninterrupted view of the entire city can be enjoyed with their lovely cocktails, like the Dirty Martini, or a glass of premium wine, which beautifully complements its fine-dine Italian

menu. It is a great establishment to enjoy Sunday brunches in, with their wood-fired pizzas, served with a side of live music.

Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri

ROOH

Offering delicious modern Indian dishes with generous portions and top-notch quality, Rooh is a gem. The minimalist interiors are chic, but the outdoor terrace steals the show with stunning views of the Qutub Minar—perfect for chilly Delhi nights. They serve great cocktails too.

H-5/1, Ambawatta One Complex, Kalkadas Marg

LE CIRQUE, THE LEELA PALACE

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modern Franco-Italian-inspired cuisine—mouth-watering risottos, pastas, and guilt-free desserts—every dish is a delight. The presentation is stunning, and the cosy, elegant vibe makes it perfect for a special evening. Friendly staff render the experience even richer.

Diplomatic Enclave, Chanakyapuri

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COBA

Who does not enjoy a hearty brunch in a restaurant nestled amidst lush greenery? That is what Coba is—a multi-cuisine restaurant; their Japanese fare being my absolute favourite. The sushi and the roast chicken are a vibe. The contemporary ambience



is perfect for Delhi winters.

Vasant Square Mall, Vasant Kunj

BO TAI

I love the experience of modern Thai cuisine here along with breathtaking views of the Qutub Minar and the historical neighbourhood. Their dim sums are toothsome as are the Thai salads. Do not miss their decadent Coconut Crème Brûlée.

6/4 Kalkadas Marg, Mehrauli



TOP TO BOTTOM

The food served at Le Cirque is artistically presented; Cirrus 9's Signature Skyline Cocktail, The Qila Legacy, is inspired by the Purana Qila; The outdoor seating area of Cirrus 9.

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OUR WINGS

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

Airbus A319



06

Boeing 777-300ER



19

Airbus A320neo



94

Boeing 777-200LR



03

Airbus A320ceo



04

**Boeing 787-9
Dreamliner**



06

Airbus A321ceo



13

**Boeing 787-8
Dreamliner**



26

Airbus A321neo



10

**FLEET
STRENGTH
187**

Airbus A350-900

06

*Total number as on 8th October 2025;
This fleet count is exclusive of Air India Express
(Air India Group's low-cost carrier)

THE NEW AIR INDIA EXPERIENCE ABOARD THE A320NEO

Air India has successfully completed the retrofit programme for its legacy Airbus A320neo fleet with brand-new cabin interiors in the airline's vibrant new livery. This milestone marks the transformation of all 27 legacy Airbus A320neo aircraft in Air India's fleet, completed within a short one-year time frame. The programme commenced in September 2024 as part of a broader US\$400 million initiative to modernise Air India's entire legacy fleet.

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- Delhi-Kolkata
- Delhi-Chennai
- Mumbai-Bengaluru
- Mumbai-Hyderabad
- Mumbai-Chennai
- Mumbai-Kolkata, in addition to many others

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Air India and Airbus have inaugurated an advanced 12,000sqm pilot training centre at the Air India Training Academy in Gurugram. This state-of-the-art facility will train more than 5,000 new pilots over the next decade to support the exponential growth of commercial aviation in India. Equipped with 10 Full Flight Simulators (FFSs), along with advanced classrooms and briefing rooms, the facility is designed to train pilots for the Airbus A320 and A350 aircraft families, and its courses are approved by both the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA). The facility is currently equipped with two Full Flight Simulators for Airbus A320 family aircraft.

MORE FLIGHTS TO THE UK

Air India has expanded its services to the United Kingdom as part of its Northern Winter 2025 schedule, adding a fourth daily flight between Delhi and London (Heathrow). This increases Air India's frequency from 24x weekly to 28x weekly. All Air India flights on the high-demand route are operated by the airline's new Airbus A350-900 and Boeing 787-9 aircraft. This ensures the consistent availability of Air India's best widebody cabin products between Delhi and London, with both aircraft types featuring three cabin classes: Business Class, Premium Economy, and Economy Class.

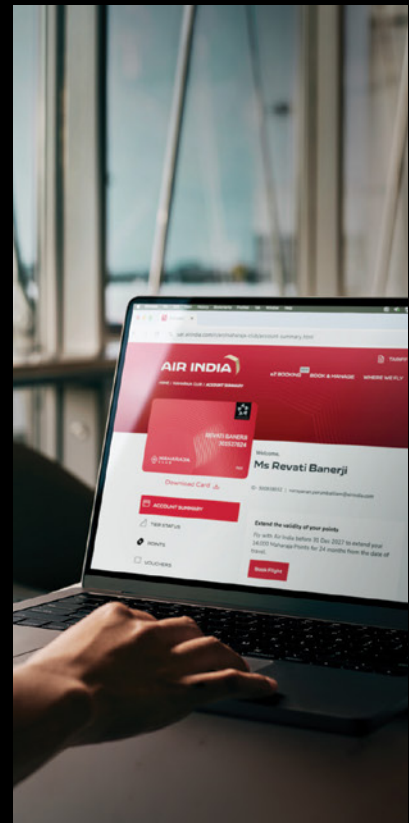


↑ INCREASED CONNECTIVITY

Air India has added 174 weekly flights on key domestic and short-haul international routes, operated by its single-aisle aircraft, as part of the Northern Winter Schedule. This expansion enhances connectivity to major cities in India and Southeast Asia in high demand. Additions to short-haul international routes include those to Kuala Lumpur and Denpasar (Bali), both from Delhi. Domestic connectivity includes new routes like Delhi-Jaipur and Delhi-Jaisalmer, along with an increased number of flights between major Indian cities.

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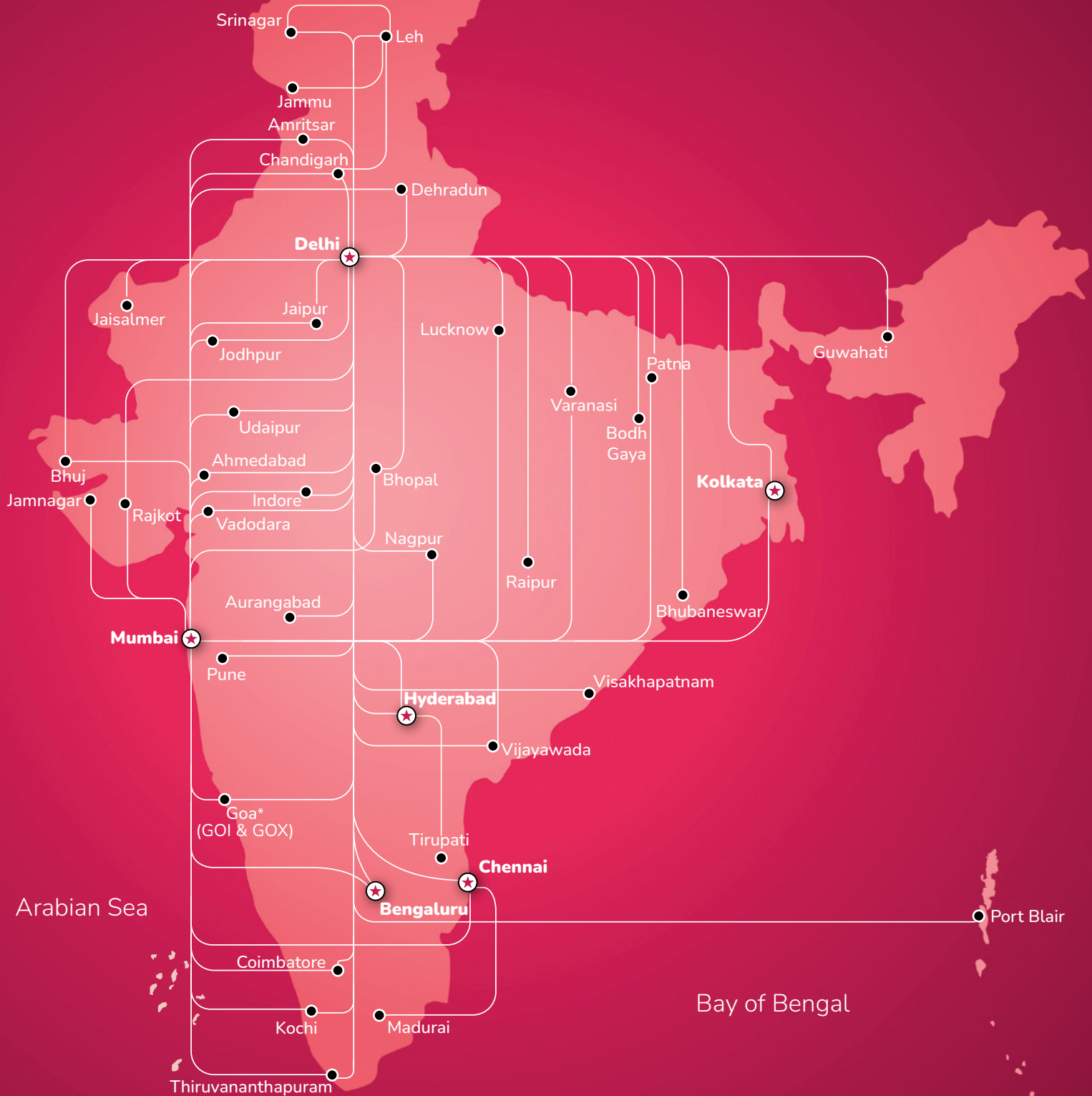


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DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



*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

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

*Route map as on 8th October 2025

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Air India flies non-stop to 39 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	
Vienna (VIE)	←————→	DEL	
Zurich (ZRH)	←————→	DEL	
Tel Aviv (TLV)	←————→	DEL*	

UK



Birmingham (BHX)	←————→	DEL	ATQ	
<u>London</u>				
Heathrow (LHR)	←————→	DEL	BOM	BLR
Gatwick (LGW)	←————→	ATQ	AMD	GOX*

North America



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

Middle East



Dammam (DMM)	←————→	BOM			
Doha (DOH)	←————→	DEL	BOM		
Dubai (DXB)	←————→	DEL	BOM	COK	HYD
Jeddah (JED)	←————→	DEL	BOM		
Riyadh (RUH)	←————→	DEL	BOM		

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*Flights to Tel Aviv, and London Gatwick (from Goa, Mopa) are temporarily suspended

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

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*Route map as on 8th October 2025



Far East

Hong Kong (HKG)	↔	DEL
Seoul (ICN)	↔	DEL
Tokyo (HND)	↔	DEL



South East Asia

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



Australia

Melbourne (MEL)	↔	DEL
Sydney (SYD)	↔	DEL



Africa

Mauritius (MRU)	↔	BOM
-----------------	---	-----

Indian Subcontinent

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

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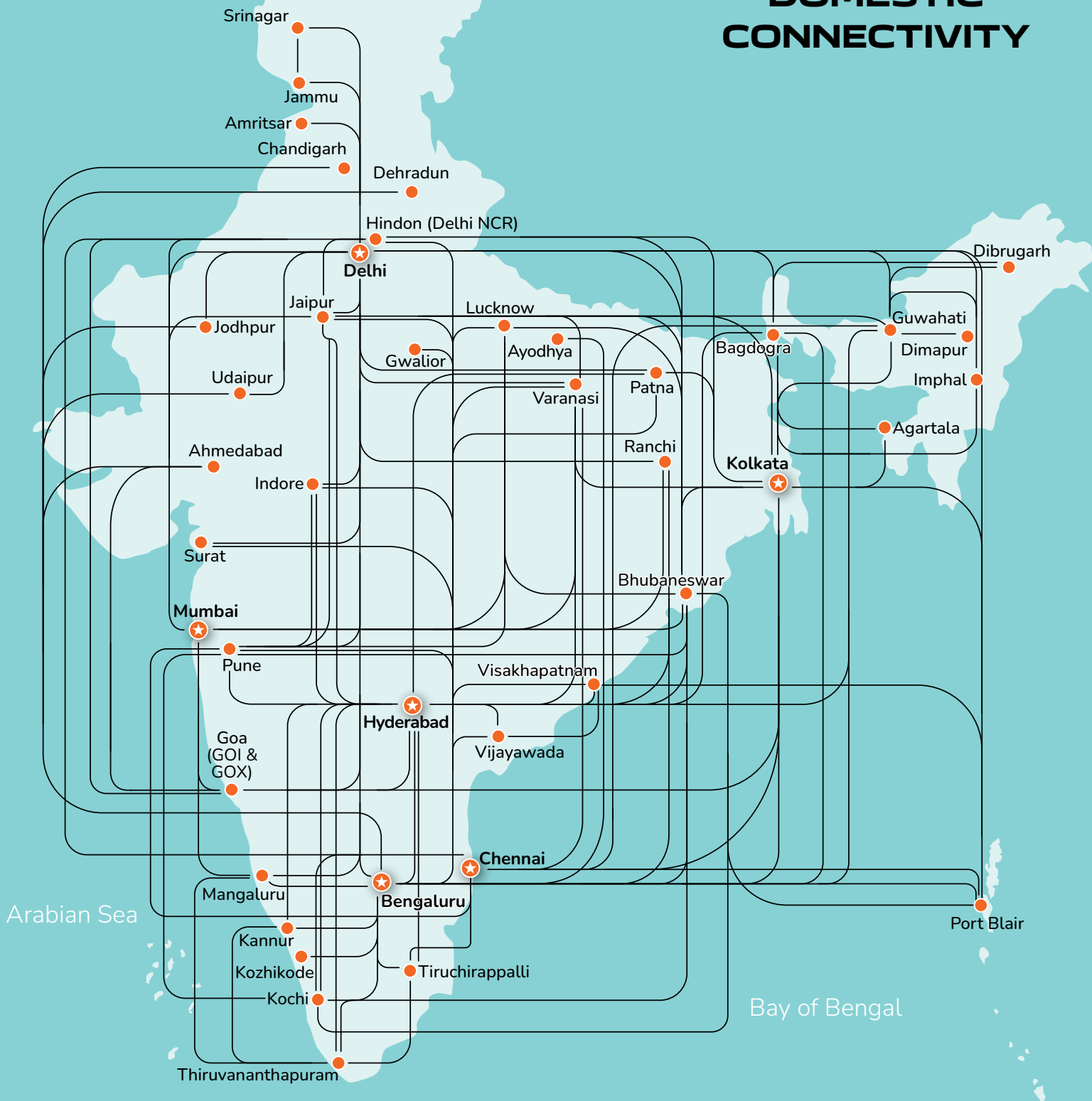
- Close and restart your browser, then type **byod.airindia.com**
- If this does not work, try an alternative browser and type **byod.airindia.com**
- Power your device off and on, then repeat the steps

SCAN TO STREAM

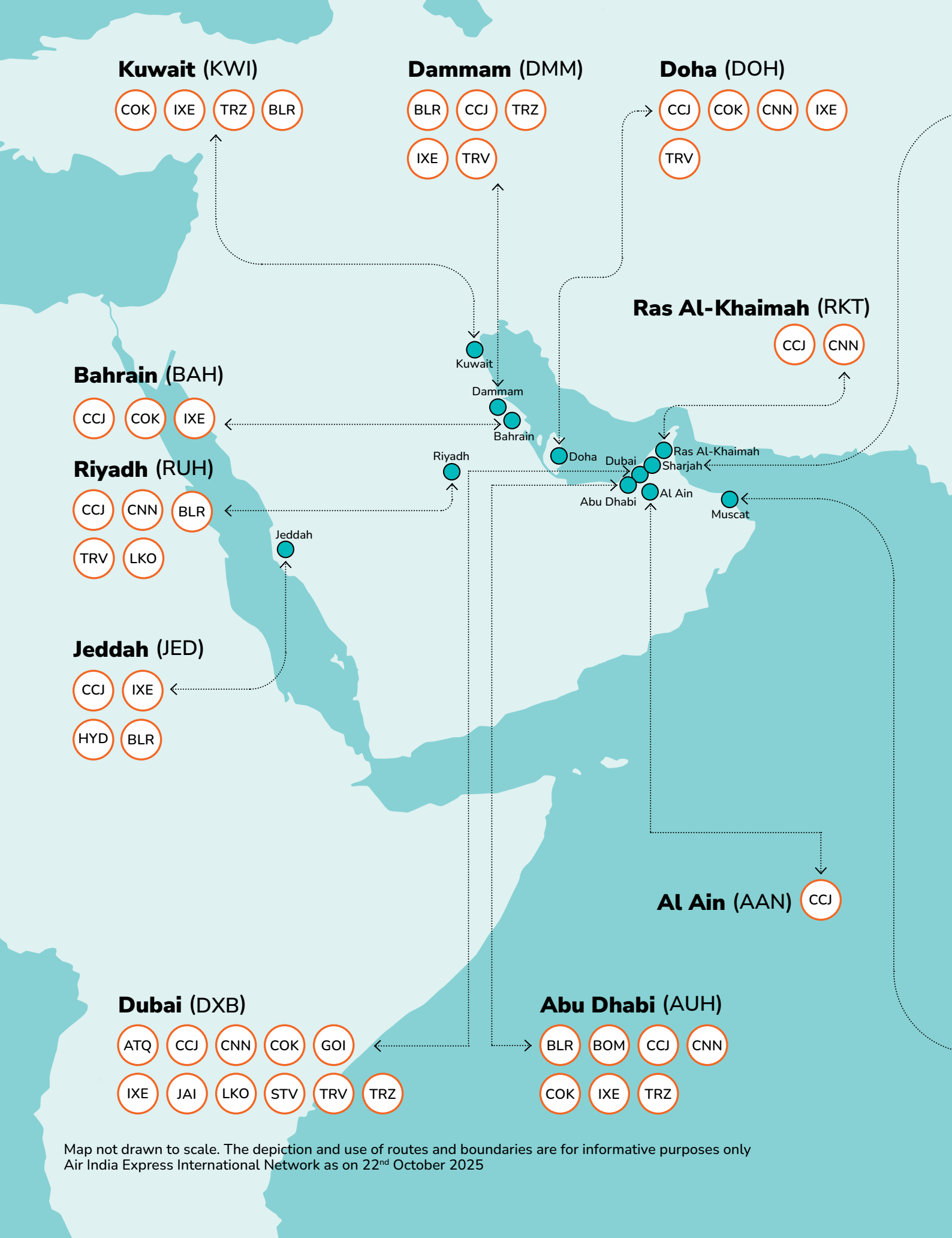


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**INTERNATIONAL
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Sharjah (SHJ)



Kathmandu (KTM)

BLR

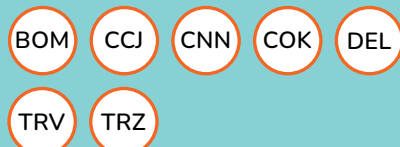
Bangkok (BKK)

PNQ STV BLR

Phuket (HKT)

HYD

Muscat (MCT)



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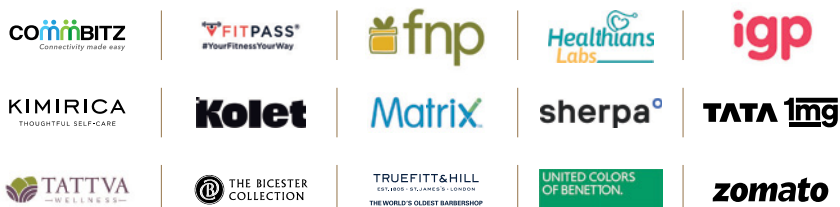
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A cluster of densely-packed houses that sheltered over 200 military families in the 1960s and 1970s, today, Treasure Hill is a vibrant art community. The area is quaint, perfect for a lazy stroll. Here, you will find fortune-cookie installations, elaborate murals, boutiques, and you can even stop for coffee. No matter what time of the year you visit, there is always some kind of arty event—an exhibition, a light show or something else.



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

BROADCAST REGARDING INDIAN CONSTITUTION

नवंबर 26, 1949 को भारतीय संविधान ऐतिहासिक रूप से अपनाया गया, जो 26 जनवरी, 1950 को लागू हुआ। यह सभी भारतीयों के लिए लोकतंत्र, समानता, और न्याय का प्रतीक है।

November 26, 1949, marks the historic adoption of the Constitution of India, which came into effect on 26th January 1950. It is a cornerstone of democracy, equality, and justice for all Indians.

150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SHRI BIRSA MUNDA

भारतीय आदिवासी स्वतंत्रता सेनानी, श्री बिरसा मुंडा की 150वीं जयंती के अवसर पर, हम उनके साहस और राष्ट्र के प्रति सेवा के लिए उनका सम्मान करते हैं।

On the 150th birth anniversary of the iconic tribal freedom fighter from India, Shri Birsa Munda, we express our respect for his unwavering courage and service to the nation.

MISSION LIFE

मिशन लाइफ, जिसे माननीय प्रधान मंत्री श्री नरेद्र 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 अनुमति देता है। सेवा संबंधी किसी और जानकारी के लिए, आप airsewa.gov.in पर लॉगिन कर सकते हैं।

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

DIGI YATRA

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

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has introduced Digi Yatra facilities at major

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

PROHIBITION OF AERIAL/ GROUND PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOGRAPHY, AND CARRIAGE OF SENSORY EQUIPMENT – SECURITY GUIDELINES AT DEFENCE AIRFIELDS (IAF JUAS)

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 टर्मिनल, विमानों और हवाई अड्डे के आसपास के क्षेत्रों सहित विभिन्न स्थानों पर लागू होता है, जैसे की:

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

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

SEAMLESS TRAVEL

India recently introduced the 'Fast Track Immigration-Trusted Traveller Programme (FTI-TTP)' to speed up Immigration Clearance for international travellers. The objective behind this implementation is to promote international mobility by developing world-class immigration facilities. The programme will be executed in two phases, with the first one (already in action) covering Indian nationals and OCI card holders. In the second phase, foreign travellers would be covered.

Currently, this facility is available at the following airports: Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kochi, and Ahmedabad. Subsequently, it will be implemented at other major airports, namely Lucknow, Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram, Navi Mumbai, Mopa, Jaipur, and Mangaluru.

HOW TO REGISTER



Applicant will apply online for Trusted Traveller Programme (TTP) Service (www.ftittp.mha.gov.in)



Processing of Application by Bureau of Immigration (BoI)



Biometrics enrolment of the approved applicants



Applicant is registered under TTP



Passengers are fast tracked through e-gates



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MY LOCAL EXPERIENCE

Udaipur is one of my favourite destinations in India and I have been there five times in the past couple of years. The music scene really touched me, and I keep in touch with a few musicians I met there. I sat with them when they performed and it made me a better musician.

LIFETIME MEMORIES

Hospitality is amazing in Udaipur—be it in a big hotel or a small cosy guest house. I enjoyed the simple places—the small rooftop cafés with lake views and the ghats. Since I went with my family, we enjoyed pottery and boating, and spent evenings listening to music.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

You must have the *dal baati churma*. For a quick hit of local street flavour, the *mirchi vada* pairs well with chai. Our go-to local shop was JMB sweets.

A HUB OF HIDDEN TREASURES

Udaipur is charmingly chaotic and all about hidden treasures. You will not find malls here, so expect traditional arts, especially miniature paintings, embossed leather-bound journals, and, of course, traditional silver jewellery.

— As told to **Veenu Singh**

Aparshakti Khurana (and family): Self; Rest: Shutterstock

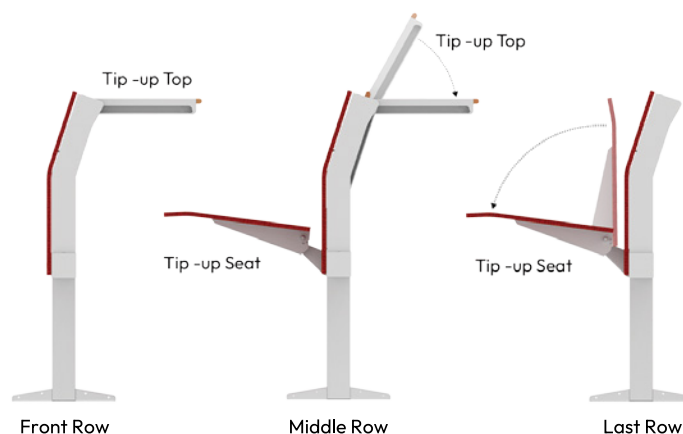
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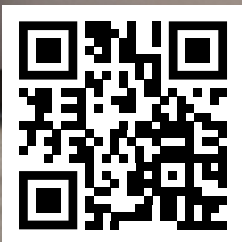
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