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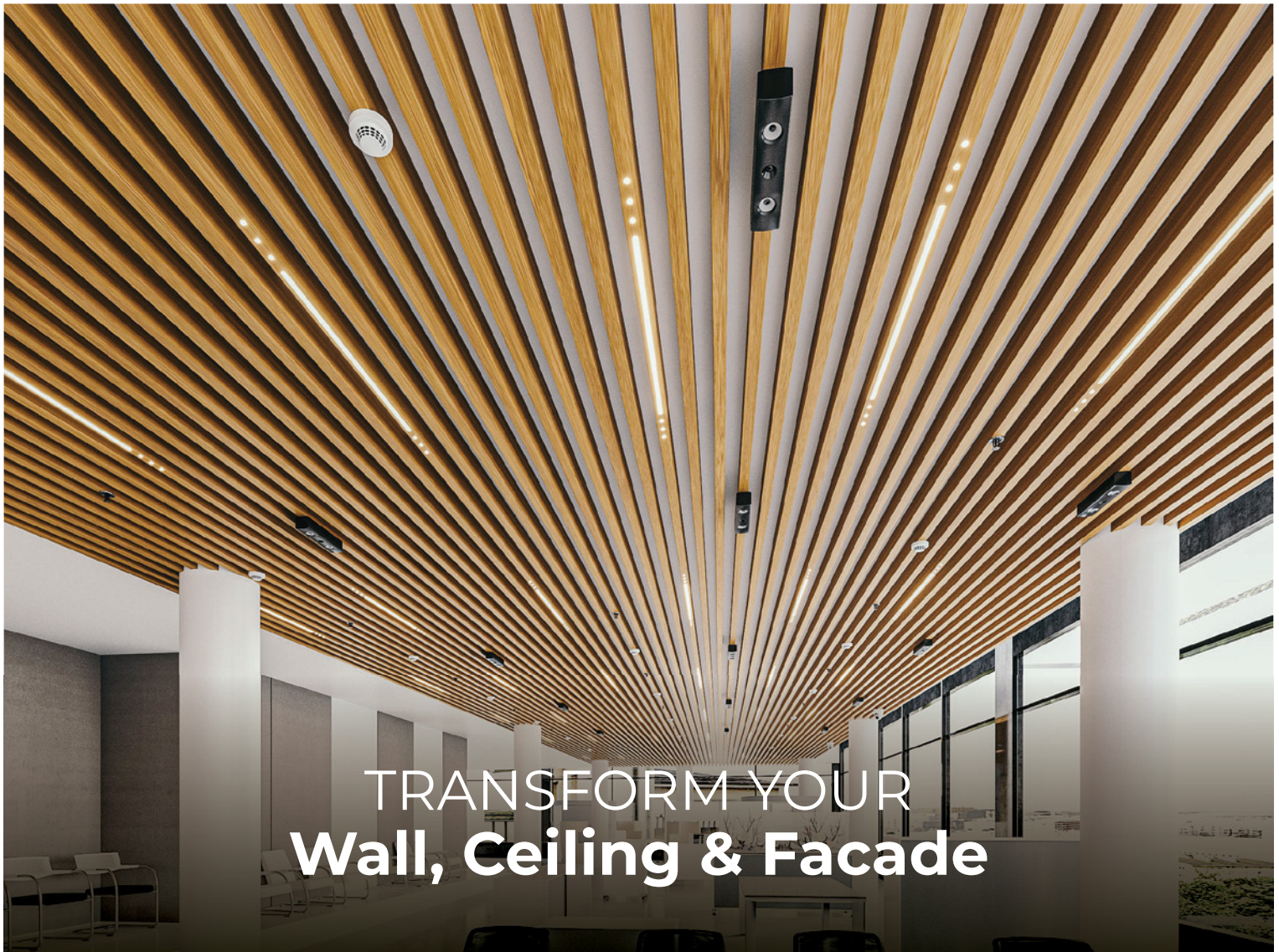
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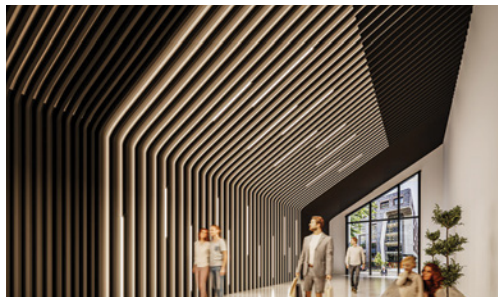
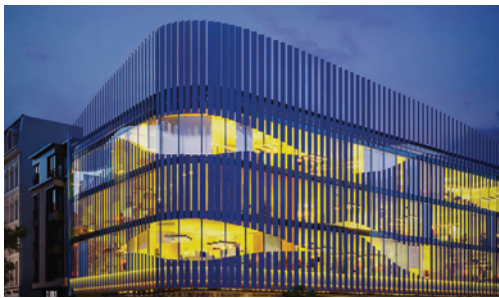
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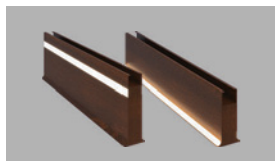
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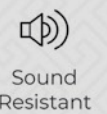


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# EDITOR'S NOTE

**As** we inch closer to the end of the year, we embrace a season of gratitude and connection. It is a time to pause, relax, and reflect on the changes that have left an impression on our lives.

Last month, we experienced a profound loss with the passing of Ratan Tata, the man who brought Air India back home to the Tata Group. He leaves behind a strong legacy marked by compassion and vision, which will continue to inspire us and remind us to cherish the light he brought to the world.

In keeping with this spirit of finding inspiration and joy around us, we present our Cover Story, a curation of one-of-its-kind immersive adventures. Inspiration is a heartening feeling that helps open doors to new possibilities and opportunities. We simply need to keep an open mind. So, hop onboard as we take you on an exhilarating journey—from an indigenous meal in the Atacama Desert and witnessing the Northern Lights from a glass igloo in Rovaniemi to diving into the world of pearl farming in Ras Al Khaimah and learning the ropes of wool weaving in Leh.

For more such unique experiences, join us to discover New York's lesser-known cultural offerings that bring as much delight as the city's other dazzling attractions. Explore the quaint Welsh 'Town of Books', albeit with a different lens. And lastly, journey to the serene environs of Nainital for a blissful sojourn in the lap of nature.

We hope these stories inspire you as we continue to bring you the very best in travel and heritage. This is your window to the world.

Happy reading and Namaste!

— **Namaste.ai** Editorial Team



**EDITOR'S PICK OF THE MONTH**  
*A curated fusion of the finest events, travels, exquisite cuisine, and enriching experiences, presenting a snapshot of life's vibrant mosaic.*



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Toronto-based Nupur has worked and lived in five countries. Her last home was Japan, where she spent half a decade. From watching ice drift from an icebreaker ship in Hokkaido, to occasionally covering a story from an active volcano—she has done it all.

↓ page 36



**Shivya Nath**  
@shivya

She is an award-winning traveller and storyteller, and a passionate advocate for slow, solo, and sustainable travel. Shivya lived out of two bags for seven years and teaches aspiring creators how to get paid to travel the world with purpose. Connect with her on her travel blog, *The Shooting Star*.



**Dr. Siddhant Bhargava**  
@dr.siddhant.bhargava

He is a fitness and nutritional scientist, and one of the biggest health-based content creators in India with close to half a million followers. Siddhant addresses nutrition issues and advises on how to live a healthy life.

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**Kshipra Bhat**  
@kshiprabhat

She travels often and loves to pen down anything that catches her eye. An avid reader and a foodie, she loves narrating stories about cuisine and travel. When not on the move, you will mostly find her transforming businesses at a global financial institution, where she works full time, and spending quality time with her daughter.



**Riddhi Doshi**  
@riddhi\_doshi\_anand

An independent journalist and blogger at *ivorystation.com*, she is based out of Mumbai and writes about travel, art, culture, climate change, and anything that she finds interesting. She is also a pet parent and textile lover.

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LED Furniture

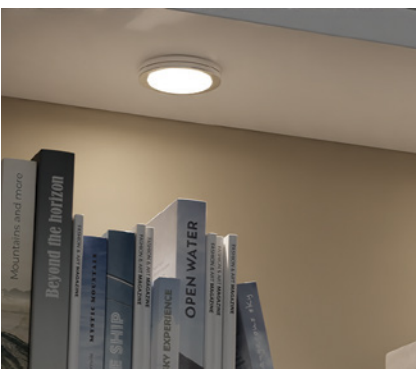
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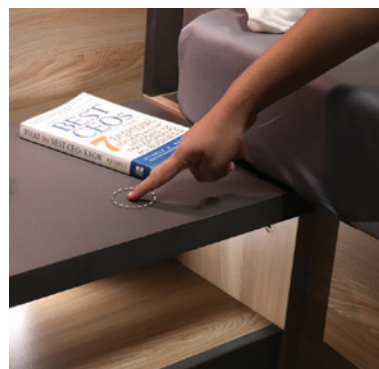
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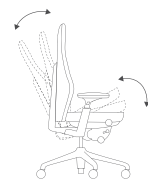
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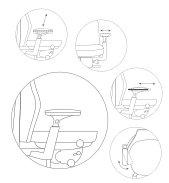
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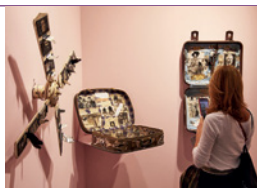


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Spot the Northern Lights from the Aurora Hut at Lake Inari in Lapland, Finland  
**Cover image courtesy**  
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Ratan Tata  
at an Aero Show  
at the Yelahanka  
Air Force Station,  
Bengaluru, in 2007



# THE MAN WHO GAVE WINGS TO OUR DREAMS

We pay tribute to the illustrious Ratan Tata,  
whose passion for aviation knew no bounds

words by **Harish Bhat**



# A

true visionary, Ratan Tata may no longer be with us, but he will always hold a cherished place in our hearts and memories. He was Chairman of the Tata Group and the Tata Trusts for several years. He was the face of Indian industry worldwide and a mentor to young India. But above all, he was a proud Indian, who gave wings to our dreams.

Even as Tata pursued pathbreaking, pioneering initiatives in his career and championed social causes with missionary zeal, there were two passions that stayed close to him—his love for aircraft and cars. His passion for flying dated from his childhood, when a small model plane was one of his favourite possessions.

Later, when he was a student at Cornell University in the US, Tata obtained his first pilot's licence. Lessons were expensive, so he earned some of the money required for this by washing planes. A few of his initial flights around Ithaca, where Cornell University is located, were filled with adventure. These student-day sorties appear to have cemented his passion for the skies.

This fervour would keep reappearing at so many points in his life. In 2007, at 69, Tata became the oldest Indian to fly an F-16 aircraft at the Aero India show in Bengaluru. The iconic image of Tata boarding the F-16 has been, for millions of young Indians, an inspiring 'Top Gun' moment. Move over, Tom Cruise.

Later, in 2022, despite being unwell

and at the advanced age of 85, he used an ambu-lift to board an Airbus 350, the long-range plane that Air India was then in the process of acquiring. An A350 had arrived in Mumbai for a demo flight. Tata went to the flight deck and sat on the jump seat behind the pilots. He experienced the flight for 40 minutes and appeared to have thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

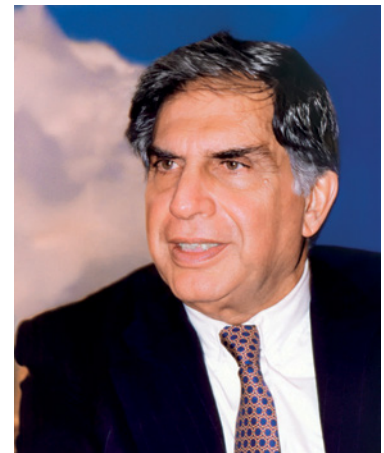
One of the defining points of Tata's life was also centred on aviation. This was the Tata Group's re-acquisition of Air India in 2022, nearly 70 years after it had been nationalised by the Government. Here was an airline that had originally been founded by JRD Tata, coming back home. Nothing could have given Tata greater joy.

When this acquisition was announced in 2021, Tata had said in a statement: "On an emotional note, Air India, under the leadership of Mr JRD Tata, had, at one time, gained the reputation of being one of the most prestigious airlines in the world. Tatas will have the opportunity of regaining the image and reputation it enjoyed in earlier years. JRD Tata would have been overjoyed if he was in our midst today."

Later, when the Tata Group had assumed ownership of Air India, Tata recorded a very special welcome message for all passengers onboard the airline. He said, "The Tata Group



**THE ICONIC  
IMAGE  
OF TATA  
BOARDING  
THE F-16 HAS  
BEEN AN  
INSPIRING  
'TOP GUN'  
MOMENT."**



welcomes Air India's new customers and is excited to work together to make Air India the airline of choice in terms of passenger comfort and service."

At the Tata Group and Air India, we believe that the greatest homage that we can pay to Ratan Tata is to fulfil this vision—to make Air India a world-class airline that always delivers the very best to its passengers. Air India's Vihaan.AI initiative is dedicated to exactly this objective.

Ratan Tata is no more with us today. But at Air India, his memory lives on in our aircraft, every day, on every single flight. He continues to inspire us to deliver the very best to all of you who have chosen to fly with us. We are committed to make our nation proud by fulfilling his dreams for Air India.

*(Harish Bhat is an Advisor and Director at the Tata Group. He was previously the Brand Custodian at Tata Sons)*



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# BLISSFUL ESCAPES

Revel in the wonder and excitement  
of four very different yet  
immersive experiences that  
will leave you inspired



# A WARM WEAVE

Delve into the art of crafting pashmina wool, with locals, in the awe-inspiring landscape of Ladakh

words by **Riddhi Doshi**



Lena Ladakh

## BEST TIME TO VISIT

Ladakh is best visited from April to July, but **winter** allows travellers to enjoy the **Chadar Trek** and snow leopard safaris.



### FACING PAGE

Top and bottom: Lena Ladakh is an all-women startup that works with the local community; Spinning woollen yarn in the Changthang Valley.

### TOP TO BOTTOM

The yarns are dyed with marigold, walnut, and madder, and then turned into rugs; A traditional loom; Shepherdess with her cattle.



### GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Leh from Delhi.



**W**hen the sun begins to set, the village

of Kharnak, in Ladakh's Changthang Valley, 15,000ft above sea level, comes to life. Hundreds of Changras, the goats that grow pashmina wool on their bellies, descend from the mountains after a long day of searching for green pastures. Once the goats are in their pens, the women of the semi-nomadic Changpa tribe show us hand-spun pashmina and sheep skeins. They use the latter to weave their clothes but the delicate pashmina is sent to Leh to be made into finer clothing.

I follow these threads to slow-textile label Lena Ladakh Pashmina's workshop, where I learn the art of dyeing and weaving the soft cashmere wools. I throw in pashmina and camel wool threads into

boiling marigold dye, soak them with excitement, and then wash the excess in water. After quick rounds of hot *kahwa* (a traditional saffron-infused beverage), I get ready to weave.

I pass my long, threaded needle up and down alternative strings of my frame. Weaving, I realise, is hard work but equally soothing and meditative. I can feel my breathing slow down and, gradually, the world around me dissolves. I even forget to check my phone for hours, a big win.

Later, looking back, I realise that this moment also perfectly encapsulates the experience of Ladakh. This region teaches you to be in the present, to be in awe of nature yet one with it. Finally, as I contemplate my creation, I find that it will help me bookmark this adventure and cherish the smaller joys of life.

# FINE CATCH

Discover the ancient practice of pearl farming in a middle-eastern haven, Ras Al Khaimah

words by **Satarupa Paul**

The air felt cool against my face as our wooden boat set sail from Ras Al Khaimah through the waters of the Arabian Gulf. The boat felt like a relic from another era, the sea beneath us a constant shifting canvas of blue. Our destination was a floating platform, with a pearl diving boat of yore anchored behind it.

This was Suwaidi Pearls, the world's only and Arab's first modern pearl farm, established by Abdulla Rashed Al Suwaidi in 2004. It looked unassuming but the history it carried was

profound. Long before oil defined the Arabian Gulf, pearls were the region's most precious commodity. For thousands of years, pearl divers risked their lives for the chance to uncover these sought-after gems. But with the rise of cultured pearls, the industry nearly vanished. Suwaidi, descended from generations of pearl divers, revived this heritage with a new, modern approach—sustainable farming.

"Pearl diving was a way of life," our guide Obaid said, as he walked us through the history of this ancient trade. "Divers would spend months at sea, surviving on dates



Ras Al Khaimah Tourism Development Authority (RAKTDA)



**FACING PAGE**

*Suwaidi Pearls is the only Arabian pearl farm in the world*

**TOP TO BOTTOM**

*The pearl farm is near the fishing village of Al Rams in Ras Al Khaimah, the UAE; Visitors can even buy pearls; This trip is a perfect blend of history, culture, and natural wonders.*



**BEST TIME TO VISIT**

Between **October and April**, when the weather is cooler. After hitting the jackpot, visitors can take their very own Arabian pearls home for a memorable keepsake.

and coffee, risking their lives with every dive.”

Obaid showed us the different types of pearl oysters, the various grades of pearls, and how these oysters are cultivated here, nurtured in baskets that rest on the seafloor, growing alongside coral reefs and other marine life. It’s a delicate balance between preserving the ocean’s ecosystem and continuing the craft that has sustained this region for millennia.

He then asked for a volunteer, and when I eagerly stepped ahead, he handed me a small knife. With careful precision, I pried the shell open. Inside, I felt a smooth, hard object beneath the oyster’s soft tissue—a pearl. “You’re lucky,” Obaid smiled. “Only 60 per cent of farmed oysters produce a pearl.”



**GETTING THERE**

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



As I held the shiny white gem in the palm of my hand, it was more than just a discovery. It felt like I had touched a piece of history, connected to the countless divers who had done the same centuries before. But this was not just about the pearls. It was about preserving a legacy, ensuring that future generations can experience the lost culture of pearl diving in a way that respects the delicate balance of the sea.

Top to bottom: RAKTDA, Satarupa Paul, RAKTDA

**W**hen our bus rolled into the vast and wild Atacama Desert, in the globe's deep south in Chile, I was convinced that nothing could grow or survive in its dry, barren, infinite nothingness. While staying at the locally-owned Terrantai Lodge in San Pedro de Atacama—a heritage house restored with adobe (a type of clay used as a building material), cactus, and stone walls and roofs—our hosts convinced me otherwise. We only needed to venture to Restaurante Ephedra to taste the wild flavours of Atacama, they said, and they were correct.

Surrounded by the brown-orange hues and star-studded skies the area



# EAT, STAY, LOVE

Taste the indigenous and  
vegan flavours of Chile's  
Atacama Desert

words by **Shivya Nath**



**FACING PAGE**

Top and bottom: Ephedra opened in May 2024; Spring is a good time to visit San Pedro de Atacama.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**  
Pumpkin Chupe is on Ephedra's menu; Grapes grow in the Atacama desert; Traditional stone architecture at Terrantai Lodge; A desert lake.



is best known for, Ephedra turned out to be a joyous culinary experience beyond anything I could have ever imagined.

On my five-course vegan tasting menu were wild herbs and flowers foraged from the desert, and veggies sourced from local communities. There was kombucha brewed with the *suico* flower, which grows wild only when it rains (a rarity in this expanse); native purple potato chips; a sorbet made of desert herbs like *rica rica*; and my favourite—the desert-inspired dessert of vegan macarons textured like the rugged mountains we could see out of the window.

Every course was also accompanied by stories of this region, some borrowed from co-founder Carolina's grandmother's kitchen and some from her own

**BEST TIME TO VISIT**

Spring and summer in the Southern Hemisphere (**September to December**), when chances of warmer weather and clearer skies are high.

adventures in curating meals for travellers like us.

As I ended my repast, I delivered my verdict: the food was extremely creative, delicious, and deserving of a Michelin star.

Finally, I reflected on how this meal was a true ode to the communities that have thrived for centuries in the world's highest, driest, and oldest desert. This produced a strange sense of bliss—knowing that this moment would stay with me as a precious memory that I would cherish forever.



**T**he word 'Christmas' instantly recalls a pine tree decked in baubles and a man with twinkling eyes, snow-white beard, potbelly, and a bundle of toys on his back. This picture came alive in Rovaniemi, the 'Official Hometown of Santa Claus' and the capital city of Lapland, where I got an opportunity to reconnect with my inner child and revel in an authentic white winter adventure at the Arctic Circle.

Finns believe that Santa Claus' original home lies in the mysterious Korvatunturi 'Ear Fell' in Finnish Lapland. However, since the exact



# DANCE OF AN AURORA

Witness the magical display of the Northern Lights in Rovaniemi, Finland, and meet Santa Claus for real

words by **Shikha Shah**



## FACING PAGE

Left and right: The Northern Lights are a natural light display caused by solar activity; Lapland is one of the best places to spot this phenomenon.

## TOP AND BOTTOM

Visitors can go aurora-spotting by snowmobile, on snowshoes or skis; Visiting a husky farm is a must-do activity.

location must be kept secret, he operates from an office at the picturesque Santa Claus Village in Rovaniemi. Millions of visitors from across the globe come here to soak up the festive spirit.

My exhilarating adventure began as soon as elves led me to a dimly-lit passageway lined with presents. After ascending a few stairs, I spotted the bearded man sitting on a large wooden chair, surrounded by books, maps, and a trunk full of letters from fans. With a big smile, he welcomed me with a jolly, "Ho, ho, ho; welcome to the Arctic Circle."

Next door, inside the post office, I wrote postcards to my loved ones back home, sharing the exciting experience I just had. All

mails are stamped with the special Arctic Circle postmark and you can have it delivered right away or just before Christmas.

Once we wrapped up this popular activity, we moved on to the ultimate spectacle, witnessing the Northern Lights. The clear inland air in this area makes it one of the best places in the world to witness the Aurora Borealis, nature's greatest light



## GETTING THERE

Fly to Helsinki with Air India's Interline Partners, Air France and Finnair.





**TOP AND BOTTOM**

*Holiday magic begins with visitors gathering outside Santa's office in Santa Claus Village, nestled on the Arctic Circle in Rovaniemi; A stay in a glass igloo with a jacuzzi and terrace is a unique experience.*



**BEST TIME TO VISIT**

The Northern Lights are visible from **late August to early April**. Statistically, the lights are visible on every second night. But the nights need to be dark enough to catch a glimpse of this magical phenomenon.

display. On an unbearably chilly night in Levi (a two-hour drive from Rovaniemi and 170km above the Arctic Circle), we drove away from the city lights, in search of the aurora while listening to numerous mythical tales from our guide. Then we waited in anticipation for the brilliant colours to creep across the sky.

Totally layered up, we stayed in the car till we got the signal to step out. Initially, there were faint streaks of green, pink, and purple in the sky, that turned more magical and dramatic with time, as if performing a happy dance. Each flash lasted anywhere from a few

seconds to a few minutes, tantalising us. I changed the settings on my phone to try to capture this bucket-list experience, both on screen and in my memory. Over an hour later, it dawned on me that I had just been humbled by nature's brilliant work of art. I almost didn't want to leave but reluctantly accepted that this adventure was now over—though I promised myself that I would be back.

# THE PEOPLE

32 EXPERT SPEAK 36 Q&A



*This iconic Rolls-Royce from Poonawalla's collection once belonged to the Maharaja of Kashmir*

## FULL OF DRIVE

Car enthusiast Yohan Poonawalla on how vintage automobiles fuel his passion



Poonawalla at Hampton Court Palace, the UK, with three cars from his vintage collection

# LOVE FOR WHEELS

For industrialist Yohan Poonawalla, happiness lies in his collection of classic cars

words by **Shrabasti Anindita Mallik**

**C**hairman of the Poonawalla Engineering Group by profession and an automobile aficionado at heart—Yohan Poonawalla's passion for classic and legacy four-wheelers is unmatched. His garage, called YZP Collection, is home to numerous vintage cars, including a 1933 Rolls Royce Phantom and a 1964 Lincoln Continental four-door convertible. And taking them on drives fills him with contentment. So unflinching is his fondness for automotive elegance that in 2023, he became the first-ever Indian to enter The

Classic Car Trust's ranking of the World's Top 100 Car Collectors.

Classic cars, Poonawalla believes, have a timeless appeal. They transcend generations and their designs of yesteryear are just as relevant today as they were back then. He explains, "We are but custodians of these priceless gems, which were built to last and which will often outlive us. We must, therefore, enjoy, protect, preserve, and pass this legacy on to the next generation. The pleasure and the joy derived through this passion is indescribably wonderful."

But where did it all

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## MY DRIVING FORCE

“Unearthing facts pertaining to historically-significant cars brings me great happiness. Also, giving back to society makes me happy; it is my responsibility to **support the motoring fraternity** by helping the **craftsmen and professionals**, without whom the classic car industry would cease to exist.”



**TOP AND BOTTOM**  
Poonawalla, pictured here with four Ferraris, was bestowed the title of 'India's Motoring Ambassador to the World' by the Vintage and Classic Car Club of India in 2023; Horse breeding and racing is a way of life for the industrialist.

begin? “I was bitten by the motoring bug pretty early on; in my childhood, in fact,” says Poonawalla, adding that he was fascinated by the various cars he rode to school in. “I used to closely observe the vintage Chevys and Mercs in my family’s collection and that ignited my passion for ‘retromobiles!’” He purchased his first-ever classic car—a 1937 Rolls-Royce Phantom III that belonged to the Maharaja of Panchkote—in 2001.

Every car in Poonawalla’s collection is historically significant. An example would be one of his recent acquisitions—a historic Range Rover that belonged to the late Queen Elizabeth II, which was used during the US state visit to the UK in 2016. “[Then] President Obama disembarked from his Marine One helicopter after landing on the lawns of Windsor Castle and sat next to the Duke of Edinburgh, Prince Philip, who drove

the car, as Her Majesty the Queen, and the [then] First Lady Michelle Obama were seated in the rear,” points out Poonawalla, eyes gleaming with pride.

As he continues to pour his heart into his pursuit, Poonawalla humbly acknowledges that it is the success that he achieves in business that has allowed him the luxury of indulging in his passion. “Therefore, work always takes precedence and is top priority for me. However, it is equally important for one to inculcate and develop one’s passions. The time I spend with my collection rejuvenates me to focus on my core duties and responsibilities,” he adds.



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# BITE INTO THIS

The right foods can help nurture your emotional health and well-being

words by Dr. Siddhant Bhargava

## MUST HAVE

Fermented foods like **kanji (rice gruel)** and **pickles** are beneficial for the gut, which is believed to improve emotional health.

**O**ur hectic and ever-bustling lives today make it imperative for us to pay close attention to our well-being. Finding foods that are mood-boosting can help support one's emotional balance. Appropriate meals not only nourish the body but also sustain the mind, improving concentration and creating a positive attitude. Here are some options to help brighten up your day.

### DARK CHOCOLATE

This treat triggers pleasure chemicals, or endorphins, responsible for satisfaction. Chocolate also contains serotonin—a chemical that has properties associated with enhancing one's state of mind and sleep. As an added ingredient, cocoa powder has antioxidants that is known to increase cognitive function. However, it is recommended to eat dark chocolate with at least 70 per cent cocoa content.

### FERMENTED FOODS

Options like yoghurt, idli, and kimchi are probiotic in nature, which help to maintain the balance of gut bacteria. The gut is particularly important in the synthesis of serotonin and studies suggest that a balanced digestion can reduce stress levels.

### BANANAS

This fruit plays an important role as a perfect source of tryptophan. The amino acid

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the people expert speak



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

Avocados are best paired with toasted sourdough; Kimchi can be found in gourmet stores and at Korean restaurants; Consuming 70 per cent dark chocolate has the most health benefits.

is converted to serotonin in the brain and, as a result, is said to help alleviate depression. Bananas also contain Vitamin B6, essential for neurotransmitter synthesis, that promotes brain function.

**LEAFY GREENS**

Vegetables like spinach, fenugreek leaves, mustard greens, and amaranth leaves are rich in magnesium. Lack of magnesium has been linked to anxiety and depression. They are also rich in folate, which helps in the production of dopamine, a chemical that is proven to improve memory and mood. You can also consume

these local greens in the form of dried powders or in smoothies.

**BERRIES**

Blueberries, strawberries, and other berries are a rich source of antioxidants that can reduce the level of oxidative stress on the brain. They are high in Vitamin C, known to lower levels of anxiety. Regular consumption has also been associated with better cognitive ability.

**NUTS AND SEEDS**

A handful of almonds, walnuts, and flaxseeds—all said to be good for brain health—may contain more magnesium, zinc, and healthy fats than one can imagine. Zinc helps in the functioning of neurotransmitters, which

is believed to reduce symptoms of depression. Omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids in nuts also promote emotional stability.

**WHOLE GRAINS**

Oats and quinoa provide steady energy and help regulate blood sugar levels. They also contain Vitamin B complex, especially B6.

**AVOCADOS**

This wonder fruit provides healthy monounsaturated fats that are essential for the brain. It also contains folate and Vitamin E, which can reduce the risk of anxiety. Additionally, Vitamin B5, helpful in the production of neurotransmitters, is found in this super food.

Make thoughtful choices; embrace a joyful life.

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# "I LIKE TO SPEND TIME WATCHING BASEBALL"

Silver screen luminary Ken Watanabe reflects on the joy and gratitude found in life's simple moments

words by **Nupur Singh**

## **HOW BIG A PART DOES ACTING PLAY IN YOUR LIFE?**

Being an actor is one big part of my life; but the perspectives and thoughts from my everyday life are what feed me as an artiste. I would not be the actor I am today had I not had the life I had.

## **HOW DO DIFFERENT MEDIUMS IMPACT YOU AS AN ACTOR?**

Each medium—film, stage or TV—has its characteristics that fulfil me in different ways. But in theatre, I find a direct connection with the audience. It is nerve-wracking but also gratifying. Receiving a heartfelt standing ovation in theatre is the greatest joy.

## **WHAT LED YOU TO OPEN A CAFÉ IN KESENUMA, JAPAN?**

This café arose out of my need to do something after the 2011 setback that Japan faced off its north-eastern coast. I had made friends here, who made me realise that a place where people could gather and share the spirit of community was needed. Entire towns on the shorelines had



*Ken Watanabe waves to the crowd at a baseball game in Petco Park, San Diego, the US, in 2023*

been washed away and only silence remained.

So, I opened café K-port in Kesenuma in 2013, which serves pizzas, drinks, desserts as well as traditional seafood specialties. We host festivals at the café, invite artistes, and I perform live for crowds. Whenever I am in Japan, I visit my café and help develop menus. It brings me happiness



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Watanabe poses for a photocall at the MIPCOM 2019 in Cannes, France

to cook and during rush hour, if needed, I also serve customers.

**IN AN INDUSTRY KNOWN FOR ITS PRESSURE AND CHALLENGES, WHAT DO YOU ENGAGE IN TO MAINTAIN YOUR WELL-BEING?**

In my free time, I like to relax at my home in Karuizawa, watch baseball, and cook what my heart desires. I also like to keep myself active by going for walks with Dan, my border collie.

**IN YOUR VIEW, HOW DID THE LAST SAMURAI AND MEMOIRS OF A GEISHA CONTRIBUTE TO A GREATER UNDERSTANDING OF JAPANESE HISTORY AND CULTURE?**

Both works were based on adapted scripts so, maintaining originality was crucial and the movies truly reflected that. Especially with *Memoirs of a Geisha*, I felt Rob Marshall directed an 'opera' with his distinctive essence, aesthetic sensibilities, and a commendable vision, bringing out the accuracy and the very best of Japanese culture.

**WHAT WERE YOUR FAVOURITE MOVIES GROWING UP?**

*Enter the Dragon* left a significant mark on me and, of course, all of Akira Kurosawa's films. In my opinion, Kurosawa has been captivating and scintillating audiences across generations.

**ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC GENRES YOU WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE IN THE FUTURE?**

My favourite type of movie is always a heartwarming drama. I hope I get to do more of those.



# THE CHECKLIST

44 ➔ LUXE 48 ➔ BOOKS 50 ➔ NOW TRENDING 54 ➔ IN FOCUS



## JAZZ IT UP

A vibrant blend of music, fun, and special moments this season

You can expect some great acts at the EFG London Jazz Festival

# OUT AND ABOUT

A round-up of bucket list-worthy events to attend this month



## INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA

Goa

20<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup> November

The 55<sup>th</sup> edition promises to be spectacular. Apart from screenings of globally-acclaimed films and documentaries, artiste interactions, workshops, panel discussions, and red-carpet events, it will offer ample networking opportunities with industry leaders and experts from around the world. The Film Bazaar (Film Market) will take place simultaneously from 20<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> November.

[iffigoa.org](http://iffigoa.org)

## FEEL THE BEAT EFG LONDON JAZZ FESTIVAL

London, the UK  
15<sup>th</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> November

One of the biggest pan-city music festivals in Europe, the event hosts over 300 live shows at venues ranging from jazz bars to the world's finest concert halls, including Queen Elizabeth Hall and Kings Place. At this 32<sup>nd</sup> edition, keep an eye out for legendary musicians Pat Metheny (guitar) and Dave O'Higgins (saxophone), and the Crosscurrents Trio (Dave Holland, Zakir Hussain, and Chris Potter). For the first time, there will be The Jazz Social, a pop-up venue (in Citypoint near the Barbican) that will also serve as a festival hub.

[efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk](http://efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk)



## HEAD TO THE DESERT RANN UTSAV

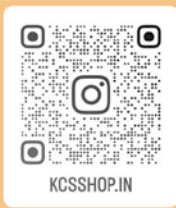
Dhordo, Gujarat  
11<sup>th</sup> November 2024-15<sup>th</sup> March 2025

For four months, the Rann of Kutch comes to life with crafts, an assorted array of folk music and performances,

delectable cuisine, and much more. From ATV rides and camel safaris to golf cart tours, there's no dearth of fun. Solace seekers can join meditation and yoga sessions. For an unforgettable and true local experience, take a ride on a *chakda*, an indigenous passenger vehicle of Kutch. [rannutsav.net](http://rannutsav.net)



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## ON THE RADAR



### PARIS PHOTO

Paris, France  
7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> November

Held at the Grand Palais, it features international galleries of contemporary and modern photography. [parisphoto.com](http://parisphoto.com)



### MACY'S THANKSGIVING DAY PARADE

NYC, the US  
28<sup>th</sup> November

Watch giant balloons and fabulous floats at this iconic American event. [macys.com](http://macys.com)



### GARDEN MARLBOROUGH

Marlborough, New Zealand  
7<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> November

It celebrates the city's beautiful landscapes with a garden party, a fête, tours, workshops, and more. [gardenmarlborough.co.nz](http://gardenmarlborough.co.nz)



GET CREATIVE

## SEOUL DESIGN FESTIVAL 2024

Seoul, South Korea  
13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> November

To be held at the Convention and Exhibition Center (COEX), the 23<sup>rd</sup> edition will showcase over 150 brands, institutions, and organisations, under the theme *Game Changer, a design that changes the game*. The event aims to promote designers, brands, and corporations as well as introduce local and international design trends. This year, replacing the Global Design Seminar will be an International Conference that will explore design trends and offer expert insights.

[seoul.designfestival.co.kr](http://seoul.designfestival.co.kr)



SHOP IN THE SNOW

## CHRISTMAS MARKET

Mount Pilatus, Switzerland  
15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> November

This Christmas, experience festive shopping and merriment at Europe's highest Christmas Market, perched at 2,132m. With stunning views of the lakes and the mighty Alps, this market features over 40 stands offering mulled wine, crafts, Christmas decorations like nativity figures, beeswax candles, and sundry stocking fillers, delicious local and regional food, and more. Adding to the joy is an exhilarating cable car ride that takes you to the market. [pilatus.ch](http://pilatus.ch)



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# DEAR PIECES

Each of these vintage collectibles are a thing of beauty and a pure delight

words by **Mignonne Dsouza**

## **BOTTEGA VENETA ALUMNA BAG**

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*The Luxury Quest; Price on request*

## **THE PSYCHEDELIC BEATLE PORTRAITS**

A one-of-a-kind set of four solarised portraits of the band members of The Beatles on linen-backed paper, taken by famous American photographer Richard Avedon for the 9<sup>th</sup> January issue of the *Look Magazine* in 1967.

**Get it:** Because having a rock-and-roll collectible is the dream of any true fan of the genre.

*Sothebys; Price on request*

• **Brian Epstein, the manager of the band, commissioned Richard Avedon to shoot the portraits**



Images courtesy respective brands



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🔴 This Lord Krishna oleograph is a classic piece of Indian art



**KRISHNA CHROMO-LITHOGRAPH**

An early 20<sup>th</sup>-century chromolithograph from the Ravi Verma Press representing Lord Krishna flanked by Rukmini and Radha. Such oleographs set a new iconographical standard for all Indian deities.

**Get it:** Because such prints form a distinctive category in Indian art and are divinely beautiful.

*Phillips Antiques; Price on request*

**PELIKAN M1000 RENJISHI MAKI-E PEN**

A limited-edition fountain pen in mint condition, it depicts a scene from the climax of the tale of *Renjishi*, a story from the Japanese theatre form of Kabuki.

**Get it:** Because even signing cheques with this unique instrument is sure to elevate your day.

*Antique Digger; Price on request*

**TRADITIONAL PERSIAN CARPET**

This collectible is part of a centuries-old tradition. A 19<sup>th</sup>-century hand-woven wool option, it is a fine example of this unique craft. This design, from the Mahallat region of Iran, uses classic colours and patterns, and is in fine condition.

**Get it:** Because owning a vintage piece that is both luxurious and practical at the same time will spark joy.

*Cabinet of Curiosity; Price on request*



**ART FACT**

**US\$450.3 million**

Was the price of *Salvator Mundi* by Leonardo da Vinci in 2017. It is the world's most expensive art sale to date.

Source: *forbesindia.com*

🔴 The Pelikan M1000 Renjishi Maki-E fountain pen has never been inked and is fitted with an 18K Medium Nib



🔴 This carpet is from the Arak province of Central Iran

Pelikan M1000 Renjishi Maki-E fountain pen: Greg Schiek / AntiqueDigger.com; Rest: Courtesy respective brands





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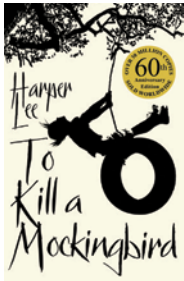
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# TOP FIVE READS

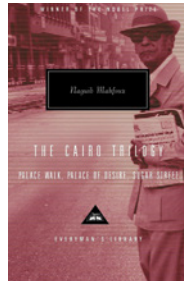
Chairperson of the Om Puri Foundation, **Nandita Puri**, reveals why these books are her favourites



**TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD**  
(Harper Lee)

I read this in high school and was riveted. The issues raised in the novel really resonated with me.

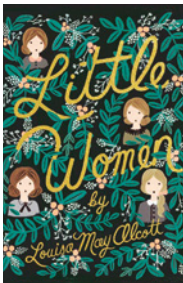
Penguin Random House India; ₹450



**THE CAIRO TRILOGY**  
(Naguib Mahfouz)

After reading this evocative series, I made sure to visit the Khan El Khalili Restaurant & Naguib Mahfouz Café in Cairo.

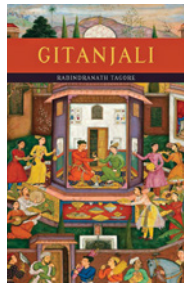
Everyman's Library; ₹2,177



**LITTLE WOMEN**  
(Louisa May Alcott)

I felt a real connection to the characters depicted in this novel.

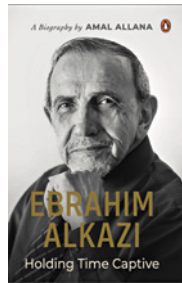
Puffin Books; ₹1,510



**GITANJALI**  
(Rabindranath Tagore)

My father studied under him, so this is a part of my psyche.

Martino Fine Books; ₹549



**EBRAHIM ALKAZI**  
(Amal Allana)

A fascinating read about my husband's mentor.

Vintage Books; ₹1,299

## NEW ON THE SHELF



**WHEN HARU WAS HERE**  
(Dustin Thao)

A heartwarming tale of love and friendship, it follows Eric's bond with Haru Tanaka, an imaginary boy Eric conjures up.

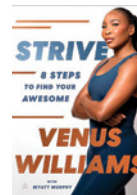
Pan Macmillan UK; ₹354



**GREATEST EVER AESOP'S FABLES**  
(Gayatri Kalra Sehgal)

Revisit the joys of childhood with this collection of folk tales narrated through the characters of animals, plants, mythical creatures, and inanimate objects.

Rupa Publication; ₹96



**STRIVE: 8 STEPS TO FIND YOUR AWESOME**  
(Venus Williams)

From the tennis icon comes eight essential tenets that can help you turn smart choices into winning habits.

HarperCollins Publishers  
₹2,010



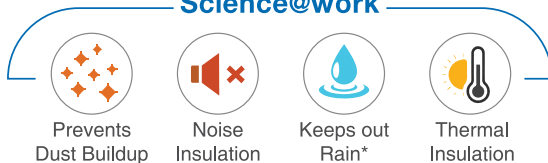
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### ↑ FOODSTORIES' GOURMET GIFTING

**Why:** The food retail brand is spreading cheer this festive season with its exclusive collection of thoughtfully-curated gift hampers, designed to cater to every taste.

**Where:** [www.foodstories.shop](http://www.foodstories.shop) **Recommended:** *The Cheesemakers Collection; The Glow Getter Hamper*

# ALL IN VOGUE

The latest in fashion, food, home décor and beyond



### A ROYAL CONNECT

The Jaipur Watch Company has launched its latest collection, *Brides of Jaipur*, with 17 handcrafted pieces that celebrate Rajasthan's architecture, artisans, and bridal heritage.



### ↑ FZN BY BJÖRN FRANTZÉN

**Why:** Opening on 8<sup>th</sup> November, this 27-seater restaurant will offer a modern European tasting menu with Japanese influences.

**Where:** Atlantis, The Palm, Dubai **Recommended:** *Duck 'bbq' with yuzu; Kampot pepper and foie gras; Turbot with Cecina de wagyu, barigoule, and pine shoot*



### ITALIAN CHIC

Salvatore Ferragamo's Autumn/Winter 2024 collection draws influence from Florence. Standout pieces include the Hug Bag, the Fiamma Bag, and the Ballerina flat.

All images courtesy respective brands

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**TOUCH OF HERITAGE**

Anavila's new collection, *Payanam*, is inspired by the rich legacy of Chettinad, Tamil Nadu, and features safari jacket sets, skirts, and more.



**YETI - THE HIMALAYAN KITCHEN**

**Why:** The latest franchise of the brand, known for serving authentic flavours of Himalayan cuisine, promises to deliver the same warmth and dining experience. **Where:** DLF Avenue, Saket, New Delhi **Recommended:** *La Phing; Thenthuk; Ema Datchi; Thakali Thali; Mushroom Choila*



**HOME ACCENTS**

Pep up your space with statement pieces from WoodFeather's collection, *Airborn*, that are created from repurposed parts of retired fighter jets and commercial airplanes.



**TIMELESS CREATION**

The festive collection by trueBrowns, *Phoolmandi*, showcases jewel tones and pastels in rich textures with floral, geometric, *ajrakh*, and *ikat* prints.



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**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**  
The open-air performance by Meghwal and Manganiyar artistes; Emlyn Marimutu performs her set; An African dawn with Louis Mhlanga; Artiste Tarini Tripathi conducts a Kathak bootcamp.



## BONUS ACT

The **Natanakairali Pavakathakali Ensemble** brought the unique glove puppetry of Kerala to life this year, fusing Kathakali, puppetry, and music.

# MUSICAL CANVAS

The annual Jodhpur RIFF presented a melange of folk performances at its 2024 edition

words by **Shrabasti Anindita Mallik**

**T**he sun emerged slowly, casting a glow on Jaswant Thada as the air swelled with the mellifluous voices of Meghwal and Manganiyar artistes, with Mehrangarh Fort serving as the perfect backdrop. The dawn I witnessed at the Jodhpur Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) was stunning, with a soulful performance to match.

RIFF is an event that not only brings together global artistes but also offers a platform for artistic collaborations, rendering

beats and melodies that transcend borders. This evokes a sense of elation for visitors, rendering it one of the much-awaited highlights of Rajasthan's cultural calendar.

The 16<sup>th</sup> edition was no different. It marked the India debut of Louis Mhlanga (Zimbabwe), Elli Miller Mabougou (a Canada-based percussionist with roots in Congo), Norwegian band Gabba, and nagara maestro Natig Shirinov (Baku, Azerbaijan), who regaled the audience with their distinct vibe, making RIFF 2024 one for the books.



# THE PLACES

60 ➔ TRULY INDIA 64 ➔ WALES

Take in the views from the tallest building in Midtown Manhattan, SUMMIT One Vanderbilt



## HIGH AND MIGHTY

New York's bustling art scene is always a revelation



# ALL CHARGED UP

The Big Apple is packed with creative delights, waiting to be explored

words by **Fareeda Kanga**

🕒 10:30AM  
**Green stretch**  
📍 Elevated Acre

Smack in the madness of the Big Apple, on Water Street, high above street level, lies a secret garden. A seven-tiered amphitheatre as well as views of the East River and Brooklyn are highlights of this space, which remains a secret even to many residents.

🕒 12:00PM  
**Funky trip**  
📍 The Graffiti Tunnel

Located in Washington Heights, this is a hidden gem that captivates the senses. The area was revitalised by artists who made it their canvas for bold expression. Some drew inspiration from the local community, most of whom have ties to the Dominican Republic, by including images of regional cuisine.

🕒 02:00PM  
**Bronze age**  
📍 Brooklyn Bridge Park

Don't miss artist Huma Bhabha's exhibition, *Before The End*, of four bronzes, cast from carved cork and skull fragments. Her hybridised forms, which borrow from ancient and modern cultural sources alike, exude both emotion and humour.

🕒 04:00PM  
**Shh, shh**  
📍 Whispering Gallery at Grand Central Terminal

A mysterious natural phenomenon, it allows you to hear the quietest whisper above the din of this cavernous and busy station. Just press your ear against the tile work in the domed section of walkways to hear a whispered sentence or a song, even at the most crowded times.






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**FACING PAGE**  
Glass skyboxes  
at SUMMIT One  
Vanderbilt

**CLOCKWISE  
FROM RIGHT**  
Times Square gets  
artsy at midnight;  
Saga offers guests  
a four- or seven-  
course menu; The  
Whispering Gallery  
at Grand Central.



**GETTING  
THERE**

Air India flies  
non-stop to New  
York from Delhi and  
Mumbai.\*

**STYLISH STAYS**

- 1/ Mint House at 70 Pine – NYC** is in the Financial District, and has large studios and apartments with curated vinyls and stylised furniture.
- 2/ Gansevoort Meatpacking NYC** offers uber-cool stays in the hip district, seconds away from stylish shops and views of the Hudson river.
- 3/ The Whitby Hotel** is a design lover's dream in Midtown, just a few blocks from MoMA.

🕒 **05:00PM**  
**Sky art**  
📍 SUMMIT One Vanderbilt

This viewing gallery, featuring all-glass skyboxes, is on the 93<sup>rd</sup> floor of one of New York's tallest skyscrapers. But beside the viewing areas, it's also a theme-based multi-sensory experience that juxtaposes art, cutting-edge technology, and architecture across three floors.

🕒 **07:00PM**  
**All that jazz**  
📍 Bill's Place

This speakeasy in Harlem mimics the bygone era of a cosy living room-turned concert hall, with jazz performed by Bill Saxton, a native New Yorker and world-class saxophonist, accompanied by the Harlem All-Stars every Friday and Saturday. If you enjoy this genre of music and crave an eclectic evening, then this one's unmissable. In keeping with the theme, you can bring your own bottle of alcohol to the venue.

🕒 **09:00PM**  
**Gourmet stop**  
📍 Saga NYC

Perched atop a landmark Art Deco skyscraper in the Financial District, Saga just has to be experienced. This Relais & Chateaux outpost and two-Michelin star recipient is unlike any other dining space. The seasonal tasting menus also accommodate vegan and vegetarian options.

🕒 **12:00AM**  
**Digital delight**  
📍 Times Square  
Display Screens

*Midnight Moment* is the world's biggest and oldest digital public art programme displayed daily on one of the most iconic public canvases—the electronic billboards of Times Square. Synchronised from 11:57pm to 12am on over 92 digital displays, this is on 364 nights a year. Works of such noted artists as Nick Cave, Tracy Emin, Laurie Anderson, and Andy Warhol have been displayed here.

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BY NIRMAL SALVI



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the places truly india



**LEFT AND RIGHT**  
The heritage wing at  
Abbotsford; Colourful  
yachts on Naini Lake.

# SOLITUDE FOR THE SOUL

With birds, butterflies, and breeze for company, even silence  
can be rejuvenating when the destination feels just right

words by **Anubhuti Krishna**

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**

*A Kumaoni thali is the highlight of this homestay; You can walk the Kilbury trail around the estate; Seasonal flowers at Abbotsford.*



**A**t 8.30am, the sun was bright but the slight chill in the air had not yet abated. Mist danced on lush grass even as purple floss sprouted from moss-laden stone walls; tiny birds hopped at a distance and butterflies flitted from flower to flower.

Whenever life gets too much to handle, I run to the hills. Breathing in clean air and listening to quietness is my way to rejuvenate. And a trip to Abbotsford Villa, a heritage homestay perched high above Nainital, was an

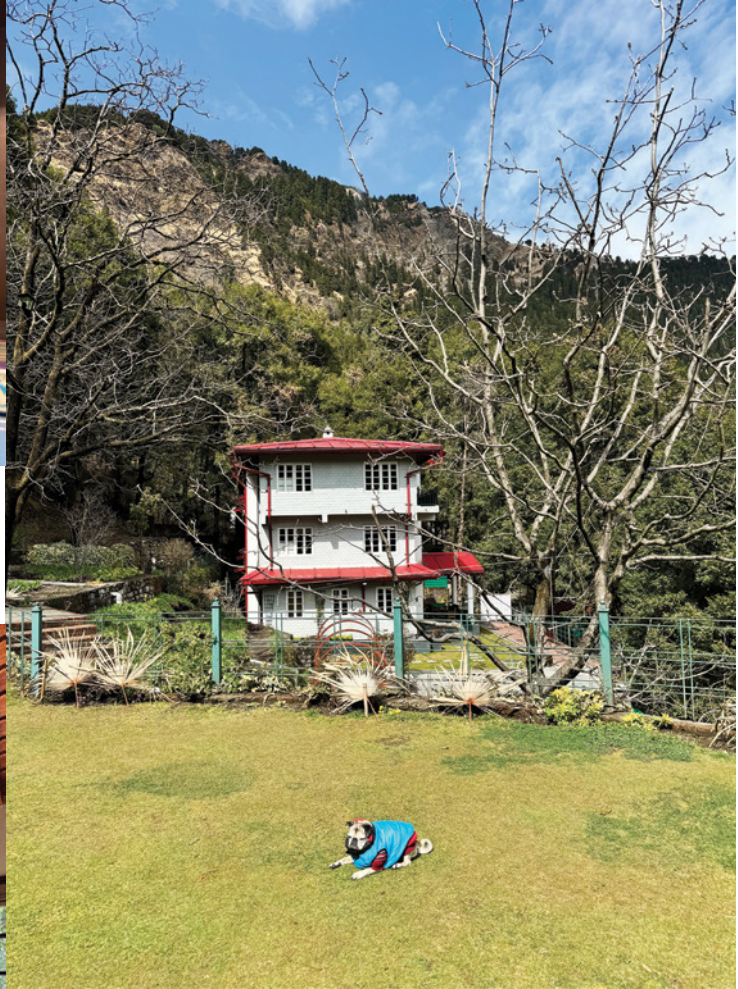
attempt to do just that.

I instantly felt at home on the 150-year-old estate, because of my familiarity with these mountains and because of my host, Janhavi. She not only opened her home to me but also shared many stories about the town—why the church of St John in the Wilderness continues to be revered, why the Boat House Club is the ultimate hotspot, and more. Inspired by her tales, I decided to waste no time in visiting these attractions.

Standing amidst a dense thicket, St John's, the oldest



**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP**  
Guests can relax in the library; Apsley House and Chica, the house pug, are both integral parts of the estate; The well-appointed rooms reflect the colonial heritage.



  
**GETTING THERE**  
Fly to Dehradun with Air India's Codeshare Partner, Vistara.  


church here, was my first stop. While I found it locked, imagining the place in its glory was both calming and touching. Next, I headed to the boat club, amongst the oldest in India. While I do not know how to sail, observing the colourful masts flutter against the glistening Naini Lake was a sight to behold. The day ended perfectly with a Kumaoni meal of *aloo ke gutke*, *bhat ki dal*, homestyle chicken

and mutton curries, and traditional *pahadi* raita, all made in-house.

On my second morning, I planned to do other things—but only after a leisurely breakfast of house specials like Nainital toast, apple pie, and *neembu saan* (a traditional salad made with pomelo and hemp seeds). First though, I settled down to some reading in the sun. Sprawled on the lawn, I flipped through a vintage *National Geographic*, read Jim Corbett's adventures, and drifted into a sweet slumber.





When I woke up, a lunch of salad and soup was waiting for me, after which I stepped out for a stroll.

Bathed in the tranquil air, I strolled beneath the deodars and pines along the winding lanes, admiring homes with lace curtains and flowerpots, finally reaching the charming Bara Bazaar. It is home to all the things I love—handmade sweaters, hand-poured candles, and handcrafted toys. I spent the afternoon browsing through old-fashioned shops and filling my bags with mittens, socks,

books, toy boats, pickles, and fruit cordials.

It was late evening by the time I returned home, to find a bonfire ready for me. I sank down next to it, listening to the crickets, observing the constellations, and warming my chilly hands. I felt calmer and happier than I had been in months. That was when I realised how just two days of 'me time' in the hills had completely relaxed and replenished my soul. And I felt glad that I had one more day to myself—for doing more of what I love.

**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**  
*This Nainital homestay is a delight during Christmas; Neembu saan is a traditional salad made with pomelo and hemp seeds; A cosy corner at Abbotsford featuring miniature art and vintage furniture.*

# LOST AND FOUND

How an unexpected twist led to the discovery of Wales' breathtaking beauty

words by Kshipra Bhat





**FACING PAGE**

Hay-on-Wye is known as the 'Town of Books'

**LEFT AND RIGHT**

A visitor checks out books during the Hay Festival in 2016; The Murder and Mayhem bookstore in the town is known for its crime fiction selection.

**MUST KNOW**

The **Hay Festival Winter Weekend** is on this year from 28<sup>th</sup> November to 1<sup>st</sup> December. The main eponymous Festival is held over 10 days in the months of **May and June**.

It was a chilly morning in Wales, the country referred to as *Cymru* in Welsh. With childlike enthusiasm, I woke up and headed straight out with my iPhone gripped firmly in my hand to capture as much as I could of this neighbourhood, including my hotel, **Llangoed Hall**. This 23-room country house is reminiscent of a *Downton Abbey*-style estate and has the most intriguing past; it is believed to have been the site of the first Welsh parliament in 560AD.

I was not only excited to document my picturesque surroundings but was also looking forward to heading to the next destination, **Hay-on-Wye**. Renowned as the 'Town of Books', it beckons bibliophiles and wanderers alike. Little did I know

that my visit would be the beginning of a transformative journey, where a seemingly minor setback would lead to a profound shift in perspective.

As I eagerly set foot in Hay-on-Wye, my heart brimmed with excitement at the prospect of immersing myself in its literary wonders. Yet, fate had other plans in store. In a moment of clumsy haste, my phone slipped from my grasp and its camera shattered upon impact with the cobblestone pavement. In a matter of minutes, my happiness turned into anguish and frustration threatened to cloud my spirits.

In that moment, I realised how our modern lives hide behind our phone cameras. We have forgotten to find happiness in the beauty surrounding us through the natural lens of our eyes. We tend to edit everything we capture

Cardiff Central Market sells all the local specialties of the area

on our phones to make it look better and appealing, but, after all, does that filter even provide the joy we are longing for? With these deep thoughts, I gathered the courage to embark on a strangely joyful exploration of this country.

Freed from the constant distraction of technology and with renewed excitement, I set off on a journey of discovery that transcended the boundaries of mere sightseeing. Immediately after the incident, I headed to **Hay Castle**, a historic fortification in the small town of Hay-on-Wye in Powys. The open-air Honesty Bookshop tucked away here has no employees and no till; book lovers can select the book of their choice and drop a payment of £1 for any book into a little black box. I then went on to explore some interesting bookstores: Murder and Mayhem, Richard Booth's Bookshop, Gay on Wye, The Poetry Bookshop, Hay Cinema Bookshop, and many others. They all made me fall in love with the town even more. This leisurely book-browsing spree was followed by a cup of hot coffee at a quaint café.

Soon, I became comfortable with my new way of exploring the region. Before I even realised, I was enjoying the lush green expanse of **Brecon Beacons National Park**, officially the **Bannau Brycheiniog National Park**, which boasts walking trails and other outdoor activities. It is also home to the first International Dark Sky reserve in Wales. I discovered myself talking to strangers and striking up meaningful conversations about weather; undoubtedly, this is the most sought-after conversation starter in the UK, alongside food, places, and life.

Next on the itinerary was **Talgarth**



**Mill** near the town of Crickhowell. Nestled on the banks of the Ellywe river that flows from the Black Mountains, this fully-restored and functional water-powered mill from the 18<sup>th</sup> century took me back in time. I learned the history of milling, and viewed the current functioning of the mill and its part in the community. The location, reminiscent of a bygone era, also maintains a beautiful garden alongside the river which is perfect for a leisurely stroll to soak in the slow life of the town. As I had a freshly prepared lunch at their bakery and café—**The Baker's Table**—I found myself savouring the beauty of history, community, nature, and food.

Meanwhile, in the charming town of **Abergavenny**, I discovered the joy of genuine human connection. This is a lively market town known for its artisanal crafts. The town houses one such shop which is famous for its hat collection, Alison Tod, situated next to **The Angel Hotel**. While the brand has attracted a host of famous names (including that of Golda Rosheuvel who plays Queen Charlotte in the hit Netflix series *Bridgerton*), I will always remember it for its warm and welcoming staff. We engaged in heartfelt conversations, sharing myriad stories as I tried on various hats. They also drew a map for me to visit a couple of interesting stores down the street.

Without immediately posting them on Instagram, I felt a cheerful connection with the people and

### **Best time to visit**

The ideal months to make the most of Wales are between **May and September**. However, in winter, visitors can look forward to dark sky photography, festive markets, and more.



**TOP TO BOTTOM**  
Hay Castle is home to the Honest Bookshop, which has a vast range of secondhand books; Alison Tod is an artisanal hat shop in Abergavenny; Richard Booth's Bookshop in Hay-on-Wye is also home to a cinema and café.





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT**  
 Welsh cake is made with black currants; Cockles are a local delicacy; Wally's Delicatessen & Kaffeehaus serves a variety of cheeses; Cawl makes for a hearty meal.



places around me, forging bonds that surpassed the boundaries of virtual interaction. Not to mention, I ended up buying two woolly hats, souvenirs that I happily brought home for my daughter from Wales.

By the time I reached **Cardiff**, I had fully embraced my phone-free state. In this bustling capital city, I indulged in sumptuous delights of the local fare. I was taken on a culinary sojourn by Sian Roberts, the founder of Loving Welsh Food, a company offering food tours in Cardiff and the Vale of Glamorgan. We started our tasting spree at **Wally's Delicatessen & Kaffeehaus**, where I enjoyed a variety of cheeses and a charcuterie board. Further, I tasted cawl (a traditional broth or stew of meat and vegetables), faggots (meatballs), laver bread (a dish prepared with seaweed), cockles (clams), and my favourite, the popular Welsh cake.

I must admit I was bowled over by the array of flavours and textures, and couldn't help but devour not only the food but the stories behind each dish, along with the cultural significance each one holds. Take for instance, Glamorgan sausages, which don't contain any meat at all and are named after the historic county of Glamorgan. These cheesy, veggie croquettes made with breadcrumbs became popular during World War II when meat was hard to



**GETTING THERE**

Air India flies non-stop to Birmingham from Delhi and Amritsar. Wales is an approximate 3.5-hour drive from the airport.





Go walking or stargazing in the Brecon Beacons National Park

come by. They are mostly made with tangy Caerphilly or cheddar cheese these days. This time, I reflected; I had truly savoured the culinary experience as I engaged all my senses.

And then came the time to bid goodbye to Wales. As I prepared to leave, my broken phone sitting uselessly in my bag, in fact, brought a big smile to my face. I had found something far more valuable than any social media photo or post—the joy of being present, of truly connecting with a place and with myself. Without a shred of doubt, this time I carried with me memories captured beyond just

mere pixels. A newfound appreciation for the beauty of authentic experiences and genuine human connections engulfed me. I finally realised that I was led on a journey of self-discovery, teaching myself to embrace the present moment with open arms and a heart full of gratitude and bliss.

In *Cymru*, I learned that true happiness lies not in the pursuit of virtual validation but in the richness of life's simple pleasures. And for that, I will forever be grateful to this quaint, beautiful destination, where an unexpected twist set me on a path of joy, thrill, and sheer enlightenment.

## BEST STAYS IN THE AREA

### **Llangoed Hall, Llyswen, Brecon**

The quintessential country house experience when in Wales. The elegant and historic hotel, spread across 17 acres of beautiful countryside, offers comfort, luxury, and tranquillity.

### **Angel Hotel, Abergavenny**

This is only a two-minute walk from Abergavenny Castle and their Wedgewood room serves an award-winning afternoon tea.

### **Hilton Cardiff**

Located in the city centre, near Cardiff Castle, it offers all the modern amenities like a heated pool, sauna, and fitness centre.

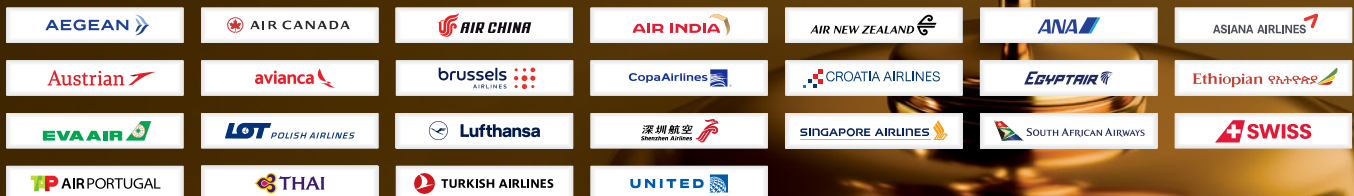
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**Phase 3: April 2024 – March 2027**  
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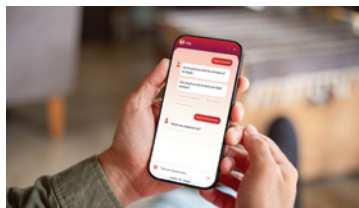
- Started adding new **A320neo** aircraft in three-class cabin configuration, including **Premium Economy**

- Redesigned **Flying Returns** loyalty programme, which will evolve into a new avatar, 'Maharaja Club'



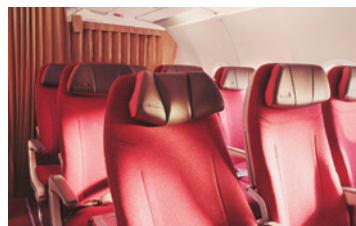
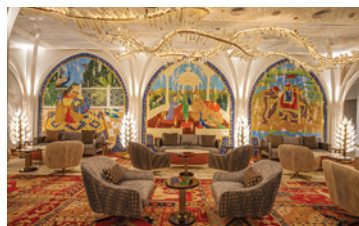
- Introduced **Vista**, a wireless inflight entertainment across legacy widebody fleet while such aircraft undergo a full interior refresh

- Unveiled refreshed website and mobile app including the industry's first **Generative AI chatbot, AI.g**



- **Augmented customer care** with five new contact centres globally, serving in nine Indian languages

- Opened a new, **exclusive lounge** at Terminal 2 Bengaluru International Airport, and redesign of the lounges at Delhi and New York JFK airports is underway



- Commenced **refit programme** for legacy aircraft; 3-4 aircraft per month will undergo retrofit with the full narrowbody fleet upgraded by 2025.

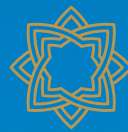
# AI 2XXX

## New Code. Same Exceptional Vistara In-Flight Experience.

As Vistara and Air India merge, your familiar Vistara in-flight experience continues uninterrupted.

---

**AIR INDIA**



**vistara**  
Fly the new feeling™

Beginning 12<sup>th</sup> November 2024, UK XXX will become AI 2XXX. A new code for the same world-class Vistara in-flight experience that you've come to love. As we merge, the Vistara in-flight experience will remain unchanged on its fleet. You can easily identify these flights by their new code AI 2XXX. On ground and everywhere else, enjoy the unified Air India experience delivered by the combined team that opens up limitless possibilities to expand your world.

To know more about Vistara's integration with Air India, scan here.



## THERE'S MUCH TO LOOK FORWARD TO WITH AIR INDIA



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Enjoy more options for every journey with over 5500 domestic and international flights every week. Fly non-stop to 90+ domestic and international destinations with Air India and over 800 destinations through our codeshare and interline partners.



### A GROWING AND TRANSFORMING FLEET

In addition to the modern fleet merging from Vistara, enjoy Air India's refurbished Airbus A320s, now equipped with a three-class configuration, including Premium Economy, which will progressively join our fleet. Be among the first to experience Air India's exclusive Airbus A350, complete with private Business Class suites and world-class amenities.

Our commitment to excellence continues with the impending addition of 400+ new aircraft, ensuring an unparalleled travel experience for years to come.



### WARM INDIAN HOSPITALITY

Experience exceptional Indian hospitality across our network, featuring gourmet meals, enhanced amenities, and captivating in-flight entertainment.



### INTRODUCING MAHARAJA CLUB: THE FUTURE OF FLYING RETURNS

With Club Vistara merging into Flying Returns, your existing Club Vistara (CV) points will remain secure and seamlessly transfer to Flying Returns at a 1:1 ratio, along with a membership tier match. With this merger, Flying Returns will also evolve into an all-new avatar, **Maharaja Club**, bringing you the best of both worlds while offering unparalleled privileges and exclusive benefits. And rest assured, all existing Flying Returns benefits will be maintained.



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Enjoy a seamless digital experience with our award-winning mobile app and revamped website with simplified booking, AI-powered travel planning, on-click assistance and much more.

\*Subject to further progressive network calibration

\*The 'XXX' in UK XXX and AI 2XXX represents the flight number for a specific journey. For example, UK 955, operating from Delhi to Mumbai, will transition to AI 2955.



*Air India Group has completed the legal merger of Air India Express Ltd and AIX Connect Pvt Ltd into a larger low-cost carrier, Air India Express*



## JOINING FORCES

Air India Group has completed the operational integration and legal merger of Air India Express Ltd and AIX Connect Pvt Ltd (erstwhile AirAsia India) into a larger Low-Cost Carrier. The formation of the merged entity, which will operate under the 'Air India Express' name and a unified airline code (IX), marks a significant milestone in the transformation journey of the Air India Group that is merging four airlines into two. The group is simultaneously in the process of merging Vistara into Air India to set up a world-class global airline.



### A REWARDING MOMENT

Air India has been awarded the title of Asia's Leading Airline Inflight Entertainment 2024 at the World Travel Awards held this year in Manila. This is the first time an Indian airline has won this title. This award is a testimony of Air India's commitment to providing its customers with the best inflight entertainment experience.

# PROUD WINGS

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



06  
A350-900  
Length 66.80m



08  
A319  
33.84m

04  
A321neo  
44.51m



13  
A321ceo  
44.50m

08  
B777-200LR  
63.70m



48  
A320neo  
37.57m

27  
B787-8  
56.72m



07  
A320ceo  
37.57m

19  
B777-300ER  
73.9m



\*Total number as on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2024

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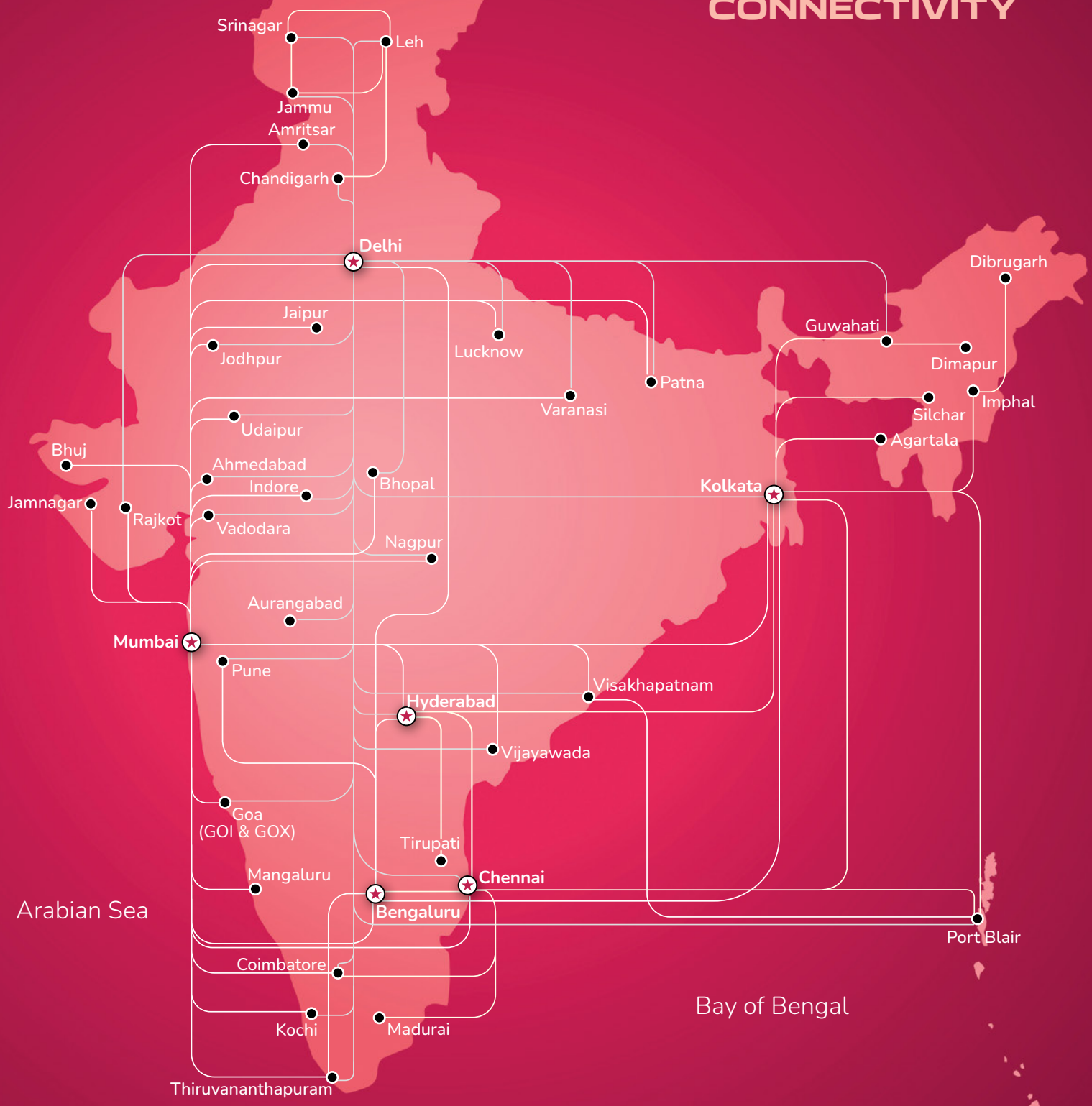
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# DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



Indian Ocean

Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only.  
\*Route map as on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024

# AIR INDIA

## INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Air India flies non-stop to 38 destinations across five continents from multiple Indian cities (pinned on the map of India)

### Europe

Amsterdam (AMS)	←	→	DEL
Copenhagen (CPH)	←	→	DEL
Frankfurt (FRA)	←	→	DEL
Milan (MXP)	←	→	DEL
Paris (CDG)	←	→	DEL
Vienna (VIE)	←	→	DEL
Zurich (ZRH)	←	→	DEL

### UK

Birmingham (BHX) ← → DEL ATQ

#### London

Heathrow (LHR) ← → DEL BOM BLR

Gatwick (LGW) ← → ATQ AMD GOX COK

### 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

Washington (IAD) ← → DEL

### Middle East

Doha (DOH) ← → DEL BOM COK

Dubai (DXB) ← → DEL BOM COK HYD MAA

Jeddah (JED) ← → DEL BOM

Riyadh (RUH) ← → DEL BOM

Tel Aviv (TLV) ← → DEL

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

\*Route map as on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024



### Far East

Hong Kong (HKG)	←.....→	DEL
Seoul (ICN)	←.....→	DEL
Tokyo (NRT)	←.....→	DEL



### South East Asia

Bangkok (BKK)	←.....→	DEL	BOM		
Ho Chi Minh City (SGN)	←.....→	DEL			
Kuala Lumpur (KUL)	←.....→	DEL			
Phuket (HKT)	←.....→	DEL			
Singapore (SIN)	←.....→	DEL	BOM	BLR	MAA

### Indian Subcontinent

Colombo (CMB)	←.....→	DEL	MAA
Dhaka (DAC)	←.....→	DEL	
Kathmandu (KTM)	←.....→	DEL	CCU
Yangon (RGN)	←.....→	DEL	



### Africa

Nairobi (NBO)	←.....→	DEL
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### Australia

Melbourne (MEL)	←.....→	DEL	BOM
Sydney (SYD)	←.....→	DEL	

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## CODESHARE \*



## PLAN A TRIP TO DAINTREE RAINFOREST

Fly non-stop to Sydney from Delhi with Air India



## INTERLINE

AccesRail	Aegean Airlines	Aeroflot	Aerolineas Argentinas
Air Astana	Air Austral	Air Canada	Air China
Air Europa	Air France	Air Macau	Air Malta
Air New Zealand	Air Niugini	Air Seychelles	Air Tanzania
Alaska Airlines	American Airlines	Austrian Airlines	Azerbaijan Airlines
British Airways	Bangkok Airways	Biman Bangladesh Airlines	Brussels Airlines
Cathay Pacific	Caribbean Airlines	China Airlines	China Eastern Airlines
China Southern Airlines	Condor	Copa Airlines	Delta Air Lines
El Al	Emirates	Etihad Airways	Fiji Airways
Finnair	German Rail	Gulf Air	Hahn Air
Hainan Airlines	Hong Kong Airlines	Iberia	Icelandair
ITA Airways	Japan Airlines	JetBlue	Jetstar
JetStar Asia	Juneyao Airlines	Kam Air	Kenya Airways
KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	Korean Air	Kuwait Airways	Madagascar Airlines
Malaysia Airlines	MIAT Mongolian Airlines	Middle East Airlines	Myanmar Airways International
Nepal Airlines	Oman Air	Philippine Airlines	Qantas
Qatar Airways	Royal Air Maroc	Royal Brunei Airlines	Royal Jordanian
RwandAir	Saudia	Scandinavian Airlines	Shandong Airlines
Shanghai Airlines	Shenzhen Airlines	South African Airways	Thai Airways
Turkish Airlines	United Airlines	Uzbekistan Airways	Vietnam Airlines
Virgin Atlantic	Vistara		

\*Both Codeshare and Interline Partners

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Hire a car or take a bus to Daintree Rainforest, Australia



Codeshare and Interline partnerships as on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2024

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#### POINTS CONVERSION



#### CO - BRAND CARD



### STAY PARTNERS



### LIFESTYLE PARTNERS



### EXPERIENCE PARTNERS



### CAR RENTAL PARTNERS



\*T&C Apply



# YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE

## DIGIYATRA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय द्वारा 13 एयरपोर्ट्स—दिल्ली, बंगलुरु, वाराणसी, पुणे, कोलकाता, विजयवाड़ा हैदराबाद, अहमदाबाद, मुंबई, जयपुर, लखनऊ, गुवाहाटी और कोचीन के लिए डीजी यात्रा की सुविधा का शुभारंभ किया गया है। डीजी यात्रा ऐप को डाउनलोड करके खुद को नामांकित करें और इन एयरपोर्ट्स पर निबाध और बाधा रहित यात्रा का अनुभव करें।

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched DigiYatra facilities at 13 Indian airports, namely Delhi, Bengaluru, Varanasi, Pune, Kolkata, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, and Cochin. You can avail it and have a seamless and hassle-free experience at these airports. To avail the facility, you can download the DigiYatra app and register on it.

## MISSION LIFE

पर्यावरण के प्रति जागरूक जीवन शैली को अपनाने की

दिशा में व्यवहारिक परिवर्तनों को प्रेरित करने के लिए, माननीय प्रधान मंत्री ने मिशन लाइफ—लाइफस्टाइल फॉर एनवायरनमेंट शुरू किया है, जो की भारत के नेतृत्व वाला वैश्विक जन आंदोलन है। आइए हम सभी प्रो-प्लैनेट एक्शन लेने का संकल्प लें, जैसे ऊर्जा की बचत, पानी का संरक्षण, पेड़ों का पोषण और पर्यावरण के अनुकूल अपशिष्ट निपटान।

Mission LiFE—Lifestyle for Environment is an India-led global mass movement launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister for inducing behavioural changes towards adopting environmentally-conscious lifestyles. Let us all pledge to take Pro-Planet actions like saving energy, conserving water, nurturing trees, and eco-friendly waste disposal.

## AIR SEVA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने विमान सेवा पोर्टल को अपग्रेड किया है, जो इंटरैक्टिव वेब पोर्टल और मोबाइल ऐप के ज़रिए सुलभ है। इस नए संस्करण में:

(क) सोशल मीडिया के साथ सुरक्षित साइन अप और लॉग इन  
(ख) अतिथियों की सहायता के लिए, चैट बॉक्स  
(ग) सोशल मीडिया शिकायत सहित, परिष्कृत प्रबंधन  
(घ) रियल टाइम उड़ान स्टेटस और विस्तृत उड़ान संबंधी जानकारी शामिल है  
सेवा संबंधी किसी और जानकारी के लिए आप [airsewa.gov.in](http://airsewa.gov.in) पर लॉग इन कर सकते हैं।

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has upgraded its Air Sewa portal, which is accessible through an interactive web portal and a mobile app. The new version includes:

- a) Secure sign-up and log-in with social media
  - b) Chat box for traveller's support
  - c) Improved grievance management, including social media grievance
  - d) Real-time flight status and detailed flight schedule.
- Air Sewa is available at [airsewa.gov.in](http://airsewa.gov.in).



# A TRAVELLER'S TALE



## GREEK HAVEN

The island of Santorini is designer **Nida Mahmood's** ideal getaway

### DOWN MEMORY LANE

Their pristine landscapes have been luring me to the Greek islands since 2014. But Santorini is most special, for its incredible views and the concept of *philoxenia*, which translates to 'love of strangers'. In Greece, hospitality is a way of life.

### A FOND REMEMBRANCE

The sunset from the cliffs of Oia, one of the island's villages, is an iconic experience. As the sun begins to dip below the horizon, the village transforms into a palette of gold, orange, and fuchsia hues. People gather near the ruined Byzantine-era castle (the highest point in Oia) to watch the spectacle.

### A FARE TO REMEMBER

I had the best fine-dine experience at 1800-Floga restaurant. Another amazing place for seafood is the Dimitris Taverna.

### DO NOT MISS

A boat tour of the caldera (an immense cavity formed due to a volcanic eruption) and the charming Atlantis bookstore.

— As told to **Shrabasti A Mallik**



Clockwise from top left: Getty Images, Nida Mahmood, Shutterstock, Shutterstock

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THINK PLANET

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