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EDITOR'S NOTE

As the festive season approaches, it brings with it a sense of joy, laughter, and merriment. Family and friends come together to celebrate, cherish traditions, and revel in the beauty of shared memories.

In exploring these moments, we shine a spotlight on the festival of lights, observed in its own unique way across the world. A celebration that transforms the landscape into a wonderland, it is more than a mere spectacle—it embodies the spirit of hope and renewal. Our Cover Story takes you on a spectacular journey through India, Germany, and Thailand. From Dev Deepawali in Varanasi and the Festival of Lights in Berlin to Yi Peng and Loy Krathong in Thailand—each festivity reveals how diverse cultures foster unity, harmony, and camaraderie.

From the glow of lights to the dazzling charm of Tokyo, join us as we discover how this bustling metropolis offers captivating experiences with its robot-operated cafés and borderless museums. For those yearning for more intimate downtime, our curated list of family getaways provides the perfect escape to unwind and bond with your loved ones.

An immersive experience awaits solitude seekers. Savour the authentic aromas of tea and coffee as we take you on two trails—from a serene tea estate in Assam to a soulful coffee plantation in Karnataka—to explore the culture and legacy of both brews.

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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Kunal and Shuvajit are independent photographers and travel writers based in Mumbai and Kolkata. The duo is passionate about heritage, history, art and culture, design and architecture, and gastronomy. Sustainability, recycling, and conservation also pique their interest.



Sinchita Sinha

@wanderingalone_2023

Based in Mumbai, Sinchita shifted her career from banking to pursue her passion for storytelling. Her love for wildlife, conscious travel, heritage, history, food, and exploring offbeat experiences led her to travel with her senses and translate those into words.

↓ page 14



Megan Leon

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A food and travel writer, Megan has called Bangkok home for over a decade. Bearing a culinary background, she explores the city's culture and diverse flavours, sharing exciting stories that celebrate both food and human connections. Her works have been published in Travel + Leisure SEA, Lonely Planet, BK Magazine, and more.



Jitendra Soni

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Jitendra is a Jaipur-based tech journalist. His passion for technology helped him trade spreadsheets for gadgets, igniting a decade-long journey at the forefront of tech journalism in India.

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Nivedita Jayaram Pawar

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A senior journalist based in Mumbai, Nivedita turned to freelance writing in 2013 after spending nearly two decades as editor for various newspapers and magazines. She contributes stories related to design, travel, and lifestyle.

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Magandeep Singh

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An awarded sommelier, Magandeep, or Magan, as he likes to be called, is a peripatetic gastronome and a hedonist who divides his time between wine tasting, reading, writing, DJing, scuba diving, and running triathlons.



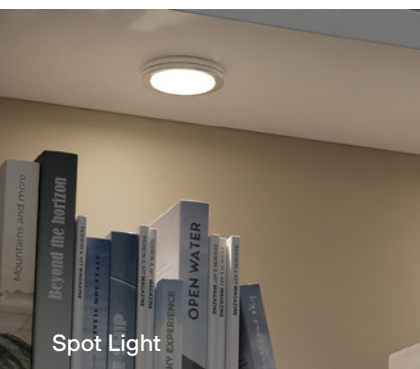
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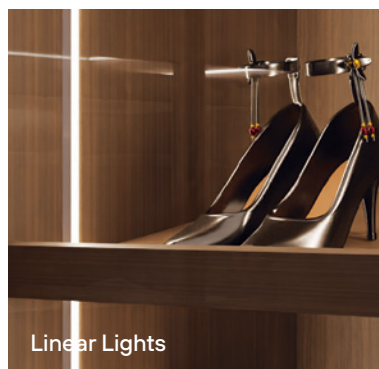
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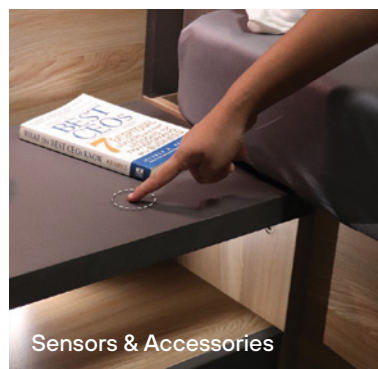
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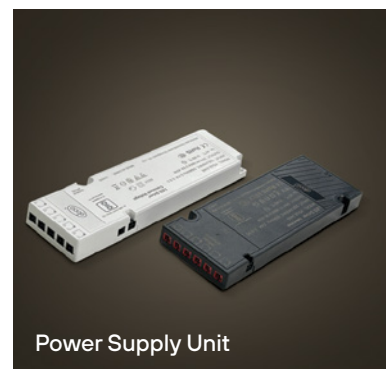
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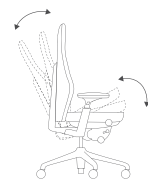
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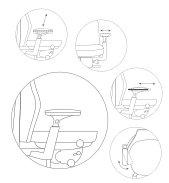
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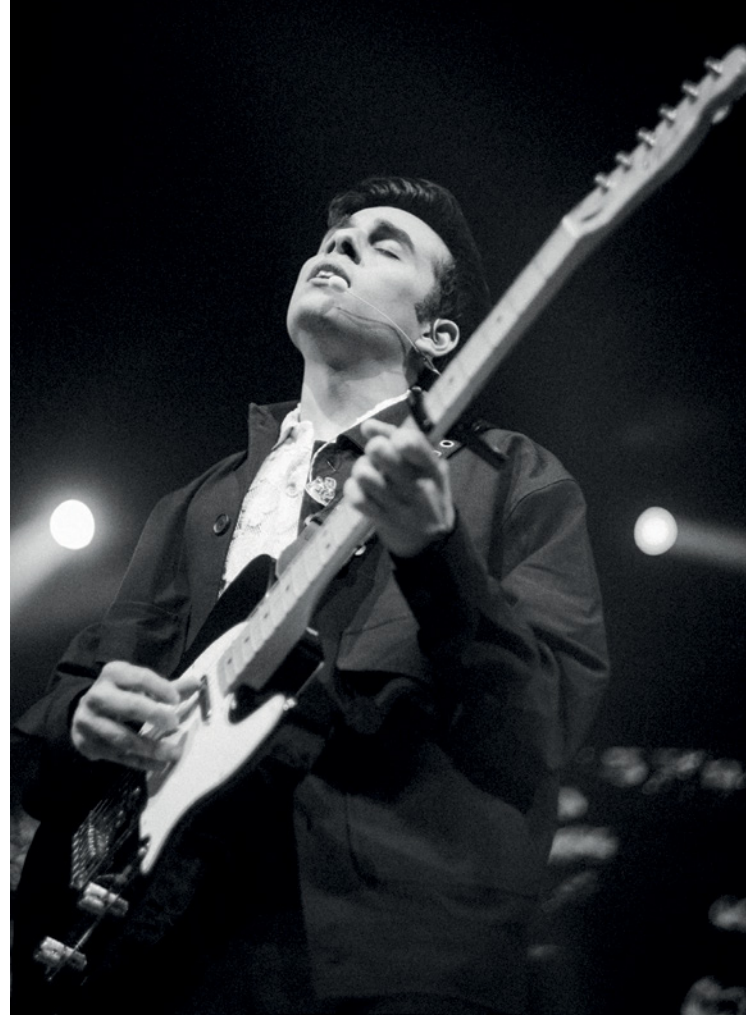
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Nicholas Shakespeare on visiting his roots



54 EVENTS

A list of must-attend global festivities this season

On the Cover
Lanterns lighting up the night at Yi Peng Festival in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

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Getty Images / Kai-Hirai
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FOLLOW ALONG WITH US



ON THE WATERFRONT

The Dev Deepawali ceremonies in **Varanasi** centre around the **Dashashwamedh** and other ghats, all of which shine brighter than ever.





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BASK IN THE GLOW

Herald the season of joy, hope, and celebration as global festivals—from Europe to Asia—suffuse the world with light and colour



A BRIGHT SHIFT

On Dev Deepawali, watch in awe as Varanasi lights up

words by **Sinchita Sinha**



TOP TO BOTTOM
Experiencing the Ganga aarti in this spiritual city is a divine experience; Another vantage point to take in the picturesque views of this festival is from a boat; Families come together to mark the celebrations.

Every November, I reminisce about a trip I took to rediscover myself as a traveller. While no journey to Varanasi is mundane, experiencing Dev Deepawali here is a whole new experience.

Celebrated across several nations, the widely-popular festival of lights, Diwali, is given a unique expression in Varanasi in the form of Dev Deepawali. This five-day affair culminates on Kartik Purnima, when people from across India, and the world, gather for a transcendent experience to remember.

In search of an authentic adventure, I chose to stay close to the Old City. This was perfect for my exploratory journeys—I navigated the winding alleys of Bengali Tola for a peek into the 'Benaras way of life'. Acquainting myself with the centrally-located

Dashashwamedh Ghat was a bonus as I would often promenade towards Assi or Manikarnika ghats and look for markets to pick up souvenirs from. When it came to local flavours, I experienced it via the snow-white lassis sold in earthen cups, or *kulhads*, with a generous amount of cream on top. This decadent treat was discovered in the market behind the Dashashwamedh Ghat. Another deep dive into the regional cuisine unearthed Markandey Sardar shop, which sold *malaiyo*, a frothy milk-based dessert.

On Kartik Purnima, I witnessed millions of devotees take a dip in the freezing water of the Ganges (November is quite chilly in north India) before daybreak, followed by a visit to one of the 12 most revered *ijotirlings* (shrines dedicated to Lord Shiva) in India—Kashi Vishwanath. Then, the



Both tourists and pilgrims enjoy the vibe that pervades Varanasi during Dev Deepawali

WHEN TO GO

Varanasi will celebrate Dev Deepawali this year on the full moon night of **15th November**, which is also **Kartik Purnima**.

city began to ready itself for the glorious celebration. At dusk, I boarded a boat to witness the grand aarti at Dashashwamedh Ghat.

What followed was an indescribable show of festive observance. When the synchronised chanting, accompanied with the ringing of the bells, reached a crescendo, a display of fireworks erupted in a cascade of shimmering sparks, creating a symphony of visual splendour across the dark canvas of the sky.

As night descended, millions of tiny flames filled my view. Meticulously placed along all the steps of the ghats, on ledges, on top of arches, around gateways of temples, and adorned houses, the earthen lamps transformed the city into a sublime sight. At that moment, I was immersed in the divine atmosphere that pervades Varanasi during Dev Deepawali—an experience that will change your worldview forever.



GETTING THERE

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

LOVE LIGHTS

Discover Berlin's dazzling transformation into a vibrant, luminous canvas

words by **Sayanti Halder**

Autumn in Europe has always held a special charm, and Berlin seemed to encapsulate that perfectly. As I flew in, the golden-tinged air and the patchwork of green and yellow trees set the stage for an unforgettable experience. I had heard whispers of Berlin's Festival of Lights, a spectacular event that turns the city into a living canvas of light and colour, but nothing could have prepared me for what I was about to witness. Since 2005, this festival has stood out for its spark and joy. The original thought behind this was to brighten up the autumn days and attract visitors to Berlin. Today, it serves as a global platform for renowned artists from many countries.

As twilight descended, I was mesmerised by how

WHEN TO GO

With the theme 'Celebrating Freedom', the 2024 Berlin Festival of Lights will dazzle for its **20th anniversary**, from **4th to 13th October**, 7pm to midnight.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The illuminated Berliner Fernsehturm in 2023; A stunning display on the Berlin Cathedral; The colourful façade of St. Hedwigs Kathedrale; A teaser photo of the Brandenburg Gate in 2024.



Berlin Cathedral: Getty Images; Rest: FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS



the city began to shimmer and shine. The transition from daylight to darkness was seamless, as buildings and streets started to glow with a strategic brilliance that painted the sky in hues of blue and purple. The lights, which would continue to dazzle until midnight, transformed familiar landmarks into fantastical displays of imagination.

Eager to soak in this spectacle, I embarked on a bus tour recommended by a friend. Armed with snacks from Französische Street, we began our journey from the Potsdamer Platz. Thereafter, we joined people converging around Museum Island.

Berlin's historic landmarks—from the towering Berlin TV Tower to the iconic Brandenburg Gate—were adorned with

mesmerising displays. Lesser-known streets, bridges, and squares also received their moment in the spotlight. Our tour offered frequent stops, with a guide who skilfully narrated the festival's highlights in both German and English.

Next evening, I boarded a river cruise along the Spree from Jannowitzbrücke. We cruised under the Oberbaum Bridge, past the famed East Side Gallery, and, eventually, the beautifully-lit Berlin-Mitte before making a turn at the House of World Cultures.

Both tours offered distinct views of the festival. Each moment was a testament to the city's ability to blend culture and creativity seamlessly. Berlin had given me a collection of vivid memories that would forever light up my recollections.



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Frankfurt from Delhi and Mumbai*. Travel to Berlin with our Intermodal Partner Deutsche Bahn.

*For travel starting from 12th November 2024



People gather on the outskirts of Chiang Mai to release sky lanterns during the Yi Peng festival

Tourism Authority of Thailand

SHARE THE JOY

Experience the magic of Loy Krathong and Yi Peng in Thailand

words by **Megan Leon**



TOP TO BOTTOM

The delicate flower baskets called krathongs are made as offerings to the water goddess; These baskets are filled with flowers, incense and candles; The decorated baskets are then released in water to mark the festival of Loy Krathong.

I still vividly remember our first holiday in Chiang Mai, where we discovered the celebration of Yi Peng, the lantern festival, which also coincides with Loy Krathong, a celebration of water and gratitude. Living as an expat in Thailand for over a decade, these two festivals have left a lasting impression, revealing rich cultural layers intertwined with significance and hope.

On the night of Yi Peng, people from all backgrounds gathered on the outskirts of Chiang Mai to participate in the age-old tradition of releasing lanterns, called *Khom Loi*, into the night sky. The festival is an ancient Lanna culture tradition of Northern Thailand, where *Yi* means ‘two’ and *Peng* means ‘full moon’, a reference to the lunar calendar. As the sun

went down, we carefully lit the lantern and offered our thanks while it filled with hot air, then let it gently ascend, carrying our aspirations and dreams. More and more lanterns filled the sky, creating an illuminating, celestial city before our eyes.

What made this time of year even more special was the coinciding celebration of Loy Krathong, the festival of water and the cleansing of negative energy. Unlike Yi Peng, which takes place in Chiang Mai, I was intrigued to learn that Loy Krathong was celebrated nationwide. And because we lived in Bangkok, we joyfully entered into the spirit of the festivities. We crafted delicate baskets, or *krathongs*, from banana leaves, flowers, incense, and candles, and released them in water as our way



of paying respect to the Goddess of Water, Phra Mae Khongkha, while letting go of bad luck. Sometimes, adding a coin signifies good luck with wealth.

While both festivals share a kindred spirit of celebration during the same week in November, I appreciated how their meanings were quite distinct. Yi Peng drew me in for its illuminated processions (it is also celebrated with a corresponding feast of Thai delicacies, including vegetarian curries and sweet treats). In contrast, Loy Krathong, a one-day festival emphasising our gratitude for water as well as forgiveness, felt a lot closer to home.

When we released our lanterns on that memorable night, I felt a profound connection not only to my loved ones but also an immense appreciation for Thailand. As each year passes, we continue to honour both traditions

by visiting our local park, Benjakitti, or neighbouring landmarks like Wat Arun, to pay our respects to the water goddess and bond with the community.

It's safe to say that Yi Peng and Loy Krathong have woven themselves into the fabric of our family traditions, alongside Thanksgiving and Christmas, allowing us to celebrate our family values and our deep gratitude for the beautiful country of Thailand, which we still call home.

WHEN TO GO

Loy Krathong will be celebrated on **15th November** and Yi Peng dates are **15th-16th November** in 2024. Yi Peng is held in private lantern release venues on the outskirts of Chiang Mai, while Loy Krathong is celebrated across the country.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Both festivals are devout expressions of Thailand's Buddhist traditions; illuminated processions and displays form a part of Yi Peng observances; An offering of flowers, incense sticks, and lights is added to the baskets to signify good luck with wealth and wellbeing.

GETTING THERE
Air India flies non-stop to Bangkok from Delhi and Mumbai, and to Phuket from Delhi.

THE PEOPLE

28 EXPERT SPEAK 32 INSPIRING INDIA



STAR STRUCK

Chef Marco Pierre White
opens up about how he's never
eaten a bad meal in India

*The legendary chef
made international
headlines in 1999
when he returned his
three Michelin stars*

"I LOVE THE DOSAS AND THE BIRYANIS"

The godfather of modern cooking, Marco Pierre White, on his love affair with Indian food

words by **Nivedita Jayaram Pawar**

WHEN DID YOU DECIDE TO BECOME A CHEF?

I never wanted to be a cook. My real love affair was with nature. When I started to see the beautiful salmon and lobsters come in from the sea...that ignited my imagination altogether.

IN 1995 YOU WON THREE MICHELIN STARS. BUT YOU WALKED AWAY FROM IT ALL IN 1999. WHY?

Wining three stars is the most exciting thing in a chef's life. But retaining them is the most boring job. After retiring, I didn't want to pretend I was behind the stove and continue to charge high prices and question my integrity. So, I gave the Michelin stars back. But I had to win those stars to understand what I really wanted from life.

CHRISTMAS IS ROUND THE CORNER. DO YOU HAVE A FAVOURITE MEMORY OF THE DAY?

Sadly, I work every Christmas Day at my restaurants. It's the busiest time of the year for us. But as a child, Christmas was quite mesmerising and beautiful.



Chef and restaurateur Marco Pierre White at the opening of his restaurant in Dublin, Ireland, in 2013

I loved the icicles that formed like stalactites when overflow pipes froze and the special time at school when lessons stopped and we decorated the classroom. We'd collect holly and mistletoe from a nearby orchard and go caroling. After the presents were opened, we tucked into a full English breakfast made by my father, a chef. *Nonno* [grandfather] sent



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Chef White was the youngest British chef to win three Michelin stars in 1995

white truffles in cotton bags and a Christmas cake from Verona. One of my favourite rituals as a child was dressing the Christmas tree with my mother and placing the star on top.

THE MOST MEMORABLE MEALS YOU HAVE EVER HAD.

I love the dosas and the biryanis in India and always enjoy it with bony pieces of meat so I can taste the rich marrow. Trishna, a restaurant in Mumbai, serves the best dosas I have ever had. They feed you well without the fluff.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE ABOUT INDIAN CUISINE?

Home cooking in India is amazing because of its mothers, daughters, and grandmothers who can cook. The passing of knowledge down generations, understanding of spices, and how their fingertips become weighing scale is great.

YOUR FAVOURITE PLACES TO EAT.

Undoubtedly India. Every dish here is so good, I could live here. India is the only country in the world where I have never had a bad meal. I also like the gastronomy of Italy, Spain, and France.

WHAT MEAL DO YOU LOVE RUSTLING UP AT HOME?

I like to do a one-pot meal, like risotto. But my favourite is a ham sandwich with Colman's English mustard and a cup of tea.



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SIGN INTO WINE

Here's how to acquire a unique portfolio that can be both satisfying and profitable

words by **Magandeep Singh**

MUST KNOW

Data shows that wine investments are as profitable as investing in gold.

As a young sommelier, I was always unsure about how wine investments would work. But with time, I have come to understand how wine can be used as an investment tool for long-term gain. With

information acquired from professionals and companies who specialise in wine investments, here is all you need to know to include wine in a financial portfolio.

IS IT STABLE?

Investing in wine seems risky but you'd be surprised

to know that returns have only been slightly behind gold (330 per cent for gold vs 320 per cent for wine between 2004-2021, as per data from Hedonova, a firm specialising in alternate investments). It works because wine ages in the bottle—and a good taster



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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

An archival image of a Christie's expert examining wine before an auction; Wine investment firms will not just handle buying and selling, they'll also manage your portfolio; As certain wines age, they become more covetable, causing the price to rise.

can identify the potential in a wine. This makes its future-perceived value higher and consequently more buyers line up for the wine, driving up prices. Since the amount of wine made every year by a winery varies as a function of the weather, the 'acquisition anxiety' quotient is always brimming.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

It's not as simple as buying three bottles on a holiday, parking them in a dark corner, and then bringing them in for evaluation a decade later. The right wines from sought-after regions need to be identified, bought

when young, and then one must see how prices move. Many firms buy the wines even before they are ready, at a better rate. A deep knowledge of brands and regions, and their historic performance as a value proposition is a requisite.

WHY NOT ART?

While the value of all forms of art is driven by certain factors—popularity of provenance, rarity, availability, mass appeal—there are a few factors that affect the wine market uniquely. Mainly, it's the vagaries of nature, which can yeild a bumper harvest one year and decimate entire vineyards the very next one. This can create ripples in the supply that affects prices.

As certain wines age, they become more covetable, which sends their price up. Another factor directly impacting rarity is the number of bottles left from any given year. Wine can

get consumed; so, with each bottle uncorked, the value of the others appreciates.

HOW DO I GET IN ON THE ACTION?

You can do it directly online by getting an account on sites like Liv-Ex. Else, companies like Berry Bros. & Rudd, Fine+Rare, Hedonova, and Vinovest, among others. They not only handle the buying and selling but also keep you updated on prices and advise you on your portfolio. Profits from this can be taxed like any other long-term capital gain so, there's that caveat.

IS IT WORTH IT?

If only to afford you bragging rights, give you a sense of diversifying investments, or make you glow with the idea that you own a wine cellar, it's definitely worth it. The upside: you make a tidy sum; the downside: you can still end up with covetable bottles for your next soirée.

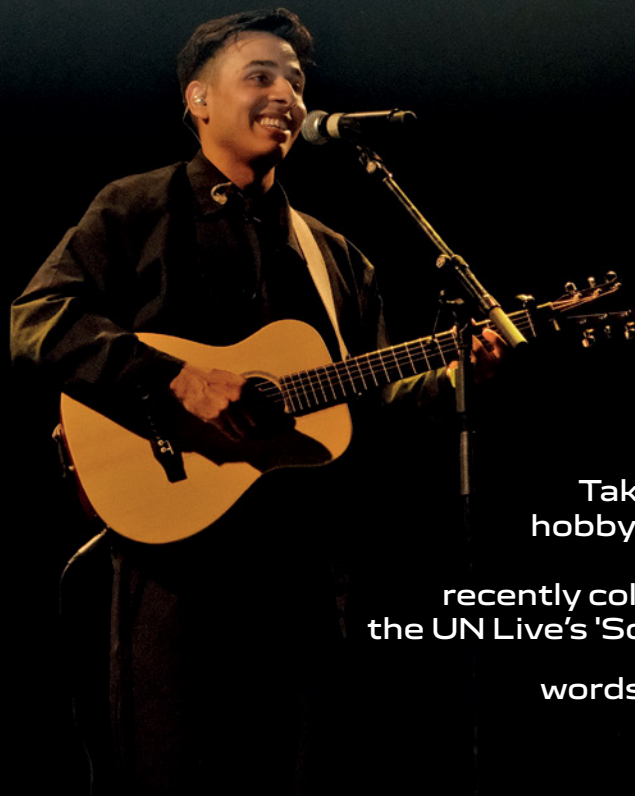
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STRIKE A CHORD



Taking a chance on a hobby has led indie singer-songwriter Anuv Jain to recently collaborate with the UN Live's 'Sounds Right' initiative

words by **Shrabasti Anindita Mallik**

MY NEW INDIA

There is a noticeable **growth story** happening in India. People, especially in urban areas, are keen on **exploring Indian musicians**, including independent ones like me. I hope that India's music scene, along with other industries, keeps growing for good.

YOU HAIL FROM A BUSINESS FAMILY. WHEN AND HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR CALLING IN MUSIC?

For the longest time, I believed that I would be a part of the business. But that's life—sometimes certain things don't work out while certain things do, and that's how music happened. I've been singing since childhood but music was nothing more than a hobby. It was during the lockdown when I released my music on

YouTube and decided to take a leap of faith. If I hadn't, I would have regretted it for the rest of my life.

THE MUSIC YOU COMPOSE IS MOSTLY ON GUITAR, UKULELE, AND ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS...

For me, the songwriting needs to come through so, I don't fill up the composition with an assortment of instruments. I let the lyrics be the hero of the song. This

style is unique to me and I'm happy to continue this for a while but I wouldn't really mind changing the formula.

FROM A SHY LUDHIANA BOY TO JOINING HANDS WITH THE UN—YOU'VE COME A LONG WAY.

Working closely with the United Nations has always been a dream. It was a momentous occasion to collaborate with the UN Live's (Museum for United Nations) 'Sounds Right'

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CRORE  24% YoY

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CRORE  16% YoY



ON A LIGHT NOTE

Bollywood Dreams

I would love to sing for movies; work with Ranbir Kapoor or sing in an Alia Bhatt starrer. Imtiaz Ali's films have amazing music and I would like to work with him.

True Inspirations

I'm lucky to have met Ed Sheeran and Atif Aslam. I want to meet AR Rahman.

When work mode is off, I can be found...

At the gym or on a drive with friends.



initiative this year. For this, we had to weave sounds found in nature into one of our popular songs and re-release it. A considerable portion of the royalties from the track goes towards charities for environmental conservation. The song that we chose was *Baarishein* and mixed the gentle sounds of rain and thunderstorms from India into the composition. And raindrops were an obvious choice because *baarishein* means rain. It is gratifying to be able to work towards making this world a bit better.

YOU ENJOY WATCHING MOVIES. DO THEY INSPIRE YOUR LYRICS?

Yes, very much so. They are major sources of inspiration whenever I want to write because on certain days, I am too happy to write something emotional—words that tug at the heartstrings. That is when I would watch a sad movie, and it gets me in the mood.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Jain enjoying a sweet moment in the sun in Solan; In Manchester, during his sold-out UK tour this year; Jain always considered his music a hobby till he released his compositions on YouTube.

The number of films that I watch now has reduced considerably, owing to my work and travels. But while I was in college, I watched almost every film.

HOW CRUCIAL A ROLE HAS SOCIAL MEDIA PLAYED IN YOUR SUCCESS JOURNEY?

In certain ways, social media has had an incredible role in building my career. As independent artistes, we don't have many avenues to market our music. But social media is free and accessible for all; it is an almost level playing field. And I think I have been able to build a close-knit audience who are interested in the kind of music that I create.

THE CHECKLIST

42 ➔ GADGETS 48 ➔ FOOD 54 ➔ EVENTS 56 ➔ BOOKS

Saundh's festive 2024 collection fuses Japanese, African, and Indian influences

STEP IN STYLE

The latest fashion trends and luxury offerings this festive season



↑ FALGUNI SHANE PEACOCK STORE LAUNCH

Why: Designed by Gauri Khan, this is the design-duo's first luxury prêt store in India. **Where:** *The Dhan Mill, New Delhi* **Highlights:** *A street-luxe collection that redefines street chic, brass-monogrammed tables, Savonnerie carpets, and more*

ALL IN VOGUE

The latest in fashion, food, wellness and beyond!



ODE TO A LEGEND

An exhibition featuring the best works of India's first abstractionist, Bimal Das Gupta, will be held at Travancore House, KG Marg, New Delhi, from 9th-10th November.



↑ MISSION BAY

Why: For an authentic taste of San Francisco cuisine, with a menu featuring influences from Mexico, Italy, the Mediterranean, Japan, and Korea. **Where:** *Eldeco Centre, Malviya Nagar, Delhi* **Recommendations:** *Fried Chicken Karaage, Acqua Pazza Sea Bass, Baja Style Cauliflower Tacos*



JOYOUS FEAST

Masque (Mumbai) marked its eighth year with a month-long celebration, highlighting regional cuisine and launching an all-new menu curated by Chef Varun Totlani.



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GLOBAL ENSEMBLES

Saundh's 2024 festive collection, *Worlds Within*, is an amalgam of two cultures—Japan and the African Wodaabe community—on chanderi, muslin, georgette, organza, and more.



THE GRAMMAR ROOM

Why: The iconic brand opens franchises in two strategic locations across Delhi-NCR, retaining its timeless charm and elevated gourmet café-style food. **Where:** Khan Market (New Delhi) and 32nd Milestone (Gurugram)

Recommendations: *K- Benedict, Sushi Tostada, Duck Duck Plum, Emo Mocha, and Pisco Gimlet*



LUXURY PIECES

Swiss watch manufacturer Franck Muller's first boutique in Delhi will offer exquisite timepieces along with occasional limited edition ones.



PAYAL SINGHAL X MYARAA

Why: Designer Payal Singhal has partnered with Myaraa to create the *Blossom* hats collection, merging innovative headwear design with timeless Indian artistry.

Where: www.payalsinghal.com / www.myaraa.com
Recommendations: *Natural wheat straw hats that are embroidered with intricate yet vibrant floral patterns*



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AMAZON GREAT INDIAN FESTIVAL 2024 ANNOUNCES GREAT DEALS FOR FESTIVE-READY HOMES

Grab exciting offers on premium home and kitchen appliances along with auto products

With the festive season approaching, it's time to upgrade home spaces, from home and kitchen appliances to bedsheets, decorative lights, and kitchen tools. To make this shopping season more exciting and convenient, the Amazon Great Indian Festival 2024, starting 27th September, is offering up to 50% off on a wide range of Home, Kitchen, and Outdoors products, with over 20,000 items and installation services across 300+ cities, all from the comfort of your home. Customers can also avail a flat ₹1,000 off on a minimum purchase of ₹10,000 on appliances and enjoy 10% off with SBI Debit and Credit cards on minimum purchase of ₹5,000 across categories.

Here are some products on Amazon.in with great deals from sellers in Home, Kitchen, Furniture, and Auto categories:

AGARO ROYAL AIR FRYER

This multifunctional oven allows one to roast, bake, dehydrate, and defrost with even heat distribution. Its rotisserie function and adjustable temperature control can help simplify meal prep. **Get this on Amazon.in for ₹11,999**



GODREJ INTERIO VURV 2-DOOR, 2-WAY SLIDING STEEL WARDROBE

Featuring a durable steel construction, this wardrobe will add modern elegance to the living space with its minimalistic design. The ample storage makes it perfect for organising clothes and accessories. **Get this on Amazon.in for ₹20,490**



THE SLEEP COMPANY ELEV8 SMART RECLINER BED

Enjoy peaceful sleep with this advanced adjustable bed, featuring head and leg elevation, zero-gravity mode for spine relief, and a wireless remote. Its durable metal frame includes anti-snore and TV modes, and a built-in massager for ultimate relaxation. **Get this on Amazon.in for ₹79,200**





HAMILTON BEACH PROFESSIONAL JUICER MIXER GRINDER

This blender boasts a robust motor with triple overload protection and three stainless steel, leak-proof jars. With 13 programme settings, variable speeds, double interlocks, and shatterproof lids, it offers versatility and safety. **Get this on Amazon.in for ₹19,999**



HOKIPO LUXURY SOFA THROW

This cover comes with advanced flocking technology and enhances the sofa. Its fade-resistant and tear-resistant finish makes it skin-friendly and durable.

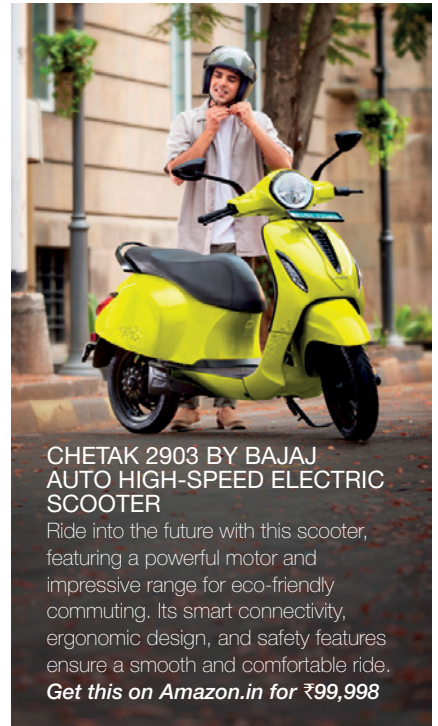
Get this on Amazon.in for ₹4,690



SEIKO PLASTIC MELODIES IN MOTION CLOCK

This clock features rotating scenes and 18 high-fidelity melodies, combining orchestral tunes, sparkling lights, and synchronised motion with reliable quartz movement.

Get this on Amazon.in for ₹21,000



CHETAK 2903 BY BAJAJ AUTO HIGH-SPEED ELECTRIC SCOOTER

Ride into the future with this scooter, featuring a powerful motor and impressive range for eco-friendly commuting. Its smart connectivity, ergonomic design, and safety features ensure a smooth and comfortable ride.

Get this on Amazon.in for ₹99,998



HERO XTREME 125R BIKE

This bike boasts sleek design and powerful performance, ensuring a smooth ride. It comes with advanced features like front disc brakes, a hazard lamp, single-channel abs, a wide rear tyre, and mono-shock suspension.

Get this on Amazon.in for ₹99,500



SCAN FOR SHOPPING



SHARE THE CHEER

In search of festive gifts?
Check out these devices

words by **Jitendra Soni**

➔ PIXEL 9 PRO FOLD

With a perfect balance of design and functionality, Google's new Pixel phone transforms into an eight-inch tablet on demand. Specifications include a Tensor G4 chipset, 16GB RAM, and up to 512GB of storage. Running on Android 14, there are a slew of AI features that take photography and smartphone usage to the next level. Whether gaming, streaming or creating content, the Pixel 9 Pro Fold handles everything effortlessly, making it an ideal gift.

Why buy: Multi-tasking, exceptional camera, seamless software

US\$1,799 (starting price)

➔ BOOX TAB ULTRA C PRO

This is a powerful eBook reader with a 10.3-inch colour display and exceptional battery life. Running on Android, it also lets you browse the internet and listen to music. You can easily go on a binge-reading spree with this device, as the battery life extends to days. Paired with a keyboard case, this tablet converts into a compact PC for emails or presentations on the go, making it a truly versatile choice. Also, use the bundled stylus for quick notes or artistic endeavours. The muted colours and bright screen on the Tab Ultra C Pro provide a paper-like reading experience. Its camera is good for scanning documents, but not the best choice for taking portraits.

Why buy: Enhanced eBook reading, productivity gadget

US\$649.99



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↓ **SONOS ACE HEADPHONES**

These headphones boast great sound quality. Their lightweight build and soft memory foam earcups offer premium comfort. You also get a case to keep them safe. Featuring lossless and spatial audio, class-leading Active Noise Cancellation, and Aware Mode, the Sonos Ace excels in music playback and noise isolation. They offer TrueCinema technology for an immersive experience and connect to your phone, laptop, and iPad. With a 30-hour battery life and quick charging (3 minutes for 30 minutes of listening), this is a versatile audio companion.

Why buy: Excellent sound, noise-cancelling
US\$476.30



→ **LG CINEBEAM Q**

This portable projector is perfect for indoor and outdoor movie nights. The stylish LG CineBeam Q, with its industrial design and rotatable handle, is a conversation starter. Projecting vivid 4K images up to 120 inches, it's ideal for social gatherings. The device automatically adjusts focus and optimises screen size for an immersive experience. Running on the webOS smart TV platform, it supports popular streaming services and wireless content sharing via AirPlay 2 and Miracast.

Why buy: Versatile entertainment
US\$1,299.99



↑ **SAMSUNG GALAXY RING**

Looking for the perfect gift to help someone monitor their fitness without the hassle of a screen on their wrist or the need for frequent charging? This innovative ring is ideal for those seeking a discreet fitness tracker that silently monitors vital signs without bombarding them with alerts. The elegant wearable seamlessly integrates into your lifestyle and tracks such essential metrics as heart rate, skin temperature, and blood oxygen levels. It provides a comprehensive energy score based on your physical readiness, factoring in your previous day's sleep quality, heart rate patterns, and activity levels. With an impressive seven-day battery life, it is available in three finishes—matte black, silver, and gold—to complement any style. Its comfortable, lightweight design makes it easy to forget you're wearing a powerful health companion.

Why buy: Stylish, comprehensive 24/7 fitness tracking
US\$400





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➔ SHARGE DISK

This tiny, yet trendy, compact disk enclosure supports up to 2TB of SSD storage, offering on-demand expansion and boasts 3.2 Gen 2 port USB. Available in bright yellow and grey colourways, the Sharge Disk is compatible with Windows, MacOS 10 or later, iPad OS 12.0.1 or later, Linux, and Android. Despite its cute design, this enclosure features a high-speed fan and weighs just 24gm. While it can be purchased from Sharge, the storage chip has to be bought from other preferred brands.

Why buy: Compact, high-speed storage expansion
\$59.99 (enclosure only)

US\$ 1,173+

was the average annual sum spent in the US and the UK on holiday gifts in 2022.

SOURCE: giftrabbit.com



➔ AYANEO POCKET DMG

Retro gaming enthusiasts will love the AYANEO Pocket DMG, which combines nostalgic aesthetics with cutting-edge hardware for an immersive experience. This compact handheld sports a Qualcomm chip, runs on Android, and offers up to 16GB of RAM and 512GB of storage. Apart from emulators for retro games, it handles the most modern games on its unique 1:1 aspect ratio screen. Its 3.9-inch bright OLED display and Gameboy-inspired design with a unique button layout are sure to reignite your passion for gaming.

Why buy: Portable device, retro charm
US\$340 (starting price)





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FRESH ON THE PLATE

This Thanksgiving, let's celebrate the joy of gathering with loved ones by mixing things up and going beyond the traditional turkey

words by **Team Namaste.AI**

🍷❤️ ROASTED ARTICHOKES

Vegan community, rejoice! This year, we are championing roasted artichokes, tossed with olive oil, lemon, and herbs, as a centrepiece for guilt-free feasting. These plant-based beauties are not just a pleasure for the eyes but also a treat for the palate. Their soft, flavourful leaves invite you to dip them into a zesty tahini sauce or hummus. Don't forget to scoop out the fuzzy choke in the centre to taste the tender 'heart'—it is the best part.

🍷❤️ MENEMEN

Imagine the delight of dipping a crust of freshly-baked bread into a rich and savoury medley of eggs, tomatoes, bell peppers, and ingredients of your choice (as there is no formal recipe). That's how you make *menemen*, a traditional Turkish specialty. One way is to prepare it with feta cheese, onions, and herbs. Egg lovers will surely love this. Serve it in a copper skillet for an authentic feel.










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The kitchen is the heart of every home, where love is infused into meals and memories are created around the table. To keep us healthy and happy, our daily food deserves an extra touch of goodness. Amul Ghee brings that perfect blend of love and nourishment to every dish.

Just a spoonful of pure Amul Ghee every day can work wonders for your health. Packed with essential vitamins and minerals, it promotes good health. So, whether you're a fitness enthusiast, skincare lover or simply seeking more energy, a spoonful of Amul Ghee is enough to make all the difference.

Amul Ghee

GOLDEN FACTS ABOUT GHEE

 Source of vitamins A, D, E and K	 Promotes digestion	 Boosts immunity	 Helps in external nourishment
 Healthy fats with Omega 3 fatty acid	 Source of energy	 Higher smoke point best for cooking	

COMING SOON

AMUL DESI COW GHEE

Made from Gir cow milk sourced from the Saurashtra region, this delightful ghee is arriving soon.



DISCOVER GOLDEN GOODNESS WITH THE AMUL GHEE RANGE



Amul Pure Ghee, with a legacy spanning years, is India's most trusted ghee. It's known for its purity and rich aroma. And it is proudly exported to over 30 countries.
Culinary Usages: पराठा, दाल मखनी, हलवा, और भी बहुत से डिशेस.



Amul Cow Ghee, made from cow milk, has a yellow colour, rich flavour, and essential vitamins for your health.
Culinary Usages: मोदक, पुरणपोळी, थिरा, लापशी, डाळ.



High Aroma Cow Ghee is made from cow milk. It boasts a rich aroma and enhances South Indian dishes with its granular texture.
Culinary Usages: मूंगफली, घुंघरीय, कोमलकट्टे, पायस.



Amul Brown Ghee, with its deep brown colour, is favoured in Eastern India for its nutty aroma and caramelized taste.
Culinary Usages: बी डात, होलार डाल, सज्जे



Amul Buffalo Ghee, with its pearl-white colour and daanedar texture, is made from Saurashtra region's buffalo milk that adds a rich flavour.
Culinary Usages: लड्डू, गुलाब जामुन, चूरमा.



Amul Sagar Ghee, a pride of Gujarat, is crafted to enhance your cooking with its granular texture and purity.
Culinary Usages: भिखडी, सुजडी, मोहनथाण

✗ MYTH

Ghee causes cardiovascular problems.

Ghee is A2 in nature.

If ghee shows layer separation, it indicates impurity.

✓ FACT

Ghee contains monounsaturated omega-3 fatty acids that support heart health.

A2 is a type of protein which may be found in milk. But ghee contains only fat and is not A2 in nature.

Fat separation is a natural property of ghee due to its diverse fatty acid composition.





🍷❤️ PORTOBELLO MUSHROOM

This flavoursome variant is an excellent tribute to the beauty of vegetarian cooking. Marinated in balsamic vinegar and herbs, they become rich and flavourful, offering a satisfying alternative to turkey roast at a Thanksgiving dinner. Stuff them with quinoa and spinach or the classic cheese-and-tomatoes combo for added texture and nutrition. As they roast to perfection, these earthy mushrooms create an inviting aroma that fills the home with warmth. It's a heartfelt choice that proves vegetarian dishes can shine brilliantly on any holiday table.



RAISE A TOAST

Go **beyond the obvious** and serve your guests non-alcoholic punch, sparkling lemonade, hot chocolate or cold brews during and after the grand dinner.

🍷❤️ GLAZED QUAILS

Surprise your guests and family with the elegance of yet another simpler-to-prepare poultry choice. Marinated in a delectable mixture of honey and soy sauce, these petite birds bring a touch of sophistication to your spread. Their succulent meat offers a delightful twist from the standard menu, arousing interest and excitement. When paired with in-season vegetables, they transform from a mundane dinner option into a gourmet adventure, sparking joy and conversation around the festive table.





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↑ ♥ SEAFOOD

Let the ocean's bounty grace your Thanksgiving feast this year. With the best of Oriental aromatics, dishes like roasted king crab, steaming salmon, and red snapper lend a light touch that counterbalances the rich tastes of traditional sides. The vibrant colours and mouthful tastes of the sea celebrate the season's abundance, creating a lighter yet festive vibe. Plus, seafood is versatile—you can grill, bake or sauté it to perfection. The surprise of seafood will be much appreciated by your guests and family.

↓ ♥ BIRYANI

Looking to give your Thanksgiving dinner an Indian twist? Try the widely-recognised biryani, a dish that celebrates variety on all levels. This fragrant rice-based dish gives your feast a pop of colour and flavour, thanks to the spices it is cooked with. It serves as a reminder that the purpose of Thanksgiving is to get together and share stories, cultures, and cuisines. Be it with meat or vegetables, preparing biryani takes time. So, plan well in advance. Present it alongside raita or a refreshing salad. Happy feasting!



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Bucket list-worthy events to attend in October



CULTURAL MÉLANGE OKTOBERFEST

 Berlin, Germany

Till 26th October

While Oktoberfest celebrations are grand in Munich, did you know that Berlin, too, marks the festival with a flair of its own? Held at the fairground located next to the Spandau Citadel (open every Friday and Saturday), it features over 2,000 seats and boasts entertaining programmes, including artistes like DJ Hauffi and master yodeller Mario Bamberger this year. Such traditional dishes as Obatzter, and Kaiserschmarrn are available. visitberlin.de

Getting There: Travel with Air India's non-stop flights and intermodal partner. Visit www.airindia.com to book your tickets.



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 Multiple cities

30th October 2024-August 2025

The band's *Music of the Spheres* world tour will kick-start from Australia (Melbourne, followed by Sydney) and move to New Zealand (Auckland) this year. It'll then travel to the UAE (Abu Dhabi), Hong Kong, and South Korea (Seoul), concluding with eight shows in the UK (Hull and London) in 2025. Most tickets are on sale now. coldplay.com

Getting There: Fly Air India to Hong Kong from Delhi; to Seoul from Delhi; to Dubai from Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Kochi.



TRICK OR TREAT HALLOWEEN

 Derry (Londonderry), Ireland

28th-31st October

What is believed to have begun as a religious observance, across the UK and the US, has transitioned into a day

of merriment for all ages with myriad celebrations. One such is the Derry Halloween, where parties are taken a notch higher with a carnival, street and acrobatic shows. derryhalloween.com
Getting There: Travel with Air India's non-stop flights and intermodal partners. Visit www.airindia.com.

ON THE RADAR



ABHANERI FESTIVAL

📍 **Abhaneri village, Rajasthan**
4th-5th October

It features folk performances like *kachhi ghor* and *kalbeliya*, along with village safaris, puppet shows, and camel cart rides. tourism.rajasthan.gov.in



ICC WOMEN'S T20 WORLD CUP 2024

📍 **The UAE**
3rd-20th October

Catch the 10 teams facing off for the trophy. Venues will be in Dubai and Sharjah. icc-cricket.com



GUINNESS CORK JAZZ FESTIVAL

📍 **Cork City, Ireland**
24th-28th October

The 46th edition features a great line-up of Irish and international musicians. guinnesscorkjazz.com



POP CULTURE FEST NEW YORK COMIC CON

📍 **Javits Center, NYC, the US**
17th-20th October

The East Coast's biggest pop culture convention returns with four fun-filled days of cosplays, artist(e) meet-ups, and great music. Get the chance to see actors who brought some of the comic world's most iconic characters to life, including Paul Bettany (Vision), Josh Brolin (Thanos), and Matt Smith (Doctor Who) alongside comic book legends, new creators, and everything in between.

🌐 newyorkcomiccon.com

Getting There: Fly to New York with Air India's non-stop flights. Visit www.airindia.com to book your tickets.



FESTIVE TREATS

HAWAII FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL

📍 **Kaanapali, Maui, Hawaii**
25th-27th October

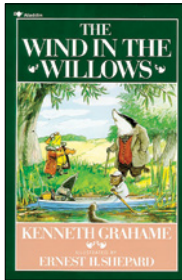
Hawaii's largest food and wine festival will bring together over 150 global tastemakers—Michelin-starred chefs, celebrated winemakers, and master mixologists. Wine lovers can enjoy tasting sessions, guided by expert winemakers. 🌐 hawaiifoodandwinefestival.com

Getting There: Travel with Air India's non-stop flights and intermodal partner. Visit www.airindia.com to book your tickets.



TOP FIVE READS

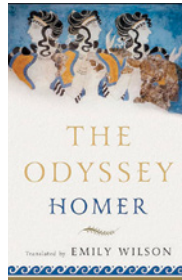
English classicist, **Dame Mary Beard**, DBE, FSA, FBA, FRSL, shares her all-time favourite titles



THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS
(Kenneth Grahame)

It's a children's novel of English countryside life seen through the eyes of different animals, and explores human nature.

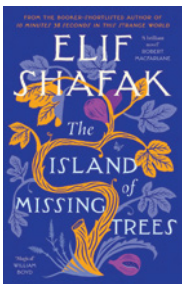
Simon & Schuster India; ₹399



THE ODYSSEY
(Homer)

One of the earliest works of Western literature, it's a wonderfully-sophisticated story of homecoming; one you can tell kids.

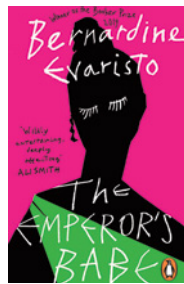
W. W. Norton & Company; ₹1,590



THE ISLAND OF MISSING TREES
(Elif Shafak)

A speaking tree tells a tale of human grief.

Penguin Random House UK; ₹1,098



THE EMPEROR'S BABE
(Bernardine Evaristo)

Written in poetry, this was a surprise read on Roman Britain.

Penguin Random House UK; ₹988



JANE EYRE
(Charlotte Brontë)

Every time I read it, it offers me a different perspective.

Penguin Random House UK; ₹878

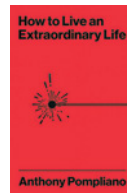
NEW ON THE SHELF



TALES OF MISCHIEF AND ADVENTURE
(Ruskin Bond)

Relive your childhood memories with this collection of the author's cherished stories on adventures, mischiefs, and friendships.

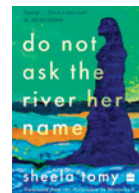
Rupa Publications India; ₹250



HOW TO LIVE AN EXTRAORDINARY LIFE
(Anthony Pompliano)

Through 65 letters addressed to his children, the author imparts inspiring life lessons for a happier future.

Pan Macmillan India; ₹599



DO NOT ASK THE RIVER HER NAME
(Sheela Tomy; translated by Ministry S)

Join Ruth on a heartwarming journey to discover love and humanity that transcends borders.

HarperCollins India; ₹499

THE PLACES

60 → TRULY INDIA 64 → DESTINATION

*The teamLab
Borderless
museum in
Tokyo is a
unique sensory
experience*

TOKYO DRIFT

Got just 24 hours in the
Japanese capital? Make the
most of your time



the places on the clock



TOKYO TIMES

From wrestlers to robots, spend an action-packed day in this vibrant city

words by **Kunal Bhatia** and **Shuvajit Payne**

🕒 09:30AM

Setting sights

📍 Tokyo Metropolitan Government Building Observatories

Zip up 202m to the twin observation decks atop these mighty buildings for stunning 360-degree views over and across the megalopolis. Spot historic shrines, iconic towers, and even the majestic Mt. Fuji on clear days.

🕒 11:00AM

Slurping goodness

📍 Ramen Jazzy Beats

With the head chef doubling up as a DJ, reserve brunch at this top-rated restaurant's latest outlet to savour hearty bowls of steaming *shoyu* ramen accompanied with foot-thumping music. Opt for *tokujo* to get all the toppings, including bamboo shoots and fried enoki mushrooms.

🕒 12:30PM

Fantasy world

📍 teamLAB Borderless

Here, expect a free-flowing spectacle of digital art installations—colourful, immersive, and even interactive. Relocated in the Azabudai Hills, there are no boxed galleries. So, explore as you like and go where your imagination takes you.

🕒 02:00PM

Battle of the giants

📍 Ryogoku Kokugikan

You might be forgiven for thinking that the Earth shakes and mountains move when witnessing bouts of legendary Sumo wrestling, Japan's most iconic sport. Three times a year, the Kokugikan stadium plays host to national sumo tournaments. It can accommodate over 10,000 visitors.

FACING PAGE
The futuristic teamLab Borderless digital art museum

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT
Itoya store is filled to the brim with stationery; Get served by robots at DAWN café; Explore touristy sights on a street kart tour; Enjoy music and food at Ramen Jazzy Beats.




GETTING THERE
Air India flies non-stop to Tokyo from Delhi.

STYLISH STAYS

- 1/ Aman Tokyo** offers meditative calm and a cocooned getaway with impeccable city views from its lofty heights in the Otemachi Tower.
- 2/ Muji Hotel Ginza** is a delightfully minimalist, no-frills boutique hotel that's an extension of the brand's flagship store.
- 3/ Hoshinoya Tokyo** is designed as a traditional ryokan in a high-rise format complete with tatami mats, tea lounges, and a rooftop onsen.

🕒 03:30PM
Futuristic socio-tech
📍 Avatar Robot Cafe DAWN

Combining technology with a humane element, the ushers, waiters, and baristas at DAWN are robots operated remotely by home-bound people unable to move physically due to age or health issues. Not only do they get your coffee but also happily engage in conversation.

🕒 04:30PM
The drama unfolds
📍 Kabuki-za

Inscribed as an Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO, Kabuki is Japan's traditional dance-drama theatre form complete with extravagant costumes, elaborate make-up, and highly stylised movements by the actors. While headsets provide English audio guides, never take your eyes off the stage—performers disappear before you know it, sets change, and enthralling live music keeps up the suspense.

🕒 07:00PM
Retail therapy
📍 Itoya

With twelve floors of pens and pencils, stamps and postcards, journals and notebooks, along with hundreds of colourful *washi* tapes, textured papers and desk accessories, this is a stationery store par excellence. Shop for your home or office, and even pick up some unique gifts.

🕒 08:00PM
Time for fun
📍 Shibuya neighbourhood

It's time to unleash your inner child. Dress up as your favourite childhood character in a colourful onesie and whizz down the streets in open karts. It's a great way to wind down the day, while enjoying getting papped by curious onlookers, and passing by such famous locations as the Tokyo Tower and the Shibuya Scramble Crossing, as you cruise along. Remember, that the fun calls for an International Driving Permit.



LEFT AND RIGHT
Brewing a perfect cup of coffee is no less than an art; Tea in India is more than a beverage, it is an emotion.

CUPS THAT CHEER

Two enthusiasts take us on a soulful journey to discover the secrets behind India's two favourite beverages

words by **Madhulika Dash** and **Vaishali Sabherwal**

Tea drinkers and coffee lovers will agree on one thing—India is home to plantations that produce both brews in impressive quantities and qualities. A few estates today carry on the pioneer spirit of their founders, continuing to honour their traditions, and staying engaged with global trends. Join us, as two enthusiasts take us on an immersive journey to the farthest corners of India, exploring two vastly-different plantations, only to find that the essence of a perfect brew unites them.

A MIGHTY MUG

What would life look like

on a coffee plantation? This was the thought that crossed my mind as I set off to visit a fascinating and award-winning estate on the outskirts of Bengaluru. The place is steeped in history; so, I was hoping for a full-bodied experience. And it didn't disappoint.

I was headed to the sleepy town of Sakleshpur. Home to Manjarabad, once a strategic fort of Tipu Sultan, it is known for four things: coffee, spices, waterfalls, and trekking trails. It's also home to the Harley Estate and their eco-friendly homestay, Golden Wood.

Owned by the Purnesh family, this former British plantation has remained the

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Coffee 'cupping' is done to ensure that a brew meets quality standards; At Golden Wood, guests use jeeps to explore the Estate; The estate serves traditional Malnad cuisine.



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Mangaluru from Mumbai, and to Bengaluru from Mumbai, Pune, Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi, and Guwahati.*

address for award-winning coffees, globally, since the 1860s. Much of the credit goes to the fourth and fifth generations of planters, who used their knowledge to develop beans that are high in quality while still retaining traditional practices. The coffee plant maintenance and the harvesting process continue to be managed by the local people who call the estate home.

The lush greenery is what gives the shade-grown coffee its distinct taste and grading. This, plus the fermentation process has allowed the estate to produce over 70 different varietals that form the base of many specialty offerings in the country, including their in-house brand, Classic. "Our lab is

where new-age science and artificial intelligence come together as we play around with the bean's sugary coating to highlight notes that appeal to the modern palate," says Chandini Purnesh, an engineer-turned-master barista.

Aside from the plantation, Golden Wood focuses on giving visitors an authentic vibe, with old homes and woodsheds repurposed as guest cottages. The fare includes local delicacies, including pork, mutton and country chicken curries, and such special dishes as steamed rice balls with a coconut filling and the *chigli* chutney made of fire ants. Visitors can also expect to spot numerous avian species, including migratory birds that



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
Coffee beans are harvested in winter; Visitors to Vaani Greens are also welcome to pick tea leaves; Some estates in India boast specialised coffee labs.



flock here during the winter, the harvesting season for coffee. The sprawling estate is also home to elephants, gaurs, bears, leopards, antelopes, and deer, making it a well-rounded, satisfying experience for guests.

TO THE T-EA

Assam celebrates 200 years of tea this year, which bears testimony to how the beverage forms an integral part of the state's culture and heritage. The Kanchanjuri Tea Estate, surrounded by the mighty Kaziranga National Park, is a part of this proud tradition. Today, it invites visitors to explore its unique way of life and the tea that makes it all possible.

Riniki Bhuyan Sarma, entrepreneur and wife of the present Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma, launched Vaani

Greens Wildlife Resort in February 2024 to allow visitors a chance to experience the rich culture of the state. "I want everyone to experience the true beauty of Assam—its happy people, the wildlife, delicious food, culture, and, most importantly, the tea... all in a sylvan, yet safe and luxurious environment," shares Riniki.

A three-hour drive from Guwahati airport, the resort also features luxurious Geodesic Domes that give guests great views of the vast estate. There are also tea tastings on offer, including smoky tea from their gardens that is brewed in a bamboo shoot, slow-roasting on charcoal.

The monsoons in Assam are ideal for plucking as the crop yields a malty, strong black tea that this region is famous for. At the plantation,



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT

A bird's-eye view of Vaani Greens; The Geodesic Domes ensure guests have the best views; Guests can take a boat ride on the river that runs through the property.



I was overwhelmed by the wonderful heady fragrance of the fresh tea leaves.

Cheery local women were busy plucking the leaves and tossing them into tall wicker baskets. I observed that they not only plucked the top two tender leaves and a little bud from every shoot. I learnt that those two leaves are most packed with flavours, while the bud bursts with antioxidants. Intrigued, I dived into the ritual with a basket of my own and surprised them with a sizable stash of fresh leaves to add to their day's collection.

Beyond the tea, there are other attractions on offer. I spotted friendly ducks and giant hornbills while enjoying a breathtaking boat ride on the river that gently undulates through the property. And its close proximity to Kaziranga is also

ideal for guests who want to explore this UNESCO World Heritage site.

Vaani Greens treated me to an incredible venture, allowing me to experience its rich tea heritage. Not to mention the feeling of knowing that someone, somewhere, is enjoying a cuppa prepared with the leaves plucked by me.

COMMON GROUNDS

Much like a good cup of tea or coffee, such plantations go beyond offering just a refreshing and rejuvenating experience. While visiting any estate is a cherished memory for a connoisseur, these two properties offer a glimpse of not just the treasure that needs preserving but also pay tribute to the human perseverance that makes it all possible.

Clockwise from top left: Vaani Greens; Vaishali Sabherwal; Vaishali Sabherwal



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Guwahati from Delhi, Kolkata, Imphal, Dimapur, and Bengaluru.*

*For travel starting from 12th November 2024

GET GOING

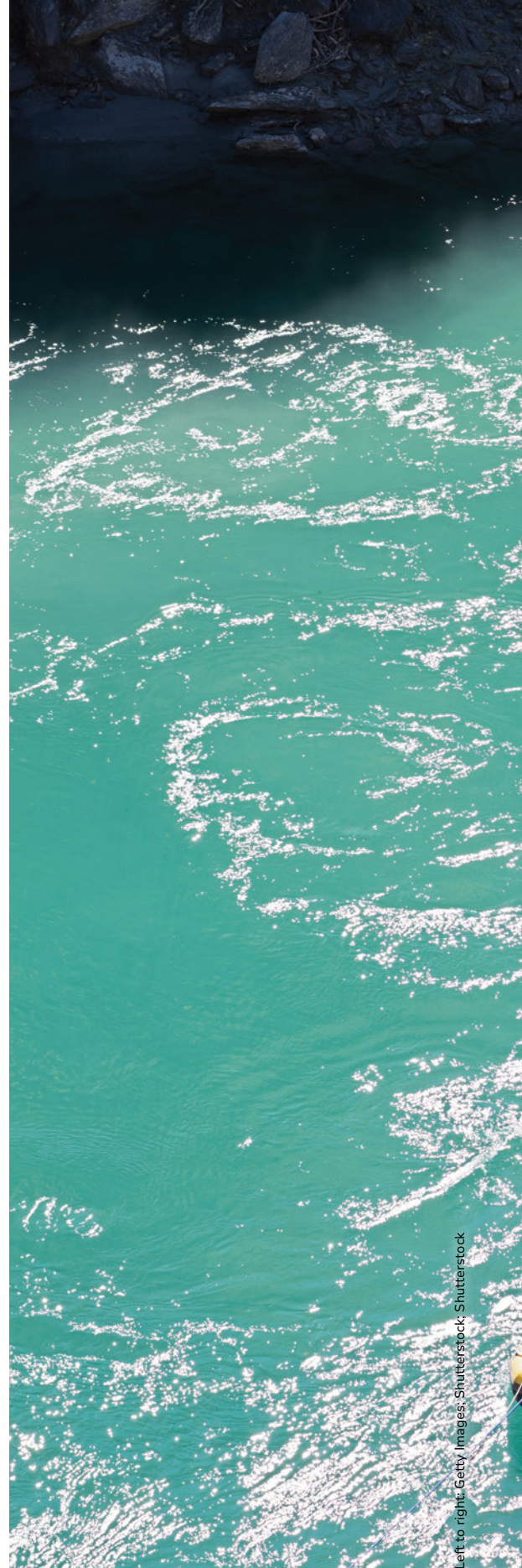
Escape the city hustle with unforgettable family getaways this festive season

words by **Mignonne Dsouza**



↑ CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA

September to December is springtime, making it an ideal period to explore all the wonders of this city. Gaze at the stunning coastline from Table Mountain and take in the surroundings on Scootours, which use non-motorised vehicles to explore the area. Let the children indulge in numerous fun activities like boat rides, art workshops, and mini-golf at the V&A Waterfront, also home to the Cape Town Diamond Museum that displays replicas of the world's most famous diamonds.



Left to right: Getty Images; Shutterstock; Shutterstock



📍 **QUEENSTOWN, NEW ZEALAND**

The adventure capital of the world is a true family-friendly destination. You'll find activities suitable for all age groups and energy levels. Zip your way past the stunning harbour views on Waiheke Island or across The Remarkables mountain range. Also, Spring (September to November) is the best time to indulge in bungee jumping; so, take a leap of faith at the original Kawarau Bungy site or from New Zealand's highest bungee point, the Nevis. Alternatively, Moke Lake is ideal for camping and angling if you wish for some relaxed downtime.





↑ SRINAGAR, JAMMU & KASHMIR, INDIA

When it comes to a relaxed trip, Kashmir is always on everyone's bucket list. As autumn, or *harud* (in Kashmiri), approaches, the city's iconic chinar trees burst forth in red and orange hues. The cooler weather is also the best time to relish the local cuisine; work up an appetite for this by visiting Chinar Bagh and the Mughal Gardens, and taking a shikara ride on Nigeen Lake. However, adventure seekers won't be dissatisfied either and can soar into the sky in a hot air balloon from Zabarwan park.



Clockwise from top: Getty Images; Getty Images; Shutterstock



← DUBAI, THE UAE

Both adults and youngsters alike are spoilt for choice here. Create lasting memories at Legoland Dubai, Dubai Parks and Resorts, and the upcoming sweet deal, the Museum of Candy. Children can stay entertained at Dubai Aquarium & Underwater Zoo in Dubai Mall—there's always something new to see here—as the adults shop. Then, the whole family can head to Dubai Marina for waterfront views and self-drive boat tours.



Clockwise from top left: Shutterstock; Shutterstock; Getty Images

➔ **TADOBA-ANDHARI
TIGER RESERVE,
MAHARASHTRA, INDIA**

This year, take your family to visit wildlife. And Tadoba is undoubtedly one of the best locations in the country to not only get close to the natural world but to see the majestic Bengal tiger as well. Other species native to the reserve include leopards, sloth bears, antelopes, and deer. Beyond the forest, enjoy boat rides on Irai backwaters and visit the butterfly garden to delight the kids further.



Shutterstock



📍 SINGAPORE

With an extensive choice of things to do, Singapore is always high up on the holiday list. For folks who enjoy eating good food, the Singapore Food Festival offers theatrical and experimental dining experiences, at iconic venues, throughout October. While visiting Gardens by the Bay, you don't want to miss *Carnival of Flowers*, a stunning Australian-themed floral display that will run till 17th November. Families should also drop by the *Impressions of Monet: The Experience* exhibition—it's a must-see!





↑ SARDINIA, ITALY

Don't be surprised if you spot a celebrity on this southern Italian island as it has played host to everyone—from the Clooneys to the Beckhams. This is one of the best spots to relax, whether you choose one of its golden beaches or the Trenino Verde (Green Train) that takes you into the interior. And when hunger strikes, feast on authentic Margherita pizzas and pastas, as well as seafood and gelatos.

YOUR AIR INDIA



NEWS

We keep you abreast of our latest news and updates, so you never miss a beat

p 74 

ROUTES

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

p 77 

PARTNERS

Along with our partners and through alliances, we connect the world and create a bond

p 80 



WORLD-CLASS AIRLINE WITH AN INDIAN HEART

In 2022, Air India launched its five-year transformation programme, Vihaan.AI, embarking on its journey to become a world-class airline with an Indian heart—the absolute best-in-class in customer service, technology, product, reliability, and hospitality.

TAXI



Phase 1: March 2023
Fix the basics

TAKE-OFF



Phase 2: April 2023 – March 2024
Build for excellence

CLIMB



Phase 3: April 2024 – March 2027
Scale and grow

TRANSFORMATION PILLARS

People and Digital as differentiators



Global loyal customer base



Robust and clockwork operations



Industry best talent



Industry captain on future agendas



Commercially efficient and growing

Enablers

- Clear and open communication
- Powered by technology
- Values-driven cultural transformation

THE JOURNEY OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS

- Launched **new brand identities** of Air India and Air India Express including the new livery



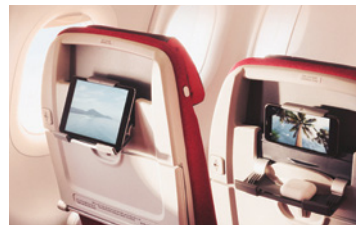
- Placed record-setting orders for **470 aircraft**. Now arriving at the rate of one new aircraft every six days

- Rolled out the **new Air India experience** aboard A350 flights: world-class cabin product along with new tableware, bedding, amenity kits by Ferragamo and TUMI



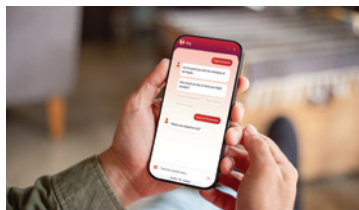
- Started adding new **A320neo** aircraft in three-class cabin configuration, including **Premium Economy**

- Redesigned **Flying Returns** loyalty programme, adding a slew of customer-friendly features

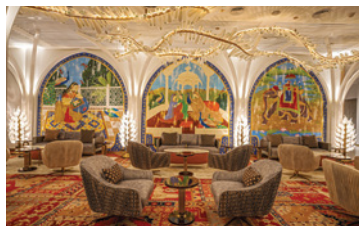


- Introduced **Vista**, a wireless inflight entertainment across legacy widebody fleet while such aircraft undergo a full interior refresh

- 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



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Chin Yau Seng, CEO, SIA Engineering Company, along with Air India's senior leadership team; Air India's cityside check-in and baggage drop facility has been introduced at Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport; Air India now connects Delhi and Kuala Lumpur with daily non-stop flights.

↑ BREAKING NEW GROUND

Air India Group announced the construction of a mega Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility at the Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru. This will be an important hub for Air India group airlines' aircraft maintenance operations in the region, as it modernises its fleet and expands global operations. The upcoming MRO facility also reiterates the airline's commitment to building a strong self-reliant aviation ecosystem for India.



ENHANCED PASSENGER COMFORT

Air India will offer a cityside check-in and baggage drop facility at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad to ensure a smooth travel experience for passengers flying with Air India, Vistara, and Air India Express. This new service offers greater flexibility, allowing passengers to save time and relax at the airport without having to carry their baggage with them.



CHARTING NEW ROUTES

Air India has inaugurated its daily, non-stop flights between Delhi and Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. It is now Air India's sixth destination in Southeast Asia, further strengthening its presence in the region and steadily expanding its global route network. Air India's service to Kuala Lumpur offers a new flight option to an increasing number of travellers between India and Malaysia, and opens new connections for Malaysian travellers to access Air India's worldwide network that spans five continents.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
 Amenity kits in the A350-900's Business and Premium Economy classes are offered by Ferragamo and TUMI; Cabin crew serving a delicious meal; Guests enjoy premium inflight entertainment (IFE); Air India's legacy A320neo aircraft will undergo a refit with new seats, modern cabins, and new livery; Guests onboard the new A350 aircraft will enjoy their meals in brand-new cutlery, glassware, and tableware, in Business and Premium Economy.



↑ AN ALL-NEW EXPERIENCE

Air India has introduced its A350-900 aircraft on the Delhi-London Heathrow route. This twice-daily service is the first deployment of the 'new Air India' experience on long-haul flights. The cabin offers full-flat beds in Business class, a new Premium Economy experience, and the latest-generation seats in Economy. Guests in Business and Premium Economy will enjoy amenity kits by Ferragamo and TUMI as well as new chinaware, tableware, bedding and more.

A GRAND UPLIFT

Air India has announced the commencement of its over US\$400 million refit programme for a phased revamp of 67 legacy aircraft in its fleet—beginning with narrowbody aircraft and then moving to widebody aircraft. This refit will lead to a refreshed product boasting the new Air India experience—with a modern three-cabin configuration, new seats, new carpets, curtains, and upholstery. The first narrowbody aircraft has already gone in for a refit and is expected to enter commercial service in December 2024, joining the eight recently-delivered A320neo aircraft that already feature the upgraded cabin interiors and configuration.



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



← 09
A320ceo
37.57m

→ 19
B777-300ER
73.9m

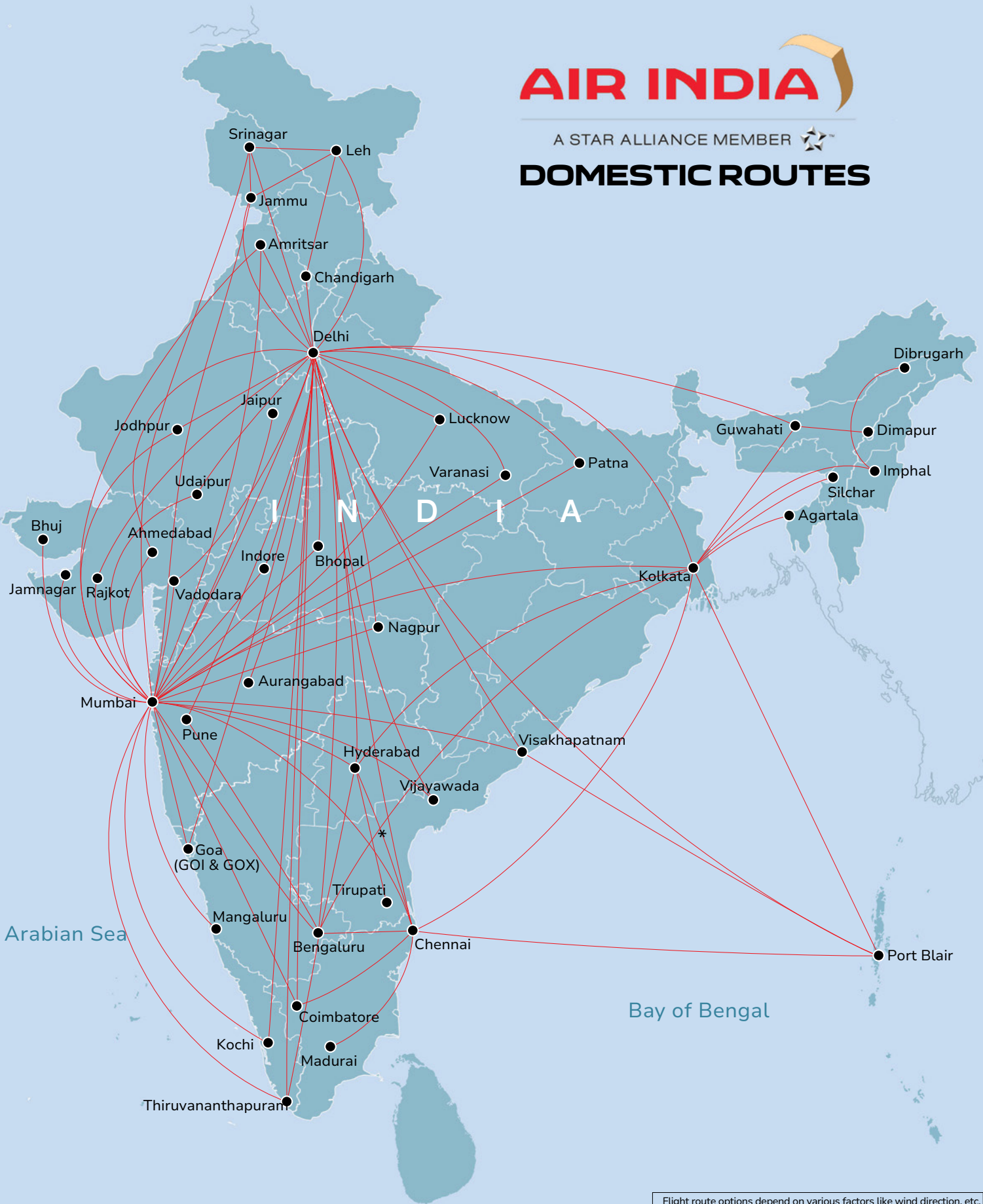


*Total number as on 10th September 2024



A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER 

DOMESTIC ROUTES



Flight route options depend on various factors like wind direction, etc.
Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only.

* Temporary operations with A350-900

your air india routes



AIR INDIA

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

**INTERNATIONAL
ROUTES**



East Siberian Sea

ASIA

EUROPE

Pacific Ocean

AFRICA

Indian Ocean

AUSTRALIA

Southern Ocean

Flight route options depend on various factors like wind direction, etc. Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only.

700+ DESTINATIONS AND COUNTING

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↓ C O D E S H A R E *



PLAN A TRIP TO ELEPHANT ROCK (JABAL ALFIL)

Fly non-stop
to Jeddah
from Delhi or
Mumbai 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

→ **Take a connecting flight to AlUla with our Interline Partner Saudia**



→ **Take a taxi or rent a car from the airport to head to Elephant Rock**



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Scan to enrol and earn **1000 bonus points** on your first flight

OUR EXPANDING PARTNER NETWORK

BANKING PARTNERS

POINTS CONVERSION



CO - BRANDED CARDS



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YOUR ATTENTION, PLEASE

DIGIYATRA

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय द्वारा 13 एयरपोर्ट्स—दिल्ली, बेंगलुरु, 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 निर्बाध 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 जरिए 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 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.

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A TRAVELLER'S TALE



HOME BOUND

British author **Nicholas Shakespeare** on visiting his roots in Shimla



AN UNFORGETTABLE MEMORY

Visiting Jutogh, near Shimla, with my father about 20 years ago. More than it being my first trip to India, it was special for my father because he was born in a bungalow here. My father was a few years old when he left the country and didn't go back till then. We even visited the bungalow.

LOCAL EXPERIENCE

We trekked up to the Tibetan border; the area had just opened up recently. We reached the top of a beautiful mountain where we came across a fakir. Three years later, we hiked up the same route and he was still there. And he recognised us.

A FARE TO REMEMBER

I can never have enough of the delicious Indian curries. And the mango chutney. We bought enough bottles to last us for nearly six months in England.

MUST VISIT

Gaiety Theatre and the Viceregal Lodge, now known as Indian Institute of Advanced Study.

— As told to **Shrabasti A Mallik**



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