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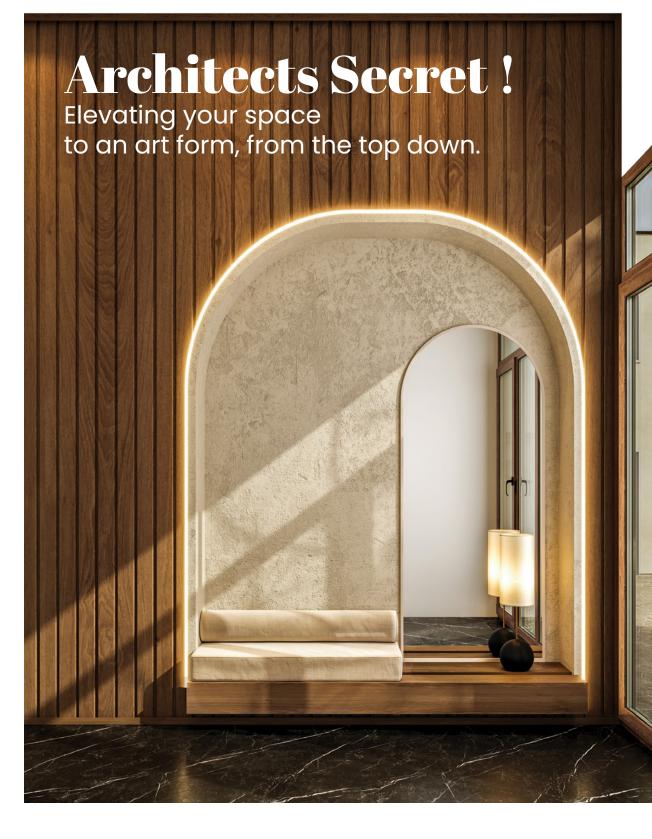
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CEO'S MESSAGE

elcome aboard. Thank you for choosing to fly with Air India. We deeply appreciate your patronage. The past few months have been extremely difficult for many people, and all of us at Air India grieve for those lost with AI 171 on 12th June.

Since that tragic day, our support of affected families, through financial, medical and other assistance, has continued unabated. We are eternally grateful to all the first responders, medical and disaster relief professionals, social workers, as well as governmental staff whose service in the aftermath of the accident has been invaluable.

In addition to Air India's own actions, 'The AI-171 Memorial and Welfare Trust', has been established and will be endowed with ₹500 crore by our major shareholder Tata Sons and the Tata Trusts to ensure that attention, resources and help remains present over the years and decades ahead.

Beyond helping those affected, our highest priority has been to ensure operational safety. Air India has taken many steps to give ourselves, our regulator and our customers confidence. These include additional inspections of aircraft, engines and systems, heightened recurring checks, and we continue to provide a range of support services to our crew.

We also temporarily scaled back our schedule to give more time for such checks, and to accommodate the longer flying times arising from new regional airspace restrictions. Our route network and flight schedule are now progressively being restored, but I apologise for the inconvenience this may have caused you in the interim.

In the two months following 12th June, Air India has operated nearly 40,000 flights and carried close to 5 million customers. We have been deeply touched by the countless messages and words of support, and I am especially grateful for the kindness and empathy so many of you have shown to our frontline staff, who have displayed such resilience and professionalism. On behalf of my colleagues, thank you.

This accident has deeply affected us. I assure you that all of us at Air India are completely committed to adopting whatever lessons or new guidance that emerges, and to rising higher. Our steadfast objective to build a world-class, global airline with Indian warmth remains, and we will not let up.

Once again, thank you for choosing to fly Air India.

Campbell Wilson

CEO and MD, Air India



AIR INDIA

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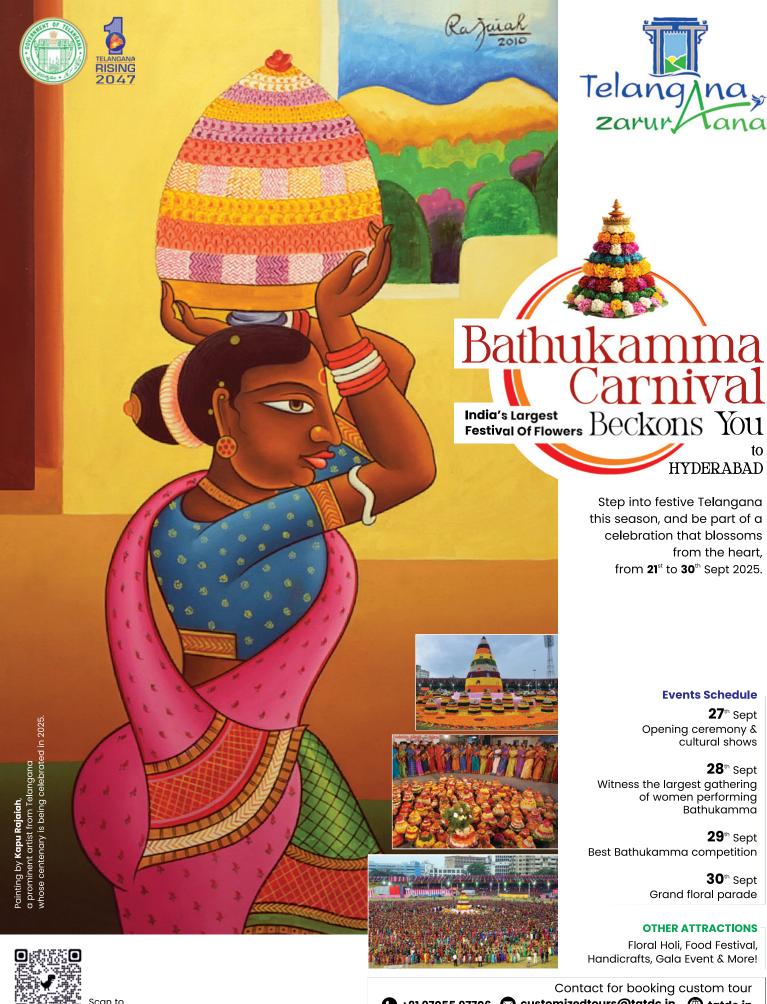


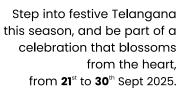












HYDERABAD

Events Schedule

27th Sept Opening ceremony & cultural shows

28th Sept Witness the largest gathering of women performing Bathukamma

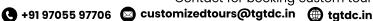
29th Sept Best Bathukamma competition

> 30th Sept Grand floral parade

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

Floral Holi, Food Festival, Handicrafts, Gala Event & More!







EDITOR'S NOTE



aried dialects and languages, cuisines, colours, festivals, cultures and customs—the unity in India's diversity manifests itself in various forms.

In our Cover Story this month, meet Londonbased couple Jenny and Adam who witnessed it first hand on their sabbatical when they set out to truly explore India. They named their passion project 'Bharat 108' and spent seven months in an autorickshaw riding over 13,000km. At every step, they were touched by the warmth, generosity, and hospitality from the people. "This unity is not loud... It is something you feel in the quiet act of a stranger handing you water, a mechanic refusing payment, and a home offered with no strings attached."

Our cabin crew is much the same, hailing from over 450 Indian cities and coming together as one cohesive team in the sky. In this issue, we talk to a few of them about their roots and traditions. Also paying homage to his hometown is singer-composer Papon, who pens a heartfelt note on how music brings the country together.

Be it music or a simple tradition, take time to appreciate life. In Body, wellness expert Luke Coutinho emphasises why it is so important to press pause. In Soul, we explore a Parisian suburb through the art of flânerie—leisurely exploration. In Mind, we introduce you to a unique bookstore in Los Angeles, where the art of reading is brought alive in myriad ways.

With this issue, the magazine returns after two months as we recommit ourselves in the memory of those we lost with AI 171. We remain grateful for the support you've shown us through this difficult time.

We remain committed to building Air India into a 'world-class, global airline with an Indian heart'. Happy reading!

- Namaste.ai Editorial Team

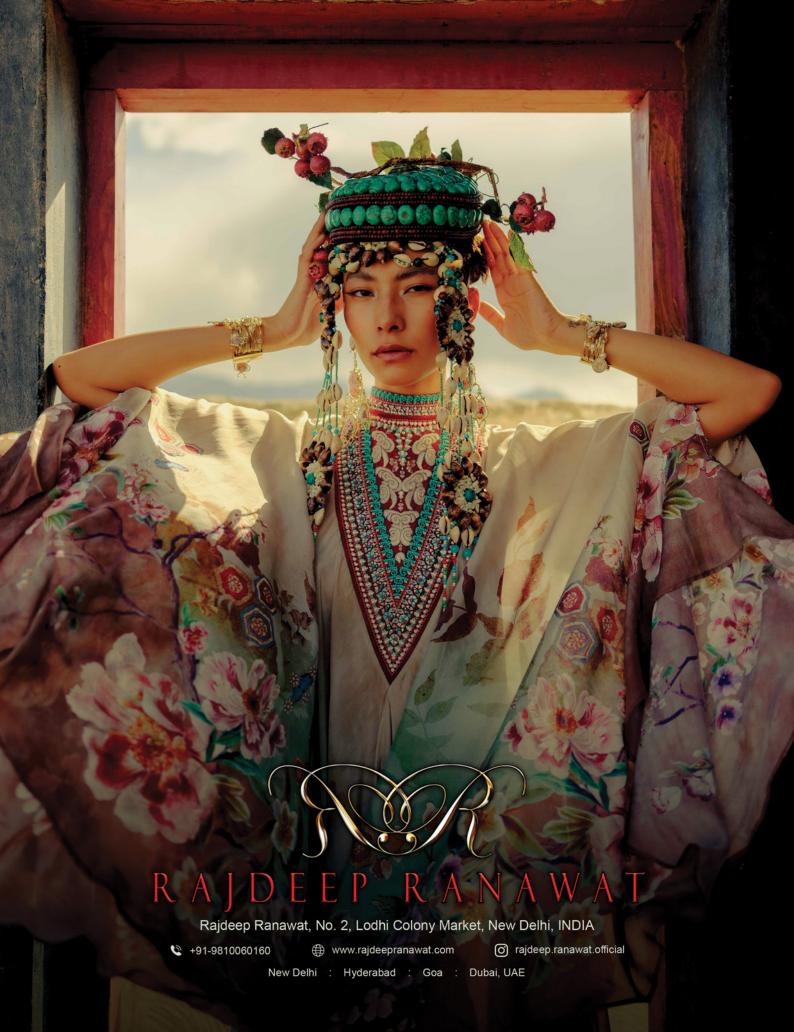




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CONTENTS SEPTEMBER 2025





MIND

17

HOMAGE

Artiste Papon on the diverse music influences in his hometown, Guwahati

20

SLICE OF INDIA

Air India's remarkable crew represents the best of India

22

DISCOVER

A one-of-a-kind bookstore in Los Angeles

30

CONSCIOUS **TRAVELLER**

Being a volunteer can lead to a gratifying vacation experience

34

CRAFT

Nepal's wood carving tradition is in fine hands

CHECKLIST 40

INFOCUS

Van Gogh takes centre stage at the New York Botanical Garden

42

INFOCUS

A run up to the 18th Jodhpur RIFF

44

EVENTS

Mark your calendars for the month ahead

54

BOOKS

Make that next long-haul a breeze with our selection

58

ON THE CLOCK

Go around Ho Chi Minh City, all in one day

62

NOW TRENDING

A round-up of new stores, brand launches, and more

BODY

EXPERT SPEAK

Luke Coutinho on the incredible benefits of pressing pause

SOUL

WANDERLUST

An amble through a Parisian suburb unveils some delightful surprises

84

REVIVAL

Burma Kapuni Arisi rice's incredible journey

YOUR AL

SOCIAL BUZZ

Travellers share their love for Air India, online

91

FLEET

Our machines

94

VIA INDIA

A trip to Delhi's art and culture hubs

97

ROUTES

Our connectivity

On The Cover

A man steers a coracle on the Tungabhadra riverside in Hampi, Karnataka

Cover image courtesy

Bobby Joshi

*All pages marked as Special Feature are paid advertorials



charms of Sri Lanka











CONTRIBUTORS

Luke Coutinho

An integrative lifestyle expert, Luke practices in the field of holistic nutrition and is the founder of the You Care Wellness Program. He has authored four bestsellers and won several national and international awards. His clientele ranges from billionaires to A-listers across film, television, industrialists, royal families in the Middle East, and more. He writes on the importance of taking a pause in your day-to-day life.



Poorna

Banerjee

□@panushy

Kolkata-based

Poorna is a food

writer, restaurant

consultant, and a

strategist. She is

passionate about

food history and

When she is not

off on a culinary adventure, she can be found in the kitchen, whipping up a storm. She lists eight of Kolkata's most iconic dishes. page 48

global gastronomy.

and condiments or

surrounded by spices

social media







🕒 Garima Verma

🗇 @ garimavverma

After working with top media houses in the country, Garima bid adieu to routine and chose the roads that were less travelled. Now, she reads among lovely landscapes, marvels at historic ruins, loses track of time in grand museums, savours world cuisines, and covers sports from inside thunderous stadia. among other fun escapades. She explores Delhi's cultural hubs.

page 94

Jenny and Adam

@ hest chevamos

An Italian couple based in London. they harbour a passion for meaningful travel. After journeying 13,864km across India in a tuk-tuk called RAJA, Jenny and Adam now explore the country through immersive storvtelling and experiencesconnecting curious travellers to India's diversity, warmth. and spirit. They chronicle their adventure in the country. page 12



With roots in Guwahati (Assam) and a voice that tugs at the heartstrings. Papon is also a composer. He hails from a musical family (his father was a notable figure in Axomiya folk music) and has sung in several Indian languages. A traveller, wanderer, and nature lover, he pens his thoughts on the diverse musical influences of his hometown and how that has inspired his music.

page 17

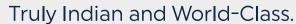


















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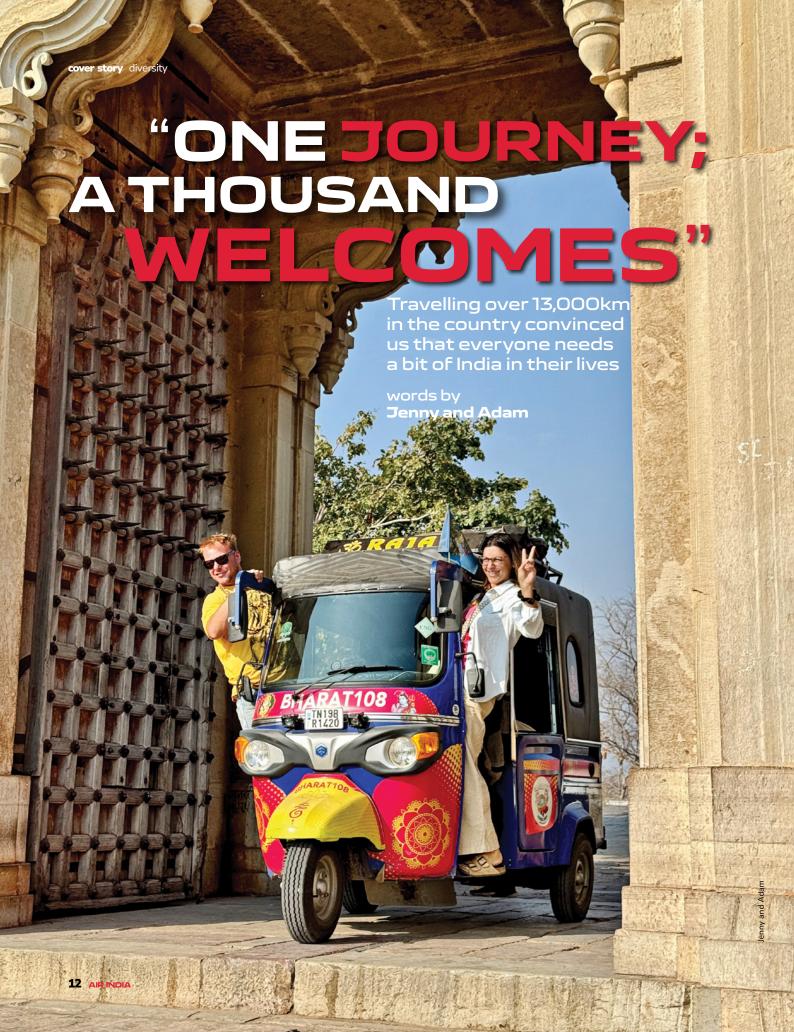
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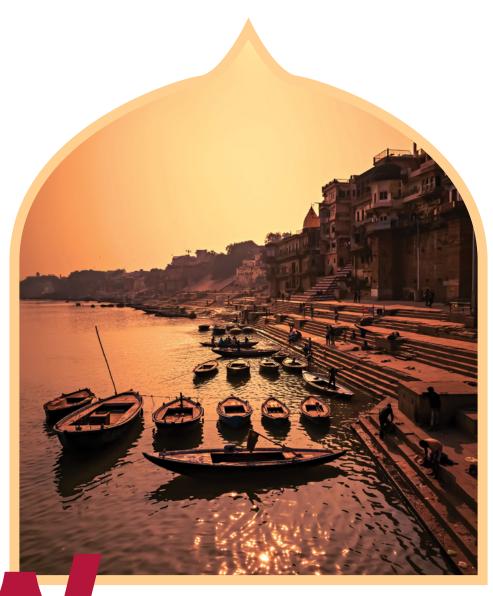


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Sunset at the ghats of Varanasi

FACING PAGE At Chittorgarh in Rajasthan

hen we first set off in our tuk-tuk, RAJAblue-bodied, covered in colourful stickers, and full

of spirit—to travel over 10,000 kilometres across India, we thought we knew what we were in for: adventure, colour, challenges, and a lot of chai. What we did not expect was how deeply this journey would touch our hearts or how often complete strangers would step in to turn ordinary moments into memories we will treasure forever.

This epic road trip that we called 'Bharat 108', revealed India's diversity in its many shades, showing us that beyond the celebrated bonds of cricket or Bollywood, the country possesses a shared spirit; an

instinct to help, to host, and to welcome travellers, beyond just lip service.

We have seen this hospitality play out from the deserts of Rajasthan to the humid streets of Kolkata and from the salt flats of Gujarat to the rolling hills of Jharkhand, through Himachal's mountains, Kerala's backwaters, and the bustling cities. And it is that spirit that will anchor us as we begin our next adventure—helping others discover India in the same authentic way we did.

A Gift in the Desert

The heat of Rajasthan has its own way of wrapping around you-dry, fierce, and relentless. On a long stretch of motorway, just before the desert began, we stopped

cover story diversity

13,864km completed with RAJA

17 states

4 Union Territories

223 days taken to complete the journey

93 different locations that they slept at (unpacked/packed even more times)

108 times RAJA was refuelled (86 per cent with CNG and 14 per cent with petrol)

TOP AND BOTTOM

In Amritsar, the authors visited the Golden Temple; Adam near the Jog Falls in Karnataka.

by a small roadside stall. A vendor, watching us wipe sweat from our brows, handed us two bottles of chilled water. We reached for our wallets, but he waved his hand and smiled, "No, no, you are guests here." It was a small gesture but as we sipped the cool water under the blazing sun, we felt something bigger—a reminder that in India, kindness is never measured by size.

When Help Arrives Before You Ask

In Jharkhand, RAJA decided to take an unscheduled break. We limped into a hotel for the night, unsure how we would manage repairs. But India does not make you wait for help; it finds you. By sunrise, two mechanics were at the door, tools in hand. They worked



till RAJA was ready to roll, then refused payment. "Atithi Devo Bhava (the guest is God)," they said simply. We drove away not just with a repaired vehicle but with an understanding of how deeply this value runs in India.

Friends in a Storm

Interestingly, helpful people just kept coming our way. After a tropical storm in Kanniyakumari, we crossed into Kerala, drenched but determined to keep going. That is when we met the most amazing group of people who hosted us and took us to a rickshaw

waterproof. What began as a rescue mission turned into a friendship that lasted the entire journey.

The Ride That **Changed Everything**

It was Easter Sunday in Kolkata and to celebrate. we had treated ourselves to pizza—a small taste of home. As we stepped out of the restaurant into the sweltering 40-degree heat. we met a Sikh couple who noticed our flushed faces and immediately offered us a lift back to our hotel. Ten minutes later, the ride had turned into a conversation and the conversation had turned into an invitation. We checked out of our hotel that same evening and spent five unforgettable days in their home.

Along with shelter and food, they also gave us an experience of family life in Kolkata. They taught us







IN EVERY CASE, THE DOOR DIDN'T JUST OPEN—IT STAYED OPEN. AND WE WERE TREATED AS GUESTS WHO WERE, EVEN IF JUST FOR A WHILE, PART OF THE FAMILY.



BITE SIZE

What's your favourite Indian food?

Adam: Chhole Bhature and Kathi Roll **Jenny:** Paper Dosa and Mango Fish Curry from Paragon Restaurant in Calicut (or Kozhikode), Kerala

her space, made chai in her kitchen, and slept in her guest room. It was a reminder that hospitality in India often has no boundaries and no conditions.

A map of India showing the pit stops the couple made during

CLOCKWISE FROM

TOP LEFT

their journey; The majestic Dudhsagar Falls in Goa; Chholey bhature is one of the few Indian dishes the couple loved.

A Home Minus the Host

travel wisdom for the long

the most lasting souvenirs

importantly, reminded us that

you collect are not things but

road south, and, most

connections.

This point was further driven home in Surat, where we stayed in a home whose owner was in Dubai at the time. A friend of a friend, she offered to host us for two nights. She had never met us yet she left her home open for us, as if we were old friends. We stayed in

Countless Doors, **Always Open**

And these are only a few of the stories. We have lost count of the times people have reached out, eager to host us in their towns. We have been welcomed into homes where families proudly showed us the iconic sights of their region

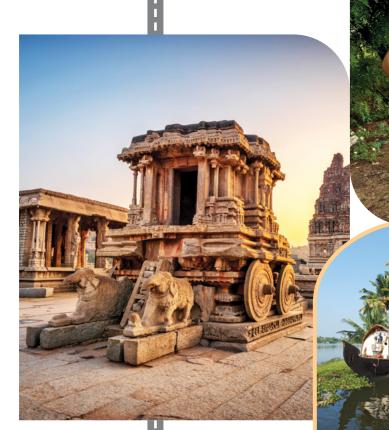
and then, just as proudly, introduced us to their neighbours and friends.

We have eaten countless home-cooked meals, sat cross-legged on cool floors in village homes, and been invited to join in temple celebrations that lit up the night with music and devotion. Once, we even taught for a day at a school for less fortunate children, surrounded by laughter, curiosity, and energy.

We have been included in family pujas, where incense curled into the air and blessings were whispered for our onward journey. In every instance, the door did not just open, it stayed open. And we were treated as guests who were, even if just for a while, part of the family.

Unity Beneath Diversity

Every state we crossed—Tamil Nadu,



CLOCKWISE FROM

Hampi is a UNESCO World Heritage Site; On the last leg of the journey in Tamil Nadu; A houseboat on the Kerala backwaters; The couple shares a warm moment with Mumbai's finest.

Kerala, Karnataka, Goa, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, and back to Tamil Nadu—had its own flavours, clothing, and rhythms. The thalis of Gujarat gave way to the fish curries of Bengal.

Saris changed in drape and design. Languages shifted so quickly that sometimes, by lunchtime, we were hearing new words.

Yet everywhere, the core values stayed the same: generosity, respect for guests, and a readiness to help. This unity is not loud; it is not a slogan shouted from billboards.

It is something you feel in the quiet act of a stranger handing you water, a mechanic refusing payment, and a home offered with no strings attached.

our Journey BESTCHEVAMOS est.che.vamos

From Guests to Guides

We came to India from London expecting a grand adventure. Now, we want to share that with others. Our next chapter will be as companions, helping travellers experience India the way we have; not just as visitors but as welcomed guests. It is our way of giving back to a country that has given us so much, and of showing the world an India that is welcoming and unforgettable.

When we started this trip, we thought the highlight would be reaching the finish line. But looking back, the real treasure has been the moments in between—the countless small kindnesses that, together, tell the story of a country united by the way it treats strangers.

If there is one thing we have learned, it is that in India, there are no strangers for long.



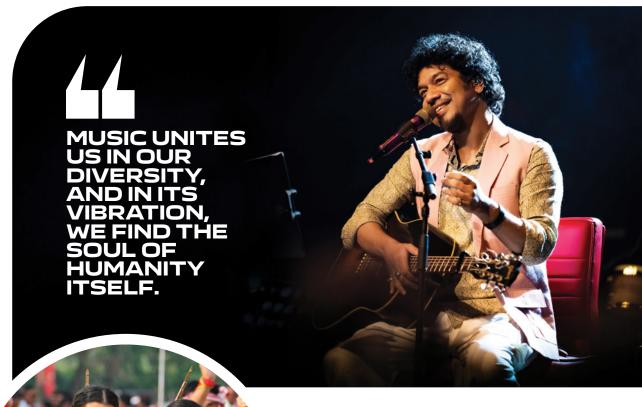
The Brahmaputra river, one of the largest of its kind in the world, flows along the length of Assam and is navigable via boats and cruises

y city. My muse. My home... Guwahati. The land of blue hills and the red river, it is one of

the few cities in the world with a mighty river—the Brahmaputra—flowing through it, while being surrounded by hills on all sides, like a natural valley. Just a 20-minute drive in any direction takes you into untouched wilderness and stunning landscapes. It's the land of the orchids and the ferns.

I grew up in a very different Guwahati—one rich with marshlands, hills, forests, and the vast, white sandbanks of the Brahmaputra river. I still fondly remember visiting the Assam State Zoo cum Botanical Garden, nestled on a hillside, which remains one of the most natural and beautiful zoos I've ever seen till date. But over and above enriching and filling my boyhood days with joy and happiness, the city has inspired my music, and my career, in more ways than one.

Guwahati is a true melting pot of musical genres from across India and beyond. Located in the North-east, it has strong influences of rock and blues. And as the largest city in a state that is home to some of the most diverse indigenous tribes, its folk and traditional music are incredibly rich. Furthermore, its proximity to the Far East brings in Mongoloid influences, adding another unique layer. It is so much like east Asia. And being a part of India, it naturally absorbs elements of Indian classical



music and Bollywood. Growing up in such a myriad musical environment helped me internalise a wide range of styles, which I now express in my work.

In India, with its immense diversity, music becomes the most natural common thread. Every community carries its own shade of melody, distinct yet familiar, like branches of

the same tree. This is why music is perhaps the most powerful way to understand ourselves and each other. It unites us in our diversity, and in its vibration, we find the soul of humanity itself.

As I travel, I find melodies thousands of kilometres apart that feel strikingly similar. The words may differ, the stories may shift, but

the tunes carry the same emotions of joy, sorrow, laughter, and longing... reminding us that we are, at our core, one human race.

The city's vibrant charm, however, extends beyond melodies into its diverse tribal cuisine, rich ethnic art forms, and the sacred Kamakhya temple. But for me, what makes Guwahati truly special are the serene getaways just minutes from the city. You can drive up a hill or escape to a white-sand riverbank with ease. It's a place where the laid-back rhythm of nature blends beautifully with the energy of the city.

Whenever I am back in Guwahati, I usually drive out towards Sonapur or a certain spot that I would like to keep a secret. For nature lovers, a drive to Deepor Beel—the

TOP AND BOTTOM

Papon during a performance; Bihu is one of the most important festivals of Assam, celebrated with traditional music, dance, and food.

CULINARY HOTSPOTS

For authentic Assamese cuisine, Paradise and Delicacy are iconic. Michinga offers a great spread of Northeast specialities, while Local Foods, Naga Kitchen, Mising Kitchen, and Taii Singpho serve incredible indigenous dishes. For café vibes, Café Shillong, Mocha, Terra Mayaa, 11th Avenue, By The Way, and The Dhaba are ideal.



numerous migratory birds annually and is a great spot for birdwatching; The revered Kamakhya Temple is one of the biggest Shakti Peeths in the country.

largest wetland just outside of Guwahati-offers serene landscapes and birdwatching opportunities, especially during the winter months when migratory birds fly in. And just an hour away from the city lies Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, home to the rare one-horned rhinoceros.

But to experience the oldworld charm of Guwahati, explore the historic markets like Fancy Bazar and Panbazar or stroll through the riverside areas of Uzan Bazar. The scenic drive along the river, winding through the hills toward Kharguli, offers beautiful views of the city's character. Don't miss a leisurely drive around Digholi Pukhuri and a visit to the nearby District Library. And, of course, a trip up Nilachal Hill to the worldfamous and deeply revered Kamakhya Temple is a must. You can also go for short voyages around Guwahati in river rides on vessels that offer food and drinks.

But how you experience and immerse in the ethos

of the city, and the state, at large, depends on which time of the year you arrive. One of the most magical months to visit Assam is in mid-April, when the entire state celebrates Rongali Bihu—the Assamese New Year. This festive season coincides with the arrival of the first spring showers, known as bordoisila. Across villages and towns, people celebrate with vibrant Bihu music and dance, while farmers begin to sow paddy in the fields. The energy, music, food, and weather during this time create an atmosphere that's simply unmatched.

With the majestic Brahmaputra flowing through the heart of the city, Guwahati's September skies are truly a sight to behold—a crimson sun setting over the red-tinted river is beyond words. You can sit for hours at the ghats near Panbazar or Uzan Bazar, just watching the sun dip below the horizon. Another beautiful time is between November

and February—lovely misty winter; it's when the river reveals the magnificent white sand beaches.

Assam is also the birthplace of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement, led by the revered saint Srimanta Sankardeva (Xonkordev). Here, places of worship are called satras (xotros) and Naam Ghars—much like spiritual monasteries. The architecture, the peaceful ambience, and the unique devotional music (which can be considered a third school of Indian classical music) make these sites truly special. The living tradition of Sattriya culture, which has thrived for over 550 years, is not to be missed.

As a proud Axomia, I can go on but I'll leave you with this—Guwahati is a cool city to unwind in, with its short getaway to nature, its lovely cafés with amazing food, and the laid-back vibe that one needs today to slow down from the crazy fast life the world lives.





GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Guwahati from Delhi.





ALL SMILES ON BOARD

There is no better example of unity in diversity than Air India's 9,000+ strong cabin crew family that comes from 450+ cities across India. We spoke to a few of them to understand the unique facets they bring to the table and what keeps them motivated



RAKOON SONAHANG RAI CABIN MANAGER

HOMETOWN: KALIMPONG, WEST BENGAL

A tradition from your hometown that is synonymous with warm hospitality?

In all hilly regions, hospitality is our way of life. People here are naturally warm, kind, and honest, and they welcome guests with genuine respect. A simple but meaningful tradition is offering tea or a warm meal to anyone who visits, whenever. It's our way of showing care and making every guest feel at home.



BINAIPHER N. BATLIWALA SENIOR CABIN CREW

HOMETOWN: PUNE, MAHARASHTRA

What is one regional culinary delicacy that you want everyone to try at least once?

Dar Ni Pori is a lesser-known gem compared to the widely recognised puran poli, yet it holds a special place in Parsi cuisine. While both dishes share lentils as a common ingredient, their similarities end there. Typically enjoyed as a teatime treat, the Dar Ni Pori can be likened to the British scone, offering a delightful experience with its crisp, flaky pastry that encases a rich filling of sweetened dal and an assortment of dried fruits. Unfortunately, preparing this delicacy can be intricate, making it a rare find.



SREEJIV SREEDHARAN CABIN EXECUTIVE

HOMETOWN: THRISSUR, KERALA

How has your hometown or cultural heritage shaped who you are in your role at Air India?

My cultural roots have helped ingrain values like patience, humility, and adaptability, helping me deal with diverse situations onboard—whether it's offering a warm smile, resolving a concern calmly, or going the extra mile for a guest. I've learned to communicate and connect with people from all walks of life, which is essential for a world-class airline with an Indian heart.

SUDHANSHU PANDEY CABIN EXECUTIVE

HOMETOWN: VARANASI, UP

What has been your biggest learning from working at Air India which has people from several backgrounds?

Diversity makes us stronger. Working with colleagues from different states and cultures has shown me that everyone brings unique strengths, perspectives, and stories. When we respect and blend these differences, the workplace becomes not just productive but also deeply enriching.



VAREIKHAN VASHUM CABIN EXECUTIVE

HOMETOWN: UKHRUL, **MANIPUR**

What is the one thing that unites people?

What unites people from diverse backgrounds and states is mutual respect. It encourages open dialogue, reduces conflict, and builds trust, allowing people to find common ground despite their differences.

AT A GLANCE*

 $oxedsymbol{oxed}$ 9000+ strong cabin crew family comes from 450+ cities in India spanning 28 states and 7 Union Territories

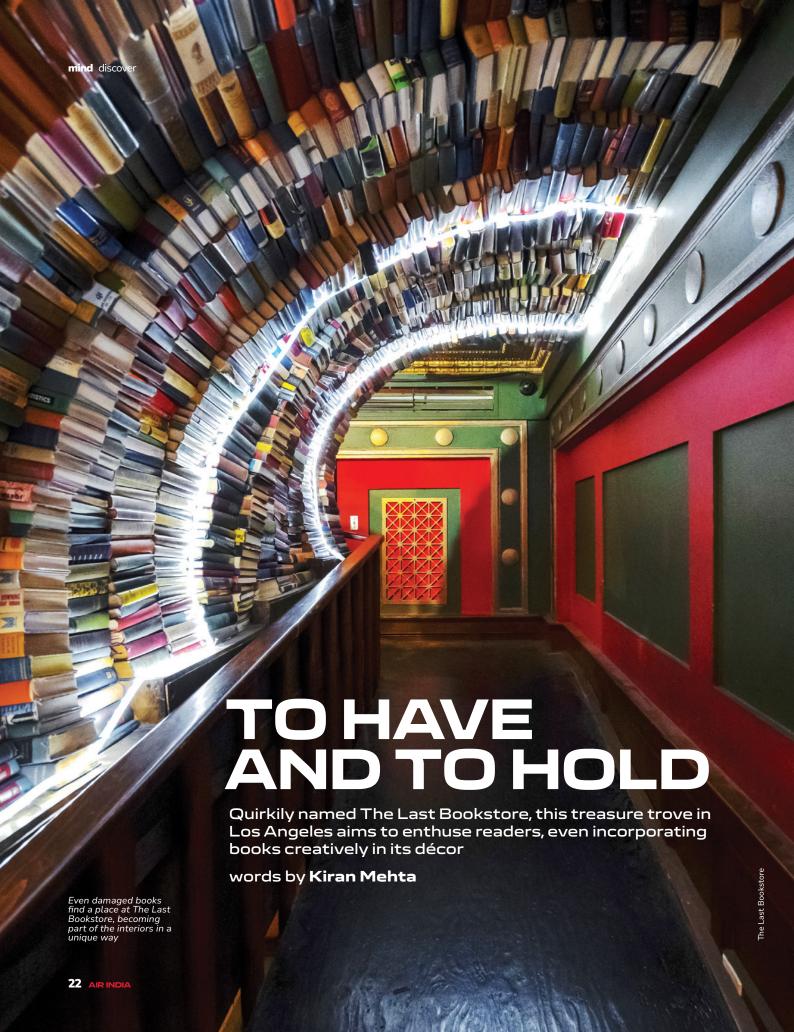
Our cabin crew can collectively speak

40 languages

16% male cabin crew members

55.5% cabin crew in the age group of 25-35 years

^{*}The figures stated are estimates and may not reflect exact numbers.





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hy lug a book along, when you can read it on a screen?" asked my co-passenger, Pooja, on my flight from Mumbai to Los Angeles. I was re-reading my fraying, second-hand copy of Good Omens by Terry Pratchett and Neil Gaiman. And it is largely due to the condition of the book that I continue to choose physical books over e-books.

Let me explain. In an electronic book, you can't see notes from previous readers, hastily scribbled and tucked away, forgotten, until you chance upon them. You can't see paragraphs underlined by a previous owner; sentences that really spoke to them. Just like that, you begin to wonder about the life and circumstances of the previous owner. And are you familiar with the

woody, comforting smell of old books? "Technology offers convenience but it takes away a lot," I explained to Pooja.

That's when another co-passenger told me about The Last Bookstore, in Los Angeles. Walk inside the store, located in Downtown, and you'll instantly realise that the rather modest entrance belies what lies within—a whopping 22,000sqft shop that spans two storeys. It comes filled with books, stacked across a multitude of shelves—from floor to ceiling-in a host of different rooms.

The gigantic store, with its high ceilings, appears to be held up by imposing yet gorgeous fluted marble columns. As I take in the architecture, a chatty employee informs me that the structure dates back over a hundred years. "These prized possessions are right

at home in this former bank," he says, while referring to the books. And the parallels stop there. Unlike a bank, there's nothing formal about this bookstore. For one, the books here aren't just for reading. They also form a part of the décor. Books that are too damaged to read get a second life as quirky design elements. Walk past the gigantic columns, head upstairs, and you'll chance upon a tunnel made up entirely of books.

TOP AND BOTTOM

The store is sprawled across 22,000sqft; Books apart, quirky aesthetics and decorative pieces that dot the store grab one's attention.







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Exploring the upper storey is like walking into the wardrobe in *The Chronicles* of *Narnia*. You enter a fantasy world that's taken concrete shape. You'll find books floating in thin air, right above your head. (Don't look too closely or the magic will unravel when you spot what is holding up the book). A vintage typewriter sits on a desk, having dished out stories on reams of paper, without an author in sight.

No e-bookstore can ever match up to this experience. You never know what lies around the corner. Could it be an inviting chair made of books? Could it be the sheer wonder of catching a glimpse of your favourite author's handwriting, signed on a priceless second-hand copy? In this surreal setting, you half expect the books to come alive, talk to you, and tell you their story. Just like a bestselling book, this store has you hooked, while dishing out an experience you didn't see coming.

Take a closer look and you'll find books from every

genre, every author you know, and many you've never heard of. I come across books on crime fiction, true stories that appear more surreal than fiction, love stories, rare manuscripts, first editions, light reads for a dollar, books of poems, howto guides, graphic novels, travel guidebooks, history books, comics, books on the anatomy, and so much more.

The store procures books by buying, trading, and accepts donations, which accounts for its variety. Trading works for avid readers who get store credit for the books they sell. In addition, there is a large section dedicated to vinyl records, which also applies the same model for sourcing. The upper floor also opens up into various art galleries housing photographs, paintings, sculptures, and even kitschy jewellery, and other such accessories.

Today, The Last Bookstore is the largest new and used bookstore in California. But it began in 2005, from a modest loft, eventually moving into this massive, heritage structure. Back then, the owner Josh Spencer decided to capitalise on his experience of selling everything—from cars to clothes—online, while turning to his first love, books, and selling them offline. A documentary on the store's official website offers you a glimpse into his life (and mindset). You see him navigating life as a husband, father, and businessman, who met with an accident, when he was younger, that resulted in him being paralysed from the waist down.

It's no small feat that
Spencer's store has grown
into one of the largest
independent bookstores
in the world. Its name was
chosen during the time
when a lot of bookstores
were going out of business,
and it gets more appropriate
every year. Even my copassenger admits she
cannot resist the lure of The
Last Bookstore. And in that
revelation, lies hope.

LEFT AND RIGHT

The diverse genres of books and records in the store means readers are bound to find something they like; The stairs help direct customers to different sections.

WHERE TO STAY

Hotel Bel-Air

An old Hollywood gem, it boasts the Bell Suite, dedicated to the man who created the Bel-Air neighbourhood.

Whisky Hotel Hollywood

Located close to the Hollywood Walk of Fame, this boutique option exudes a charming European vibe.

The Maybourne Beverly Hills

Located in the iconic neighbourhood, this is close to high-end stores and offers a luxurious on-site spa.



GETTING THERE

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There's nothing more gratifying and humbling than volunteering while you travel, leaving your destination a bit cleaner than when you arrived



have always felt a deep sense of freedom when I travel. Not too long ago. I found myself knee-deep in mulch, laughing with strangers, and feeling more grounded than I had in years. I had enrolled in a 10-day volunteering programme at Tieedi, Darjeeling, wanting to learn about regenerative living and to simply spend time in nature. What I didn't anticipate though was how quickly the place and its purpose would envelop me.

It's not often that life offers us a chance to step outside the spirals of our daily lives and recalibrate. But every now and then, when we slow down and tune in. we hear an inner voice that asks: what is it that we truly seek? For me, that spontaneous trip became something much deeper. I went back the following year as a volunteer—a choice that provided a break and sparked profound transformation. As I sat in the stillness, surrounded by the quietude of the woods, it seemed like nature had wrapped itself around the very core of my being; a much-needed reminder of what it means to be present and alive.

I woke up each morning to gentle bird calls and a warm snug of the sun.

The air was crisp, the silence healing. Each day brought something new and delightfully different—mulching trails, mixing mud for plastering walls, feeding chickens and ducks, composting kitchen waste, planting seeds, and discovering the magic of soil regeneration. Every action felt purposeful and joyful.

Evenings were just as gratifying moonlit strolls, candle-lit conversations, and hearty home-cooked meals that nourished more than just the body. What stood out most was being invited into the homes and hearts of locals. There's something powerful about stepping away and, in that space, acknowledging the invisible thread that connects us to all of existence and one another.

For me, the turning point came while sorting waste at Tieedi's segregation

DIGITAL LOCKS

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EZONE

6

EZONE

VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVES TO GET YOU STARTED

These five inspiring projects invite you to roll up your sleeves, contribute wholeheartedly, and discover a richer way to explore the world.

TIEEDI (WEST BENGAL)

Focus: Sustainability, permaculture

Environment: Forest ecosystems; Tieedi is a forest garden and zerowaste collective, regenerating Darjeeling's native ecology Best For: Nature lovers, remote workers, families How you can help:

• Mulch trails, mix mud for plastering walls, compost kitchen waste, plant seeds

tieedi.in

SAGARMATHA NEXT (NEPAL)
Focus: Waste innovation and

Focus: Waste innovation and conservation awareness
Environment: High-altitude trekking zones; Set along the Everest Base Camp trail, its 'Carry Me Back' initiative invites trekkers to carry waste down the mountain, while its Experience

Centre transforms waste into powerful art Best For: Creative people, artists How you can help:

- Carry collected waste from Namche Bazaar to Lukla
- Support local artists sagarmathanext.com

TRASH HERO (INDONESIA)
Focus: Plastic pollution and beach clean-ups

Environment: Coastal ecosystems; It organises beach clean-ups across Southeast Asia and Europe Best For: Families, solo travellers How you can help:

- Join a beach clean-up—no registration required
- Participate in zero-waste workshops trashhero.org

PRATTHANADEE FOUNDATION (THAILAND)

Focus: Education and women's empowerment
Environment: Urban/rural communities; An award-winning

NGO, it helps underprivileged

women build confidence, career skills, and fosters independence Best For: Educators, urban travellers

How you can help:

- Facilitate workshops on communication and teach English
- Support rural outreach programmes pratthanadee.org

MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS (SWITZERLAND)

Focus: Alpine conservation
Environment: Mountain
ecosystems; This nonprofit involves volunteers in
campaigns to dismantle obsolete
infrastructure and conserve public
access to wild spaces
Best For: Hikers, skiers,
environmentalists
How you can help:

- Join clean-up missions to remove infrastructure (otherwise left to rust in the mountains) resulting from military, tourist, and agricultural activities
- Help with multi-lingual translation or campaign support

space. It's so easy to go about our lives, oblivious to all that we leave behind— the wrappers, the bottles, and the

garbage that disappears but never truly goes away. That day, it felt like someone held up a mirror, and I wondered if this was what freedom in travel truly meant.

Today, travel is often about ticking off 'must-see' attractions, clicking photos, and moving on. But volunteering offers the chance to experience places much more deeply. Whether restoring trails in Switzerland, cleaning beaches in Bali, or teaching life-skills in Bangkok, you leave with memories and meaningful impact.

That's the power of volunteering—



you see the damage we've done, yes, but also the difference you can make. And somewhere in that shift, travel stops being a getaway and becomes a homecoming to something within us we may have long forgotten.

LEFT AND RIGHT

Mountain Wilderness focuses on alpine conservation in Switzerland; The author engaged in mud plastering in Darjeeling.



















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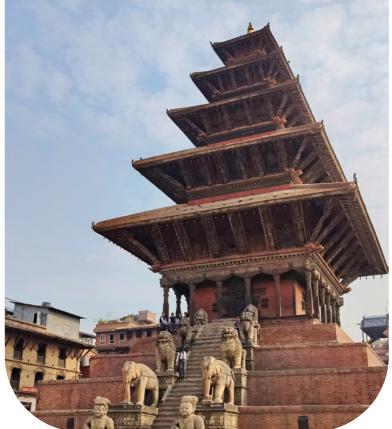






ATMANTAN Wellness Centre Mulshi, Pune, Maharashtra, India www.atmantan.com, +91 76313 16666 reservations@atmantan.com





A LEGACY TO UPHOLD

The skilled woodcarvers of Nepal carry on a rich heritage despite the winds of change

words by Kalpana Sunder

hen I land in Kathmandu valley, one of the first things that catches my eye is the abundant wooden architecture. Temples, courtyards, and old residences are adorned with rich wood carvings—from roofs and windows to struts and doors.

My hotel, The Dwarika's, with its sunlit courtyards and brick façades, is a living museum, showcasing carved doors and windows, antiques and artefacts. Founder Dwarika Das Shreshta once

saw a local using an old, carved pillar and window frame for firewood in 1952, and was horrified at the thought of his country's artistic heritage being burnt. He salvaged the pieces and set off on a mission of collecting window frames, pillars, and doors from the valley. Today, his hotel boasts vintage beams, torans, etc. rescued from heritage houses, including a door from a 13thcentury temple. He also has a Foundation that promotes the work of artisans, along with a restoration unit.

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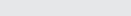
















WHERE TO STAY

Kathmandu Marriott Hotel

Contemporary rooms near local attractions, and international and Asian restaurants.

The Dwarika's Hotel

Charming heritage-style rooms with wooden furniture, and the iconic Krishnarpan restaurant that offers a multicourse Nepali meal.

The Nanee (Bhaktapur)

Expect Nepali food, architecture tours, and cultural explorations at this boutique hotel.

I learn from my local guide, Rita Suwal, that Nepal boasts a long-standing tradition of wood carving; artisans use basic tools to sculpt intricate artwork and sculptures from sal or sissoo wood. In fact, the name Kathmandu is believed to be derived from the word 'Kasthamandap', a temple built from the wood of a single tree.

The Newars, said to be the original settlers of Kathmandu, are still renowned for their woodcrafting skills. According to local lore, Chinese traveller Hsüan-tsang mentioned Nepal's wooden crafts and sculptures in the Licchavi period as early as 643 AD. The tradition flourished during the Malla period between the 12^{th} and 18^{th} centuries when the three royal cities (Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur) became cultural hubs. The craft declined until the 1970s, after which it was revived.

The medieval buildings of these cities are adorned





with stunning carvings.
From the wooden five-tiered
Kumbeshwar pagoda temple
in Patan and the 'Peacock
Window' in Bhaktapur to the
Durbar squares—the finest
artistry is on display.

The carvings are rich in symbolism and draw inspiration from scriptures and mythical deities of Buddhism or Hinduism. The wooden beams and brackets called tundals, ensure stability and are intricately carved with

mythical creatures, deities, and floral patterns.

I can't help marvelling at the artistry of the Newari window screens, made with three slender battens fitted into one another like a lattice, with patterns of circles, squares, diamonds, flowers, and vajras (a weapon of Lord Indra). Called Aankhi Jhyal, or 'eye window', many of the carved windows were solely for embellishment. Glass wasn't used, so the latticed screen blocked out

TOP AND BOTTOM Carved wooden 'tympanum' (decorative surface) above doors is a common feature; The famous 'Peacock

Window' in Bhaktapur.

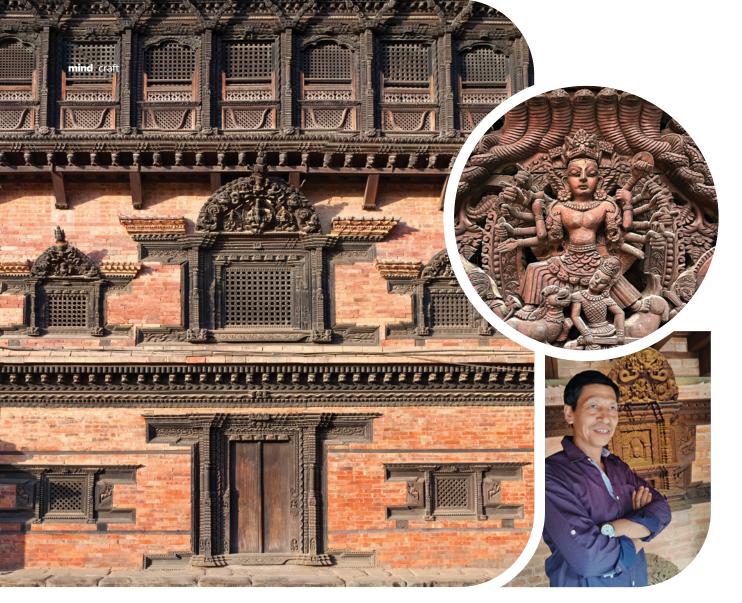


Khub Chand Sawhney's (KCS) Kashmir Shawl Emporium was established in 1950. We are a symbol of heritage, legacy and the perpetuity of fine craftsmanship. A place for finding something timeless and classic, something which can become a family heirloom and passed down over generations.





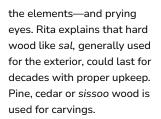




CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT The Palace of 55 Windows in Bhaktapur Durbar Square; Intricate wooden carving at Nvatapola Temple: The famous woodcarver, Indra Kaji Shilpakar.



GETTING THERE



The Newari community dedicate their lives to this craft. Shunning modern tools, they use hand tools and techniques passed down generations. Once the wood is seasoned, they sketch designs onto it and then use chisels, knives, mallets, and gouges to carve. A natural oil is then used to polish.

In Bhaktapur's Taumadhi Square, the towering five-

storeyed Nyatapola Temple that displays 108 exquisitelycarved wooden roof struts, is my favourite. Also see the beautiful Palace of 55 Windows, which was built by King Yaksha Malla in 1427 and presently houses the National Art Museum.

I meet master wood carver Indra Kaji Shilpakar, who began learning the trade at 12 and has worked closely with his father, at his home in Bhaktapur. Shilpakar has been involved in restoration work across Nepal, especially after earthquakes. He says, "If we want to rebuild or restore our temples in the

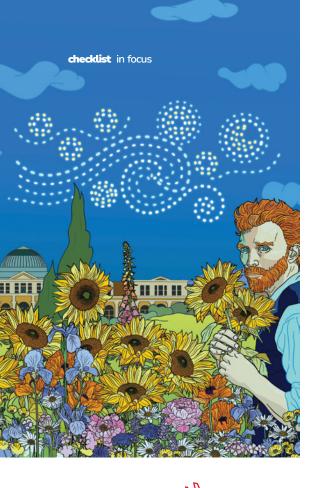
style of yesteryears, there will be enough work for all. When your carving adorns a temple, everyone sees it, and it spans generations. Tourism can regenerate local craft."

At the woodcarving museum near the Dattatraya Temple, I see carved struts, pillars, and torans. Rita explains that the struts are not just functional, they are divine and instructional. Not far from here is Nepal's iconic 'Peacock Window'.

Just about 60 families now work to keep this craft alive. It remains a reflection of the country's identity and a testament to its creativity.

Air India flies non-stop to Kathmandu from Delhi.





IN FULL BLOOM

Vincent van Gogh's creations come to life in floral form at the New York Botanical Garden

ee the paintings of the Dutch artist spring to life at the New York Botanical Garden this year.

The floral exhibition *Van Gogh's Flowers* is on exhibit in the Bronx till late October and features botanical displays and large-scale installations by contemporary artists.

The venue is also hosting complementary events that will involve van Goghthemed drone shows, live music, and refreshments. The show's highlight is at The Conservatory Lawn, which is blooming with a massive field of monumental sunflower

sculptures by artist Cyril Lancelin, alongside living sunflowers and other plants, all inspired by the blooms in van Gogh's artworks. Farther inside the Conservatory, visitors can pose in front of artist Amy Jacobsen's threedimensional sculptures inspired by van Gogh's expressive masterpieces of irises, imperial fritillaries, oleanders, and roses, with walls of living plants behind them. There is also a recreation of the garden of the hospital in Arles, Provence, which van Gogh painted several times.





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ome full moon and Jodhpur's historic Mehrangarh Fort will come alive this October with folk traditions from around the world. Add to that soulful ragas in the wee hours of the morning at the majestic Jaswant Thada, unforgettable melodious collaborations, and numerous boot camps and workshops, and you have Jodhpur RIFF, an annual international roots music festival.

In its 18th year, this five-day cultural extravaganza will unfold in various locations inside the Fort, with the biggest stage set up at the Zenana Courtyard. The line-up this year is stellar too—Spanish band Nicotine Swing, Uzbek vocalist Gulzoda Khudoynazarova, Finnish fiddler Emilia Lajune, Swiss-Syrian saxophonist Basel Rajoub, Padma Shri Lakha Khan (one of the last masters of the 27-string Sindhi sarangi), and many more.

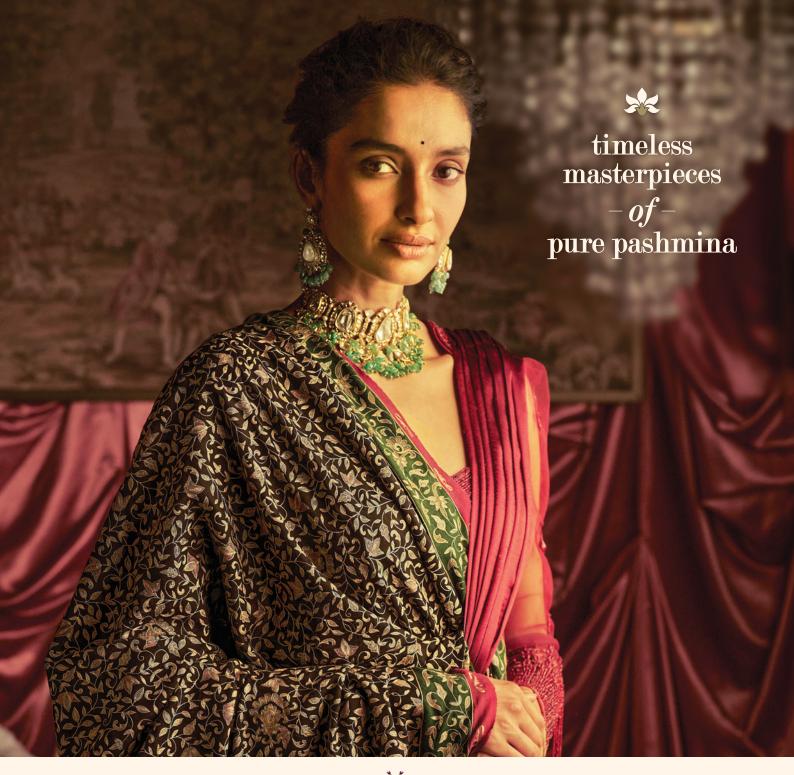
Pro tip: do not miss the closing act, the RIFF Rustle, an impromptu collaboration of all the participating artistes.

2nd to 6th October, Mehrangarh Fort, Jodhpur, Rajasthan



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

The dawn performances are held at Jaswant Thada; Chennai-based quartet Jatayu will make their RIFF debut this year; The 2025 line-up also features Naples-based band Ars Nova Napoli, one of the leading voices of Neapolitan Nu Folk.





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Catch some exhibitions, relish a food festival, and enjoy the cultural buzz



♥ Singapore

4th-24th September
This eagerly-awaited culinary extravaganza sees the area's finest chefs and gastronomic innovators curate signature experiences for visitors. Expect pop-ups, collaborations, and cooking demonstrations across the city-state.

singaporefoodfestival.com

UNIQUE MESSAGES PEACE DOVES

O London, the UK

Till 13th September

This installation at Southwark Cathedral by internationally-acclaimed sculptor Peter Walker features thousands of paper doves decorated with unique messages written by visitors, school children, and community groups.

athedral.southwark.anglican.org



POP-U

NITA MUKESH AMBANI CULTURAL CENTRE'S INDIA WEEKEND

New York, USA

12th-14th September

To be held at the Lincoln Center, it will feature the US première of India's largest theatrical production, *The Great Indian Musical: Civilization to Nation.* There will also be dance workshops organised by Shiamak Davar and his team, and a series of musical performances, including those by Rishab Rikhiram Sharma, Shankar Mahadevan, and Shreya Ghoshal.



ON THE RADAR



TORONTO FILM FESTIVAL

🛡 Toronto, Canada

4th-14th September

The 50th edition will screen the new 4K restored version of Satyajit Ray's Aranyer Din Ratri. tiff.net



LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

Venice. Italy

Till 23rd November

This seminal exhibition is a celebration of art, architecture, cinema, music, theatre, dance, and more.

labiennale.org



HARRY POTTER: THE EXHIBITION

O Abu Dhabi, the UAE

Till 21st September

Witness an incredible collection of props, costumes, and more.

harrypotterexhibition.com





BBIG PICTURE NON-RESIDENCY

쬣 Jaipur, Rajasthan

Till 5th October

The Jaipur Centre for Art (JCA) at the City Palace will host a first-of-its-kind group exhibition curated by Los Angeles-based Indian-American gallerist Rajiv Menon. This will feature 16 groundbreaking artists, including Rajni Perera, Chitra Ganesh, Baseera Khan, and Shyama Golden.

🔍 jaipurcentreforart.com

Clockwise from top left: Getty Images; Shutterstock; Suchitra Mattai Instagram/harrypotter_exhibition; labiennale.org



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NOHRD Bike - Indoor Cycle

Engineered for performance and designed to impress, this exercise bike redefines what it means to ride at home. The NOHRD Bike delivers a powerful cardiovascular workout while enhancing both your workout routine and your gym space.



MADE IN GERMANY

NOHRD Wall Compact - Fitness Wall

A full fitness solution in a sleek wall design: the NOHRD Wall Compact features cable station, skierg, touchscreen with daily workouts, and leather hand weights - all in one elegant unit.



MADE IN GERMANY

Sprintbok - Curved Treadmill

Experience a new dimension of running. This self-powered, curved treadmill encourages a natural running style, enhancing your workout efficiency. The 62 wooden slats, topped with a linoleum finish, provide optimal grip and a smooth, quiet run.

WATERROWER | NOHRD



In Kolkata's Chinatown, two distinctive styles of cooking this dish still reign supreme. While the Cantonese-style chow mein consists of noodles topped with a mild, starchy gravy, the Hakkastyle is fried over high heat to add a distinct, deliciously-smoky 'wok hei' (breath of wok) to the oily, soy-laced noodles. Both versions have their individual fan bases, with some customers preferring the gravy while others prefer their noodles dry.

Where to try it: Kim Ling, 13

South Tangra Road, Tangra

8 DISHES TOTRYIN

A true melting pot, the food landscape in the City of Joy is an ultimate medley of different cuisines

words by **Poorna Banerjee**

KOLKATA



OCHELO KABAB

Inspired by the Iranian version of the Chelo Kabab that a Park Street restaurateur had eaten on his trip, the Kolkata version consists of buttered rice served with an assortment of kebabs and roasted vegetables. It is often served on a sizzling plate.

Where to try it: Peter Cat, 18A Park Street



PRESENTING **ELARA**



PALATIAL 4 BHK RESIDENCES WITH EXPANSIVE DECKS

AT

Sector 12, Greater Noida West

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O MUGHLAI POROTA

Similar to Mumbai's baida roti, this is a flat pancake traditionally stuffed with beaten duck egg (though many eateries use chicken eggs now) and other fillings, including minced meat, then pan-fried or deep-fried (depending on the restaurant), and served with a simple salad and potato curry. It is often paired with mutton or chicken kosha and an array of traditional Bengali meat dishes for a more indulgent experience.

Where to try it: Anadi Cabin, SN Banerjee Road (near Esplanade)



© KOLKATA BIRYANI

When Nawab Wajid Ali Shah settled in Kolkata, the Awadhi chefs in his kitchen decided to add the potato, a rather exotic vegetable in the then Calcutta, to this dish. Today, connoisseurs consider the potato, which soaks up all the flavours of the meat during the cooking process, a highlight of the Kolkata-style biryani. Where to try it: Shiraz Golden Restaurant, 135 Park Street



Whether paired with paper-thin roomali rotis or the iconic Kolkata biryani, the 'chaap' refers to the cut of the meat—the chop used for this iconic recipe. It is cooked on a flat pan with slightly raised edges, over low heat for hours, to get the perfect dark hue.

Where to try it: Oudh 1590, Deshapriya Park (Opposite Carmel School)





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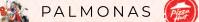


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ROLLS

Born when a British mounted police officer asked a kebab maker at Nizam's to wrap his meat kebabs in a paratha so he could eat with one hand, the roll is a quick way to get a solid dose of protein and carbs. The clever cook wrapped the greasy result in newspaper, which both protected the hand from heat and kept the fingers from getting oily. Today, rolls are found everywhere in Kolkata—from street corners to high-end eateries—making it a simple, fast meal that suits all budgets.

Where to try it: Nizam's Restaurant, 23 & 24 Hogg Street, New Market

O KHEER KODOM

Lore says that this sweet originated in Malda, with the final result coated in poppy seeds. It is a perfect example of how the same ingredients can yield different textures. A soft, ricotta-like roshogolla is encased in sweetened khoya (solidified clotted cream), then rolled in dry milk khoya. Every sweet shop has its own version, proving that even with limited ingredients, you can still come up with something delicious.

Where to try it: K.C. Dass & Co., 11 A&B, Central Avenue

52 AIR INDIA

© CHOP, CUTLET, AND FRY

The chop in Kolkata refers to croquettes that are crumb-coated and deep-fried. Vegetarian versions include ones made with banana flower (mocha), mango, and paneer. Fish fry is a crumb-fried piece of bhetki (barramundi), served with kasundi (mustard sauce) and salad, and the cutlets are made in a similar fashion. The kobiraji cutlet goes a step further—with the fried cutlet covered with a crispy, lacy egg wrap before being served—displaying an intricate technique that takes years to perfect. Where to try it: Ilish Truly Bong Restaurant,



GETTING THERE

83B, Park Street, Mullick Bazar

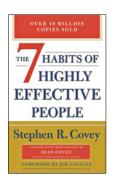
Air India flies non-stop to Kolkata from Delhi and Mumbai.



Top to bottom: Shubham Nandi; Ilish Truly Bong Restaurant; Shutterstock

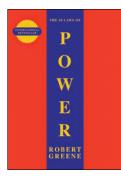


ICONIC READS FOR SELF-IMPROVEMENT



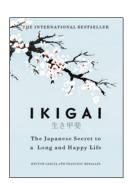
THE 7 HABITS OF HIGHLY **EFFECTIVE PEOPLE** (Stephen R. Covey)

Simon & Schuster; ₹2,581



THE 48 LAWS **OF POWER** (Robert Greene)

Profile Books; ₹2,332



IKIGAI (Héctor García and Francesc Miralles) Hutchinson; ₹1,749

TALES OF HOPE

Bureaucrat and author Sajjan Singh Yadav brings inspirational stories to life



You are with the Finance Ministry yet you have written two books. What prompted the writing?

Probably my doctoral studies

at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, where I wrote several research papers. Balancing writing with work has not been easy, but it has been possible because of a motivating and enabling work environment.

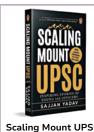
What inspired this book?

I come from a modest rural background, and I was fortunate to join the IAS thanks to a fair and transparent recruitment system. Over the years, I have seen countless aspirants transform their lives through determination and hard work. Recently, under a new initiative, newly-selected IAS

officers were attached to various ministries in Delhi. This gave me the opportunity to interact with many of them, and I felt their stories deserved to be told; they are tales of hope for lakhs of young Indians chasing the same dream.

How did you crack the exam?

The Civil Services is not just an exam—it is a test of character. With a success rate as low as 1 in 10,000, it is often called one of the toughest exams in the world. For me, it came down to treating the prep like a full-time mission. But beyond the study routine, mock



Scaling Mount UPSC: Inspiring Stories of Young IAS Officers

tests, revision etc., what helped me was the quiet belief that I belonged here; that my background did not define my ceiling.

NEW ON THE SHELF



THE SECRET OF SECRETS (Dan Brown)

The author's first novel in eight years is also his most intricatelyplotted and ambitious one so far. It sees the return of Robert Langdon in a plot that tests his wit and brainpower in unimaginable ways. Penguin Random House; ₹999

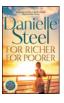


THE GARDEN OF MEMORIES AND OTHER STORIES

(Ruskin Bond)

Take a trip down memory lane with the author on his 91st birthday as he brings together some of his most personal recollections and celebrated stories in this book.

Rupa Publications India; ₹495



FOR RICHER FOR POORER (Danielle Steel)

From the New York Times bestselling author comes a compelling family drama about Eugenia Ward, a woman who faces losing everything she has worked for, with the prospect of rebuilding her world.

Pan Macmillan India: ₹495





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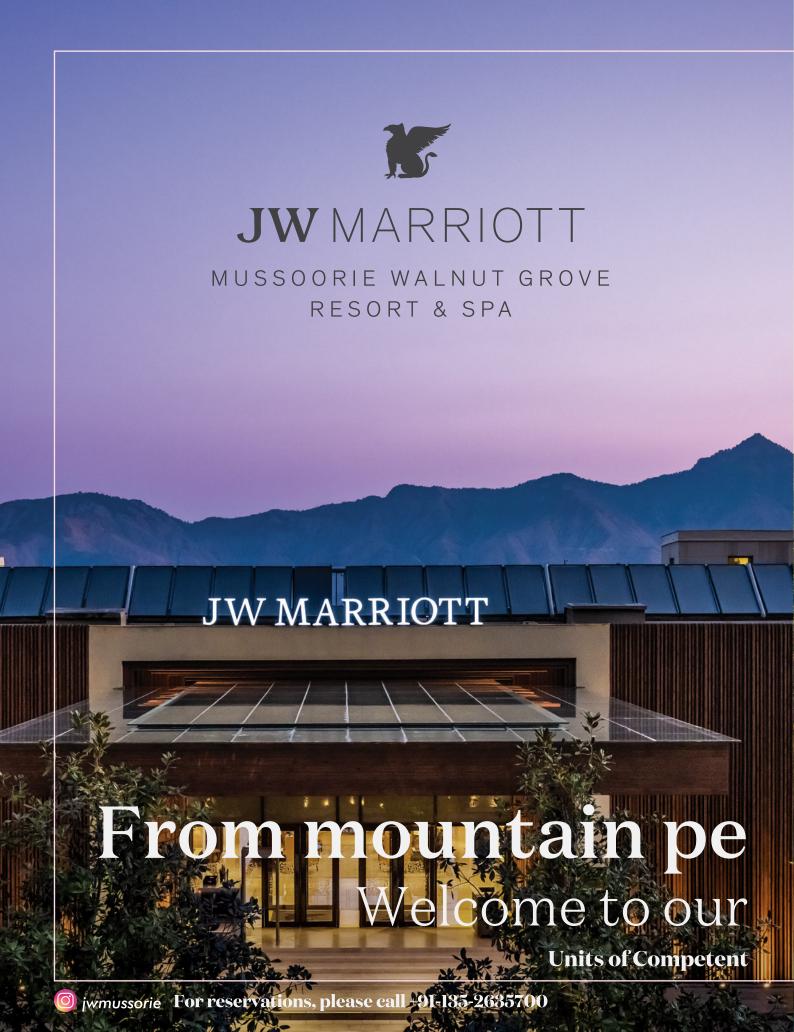
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CITY OF MANY CONTRASTS

Ho Chi Minh City is a cultural mosaic of modern Vietnam—a country that honours its past while staying firmly rooted in the present

words by Pamela Mukherjee

© 06:30AM River reverie Bach Đằng Wharf

In Ho Chi Minh, the day starts early, so rise and shine and head to the water. Watch ferries float by and locals stretch or jog. The sunrise over the Saigon river is subtle but beautiful, and this quiet morning scene gives you a moment of calm before the metropolis starts to hum. Grab a takeaway Vietnamese iced coffee.

07:30AM Tranquil space

Thien Hau Temple

Dive into the spiritual rhythm of Chinatown. This incense-cloaked temple and the pastel-hued Cha Tam Church stand just minutes apart, echoing Ho Chi Minh's cultural fusion—Taoist prayers and Catholic hymns under one sky.

9:15AM Green escape

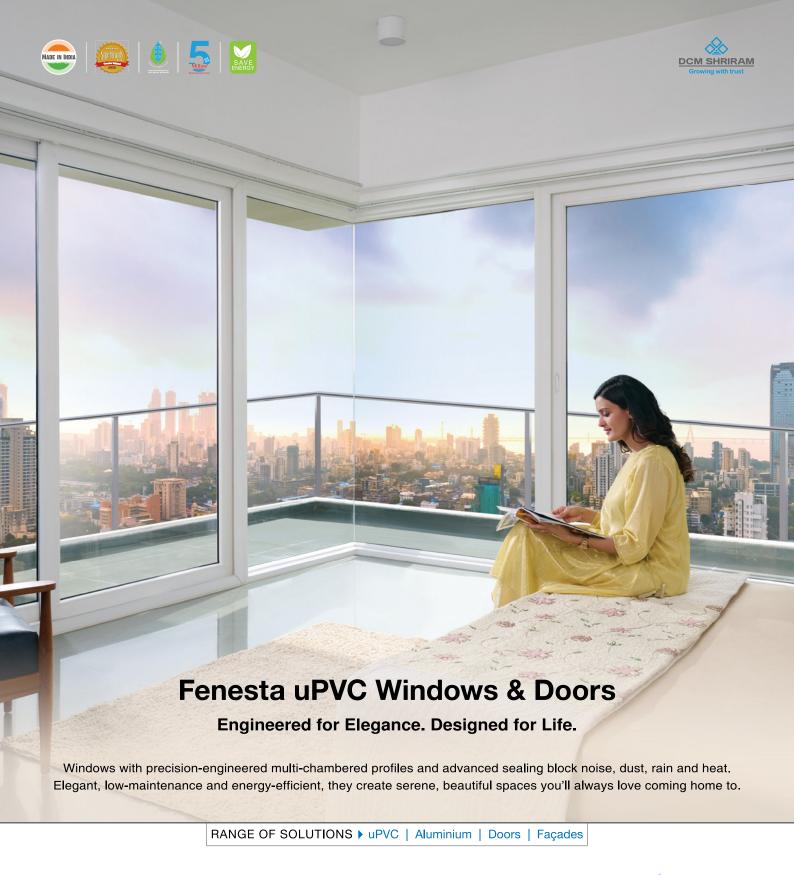
Hủ Tiếu Nam Vang Nhân Quán

Fuel up with hủ tiếu (rice noodle soup) or phổ at this breakfast icon. Residents swear by these local spots for their depth of broth. Then wander into the colonialera Botanical Garden. Statues, bonsai, and schoolchildren on field trips—it's vintage Saigon at its most charming.

11:00AM Colonial icon

Notre Dame Cathedral

The red-brick cathedral (parts of it are currently under renovation) and the nearby French colonial Saigon Post Office with mosaic floors, make a dreamy duo. Then stroll to Nguyễn Văn Bình book street, lined with indie stalls and reading cafés.













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GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Ho Chi Minh City from Delhi.



STYLISH STAYS

1/ The Reverie Saigon

A five-star hotel with Italian marble, river views, and an Hermès outlet—opulent and unforgettable.

2/ Villa Song Saigon

This tranquil, lesser-known retreat in Thao Dien features French villa vibes and a riverside breakfast. Ideal for a slow unwind.

3/ Lief Mojo Sai Gon Hotel
An arty boutique option
in District 1 that feels like
home. It's tucked away,
but still walkable to
major sights—perfect for
curious travellers.

① 12:30PM Living history

War Remnants Museum

This museum presents the harsh realities of the Vietnam War (1954-1975) through emotional photography, military relics, and personal stories. While humbling, it's a powerful way to understand the country's resilience. Set aside time to wander around and soak in some history.

© 02:00PM

Pink dream

The Vintage Emporium

Retreat to this café for a late lunch. Think artisanal sandwiches, fresh salads or lemongrass chicken on rice, paired with cooling drinks like detox juices and smoothies. Then head to Tan Dinh, or the Church of the Sacred Heart of Jesus (the city's 'Pink Wonder'), where a Gothic spire blushes against blue skies.

U 04:00PM

Shopping spree Bến Thành Market

Explore the maze of stalls for snacks, silks, and souvenirs—from lotus tea and lacquerware to wooden work and pearl pieces. For embroidered table linen, cotton and linen clothes, accessories, and shoes, Saigon Square is your fast-fashion haven. Do bargain!

① 06:00PM

Sunset bites

Katinat Coffee & Tea House (Original, District 1)

Grab a coconut coffee or matcha latte from this chain whose strong brews make it a favourite with residents. Wrap up with music, lights, and energy at Bùi Viện. This pedestrian-only street buzzes with live music and dance. Do not forget to try a crunchy bánh mì while soaking up the nightlife here.



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IN THE LAP OF LUXURY

Perched atop the Aravali Hills with sweeping views of the forested hillsides, the newly-opened Fairmont Udaipur Palace boasts 327 rooms, alongside expansive courtvards, hand-carved jharokhas, regal architecture, global cuisine, and more.





OUT OF THE BLUE

This one is for all The Smurfs fans. In a firstever collaboration with The Smurfs, Franck Muller has inaugurated Vanguard Smurfette, a limited edition of three timepieces that blend Swiss watchmaking excellence with the playful spirit of Smurfette.



JONATHAN RACHMAN'S **STORE OPENS IN BALI**

Why: San Francisco-based interior designer Jonathan Rachman has returned to his native Indonesia to open a restaurant-shop-café complex. Di Sini (the restaurant) and the store named Di Sana seek to mix European sophistication with traditional craftsmanship.

Where: Ubud

Highlights: The restaurant's menu features family recipes from the designer's mother and sister





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200 g / ₹125* 500 g / ₹280*



Kaju Katri 200 g / ₹230* 500 g / ₹525°



200 g / ₹120* 500 g / ₹270*



200 g / ₹240*



200 g / ₹250*



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Malai Peda 200 g / ₹120* 500 g / ₹270*



200 g / ₹95* 500 g / ₹225*



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Coming soon: Kunda, Rabdi Jalebi, Mawa Barfi, Angoori Rasmalai and Sweet Khoa.













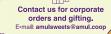












KIKLI BY CHEF AMNINDER SANDHUWhy: To celebrate Punjab's vibrant culinary legacy through its lesser-known fare, far beyond the *dal makhnis* and butter chickens, in a sprawling restored

ULEGACY MEETSFUNCTIONALITY

The Montblanc Fall/Winter 2025 Leather Collection features, among other products, The Writing Traveler, the Companion Series, and the brand's iconic Travel Case.



HERE COMES THE BRIDE

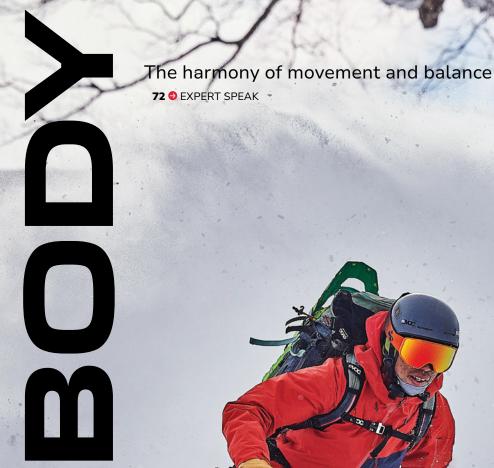
Couturier Anita Dongre's limited-edition bridal capsule, Meher, redefines tradition through lightness, fluidity, and ease. The collection, mindfully designed for the modern bride, features lehengas and sarees crafted with intricate aari embroidery, gota patti, and mirror work, by artisans from across India.

UOBJET OPENS IN DELHI

Why: The luxury design and fragrance house has launched its first boutique at The Chanakya mall. The flagship store will give customers access to a curated world of L'OBJET's signature offerings, including home décor, tableware, and apothecary. Highlights: The brand's partnerships with celebrated designers and artists; exclusive home furnishings; eau de parfum creations







What does skiing down a do what does skiing have to do what mountain have to it snowy mountain life? As it snowy mavigating life? As it with navigating a bit turns out, quite a bit turns out, quite a bit hive dita Jayaram Pawar Nivedita Jayaram Pawar

Kiroro, a winter ski resort in Hokkaido, Japan, is breathtaking; vast, pristine peaks dotted with pearly-white pines, and powdery snow



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my hotel in Hokkaido, Japan, for my second attempt at skiing, a familiar jolt of anxiety hit me. The memory of my last attempt in Switzerland still haunted me: falling off the magic carpet (the ski lift) and face-planting on the bunny hill (the beginner's slope). So, the prospect of skiing again, albeit in a new destination, was both exhilarating and intimidating.

After the initial night of rest and recuperation, it was time to strap into a pair of skis. Oh, the exquisite torture of ski boots! So snug and heavy that simply standing upright in them feels like a minor victory. But the scenery was breathtakingvast, pristine peaks dotted with pearly-white pines. And the snow. It was exactly as promised—incredibly light and powdery. Everyone else in the group had at least some experience of skiing and casually prefaced stories with statements like, "The last time we went skiing..."

Club Med Kiroro Grand, where I was, is nestled in the heart of the snow-capped Hokkaido mountains, renowned for its astounding 21

and an extended 160 days of winter. It offers skiers access to 22 runs stretching over Mt. Asari and Mt. Nagamine. Unlike the more popular and often-crowded Alps and Rockies, Kiroro remains relatively undiscovered, offering endless powder and stunning landscapes without the throngs.

DON'T COMPARE

Our patient instructor, Pam, started us with the basics—getting in and out of our skis, doing the 'pizza slice' (where the tips of the skis are brought together for slowing down or stopping), 'French fry' (parallel skis for gaining speed and making turns), and, the most crucial, getting off the ground after a fall. But gravity, it turned out, was not on my side. Within the first hour I had mastered the art of falling first gracefully, then awkwardly, and, finally, spectacularly. My skis seemed to possess an independent streak, each wanting to go its separate way. The sheer effort of getting back up after each tumble left me breathless and slightly bruised. And when it was finally

TOP AND BOTTOM

Unlike the often-crowded Alps and Rockies, Kiroro remains relatively undiscovered; Club Med Kiroro Grand offers access to 22 runs and gondolas that span both Mt. Asari and Mt. Nagamine.

POINTS FOR PREP

- Resist the urge to learn skiing from a friend; invest in lessons from a ski instructor.
- Layer up. Skiing is miserable if you are cold. Waterproof gloves are a game changer.
- Before the session, bundle up and go roll in the snow for 10 minutes to acclimatise. If you are too cold, add more layers.
- Stretch before and after.
- Skiing is serious exercise, so stay hydrated and fuel up with a good breakfast/lunch.
- Save any alcohol for after you are done skiing for the day.

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WHERE TO STAY

Club Med Kiroro Grand offers spacious, forest-themed rooms with views of the surrounding mountains and ski runs. Packages include meals, drinks, group ski lessons, and airport transfers.

YU Kiroro is a luxury property with a wide range of options—from studios and apartments to a four-bedroom penthouse with a private outdoor *onsen*.

Margo's Garden is located about 6-8km from Kiroro winter resort (they offer free shuttle services). This farm stay offers rustic charm and modern comfort. Meals are prepared from locally-sourced ingredients.

time to tackle a small slope, I knocked over a child and landed on my back like a turtle. How ridiculous that I was struggling to go four feet down when kids around me were flying down the trails. That is when skiing's first crucial lesson hit: don't compare yourself to others. Watching someone effortlessly carve the shape of a diamond in the snow while you are still mastering the basics is frustrating; focusing on your own progress is the best way.

MINDFULNESS MATTERS

When I was learning to ski, my first instinct was to look down at my feet; then occasionally at the scenery. But daydreaming and skiing are a bad combination, I quickly realised. "Eyes forward," Pam kept repeating. Just like any action sport, keeping your eyes focused straight ahead is key. Looking down or around will only make you lose balance. The same is true in life. Things improved when I kept my eyes fixed on the trail ahead and my mind in the present, free from judgement or hesitation.

NO GAIN WITHOUT PAIN

Skiing is painful. My legs were burning, muscles protesting, and the sting of the cold wind bit deep into my bones. But after the first few falls, the discomfort feels like a sharp reminder that you are



THE TWISTS AND TURNS AND OCCASIONAL TUMBLES IN SKIING OFFER POWERFUL LESSONS IN PATIENCE, BALANCE AND COURAGE, TO GET BACK UP

building new strength and pushing past your limits. Skiing has a way of making you feel truly alive.

At the end of day, I was not gliding like the 'Lord of the Alps'. But I was a little less wobbly. I could make a pizza slice, take a turn, and even glide down for a few seconds before tumbling into a heap. In the evening when I immersed myself in the onsen, the steam from the hot tub felt like a balm for my battered knees and, more importantly, my fractured ego. The day ended perfectly with a hotpot dinner of fish and meat with fellow skiiers.

Looking back, the best part was not the thrill of gliding down, but the moments in between—the view from the chairlift, the crisp winter air on my face, and the camaraderie with other skiers. These moments, like life itself, are best when you stop to take a breath and savour them. But you cannot experience it unless you get out and tackle that first slope. And that, I realised, was the most profound lesson of all.







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In this fast-paced world, our bodies are moving but inside, our systems are quietly breaking down—exactly why we need to rest and reset

words by Luke Coutinho

hat happens when a generation that glorifies hustle forgets how to rest? Every week, I meet individuals—from boardroom leaders to homemakers, students to senior citizens—who are wired but worn out. Their bodies are moving, their calendars are full, but their systems are quietly breaking down. Anxiety is camouflaged as productivity. Burnout is disguised as ambition.

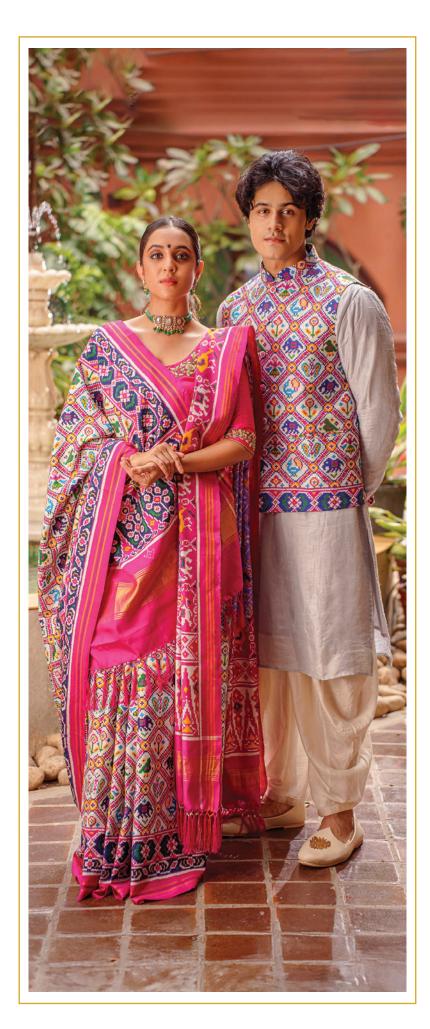
We have created a culture where doing more is applauded, but knowing when to pause is often misunderstood as a sign of weakness. The truth is, many people are not falling sick because of a lack of motivation—they are falling sick because their nervous systems have forgotten how to switch off.

So, here is a question worth asking: What if your fatigue is not a problem to fix, but a message to hear? What if the smartest thing you can do for your health this year is not a new routine or supplement, but a pause?

Stillness Heals

After over 14 years of working with patients across 27+ countries, one pattern has stood out across conditions. Clients who healed fastest were not always the ones with the most rigid food plans or supplement charts, but the ones who learned how to slow down with intention.

They began to breathe better, sleep deeper and feel safer in their own skin. Not because they followed trends, but







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o patola_bynirmalsalvi



LEFT AND RIGHT The author suggests small but purposeful breaks to breathe and slow down: Sipping your tea in silence is a simple and effective daily ritual that can create a microclimate of healing.

because they created space for stillness—the biological gateway to healing.

This is the insight that shaped my book The Calm Prescription. Calm is not a mood, it is a mechanism, a physiological shift where your body moves from fightor-flight into rest, digest, and repair. And until we activate this state regularly, even the best protocols can fall short. Stillness is not passive. It is power; it is where true recovery begins.

Why a Pause is Powerful

The human body is wired for rhythm. Wake-sleep; effortrecovery. But in the age of back-to-back meetings, screen time spillover, and 24/7 stimulation, that rhythm gets hijacked. We are stuck in sympathetic overdrive-what most know as 'fight-or-flight.'

Chronic stress keeps cortisol elevated, weakens digestion, disrupts hormonal signals, and impairs immunity. Healing does not happen in this state. This is where the pause comes in.

When we teach people simple nervous system tools—like box breathing (4-4-4-4: inhale, hold, exhale, and hold for four seconds each and repeat this cycle), or the 4-7-8 technique (inhale, hold, exhale)their BP drops, digestion improves, inflammation reduces, and sleep quality transforms. No complicated routines, just five minutes of conscious breathwork, daily, can recalibrate your nervous system.

This is what the book explores in depth: 75 simple, science-backed ways to move from stress to stillness. Because sometimes, healing is not about doing more but doing less with more awareness.

Small Rituals, Big Shifts

A pause does not need to look like a retreat or a spa weekend. It begins at home, in how you start and end your day. Here are a few simple rituals that transform:

The first five minutes after waking: Use this hypnopompic window to set a grounding intention or say a quiet affirmation—"I am safe", "I choose calm", "My





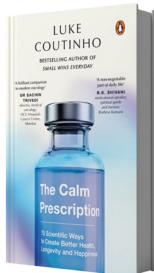


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TOP AND BOTTOM

Walking barefoot on grass has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety; The Calm Prescription is the culmination of the author's 14+ years of real-world practice and science designed to activate your calm.

body knows how to heal". Evening screen cut-off:

Swap to soft music or silence an hour before bed. Your melatonin and your nervous system will thank you.

Midday breath reset:

Between two stressful meetings, take a five-minute pause. Close your eyes and try 4-4-4-4 breathing. This can reset your energy more effectively than caffeine.

One slow ritual a day: Sip your tea in silence. Walk barefoot on grass. Light a candle. Speak after taking a meaningful pause.

None of these require a lifestyle overhaul. But practised daily, they create a micro-climate of healing.

Calm is a Necessity

One of the biggest myths we have had to help people unlearn is that calm is optional, reserved for vacations or weekends. In reality, calm is a biological

A FEW SIMPLE PAUSE PRACTICES THAT **RESTORE BALANCE**

- ➤ Begin meals with silence or gratitude—it shifts digestion from stress to ease.
- ➤ Take three deep breaths before switching tasks your nervous system resets faster than your inbox.
- ➤ Step outside daily—sunlight, wind, and birdsong are prescriptions in disguise.
- ➤ Notice synchronicities, signs, and randomness they often carry more wisdom than logic.
- ➤ Schedule peaceful pauses in your calendar—they matter as much as your meetings.

state, not a mood. It is the only state in which healing. digestion, reproduction, and deep cellular repair can truly happen.

When your body feels safe, it begins to heal. That safety is not created by perfect diets or fancy gadgets—it begins in the nervous system.

Over the years, we have seen patients with chronic illnesses, hormonal imbalances, and even terminal diagnoses respond better to treatment simply because they brought more calm into their daily routine. It was never the most rigid plan that worked but one they could practise with presence and self-respect.

Whether you are navigating high pressure as a leader. recovering from burnout or simply looking for meaning in everyday life, calm is not a detour. It is the path.

Final Boarding Call

In a world that rewards noise, urgency, and hustle, choosing stillness is radical. But here is the truth: there is no wellness without nervous system regulation.

Start small. Breathe before you react. Pause before you plan. Replace reaction with reflection. And when in doubt, remember this—your body knows how to heal, but only if you give it the right environment to do so.





ADAY OUT **INPARIS**

Aimlessly wandering through the French suburb of Butte-aux-Cailles made me realise that sometimes the best plan is to have none at all

words by Nainaa R Rajpaal

Travellers will find colourful frescoes across this neighbourhood



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CHARMING PARISIAN SOUVENIRS

You'll find gourmet treats as well as beauty and fashion buys in the French capital. Look for skincare at Caudalie or L'Occitane, macarons at the iconic Pierre Hermé or Ladurée, and check out cheese, mustard, and jams at supermarkets like Monoprix and Galeries Lafayette. For fashion, besides the iconic Champs-Élysées, explore vintage shops and local designer stores.

was someone who always believed in planning both my life and travels meticulously; but destiny had other plans when my 'forever' relationship fell apart overnight. A lifelong fan of irony, I decided to nurse my broken heart in Paris—the city of love.

It was here that I discovered the French art of flânerie, at a time when I needed it the most. Flânerie means a leisurely ramble taken to soak up beauty in the details, as you wander without an aim. The tradition traces back to gentlemen with plenty of idle time or the 'flâneurs' of the 19th century. It is said that French poet Charles Baudelaire even saw them as "connoisseurs of the street".

For me, it was the first time I was in a city without a curated itinerary. I hadn't looked up restaurant reviews, stores or marked the 'must-do' spots on my map. On my first day. I found myself looking up at a random street sign and realised I was in the 13th Arrondissement (arrondissement refers to a district in France). Of course, it was the 13th. Luck hadn't really been on my side. How wrong I was.

I was about to lose myself in one of the most charming districts in Paris, Butte-aux-Cailles. It suddenly felt like I was dropped into a countryside village hidden from the rest of the city.

Pierre Caille, the first owner of this little hill, bought it in 1543 to harvest grapes for wine. I imagined it was covered with meadows, woods, and windmills. In fact, its hilly location made it an ideal spot for the first-ever successful landing of a hot-air balloon.

LEFT AND RIGHT

You'll find authentic boulangeries in this hidden corner of Paris; Butte-aux-Cailles is located in the 13th Arrondissement.

Over 400 years later, I don't think Pierre would have been disappointed with how the area has developed. I spotted elderly residents sipping wine on outdoor tables, the spring sun reflecting the giddy glint of their eyes as their spaniels and poodles lounged at their feet. There were also little brasseries, secret boulangeries, and colourful cafés, but not a tourist or chain store in sight. In complete contrast to the traditional homes, one could also spot frescoes of dancing bears, little children with flags, and rebellious women on the walls here.

My wanderings brought me to Floral



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TOP AND BOTTOM

Butte-aux-Cailles is a great place to practise the French art of flânerie; Macarons are a preferred souvenir to pick up from here.

City (the Cité Florale), a charming part of the district, where every street was named after a flower. I peeped into artist studios whose clothes were stylishly drenched with splashes of paint. I followed the twists and turns of the aromatic wisteria vines draped over pastel-hued cottages. There were little white balcony ladders overrun with pink and purple blossoms, almost as if they were waiting for a Romeo to make his way up. Long-time residents stood at their balconies looking down at the street below, as if they were posing for a painting or

Realising my throat was parched, I turned another corner in search of sustenance. Almost on cue, Butte-aux-Cailles decided to bring me not just a glass but an entire artesian well of water. For over 100 years, a natural hot spring has been quenching Parisian thirsts at the Place Paul-Verlaine fountain. I took a swig of cool water and watched two excited children in swimming trunks do the same before disappearing into a beautiful old building across the street.

a photo.

I followed them, to find myself outside the Butte-aux-Cailles swimming pool, one of the oldest in Paris, boasting three pools—an outdoor one, an indoor one, and a Nordic one that is open all year round. After another careless turn, I arrived at the Librairie du désordre, a charming bookstore with a bright red façade. I walked in and inhaled the air, thick with the scent of ageing paper and chanced upon a first-edition Simone de Beauvoir novel, bringing back memories

of my university days. She wrote, "I tore myself away from the safe comfort of certainties, through my love for truth." It felt like a serendipitous encounter, a whispered message of strength from a literary icon.

Not far away, a window full of rainbow-coloured macarons caught my eye. I sat at the café and took a bite. The delicate almond meringue gave way to a burst of creamy raspberry. I savoured it slowly, serenaded by the melodic lilt of French spoken all around me. As the sugar touched my lips, everything around me somehow felt sweeter. I allowed myself to get out of my head and be present, for the first time in months. It was as if Paris was talking to me, asking me to get back on my feet. More importantly, it helped me trust that sometimes the best plan is to have none.



Maison Albar - Le Pont-Neuf

Designed as a plush residence, this is nestled near the Seine river in central Paris. Its Michelin star awarded in-house restaurant, Odette, offers a warm yet contemporary vibe.

Hotel Monte Cristo

Inspired by Alexandre Dumas' colourful life, the hotel imagines what the French author's home would be today. Choose from rooms, suites, and boudoirs with 19th-century themed décor.

Hôtel JoBo

Short for Hôtel de Joséphine Bonaparte, this charming property was built on the remnants of a 17th-century convent. Now hidden behind a flambovant courtvard. it features reprints of old Parisian wallpaper.



GETTING THERE

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words by Veidehi Gite

Burma Kavuni Arisi payasam is a pot of glossy black rice simmered with jaggery and cardamom

stand in the kitchen of Visalam, a 19th-century Chettinad mansion in Kanadukathan, Tamil Nadu, watching Chef Karthikeyan stir a pot of glossy black rice. Minutes later, what sits before me is more than dessert: it's Kavuni Arisi payasam, steeped in history and migration. I am instantly reminded of an afternoon at The Bangala, the century-old Chettinad residence in Karaikudi owned by the MSMM Chettiar family, where I sat with Meenakshi Meyyappan, the family

matriarch, beneath imposing Burmese teak pillars as she reflected, "Each grain tells a story." Her grandmother, just seven when the family fled Burma during the Japanese invasion, recalled little of the journey—except for a small cloth pouch of black rice seeds her father guarded more fiercely than gold.

The story of Burma Kavuni Arisi begins not in Tamil Nadu but in the fertile plains of Myanmar, where the Nattukottai Chettiarsmerchant bankers from Chettinad—established

thriving trade networks in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It was here that they discovered black rice, a hardy, nutrient-rich grain that soon found a place in their culinary and farming traditions.

Then came 1942, a year that would forever change the relationship between these merchants and their adopted home. Historical records from the British India Office document that as the Japanese invasion swept through Burma, over 5,00,000 refugees fled, many



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traversing perilous mountain routes to reach safety.

"My grandfather would wake with nightmares about that journey until his dying day," Meyyappan continued, her eyes distant. "They walked for weeks. Some families planted small patches of rice, hoping to harvest it on their return, a journey that never happened for most." What makes this story remarkable is what came after. Impoverished on returning to Tamil Nadu, these merchants transformed their relationship with the rice they carried home.

"Black rice found new life as a prized ingredient, reserved for special occasions," says Sam John, General Manager of Visalam. Among its most beloved renditions is Kavuni Arisi payasam—a luscious pudding that blends the

nutty depth of black rice with jaggery's caramel sweetness and the richness of coconut. "Preparing it is a ritual in itself; the grains are soaked overnight, then slow-cooked to perfect tenderness. Jaggery infuses warmth, grated coconut adds body to the dish, and roasted cashews and cardamom lend fragrance and crunch," says Chef Karthikeyan.

Traditionally served at weddings and festivals, the dish is a symbol of prosperity and heritage. "For the Chettiars, these grains carried the hope of rebuilding life in their ancestral homeland," explains Shiva Shankar, a local guide.

The grain underwent a cultural metamorphosis. Chef Karthikeyan explains, "In Burma, they prepared this rice as a savoury dish. Here, we reimagined it as a dessert

IT'S FESTIVAL TIME

The Chettinad Heritage & Cultural Festival will be celebrated from 12th to 16th September in 2025. This event is a celebration of the area's rich cultural heritage featuring art, music, dance, and cuisine. Activities will include concerts, talks, guided tours of mansions, temples, and historical landmarks, and curated dinners. @chettinadheritagefestival

for celebrations, weddings, and temple offerings."

Across the subcontinent, similar stories unfold. In the valleys of Manipur, Chakhao (a fragrant black rice) has also been preserved through the generations.

Yet, today, Kavuni Arisi faces new challenges, with production declining by nearly 70 per cent. "This isn't just about saving a rice variety," says Chef Karthikeyan. "It's about preserving a physical manifestation of cultural exchange."

LEFT AND RIGHT

Visalam is a 19th-century Chettinad mansion that is keeping the Chettiar traditions alive; Served at weddings and festivals, the rice is a symbol of prosperity.

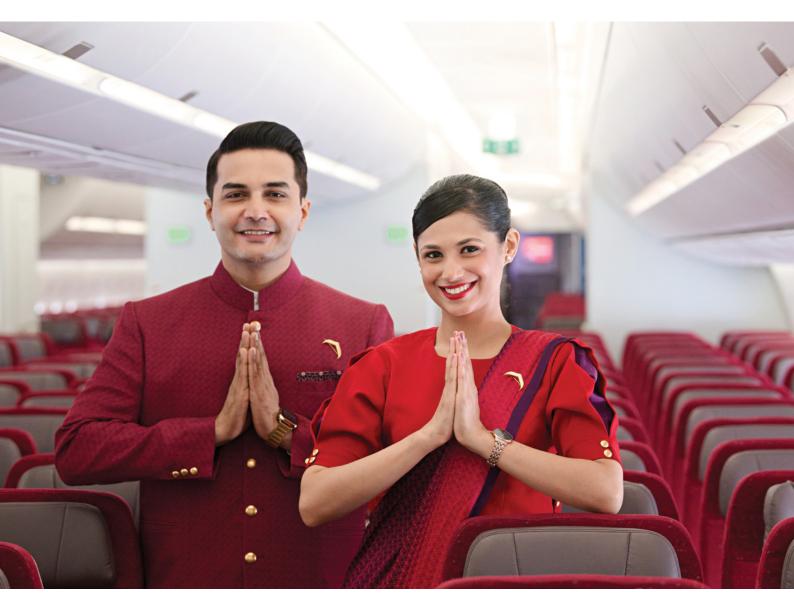


THERE

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AIR INDIA



FLEET

A look at the machines in our fleet, with updates regarding our ongoing retrofit programme

p 91 0

ROUTES

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

p 97 🕡

PARTNERS

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

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SHORT

What frequent fliers and loval customers are saying about their recent experiences flying Air India



Shashi Tharoor 🕏 @ShashiTharoor

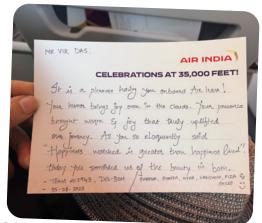
What a joy it always is to fly @airindia! The service is outstanding. And the team on my flight to Kochi today not only surprised me with this wonderful note but asked for a photo too! (Thanks, too, to the pilots for the smooth takeoff and landing, marvellous handling in monsoon weather and a ten-minutes early arrival on a wet runway... Shabash to my favourite airline!)



2:29 PM · Jul 19, 2025



Thanks @airindia these notes, and your crew, are always very sweet 😊



9:41 AM · Aug 5, 2025



Azmi Shabana 👶 @AzmiShabana



Off to #London for @Wimbledon on @airindia. Reiterating faith in our National carrier with the best inflight service in the world! @Javedakhtarjadu

1:50 PM · Jul 8, 2025





Colonel Rohit Dev (RDX) = 🛂 @RDXThinksThat

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I will always fly @airindia Flying Soon on @airindia Soar Higher @airindia Take Wings JAI HIND 🍱

9:27 PM · Jun 15, 2025



Anup Jalota 🥏 @anupjalota



I'm travelling to Dehradun with my entire team, and Air India graciously upgraded their tickets to business class. I truly appreciate this thoughtful gesture. It's always a pleasure to fly with Air India — one of the







Pankaj Advani @PankajAdvani247

Shout out to Ms Himabindu, Duty Manager -@airindia Bengaluru for assisting the Indian Snooker & Pool Team with our check in formalities, baggage issues and wonderful hospitality on our way to Mauritius

11:44 AM · Jul 8, 2025



Raveena Tandon @officialraveenatandon

nitasha© @nitassium



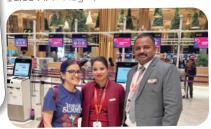
New Beginnings ... to rise and fly again against all odds ... to pick up and start all over , new resolve towards greater strength. The atmosphere solemn and the crews welcoming smiles, tinted with sadness. The Silent passengers and crew bonding with unspoken condolences and subtle confidence .Condolences to the families that have lost their loved ones . A wound that will never heal. Godspeed always @airindia. Fearless and a will To overcome and be strong

again. 💗 Jai Hind .

June 16

shoutout to the amazing
@airindia staff at blr airport last night!
my friend is dealing with a grade 3
ACL tear and we ended up reaching
extremely late for our flight!
in our stressful situation, Ayesha
and Kiran - the staff at the check in

counters were a blessing! 11:53 AM · Aug 1, 2025





vir sanghvi @virsanghvi

It's not a fashionable view but I would rather fly the @airindia

Dreamliner over any other aircraft on domestic routes. Even on international routes it has a much roomier business class than the claustrophobic configuration on the new planes.

2:48 PM · Jul 26, 2025



Through this tour, I did four flights on @airindia on the Mumbai-London-Mumbai sector. The quality of on-board service is a given with Indian crews but they were exceptional and I was very happy with the overall flying experience. I can see the change that they have been talking about and I am a firm believer that the national airline represents the country, that we must support it and occasionally, be patient with it. #AirIndia. (Disclaimer: this is not a promotion and I am doing this because I felt like it)

Harsha Bhogle 🥏 @bhogleharsha

10:39 AM · Aug 7, 2025





Acharya vinod kumar @acharyavinodkumar

Thank you, Air India, & Naveen Ji for the warm welcome and seamless assistance. From wheels to wings, your hospitality made the journey smoother and more special. Gratitude to the ground staff for their kindness and care. #AirIndia #GratefulJourney #SmoothTravel #IndianHospitality #AirportDiaries

Jai Mata Di Har Har Mahadev

June 21





Ashu Madan @ @ashumadan4

On Board on one of the longest flight, 17.30 hours Al 174.
Compliments to the captain and crew for one of the smoothest experience. Tough times for them and the way they are handling is incredible and full support to them. @airindia



10:04 AM · Jun 26, 2025

These online posts have been recreated (verbatim) from the original content for legibility



At Air India, the safety of our passengers, crew, and aircraft is not just a priority, it is our unwavering commitment.

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To know more about our safety protocols, scan this QR code.

OUR WINGS

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

Airbus A319

06

Boeing 777-300ER

19

Airbus A320neo

Airbus A320ceo

94

Boeing 777-200LR

03

FLEET STRENGTH 187

04

Airbus A321ceo 06

13

Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner

Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

26

Airbus A321neo

10

• = | A.I.R.I.N.D.I.A.

Airbus A350-900

06

*Total number as on 11th August 2025; This fleet count is exclusive of Air India Express (Air India Group's low-cost carrier)

september 2025 91



ir India continues to advance its transformation journey with a strong focus on providing a world-class product and service experience. In 2024, Air India had launched a comprehensive US\$400 million retrofit programme across its legacy fleet of singleaisle and twin-aisle aircraft. While the retrofit of single-aisle A320neo aircraft is well underway, Air India recently commenced the retrofit of its twin-aisle fleet that operates to international destinations.

WHAT DOES THE RETROFIT **MEAN FOR YOU**

Upgrading legacy aircraft with Air India's new three-class cabin configuration featuring new seats, refreshed interiors, including carpets, curtains, lavatories, and painting of the aircraft in Air India's The luxurious Business Class cabin in A320neo offers 40-inch ergonomic seats with 7-inch recline an adjustable armrest, footrest, and backrest

new livery. These upgrades enable Air India to provide a consistent experience across the fleet with luxurious Business Class seats, India's only Premium Economy, and an enhanced Economy cabin.

COMMENCEMENT OF TWIN-AISLE FLEET RETROFIT

Air India has commenced the retrofit of its twin-aisle fleet with the first legacy Boeing 787-8 aircraft being sent to Victorville,



follow suit in October 2025. Both retrofitted aircraft are expected to return to service by December 2025, following which two aircraft will undergo retrofit every month. The retrofit of the remaining 24 legacy Boeing 787-8 aircraft will be completed by June 2027.

Air India will additionally retrofit 13 of its legacy Boeing 777-300ER aircraft starting early 2027, aiming for completion by October 2028.

RELIABILITY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAMME FOR LEGACY BOEING 787-8 FLEET

Air India's comprehensive Reliability

Enhancement Programme will progress simultaneously along with the ongoing retrofit for its legacy Boeing 787-8 aircraft. This focuses on upgrading avionics and other critical components to align the fleet with the latest industry standards, enhancing aircraft reliability and minimising operational disruptions.

PROGRESS OF SINGLE-AISLE FLEET RETROFIT

Of the 27 legacy A320neo aircraft,

and have returned to service. The full retrofit of the single-aisle fleet is on track for completion by September 2025.

> of our aircraft offer a new or upgraded product and service experience

*Includes brand-new A320s and A350s. retrofitted A320s, leased B777s, and erstwhile Vistara aircraft



KATHIKA MUSEUM AND CULTURAL CENTRE

Amid the eternally-bustling streets of Sita Ram Bazaar in Old Delhi lies Kucha Pati Ram, where India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, got married, Not too far from that lost landmark stands another haveli—Kathika now as glorious as it might have been in the 19th century. Heritage restorer and curator Atul Khanna has not only sustainably restored the haveli, it is now one of the most vibrant spaces in the city for a quick peek into Indian culture. Apart from hosting heritage workshops, their initiative of reviving the lost tradition of baithaks or mehfils (intimate

gatherings centred around music and dance) has won many fans. @kathikaolddelhi

BHARAT MANDAPAM

Almost two years old, this addition to the sprawling Pragati Maidan complex came into its own during the G20 Summit in 2023. And it continues to awe with its architecture and mega events, exhibitions, and fairs. Be it international beauty expos, futuristic fairs, wellness carnivals or red-carpet events, it is abuzz with activity. Once the sun sets, its lit-up version is all the more magical with its musical fountains. Its hallways are dotted with art and depictions of the country's

Kathika Museum and Cultural Centre hosts baithaks, reintroducing forgotten culture

vast heritage. The iconic Crafts Museum is still housed here (close to Pragati Maidan gate numbers 5A, B, and C); ideal for souvenirs. @bharatmandapam

MUSEO CAMERA

If sipping chai while admiring a chandelier made of twin lens reflex cameras, starting a day with Hindustani classical renditions or spending an evening reliving the words of Gulzar is your definition of a day well spent, then this is your spot. Founded by photographer, historian, and archivist Aditya Arya, Museo





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bendence, it came under the ership of the government of la, who developed it into a BIKANER HOUSE
On the India Gate her another Blomfield-de

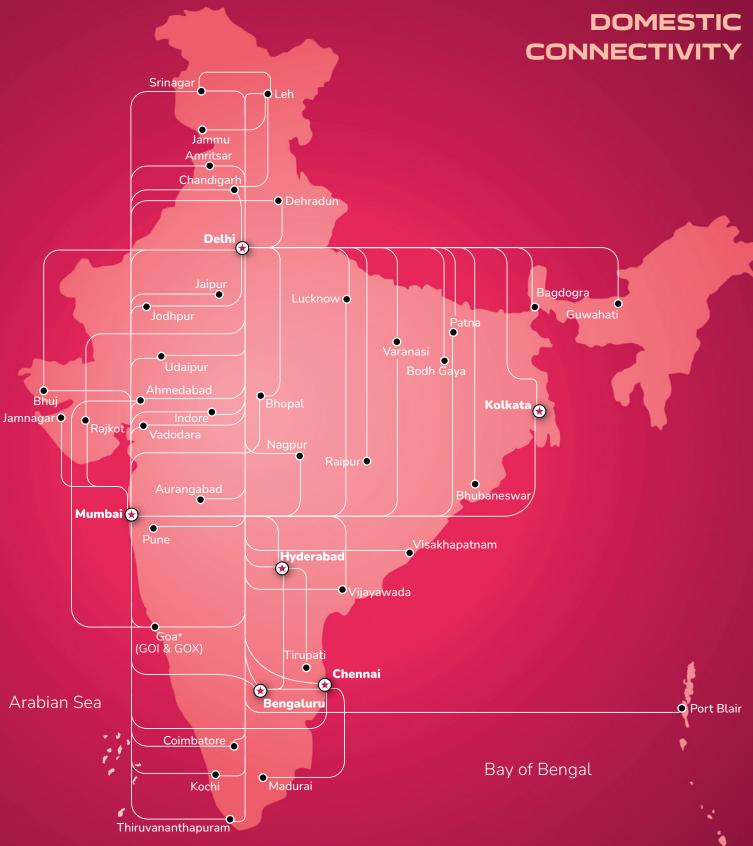
Camera in Gurugram is a visual journey into the evolution of photography. Among its 3,000-plus treasures are the spy cameras used in World War I and II. Museo Camera also joins hands with clubs like Delhi Shayari Club, and film fan clubs for musical evenings or talks. It has hosted Naseeruddin Shah, Muzaffar Ali, and Sharmila Tagore. It serves as a venue for comedy evenings as well, in collaboration with groups such as Nautankibaaz Improv Collective. @museo_camera

TRAVANCORE PALACE

In the heart of New Delhi, this pristine white example of neo-classical architecture was constructed in 1930. Post Independence, it came under the ownership of the government of Kerala, who developed it into a cultural complex with art galleries, an amphitheatre, seminar halls, conference rooms, and exhibition areas. A heritage building designed by architect CG Blomfield (of Dehradun's Forest Research Institute fame), it served as the official residence of the Maharaja of Travancore. While the butterflystyle structure sits pretty among old trees, its long, colonnaded veranda and a courtyard-styled gallery are quick lessons in architectural styles. Apart from art narratives, traditional and contemporary, it hosts Sufi nights, fashion shows, and other events. @travancorepalace.newdelhi

On the India Gate hexagon is another Blomfield-designed structure that went through an extensive restoration and is now a buzzing cultural hub. This former residence of the Maharaja of Bikaner is closer to a bungalow than a palace, with a few Rajput architectural notes like the chattris. Among its venues, the stately ballroom, with high ceilings and picturesque arches, is the prime spot for exhibitions and performances. When the weather permits, Bikaner House hosts a Sunday arts and crafts market. The lawns are perfect to spend a balmy evening, and order some nibbles from L'Opéra, Diggin or Haldiram's. @bikanerhousedelhi





*Map not to scale. The depiction and use of routes and boundaries are for informative purposes only. *This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India.

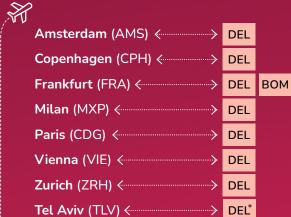
*Mumbai-Goa is operational via GOI; Ahmedabad-Goa is operational via GOX; Delhi-Goa is operational via GOI and GOX.



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Middle East 4

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 COK

 HYD
 MAA

 Jeddah (JED) <</td>
 DEL

 BOM
 BOM

^{*}Flights to Tel Aviv, and London Gatwick (from Ahmedabad, Amritsar and Goa, Mopa) are temporarily suspended.

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

^{*}This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India.

^{*}Route map as on 19th August 2025





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- 2. What browsers can I use to access Vista Stream?
- We recommend Safari for iOS and Chrome for Android devices.
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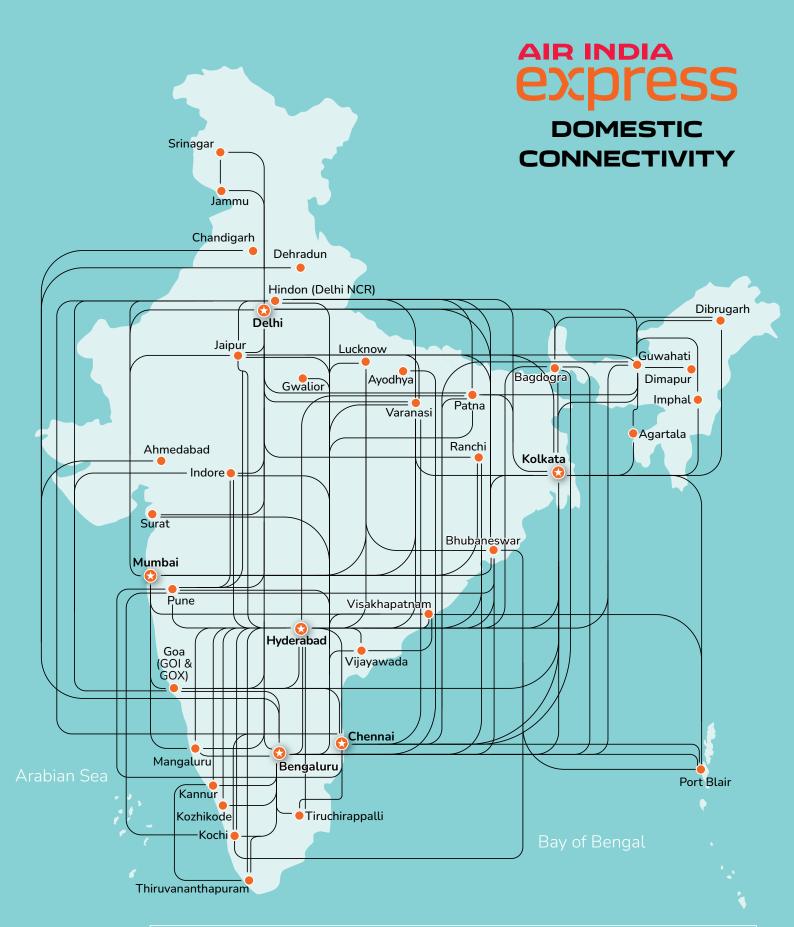
The inflight Wi-Fi is a captive wireless network within the aircraft for enjoying streamed content. There is no inflight internet access.

4. Why do I see this error message: "This version of Chrome is not supported. Please upgrade to the latest version from the Google Play Store"?

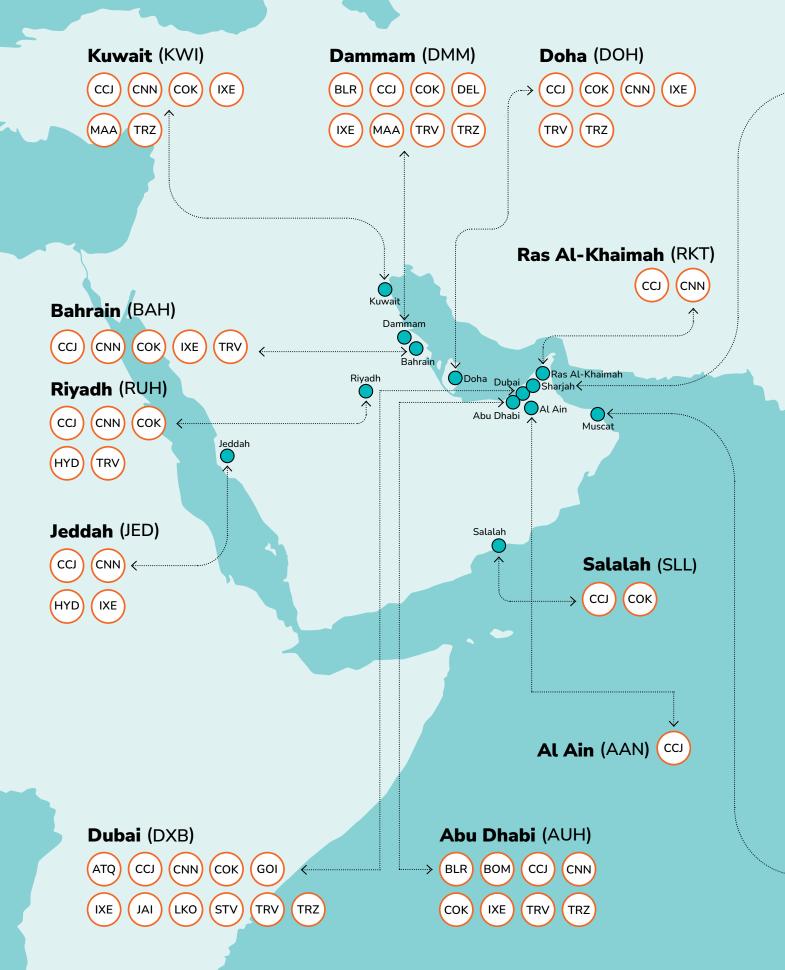
You will need the latest version of Google Chrome to view content. Please update your browser app the next time you have an internet connection.

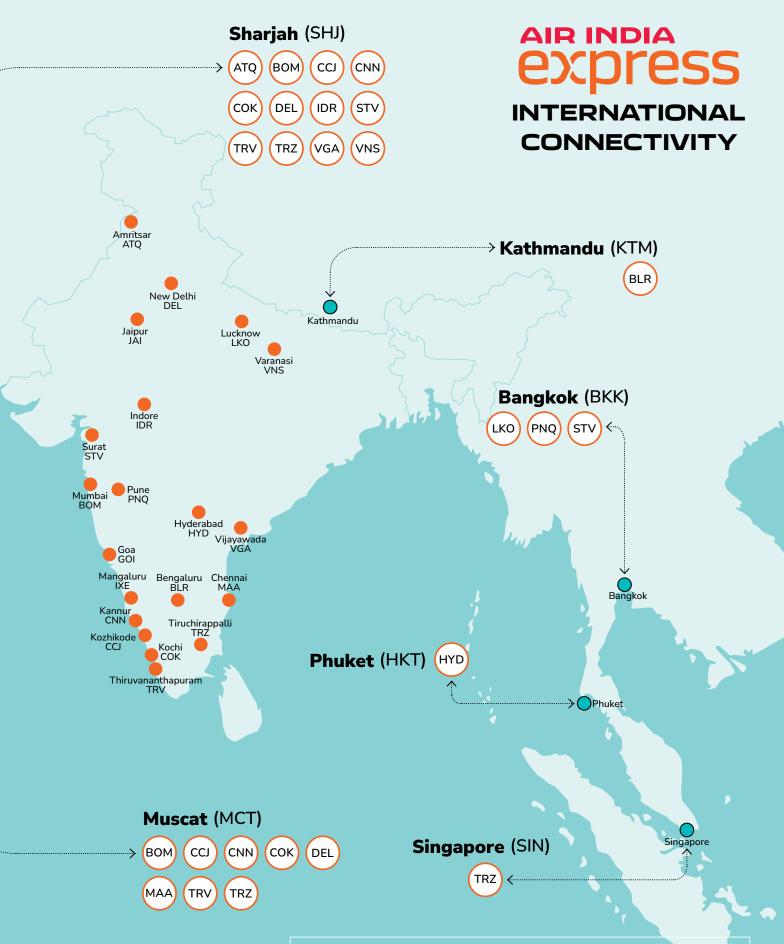
^{*}The Vista Stream service will be available only after seat belt signs are turned off. Access to service will be unavailable during take-off and landing.

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DID YOU KNOW?

India recently introduced the Fast Track Immigration—Trusted Traveller Program (FTI-TTP) to speed up the immigration clearance process. It is currently available at eight airports (Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Cochin) for Indian citizens and foreign nationals holding an OCI Card. An applicant can sign up beforehand, and after successfully authenticating their identity and fulfilling necessary verifications, avail of the service. For more details, visit https://ftittp.mha.gov.in

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REGULATORY INFORMATION FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS LANDING INTO INDIA

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BROADCAST REGARDING INDIAN CONSTITUTION

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

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

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

MISSION LIFE

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

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

AIR-SEWA

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

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

DIGI YATRA

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

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

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

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

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

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

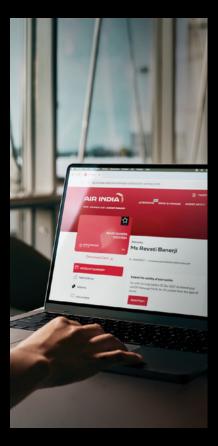
Please be informed that aerial or ground photography and videography are strictly prohibited at all times during a passenger's travel, including when he or she is inside the terminal; in vehicles en route to or from the aircraft; outside the aircraft; during landing; at the airport; during pushback,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

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A FEELING OF PEACE

A few days in Sri Lanka left actor and author **Sandhya Mridul** rejuvenated, inspired, and utterly grateful

MY LOCAL EXPERIENCE

Every once in a while, you land in a place that doesn't just offer a beautiful break but wraps you in a feeling of peace, like a long-lost hug. For me, that place was Sri Lanka. I was shooting in Colombo and got two days off to celebrate my birthday in magical Unawatuna. The thing I loved most about Colombo was that there was so much sky. It may sound simple, but when you live in a bustling city, you forget what it feels like to look up to an open, vast expanse and just breathe.

A FARE TO REMEMBER

Sri Lankan cuisine is an explosion of flavours—spicy, soulful, and entirely addictive. I'm also still dreaming of the perfect cup of coffee I had at The Gallery Café.

MY RECOMMENDATIONS

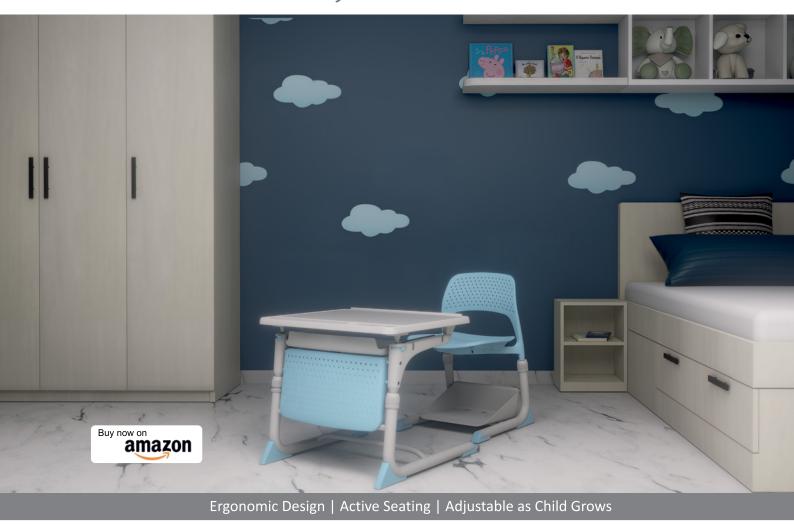
Barefoot, a lovely little store in Colombo, was a great discovery. And there was something incredibly grounding about being by the water in Unawatuna, hearing the waves hit the white sands.

— As told to **Veenu Singh**

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