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EDITOR'S NOTE



Titled Tall Tree and The Eye, this 2009 installation by Anish Kapoor takes pride of place at the Guggenheim Museum Bilbao in Spain

There is an undeniable magic in art. It inspires, connects people, and builds communities—one stroke, one story at a time. It is also why Air India has always forged a deep relationship with Indian art over the years, giving local budding artists global exposure by placing their works at the forefront.

Taking that storied legacy a step forward, we bring to you a specially curated 'Art Edition' in collaboration with one of India's most prolific contemporary artists and Padma Shri awardee Paresh Maity. What you see on the Cover is an original work by the artist set in Varanasi titled 'Morning Glory'. In the Cover Story, Maity opens up about his journey and the medium most special to him—watercolour, a medium that mirrors life itself, free flowing and full of possibilities. We also profile Kiran Nadar, one of India's foremost art collectors, whose ambitious goal is to make art accessible to all.

In our Mind section, art critic Dr Alka Pande offers insights into investing in art, while Max Hollein, Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, discusses the role of Artificial Intelligence in art.

For those who like to be out and about, in our Body section, Padma Bhushan awardee Rajeev Sethi writes about how airports are becoming the new museums. We also showcase some of the world's most art-forward airports and offer an insider's guide to buzzing global art festivals and fairs. Art historian Dr Meera Dass, who has documented Air India's art collection, gives us a peek into how the airline built not just a treasure trove of Indian art but also strategically wove art into its very identity.

We begin the New Year with this proud legacy, and a commitment to keep introducing you to the experiences that make life truly worth living.

Happy reading!

— **Namaste.ai** Editorial Team



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On The Cover

A painting titled 'Morning Glory'

Cover image courtesy

Paresh Maity

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➔ Rajeev Sethi

A Padma Bhushan awardee, Rajeev is a globally acclaimed designer and curator with over five decades of work across design, architecture, exhibitions, festivals, and cultural policy. A champion of traditional artisan practices, he has led landmark projects for institutions including the UN and the Smithsonian, and is the visionary behind the art installations at Mumbai's Terminal 2, which is what he writes about. [page 34](#)



➔ Dr Alka Pande

[@alka.pande](#)

An art historian, curator, and writer, Dr Pande has been engaged with Indian art and aesthetics for over three decades. A former professor and the recipient of numerous awards, including two honours bestowed by the French government, she has curated major exhibitions in India and abroad, and authored several books. She is currently the Curator of the Visual Arts Gallery at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Here, she offers a guide to investing in art. [page 58](#)



↑ Dr Meera Dass

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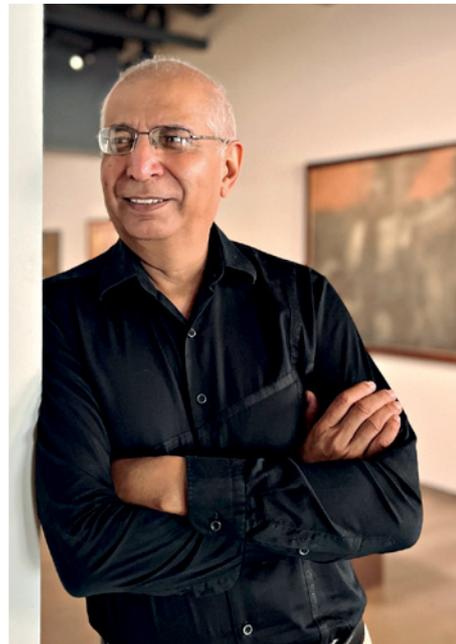
Dr Dass is an art historian, architect, writer, and cultural policy expert. She evaluated the Air India Art Collection (2016–18) and curated exhibitions like *Maharajah of the Skies* and *Dharohar*. A PhD on early Indian temples, she gives us an insight into how Air India played a pivotal role in furthering India's art journey. [page 102](#)



← Max Hollein

[@max.hollein](#)

As Director and CEO of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Max is responsible for the Museum's artistic vision and programming, fiscal and institutional priorities, as well as local engagement and international relations. He has overseen hundreds of exhibitions, launched historic projects, including the new Tang Wing for Modern and Contemporary Art (to open in 2030), secured pre-eminent acquisitions and donations, and re-envisioned the Museum's approach to public outreach. In this issue, he talks about the role of AI in art. [page 42](#)



← Kishore Singh

[@kishorewrite](#)

For over 15 years, Kishore has been closely engaged with the exciting world of Indian art and has curated a number of exhibitions. He has authored several books on art, travel, history, and business. For this issue, he interviews Kiran Nadar and offers a glimpse of the upcoming KNMA space. [page 22](#)

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→ Ambica Beri

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With four MP State Awards and a National Award for the Most Unique and Innovative Destination, among other accolades, Ambica is the Founding Director of Art Ichol (Maihar) and Gallery Sanskriti (Kolkata). A textile designer by training, she chooses to nurture art and artists through her initiatives. In this issue, Ambica talks about how art can uplift lives. **page 50**



→ Puneet Shah

@puneetshah_akara

Puneet is the founder and director of Akara Art, which operates two galleries in Mumbai. Trained in finance, he established Akara in 2009 and is known for championing Indian Modern art. He writes about how networking and goodwill are essential for growth. **page 46**



→ Premilla Baid

@premillabaid

A qualified ophthalmologist, Premilla founded Gallery Sumukha, Bengaluru, in 1996 and has championed Indian contemporary art through exhibitions, fairs, and mentorship programmes. She writes about how New Media art allows artists to push the envelope. **page 48**



← Sunaina Anand

@anandsunaina

As the founder and director of Art Alive Gallery, Delhi, Sunaina has been a driving force in the promotion of visual arts for over two decades. Under her leadership, the gallery has curated numerous exhibitions and contributed significantly to the documentation and preservation of Indian art. She delves into how Indian artists are global ambassadors. **page 44**



← Purva Damani

@purvakdamani

At heart, Purva is an art enthusiast with a background in Communications and Marketing from the Fashion Institute of Technology, New York. After working as an HR consultant in Mumbai, she returned to Ahmedabad, her hometown, to found 079|STORIES, a platform that brings art and culture closer to the public through exhibitions, performances, curation, and dialogue. She writes on taking art beyond the visual medium. **page 52**



← Rakhi Sarkar

Rakhi trained under Kamala Roy Choudhury, who was among the first Indian women artists educated in Paris. In 1986, Rakhi curated *Visions*, a landmark exhibition of four Bengal masters. As the Founder Director of CIMA Gallery, Kolkata, since 1993, she has curated over 120 exhibitions. Rakhi talks about her interactions with MF Husain, providing glimpses into the artist's personality. **page 54**





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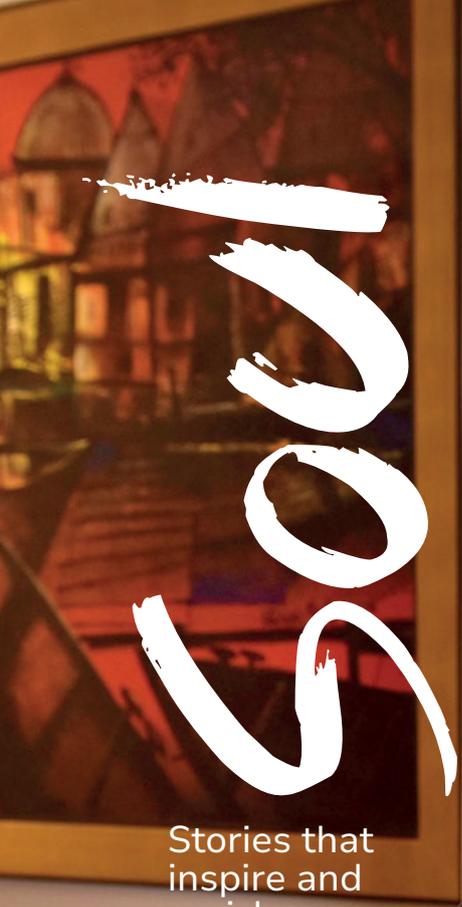
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THE WORLD OF *watercolours*

This medium, in its essence, is like a metaphor for life: fluid, unpredictable, and full of possibilities

words by Paresh Maity



Range, watercolour on paper (2015), by the artist

"Light is therefore colour"
- JMW Turner

Watercolour is one of the oldest and most versatile artistic mediums, with a lineage stretching back to prehistoric times. Its journey began in the pigments of cave paintings but it only gained recognition as a stand-alone art form during the Renaissance and particularly in the 18th and 19th centuries in Britain. Artists like JMW Turner, John Constable, and Rembrandt [van Rijn] used to paint small watercolours to be used as preliminary layouts for their main paintings. That was hailed as a tradition, the beginning of a great piece of art. But towards the latter half of the 18th century, particularly during Turner's prolific years, watercolour became the most popular medium of painting and developed into a dominant English form of art, appreciated for its spontaneity, luminosity, and expressive power.

When my journey in the world of art began over five decades ago, I was a young dreamer full of creative aspirations. I did not have the resources to express my creative desires or create new artworks. But I was determined to do it anyway, even if it meant using a piece of paper from a primary school notebook and a single tube of colour. I made do with whatever I could find, often borrowing brushes or using makeshift tools. I would sit for hours, creating small watercolour paintings inspired by the rustic charm of Tamluk, my hometown near Kolkata. The countryside, its meadows, mud houses, and shifting skies offered an endless source of inspiration.

When I grew up, my creative urge deepened and I found myself increasingly fascinated by watercolours. I painted mud houses and meadows on the outskirts of Tamluk when I was merely eight years old. Even at that tender age, I knew that the temperature needed to be a little cooler to capture the magic of a good watercolour. I was already aware, in some intuitive way, that this was a medium of precision and delicacy but I was always attracted to new challenges and discoveries, going into a deep introspective space to explore new things, hence, the medium of watercolour really appealed to me. Watercolour, in its essence, felt like a metaphor for life: fluid, unpredictable, and full of possibilities.

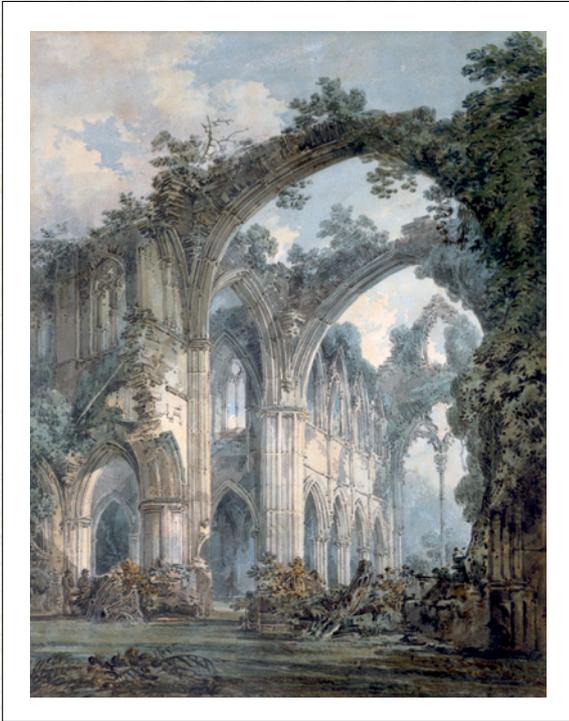
A few more years down the line, the realisation dawned upon me that the size of watercolour paintings I

was doing were very small due to the limited availability of paper sizes, mostly around 10 or 14 inches. I had no access to museums or galleries, no opportunity to see original works by great masters. My world of art was confined to books and imagination. Gradually, my passion for art became a source of frustration; I longed to create watercolours in larger sizes, to truly tap into the dynamism of the medium.

When I turned 16, I started working on slightly larger watercolour paper, around 20 by 30 inches, which is also known as Full Imperial sheet. After that, there was no looking back for me. I kept expanding my scale, attempting bigger sizes and experimenting with the medium. Initially, the chances of success with large watercolour paintings were slim, but that became the motivation for my journey and my aspiration, to master the medium.

Lagoon, watercolour on paper (2012), by Paresh Maity





CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Transept of Tintern Abbey by J.M.W. Turner;
Syndics of the Drapers' Guild (also often called just The Syndics) by Rembrandt van Rijn; Brighton Beach Looking West by John Constable.



Today, I have completed a nine-foot-long watercolour, which is one of the longest watercolour paintings in the world.

Traversing the myriad landscapes of the world, I have meticulously explored varied approaches to painting, experimenting with watercolours, oils, acrylics, sculptures, and photography. In my understanding, watercolour, as a medium of painting, is one of the most challenging forms of art because there is no scope for rectification. Each stroke of the artist determines the final outcome of the painting. A few finishing touches can be added here and there but it is generally done in a single attempt.

Working with watercolour on a larger size poses a great challenge because once you move the brush from one side to the other, the water dries quickly making it difficult to continue the strokes smoothly. Another secret to making a good watercolour is that there is no use of white pigment. The transparency makes it one of the most intricate aspects of the medium.

In my understanding, watercolour, as a medium of painting, is one of the most challenging forms of art because there is no scope for rectification. Each stroke of the artist determines the final outcome of the painting.

●
PARESH MAITY



TOP AND BOTTOM

Homeward Bound, watercolour on paper (2022), by Paresh Maity; The artist, deeply engrossed in his craft.



The white areas that one sees in watercolour paintings are actually the unpainted parts of the paper, known as 'paper white', which brings light and life into the artwork. When working with watercolour, the water floats across the surface of the paper; great precision and skill is required to preserve the paper whites. Without paper white, the painting tends to appear lifeless.

Today, watercolour as a medium is becoming a global rarity. The medium requires time, discipline, and an appreciation for subtlety, qualities that are often overshadowed by the immediacy of digital art and faster techniques. Yet, for seasoned artists and true connoisseurs, watercolour remains a medium of wonder, stoking the creative synergies of the inquisitive mind.

Paresh Maity



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THE *Collector's Gift* TO INDIA

First she collected for the home. Now Kiran Nadar's collection will power India's largest private art museum

words by **Kishore Singh**

Kiran Nadar Museum of Art



LEFT AND RIGHT
An installation view of the exhibition titled *Purvaee*, at KNMA's HCL campus in Noida (now closed); A passionate collector, Kiran Nadar has changed the perception of how Indians view art and artists, with her philanthropy.

F

For 15 straight years, Kiran Nadar's formidable omniscience in the Indian art world has been steadfast as its one-person saviour, mentor, and custodian. The size of her annual purse has been the subject of conversations and envy. She is like Oprah Winfrey for galleries and art fairs, her approval enough to fan a frenzy among collectors, causing prices to further spiral. Her auction paddle has continually shattered and set price records over the years, right up to the formidable ₹118 crore (US\$13.8 million) paid for MF Husain's *Gram Yatra* in March 2025. If she is admired for her dedication and respected for her passion, then she is also applauded for her focus. With her eponymously-named museum, she has shaped some of the finest art experiences in the country. That's now set to grow exponentially as she works to complete her dream project—the massive, million-sqft stand-alone museum to open in September 2027 near New Delhi's Aerocity. If anything has changed, it is the scope and scale that has altered to fit her ambitions of powering the most important art and culture institution the country could have aspired for.

But before we share the shape of things to come, let's roll back to a bit of history when Kiran Nadar was known only to a handful of art galleries as an eclectic collector whose appetite would inform her choices. The collection outgrew the walls of her home and lay in storage, but still she continued to acquire artworks. And there they might have lain if, in 2010, she hadn't decided



TOP AND BOTTOM
An Odissi ensemble from Gandharva Mahavidyalaya as part of KNMA's Legacy Series, 2024; Contemporary artist Bharti Kher's Ancestor, on view at Central Park, New York, generated excitement when it was shown there by KNMA.

to open it up for public viewing at her husband Shiv Nadar's HCL campus in Noida. The first private art museum in the country, it was open to the public (now closed). It started with a show aptly titled *Open Doors* that was wide-ranging, though its heartbeat was the Progressives—among her favourite artists—who had dominated headlines ever since the group had been formed in 1947.

But a museum in a corporate office was never the grand plan. In 2011, therefore, she opened a larger outpost of the museum in a south Delhi mall. Neither place was an ideal space—if one was intimidating, the other risked the seriousness a museum implies—yet, over the years, she built them up as impressive venues for exhibitions and, eventually, performance spaces. Exhibition openings attracted the art cognoscenti in droves, as much

to see as be seen. Her India Art Fair preview is the largest such event—and attraction—on the Indian art calendar.

But that's all in the past and present. Cut to September 2027 in the future when the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art (KNMA) will have its own, independent building opposite Aerocity in New Delhi. "It will be like nothing India has seen," says Nadar, whose team of curators is already giving shape to an unprecedented opening programme. What that means is exhibitions in as many as 25 galleries, all of which will open simultaneously, alongside a slew of performances in its two auditoria including music, dance, theatre, and film screenings, alongside a fine-dining restaurant, café, theatre-café, library, and member's lounge. The entire museum will open in one go.

"It's a daunting task," she admits, "so there's a wee bit of trepidation because



something like this has not been done in India before.” But she’s nothing if not confident about the task at hand. “The lay public and people not necessarily involved with art will see a reflection of the country’s rich heritage,” she promises, “thereby recapturing its contribution to our past.” What that includes is antiquities, miniatures, paintings, sculpture, photography, textiles—and then some.

A large part of that will come from its own collection of over 16,000 works, of which a small percentage will feature as part of the museum’s permanent collection. Other exhibitions, to be guest curated, may require loans from other public or private institutions, and collectors, and will be changed according to an exhibition calendar. But much of it, too, will come from the museum’s own sizeable collection—works that have never been shown before, for instance, such as its collection of miniature paintings accumulated over the years. “We’ll keep shows open for a year so people can plan their visits to different parts of the museum. Our intention is to enthral people so they keep returning—that’s the sort of attractiveness we hope to build into the museum.”

Wondering how her team will manage that? The loan of the 17th century, recently recovered Caravaggio masterpiece, *Mary Magdalene in Ecstasy*, which was on view at KNMA, Saket, and attracted footfalls into the museum, should be a pointer on that

TOP AND BOTTOM

MF Husain’s Gram Yatra holds the record as India’s most expensive painting, and will be part of the star attraction at the upcoming KNMA near Aerocity, scheduled to open in 2027; KNMA’s Tyeb Mehta retrospective at Art Mumbai 2025 was one of the big draws at the art fair.



I want to encourage the culture of museum-going in India and for that the museum has to become popular and have a vast outreach.

●
KIRAN NADAR
PROMINENT INDIAN ART COLLECTOR
AND CHAIRPERSON OF THE KIRAN
NADAR MUSEUM OF ART

score. Interest in the painting affirms Indians’ interest in works that have a sense of history. “We’re in dialogue with international cultural institutions and museums,” Nadar confirms, “about forthcoming loans of works.” Her own collection of diaspora artists includes the London-based Anish Kapoor and Raqib Shaw, and she has also collected works by South African-based contemporary artist William Kentridge, but the loans will probably be for old Western masters or contemporary heavyweights. “This will be driven by our guest curators,” she acknowledges, though there might be museum-to-museum shows that travel to KNMA as well.

The building, designed by Ghanaian-British architect Sir David Adjaye, will include Indian elements like extensive use of *jalīs*, courtyards, and pavilions, alongside international best practices to ensure the finest quality immersive museum experience. Expect state-of-the-art technology as part of the project. The atrium, for instance, will feature a retractable ceiling where sculptures can be shown irrespective of scale or in a more intimate environment, as required. The foyer will have specially-culled out areas featuring single works by artists. The idea is to ensure surprises, so that visitors delight in their visits and want to come back as much for the experience as for the cultural performances and dining.

Indians are not committed museum-goers—at least within India; reserving



TOP AND BOTTOM

Under construction, the museum opposite Aerocity in New Delhi will reflect an Indian sensibility while offering an international experience; Schoolchildren attend workshops at KNMA, Saket. The outreach to students will continue to drive change among a young generation of India's future museum-goers.

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of the museum's 16,000-strong collection will be in the permanent display

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- auditoria that will be used for film screenings, and music, dance, and theatre performances

ART EDITION

such visits for when they are travelling overseas. Nadar hopes to change that with the museum's programming and ability to curate newer surprises and experiences. To encourage them, she aims to keep the entry free for the most part, with only a few exhibits or performances that may be ticketed. If the current institution gets 500 footfalls a day, she'll be happy if that increases to 3,000-4,000 daily. "I want to encourage the culture of museum-going in India," she shares, "and for that, the museum has to become popular and have a vast outreach." An education department will ensure easy access for students from schools and colleges in the region, and for specialised groups. And, yes, those with an interest can sign up for art appreciation courses too.

Once the museum is up and running, will Nadar's impressive collecting spree ease off? "I haven't looked at a cessation in collecting yet," she says, "though at some stage it will have to stop simply to avoid works being consigned to storage. Whatever I now collect will definitely be something that's required for people to see as part of the exhibitions." That alone should continue to fuel India's art market in the foreseeable future. "I hope it will encourage other people to share their collections with the public," she hopes. Amen to that.



Kiran Nadar Museum of Art

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WORLD

The harmony of movement and balance

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- 30 → NAVIGATE
- 34 → EXPLORE
- 36 → FRAME BY FRAME

A fair to REMEMBER

These major art events across the world, and in India, are the perfect forum to appreciate, research, and buy art in 2026
 words by **Georgina Maddox**



ART EDITION

KALA GHODA ARTS FESTIVAL

This was launched in 1999 by the Kala Ghoda Association, with an emphasis on heritage, visual, and performing arts. Held in the historic namesake art district, the art installations have become a magnet for all visitors.

31st January–8th February;
kalaghodaassociation.com

THE EUROPEAN FINE ART FAIR (TEFAF)

Started in 1988 by The European Fine Art Foundation, this is another leading international art show. Visitors can expect to be astonished by the displays because all the exhibitors are the finest in their respective fields. At a TEFAF art exhibition, you can expect to see paintings, objects of art, designs, antique furniture, and several other specialities, including modern and contemporary art. It is usually hosted in Maastricht (the Netherlands) in spring and New York in summer.

Maastricht (14th–19th March)
 New York (15th–19th May);
tefaf.com



INDIA ART FAIR (IAF)

Launched in 2008, this was founded by Neha Kirpal, who is said to have sketched out the idea on a sick bag while on board a flight. The IAF has seen many avatars, with international participation as well as an emphasis on the visual arts. The directorial mantle currently rests with Jaya Asokan. It is held at the NSIC Exhibition Grounds in Okhla, Delhi.

5th–8th February;
indiaartfair.in



Top and bottom: Shutterstock; Geetika Sasan Bhandari
 All dates in the story are correct at the time of going to press



THE FRIEZE ART FAIR

Introduced in London in 2003, this has now expanded to three more locations—New York City, Seoul, and Los Angeles (LA). It is a leading global platform for the exhibition and development of contemporary and modern art. The organisation started with *Frieze* magazine in 1991 and eventually extended it to *Frieze Week* and *Frieze Masters* magazines. Of the four art shows, the Frieze London, held every October, offers the most insightful experience, say insiders.

LA (26th February–1st March); New York (13th–17th May); Seoul (2nd–5th September); London (15th–19th October); frieze.com

KOCHI-MUZIRIS BIENNALE (KMB)

The theme of the ongoing KMB is 'For the Time Being', exploring bodies in history, labour, and memory. Curator Nikhil Chopra (who has curated it with HH Art Spaces), says, "The body is an archive of memory and repertoire; of movements, of scripts, excavated from deep memory." Featuring over 60 artists, KMB hosts a vivid ecosystem of talks, film programmes, workshops, residencies, and educational projects at various venues in and around Fort Kochi, Mattancherry, and Ernakulam.

Till 31st March;
kochimuzirisbiennale.org

THE HAAT OF ART

With exhibitions across Mumbai, Bengaluru, Indore and Delhi, this event is a celebration of India's rich cultural heritage and contemporary artistry.

Delhi (20th–22nd March); Dates for other cities to be announced; thehaatofart.com

ART DUBAI

Founded in 2007, this annual art fair has become a catalyst in the region's growth, uplifting artists from lesser-represented parts of the world. This year, it will have four sections, each curated by noted names from the art fraternity.

17th–19th April; artdubai.ae



ART BASEL

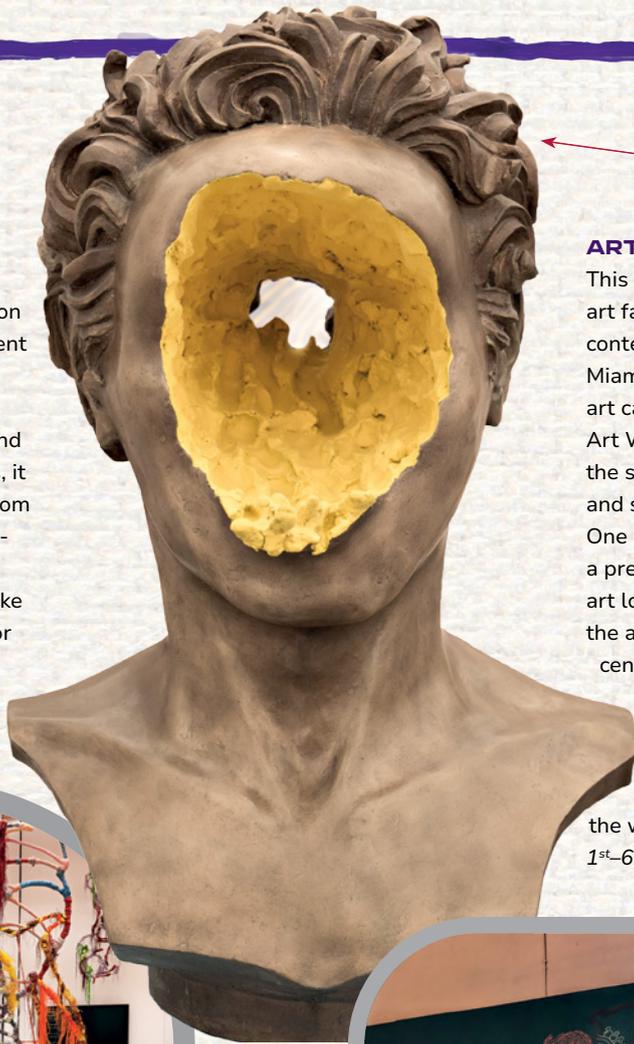
This major international art fair brings together leading galleries, artists, and collectors. Basel apart, the fair is also held in Hong Kong, Paris, and Miami Beach, with Qatar (Doha) being added to the list in 2026. It showcases 20th-21st-century modern and contemporary art (painting, sculpture, photography, and digital) and features over 200 galleries and more than 4,000 artists.

Qatar (5th–7th February); Hong Kong (27th–29th March); Paris (23rd–25th October); Miami Beach (4th–6th December); artbasel.com

LA BIENNALE DI VENEZIA

Also known as the Venice Art Biennale, this is the oldest exhibition of its kind. Started in 1895, this event commands immense importance in the contemporary art world. Focused on staging rising artists and established contemporary masters, it holds several other events apart from the main exhibition. Their specially-curated programmes, national pavilions, and collateral events make this an unforgettable experience for any art lover.

9th May–22nd November;
labiennale.org



ART MIAMI

This is the second-most attended art fair globally and the oldest contemporary one of its kind in Miami (also known as the world art capital). It is a part of Miami Art Week and is held during the same time as Art Basel, and several other art events, at One Herald Plaza. This event is a premier destination for every art lover who wants to explore the artworks of the 20th and 21st centuries. The high quality of the exhibition can be attributed to its collaborations with the most respected and noted galleries from around the world.

1st–6th December; artmiami.com



ART MUMBAI

Dedicated to the modern and contemporary art world in the "Maximum City", this event is co-founded by Minal Vazirani, Dinesh Vazirani, Nakul Dev Chawla, and Conor Macklin. The art fair, established in 2023, is scheduled to kick off its fourth edition at the Mahalaxmi Racecourse this November. It is expected to be bigger and brighter, featuring more galleries, institutions, and foundations from around the globe.

12th–15th November; artmumbai.com

SERENDIPITY ARTS FESTIVAL

Launched in 2016, this event expanded to Birmingham in May 2025, and there are plans to take it to other Indian cities and to Dubai. The original festival, however, takes place in Panaji, Goa, every December, featuring a wide range of art forms, including visual, performing, and more.

Dates to be announced;
serendipityartsfestival.com

GEORGINA MADDOX

DELHI-BASED ART CRITIC-CURATOR, WRITER, AND VISUAL ARTIST

Clockwise from top left: Shutterstock; Mignonne Dsouza; Shutterstock
All dates in the story are correct at the time of going to press



A festival inevitably finds its own voice and I do believe that the Bengal Biennale will find its own voice in the coming years. We have taken that first step into the arena and now we can only grow from here.

MALAVIKA BANERJEE
TRUSTEE, BENGAL BIENNALE, KOLKATA

KOLKATA'S SHOWSTOPPER

Long considered one of India's most important cultural hubs, the city finally has its own biennale



Why does Kolkata not have a defining arts event? That was the rationale Malavika and Jeet Banerjee of the Gameplan Foundation were wrestling with as they had been contemplating an arts biennale in Kolkata for over a decade. Finally, the first edition—the 2024 Bengal Biennale—premiered in Shantiniketan and Kolkata from November 2024 to January 2025.

The first event of its kind in the state known for its emphasis on the arts, the Biennale included exhibitions, installations, musical performances, theatre, conversations, and workshops. For Malavika, the attempt continues to be to “instigate

conversations between the Bengal masters and contemporary practices, through diverse forms of art and culture”. The 2026 edition will include new projects that will extend the viewership of arts beyond the gallery-going and museum-visiting crowd. It will bring art on to the streets of the city and create a buzz that goes beyond what the intelligentsia of the city enjoys on a daily basis.

“The great joy of putting together an event like this was to push the envelope beyond what would be expected of Bengal. That is why we had Siddharth Sivakumar, a young curator with deep experience both in curation and in the history of Bengal art. He brought a contemporary language that contrasted well with the moderns and the heritage of Bengal,” says Malavika.

“For the 2026-27 Biennale, our curator is Chander Haat, a collective that has created an arts hub at the fringes of the city. Ritika Biswas, who has worked with several global biennales is co-curator.”



India Greet at Mumbai's Terminal 2 has carved lotuses of varied sizes, materials, and designs

ART EDITION

AIRPORTS: *The new museums*

The new gateways of India, airports must reflect the spirit of their city or country

words by **Rajeev Sethi**

My tryst with art in airports started way back in the early 1980s when the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, asked me to design a VIP Lounge at the Delhi airport to welcome heads of states, as India was hosting the 7th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement in 1983. Since the message was peace, I chose the dove as a motif and commissioned artists, sculptors, and artisans, and transformed one section

of the Delhi airport. I told Mrs Gandhi that art should be taken out of warehouses where it is lying as dead stock and brought into the public domain.

I have great faith in the fact that real growth happens when art is taken out of the antiseptic hallows of museums and galleries. People must respond to art. And airports are the new museums. But they must also have programmes to nurture and engage, like art initiatives for students

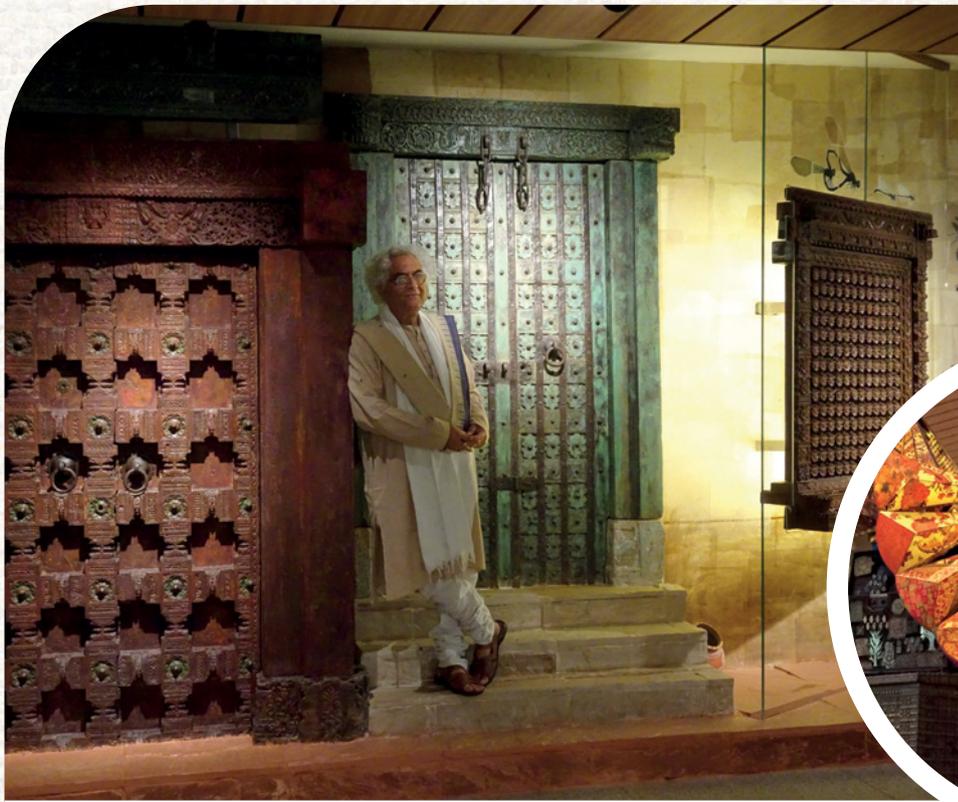
who cannot fly, to come in and see the art. Artwork should be created and co-created for a theme, and not curated. The Mumbai Terminal 2 Jaya He GVK New Museum (now renamed The ArtBeat of New India) took seven years to commission and create, with a cross-section of so many artists working to provide a vantage view of how India viewed itself from a creative lens. It houses 5,500 artworks and installations by nearly 1,500 artists, and extends

I have great faith in the fact that real growth happens when art is taken out of the antiseptic

hallows of museums and galleries.

●
RAJEEV SETHI
PADMA BHUSHAN AWARDEE,
DESIGNER, SCENOGRAPHER, AND
ART CURATOR

Rajeev Sethi



across 3.2km of wall space spanning four levels. The baggage claim, for example, showcases India's rich textile heritage, while the multimedia mural, *Conjoining Lands/Thresholds of India*, created by artist Nilima Sheikh with Suresh BV and Fayaz Ahmad Jan, brings together artists and craftspeople from Srinagar and Vadodara. It's one of Asia's largest public art projects and people have told me they wouldn't mind missing their flight for it.

Art must also be context-driven, else it is just decoration. At an airport, it must reflect the temperament and spirit of the city/region/country—that is what gives it soul. An airport sets the tone for

someone's entire trip and ensures a good exit. And homogeneity—placing art that has no context either in terms of the city or a theme—is considered the most unimaginative.

In fact, the Gateway of India was built to welcome kings and queens but today airports are the new

gateways of India—they welcome millions more and are inclusive spaces. Art at an airport has to appeal to someone coming to this liminal stage. And this liminality calls for something, perhaps not everything.

— As told to **Geetika Sasan Bhandari**

All the artworks featured here are at Mumbai's T2. (Clockwise from top left) The author stands amidst Doors of India, a cluster of traditional doorways; Doorways with carved and painted talismans form Canopy of a Door; Chintz India pays tribute to designer Ritu Kumar's work; Celebrating Indian textiles is Silent Minarets and Whispering Winds, which is based on Kaifi Azmi's poem Aurat (Woman); Atelier of Ephemera is an installation of patuas that bring the stories of rural Bengal to bustling Kolkata.

ART THAT *Takes flight*

In terminals across the globe, creativity reshapes the way we wait, wander, and wonder

KEMPEGOWDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, BENGALURU

This installation, titled V+Mana, by conceptual artist LN Tallur, takes pride of place at the airport's entrance. The name of the art piece is a play on words that describe both an airplane in Sanskrit and ancient temple façades, which is shown inverted to look like an aircraft.

Bengaluru: Kempegowda International Airport. New York and Houston: Getty Images. Some of the featured artworks may no longer be on display

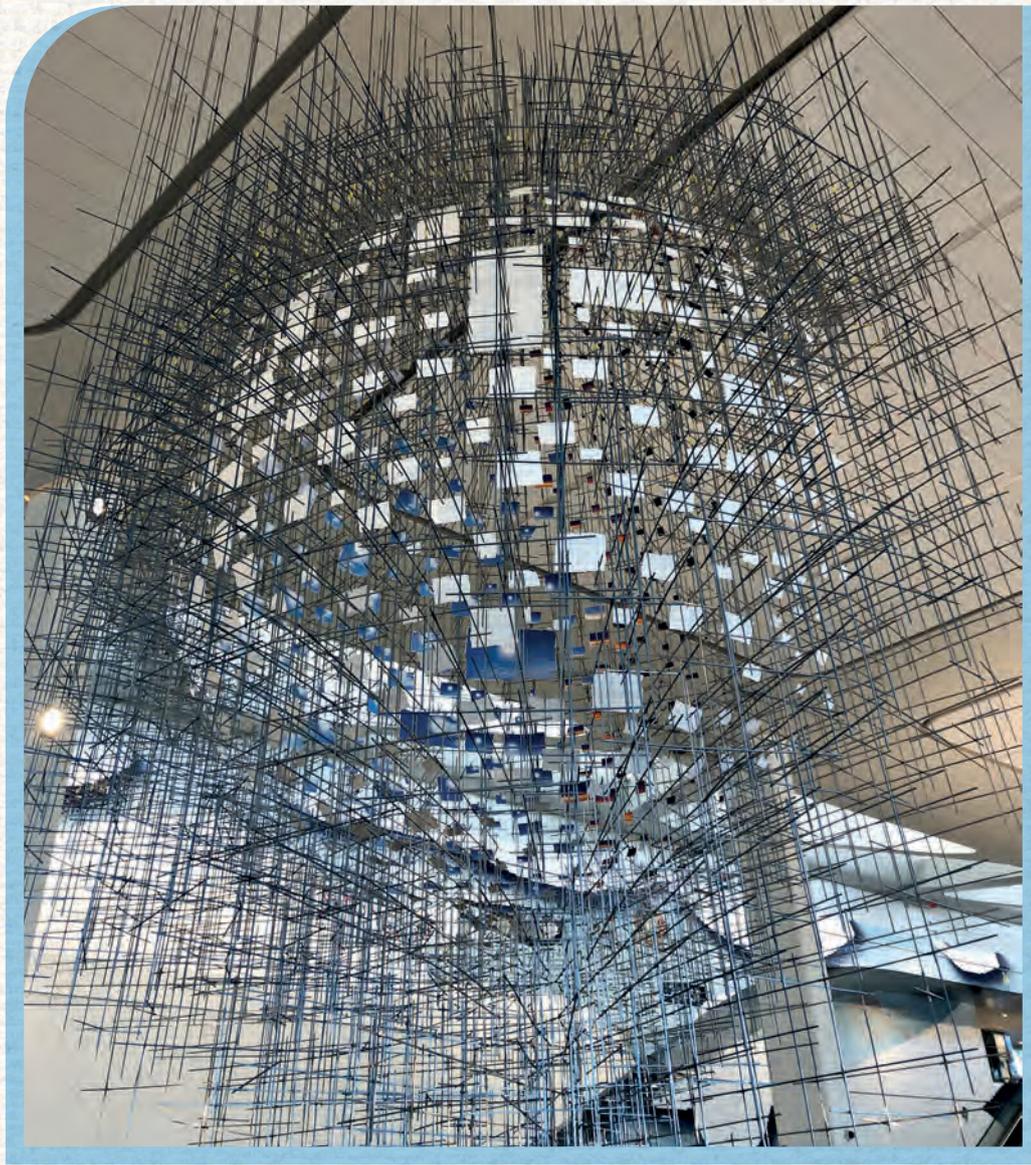
ART EDITION



GEORGE BUSH INTERCONTINENTAL AIRPORT (IAH), HOUSTON, TEXAS, USA

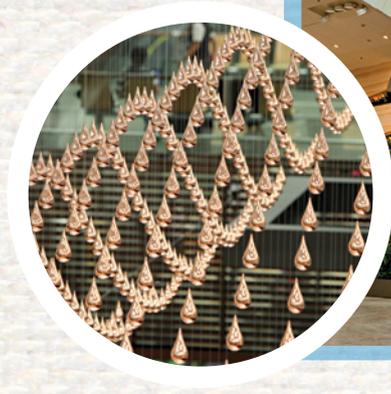
International air transport rating agency Skytrax has recognised Houston Airports twice as having the World's Best Airport Art programme. Featured here is an artwork by marine conservation artist Janavi Mahimtura Folmsbee at IAH, connecting terminals D and E.





**LAGUARDIA AIRPORT,
QUEENS, NEW YORK, USA**

Titled Shorter Than The Day, this is a permanent exhibit in the airport's Terminal B by Sarah Sze, an artist and professor at the Columbia University School of the Arts. This amorphous sphere features a constellation of photographs, each one showing the New York City sky at a different time of day.



←
SINGAPORE CHANGI AIRPORT

The art collection here is a fusion of creativity, technology, and nature—be it the 14m-high digital display (with a bespoke soundtrack), The Wonderfall, located in the departure hall of T2 or the rainfall installation, Kinetic Rain, created with 1,216 bronze droplets in T1 (extreme left).

ART EDITION

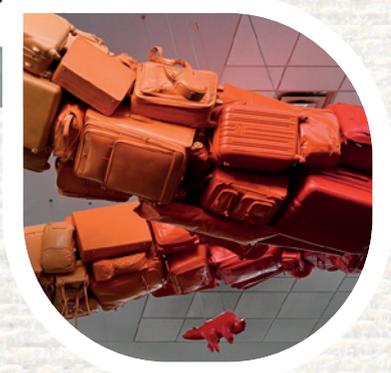
→
INDIRA GANDHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (T1), NEW DELHI

These Paresh Maity fibreglass sculptures, titled Sanyog, invite you to “experience the expanse of India, animate and inanimate, vibrant varied and vivid, united in space and spirit”. It features India’s iconic monuments to showcase the country’s rich diversity.



↔
DENVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, COLORADO, USA

The airport’s latest art installation, on Concourse B East, uses an object synonymous with travel—luggage. Titled It’s Not What You Take, It’s What You Bring Back, it is conceptualised by artist Thomas “Detour” Evans and created with 183 donated bags.





AMSTERDAM AIRPORT SCHIPHOL, THE NETHERLANDS

Art holds a special place here. While artist Tom Claassen's bronze sculptures titled, Incredible Black Sitting Snowman (right) grab attention on the H/M Pier for their beanbag-like appearance, artist Kees Franse's Apple (made with wood and one of the first works of art at the airport) bears signatures of many passengers.



I GUSTI NGURAH RAI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, BALI, INDONESIA

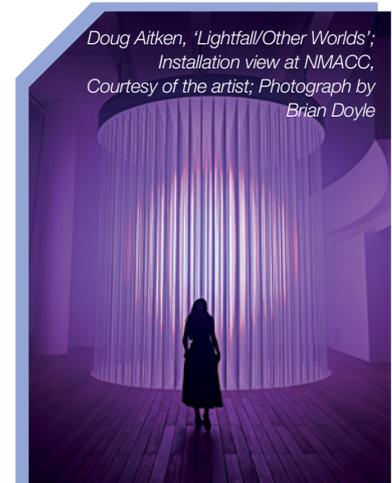
In Bali, the Garuda (a mythical bird and Lord Vishnu's mount) is a highly revered cultural symbol. While statues and depictions of this figure are visible all across the island, the airport houses a vibrantly-stunning sculpture.

EXPLORE DOUG AITKEN'S EXHIBITION UNDER THE SUN AT NMACC

The India debut of this acclaimed American artist takes audiences into a multi-sensory journey through time, space, and human experience at the Art House



Doug Aitken, 'Untitled B'; Installation view at NMACC, Courtesy of the artist; Photograph by Dhrupad Shukla/Floating Home Studio



Doug Aitken, 'Lightfall/Other Worlds'; Installation view at NMACC, Courtesy of the artist; Photograph by Brian Doyle

The Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre (NMACC) welcomes yet another landmark exhibition, UNDER THE SUN, marking the first-ever India showcase by renowned multimedia artist Doug Aitken. Audiences are invited on a transformative journey across three floors of NMACC's Art House, exploring the Past, Present, and Future through immersive installations, tactile sculptures, radiant light, and captivating video works that probe the human experience in an age of rapid change.

On the first floor, 'Past' transports visitors into elemental landscapes of wood, glass, textiles, and reclaimed materials, showcasing Aitken's collaboration with Indian artisans. The second floor,



Doug Aitken, 'Ganges'; Installation view at NMACC, Courtesy of the artist; Photograph by Dhrupad Shukla/Floating Home Studio

'Present', features *NEW ERA*, a six-screen video installation that envelops viewers in mirrored, kaleidoscopic environments exploring the intersections of technology, nature, and human connection. On the final floor, 'Future', *LIGHTFALL/OTHER WORLDS* presents a hypnotic light sculpture, so visitors can physically engage with the space and experience an ever-changing vision of possibility and evolution.

Curated by Mafalda Kahane and Roya Sachs, and co-produced by Elizabeth Edelman Sachs of TRIADIC, the exhibition is a sensory exploration that blends heritage, innovation, and visionary storytelling.

At Art House, NMACC, till 22nd February 2026. Entry is free for senior citizens, children under 7, and students of fine arts and media. Tickets start INR 250; on sale at nmacc.com and bookmyshow.com.

Mind

Shifting Perspectives

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All images are from the Spring 2024 exhibition of The Costume Institute (The Metropolitan Museum of Art), titled *Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion*. The Mermaid Bride (top right) was one of the artworks that was made interactive via the collaboration with OpenAI.



ART AND AI: *The connection*

Institutions like The Metropolitan Museum of Art are thoughtfully engaging with this new technology to facilitate education and engagement

words by **Max Hollein**

© The Metropolitan Museum of Art
The author was a guest speaker at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2025

ART EDITION



Since its founding over 150 years ago, The Met has been a place to witness the best of humanity's ingenuity and expression.

Our mission compels us to connect all people to creativity, knowledge, ideas, and one another through our unparalleled collection of art. And through that work, we both reflect and harness the inventiveness of our own time. Technology has always been a vital component of art making, and in how we care for and present art, and how we engage with people from all over the world. Each advancement brings opportunities, including today's rapid rise of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in all aspects of our lives. At The Met, we are thoughtfully engaging with this new technology to offer expanded opportunities for education, engagement, scholarship, and access to the art in our care.

Introducing AI throughout our galleries and exhibitions has presented new and exciting ways for visitors to engage with the collection. For the Costume Institute's 2024 exhibition, *Sleeping Beauties: Reawakening Fashion*, we collaborated with OpenAI to create an AI persona for a historical figure in the exhibition. This voice came to life as visitors asked questions—from details about their life to the specifics of the garments. This unique interactive experience animated The Met's research and archives, bringing visitors closer to art and history than ever before.

The Met is also expanding its Open Access programme, which, since 2017, has made over half a million images of public-domain artworks freely available online. By contributing data to open-source platforms, the Museum is enabling AI-powered tools to search and explore our art in entirely new ways. Whether a user is looking for depictions of dogs in European paintings or investigating ancient sculptural traditions, AI is making it easier to

access our collection and perform high-quality research across cultures and eras. Through the digitisation of our collections and efforts to refine how data is structured, The Met is helping shape how culture is represented and experienced in the digital age.

We are also thinking about how AI can support research, such as using machine learning to analyse fragile ancient texts or uncover hidden patterns in historical data. We have been inspired by projects like the Vesuvius Challenge, which helped unwrap and translate charred ancient scrolls from Pompeii. The Met's collection includes artefacts like fragments of pottery and sculpture from antiquity, so we are actively watching this space.

Harnessing technology helps us further ensure accessibility to our collections and programmes. Right now, we are using AI to generate visual descriptions and alt-text for artworks, making online collections more inclusive for visitors with vision impairments. This not only enhances access for those

who need it but also improves how all users search and interact with the collections, significantly broadening access to art and The Met's scholarship for a global audience.

Museums are among the most trusted institutions in the world, and The Met has the powerful responsibility of upholding our standards and acting with integrity. We have already developed guidelines for the use of AI in our work to ensure that it supports and does not undermine our mission of connecting people to knowledge, ideas, and each other. We are partnering with peer institutions to develop shared best practices to ensure trust in our institutions remains high, even as technology continuously evolves. Rather than replacing the human experience, AI can enrich it by providing new ways to explore, learn, and connect—if we use it wisely.

We believe that nothing can ever replace the power of experiencing art in person. In a world that is increasingly fast-paced and digital, museums offer something rare: a chance to slow down and reflect. As The Met embraces new technologies, we also preserve and protect moments of wonder and fascination in our galleries.

Nevertheless, art and technology have always gone hand in hand. As artists embraced the emerging technologies of their own times, new mediums like photography were once questioned as legitimate art forms. Today's artists are already experimenting with AI, and it will certainly play a key role in future masterpieces. We see this as an opportunity, rather than a threat, for expanding our understanding of art, humanity, and one another.

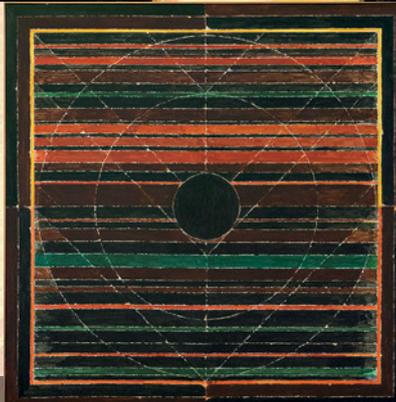
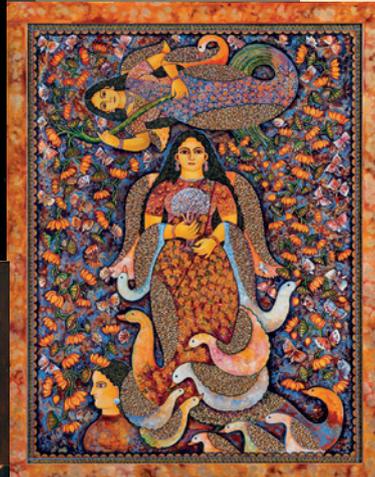
As AI reshapes the world, The Met is committed to careful stewardship and continued innovation that will ensure that creativity, knowledge, and human connection remain at the centre of the conversation.

As The Met embraces new technologies, we also preserve and protect moments of wonder and fascination in our galleries.

MAX HOLLEIN
DIRECTOR AND CEO OF
THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
One of a Kind by Paresh Maity (oil and acrylic on canvas); Prakriti by Jayasri Burman (pen and ink, watercolour on paper); Untitled by Thota Vaikuntam (acrylic on canvas); Nathdwada Rajasthan by Shibu Natesan (watercolour on paper); Bindu by SH Raza (acrylic on canvas).



ART EDITION

FROM INDIA *To the world*

Our artists serve as cultural ambassadors, spreading and celebrating the spirit of the country through their art

words by **Sunaina Anand**



Art serves as a true reflection of society, capturing its values, culture, and transformations across time. The essence of India is rooted in its diversity, which is characterised by its rich heritage, comprising colours, festivals, traditions, and philosophies. Modern and contemporary Indian art has served as a vital thread in the nation's cultural tapestry, expressing its evolving identity.

Historically, Indian art spans thousands of years, from intricate cave paintings and miniatures to tribal folk art traditions. The nationalist art movement in the early 20th century, as a response to Western academic art, was led by artists like Abanindranath Tagore. Later, Jamini Roy revolutionised modern Indian art by incorporating bold lines and folk motifs, drawing heavily from Kalighat paintings.

From colonisation to post Independence, many artists have narrated the tales of India's changing socio-economic landscape in their works. In the contemporary realm, through their art, artists emerge as true ambassadors of culture, translating the collective experiences, traditions, and emotions of their heritage into visual forms. Their creations act as cultural records, bridging generations and geographies, being a true mirror of society over the ages.

Post independence, Indian artists began to experiment more freely. Modernist SH Raza transformed abstract art to a meditative journey into Indian philosophy in his practice, while Sakti Burman fused Indian and European cultural ethos, capturing

the mystical essence of Indian culture. Others, including Anjolie Ela Menon, Manu Parekh, and Arpana Caur, added spiritual and symbolic depth to contemporary Indian aesthetics.

The country's aesthetics is also deeply intertwined with mythology, which has inspired artists. Master artist MF Husain explored themes of mythology in his art, particularly from the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*. Jayasri Burman's symbolic and richly-detailed works celebrate cultural and mythological narratives. Bharti Kher and Madhvi Parekh, among others, continue to explore folk tales and fables through innovative forms.

The vast geographical and cultural landscape of India has also been captured vividly by artists like Paresh Maity and Shibu Natesan, whose renditions of the Indian landscapes and portraits explore the mood and colour of Indian life, rendered with a contemporary sensibility. Focusing on the rural and urban experiences of India, such artists as Thota Vaikuntam and K Laxma Goud celebrate the vibrant local cultures of South India, while urban landscapes have been explored by the likes of Sudhir Patwardhan, capturing the working-class experience with raw emotional depth.

India is a land of wonder, a land of significant historical and cultural heritage. Through intricacies of their nuanced visual language and conceptual underpinnings, Indian artists have always attempted to capture the essence of India's beauty and diversity, becoming true cultural ambassadors. Through their art, they affirm that India is a source of inspiration and identity.

*India is a land of wonder,
a land of significant historical
and cultural heritage.
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Indian artists have always
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and diversity, becoming true
cultural ambassadors.*

•
SUNAINA ANAND
ART ALIVE GALLERY, DELHI

STAYING AHEAD OF *The curve*

Estate sales, solo exhibits, and showing works with a clear title help a new gallery to establish itself and stand out

words by **Puneet Shah**

My first encounter with art was as a collector during the contemporary boom of 2005–2007, when I was working with JP Morgan. I found myself increasingly drawn to the art world and soon realised that I wanted to be more deeply involved. This led me to join Bodhi Art Gallery in Mumbai in 2008. In the aftermath of the Lehman Brothers crash, the gallery shut down, prompting me to establish my own art consultancy and dealership, Akara Art in 2009. I went on to open my first gallery space in 2015, now known as Akara Modern, followed by Akara Contemporary in 2023.

The decision to initially start the gallery felt organic and progressive, coming after six years of consulting. Akara Art opened at a time when the contemporary market was at a low, but the motivation was always clear: to exhibit the work of artists I truly believed in. This conviction is also why we chose to show both modern and contemporary art under one roof. Post Covid, as we recognised how well informed and exposed the Indian market had become, the idea of opening a second, dedicated contemporary space took shape.

When Akara was founded, most galleries focused either on modern or contemporary art, rarely both. This gave us greater flexibility, including the ability to present estate sales—works acquired from artists' heirs. We were the first gallery to present a solo

exhibition of Amrita Sher-Gil outside a museum context, working closely with her nephew. We also exhibited Piraji Sagara, KG Subramanyan's toys, and a focused presentation of works by Jehangir Sabavala, all of which were well received. These exhibitions helped us gain visibility and increase our standing with collectors and buyers.

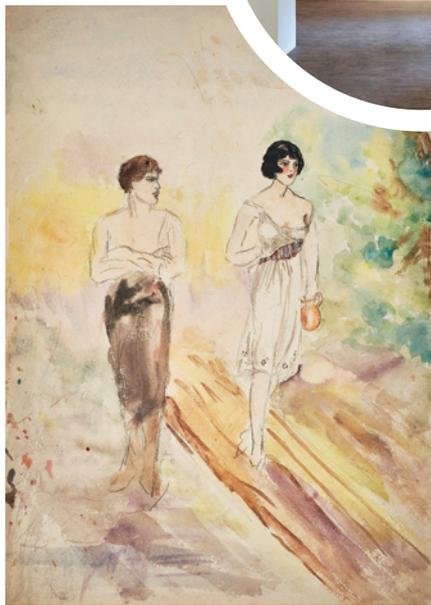
Both galleries are passion projects for me and reflect my personality. The artists we show are those I genuinely believe in and who represent the values I want to stand for. Our focus has always been on quality rather than succumbing to market pressures.

A key aspect that distinguishes us in the modern space is our insistence on clear and impeccable provenance. Even the slightest doubt is enough for us to step away from a work. This has earned us significant goodwill. Having spent many years in the industry, I have built a strong network and developed the instinct to verify works thoroughly, an element that has been crucial to the growth of both galleries.

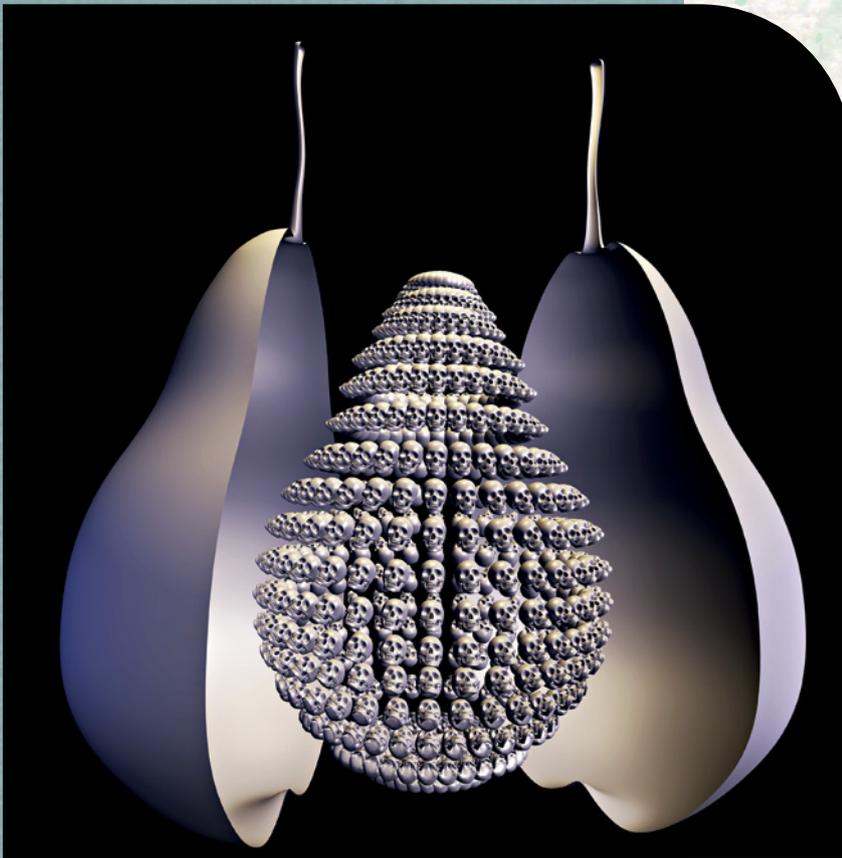
In the early years, I consciously avoided acquiring or selling very expensive works, knowing that buyers might hesitate to purchase them from a younger gallery. Today, as Akara has established its place in the art world, much of my work is done through word of mouth and positive feedback. When collectors receive affirmation about a painting they have bought, they experience the validation they seek, and our reputation grows further. One really can't ask for more than that.

Both galleries are passion projects for me and reflect my personality. The artists we show are those I genuinely believe in and who represent the values I want to stand for. Our focus has always been on quality rather than succumbing to market pressures.

PUNEET SHAH
AKARA MODERN AND AKARA
CONTEMPORARY, MUMBAI



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Puneet Shah started Akara Contemporary in 2023; Akara has hosted many estate sales; The Amrita Sher-Gil show was titled Perhaps It Will Fly Away If I Get Up; Another work by Sher-Gil; Jehangir Sabavala's first posthumous show titled Pilgrim Souls, Soaring Skies, Crystalline Seas.



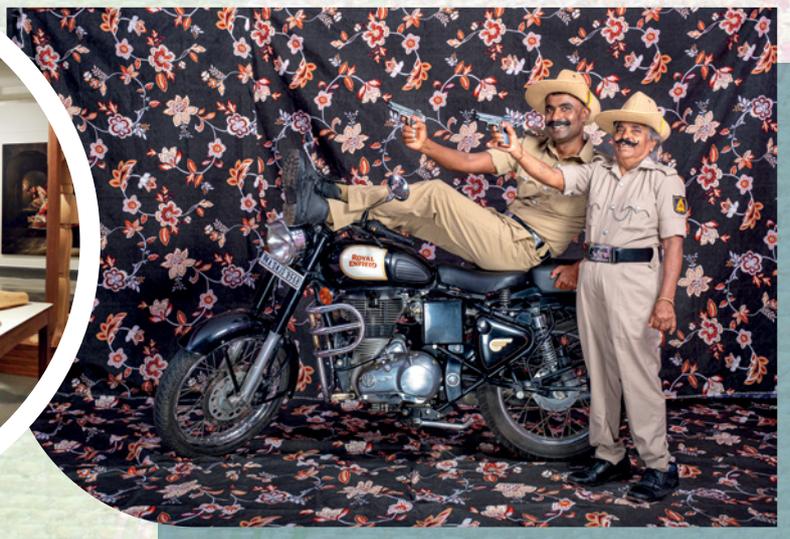
CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
 Engineered Fruit by Baiju Parthan; Untitled by Devu Nenmara; A frame from the photo-performance series titled No Longer A Memory by Cop Shiva; Exhibits of a group show called Memory, Roots & Desires at Gallery Sumukha, Bengaluru.



PUSHING *The envelope*

New Media art allows artists to conceptualise and execute their work beyond traditional boundaries

words by **Premilla Baid**



All images courtesy Gallery Sumukha and respective artists



With the turn of the millennium, high-end digital cameras, digital image editing software like Photoshop, and the possibilities of coding images entered the Indian art scene. This, coupled with advanced printing technologies, various archival papers for printing, and innovative printing methods like lenticular printing, fostered a new image-making process and generated hitherto unseen imagery. The internet and the ability to source and access images, globally, transformed how artists visualised, created, exhibited, and circulated their work. The opening up of the Indian economy and globalisation further invigorated this evolution. Gradually, the contours of New Media art took shape.

Previously, simple works like physically creating collages with cut images could now be executed more effectively using image-editing software. For an entire decade, artists quoted, altered, and morphed media images to generate artworks. Collage became a defining language for a generation of artists, and the use of ready-made images became commonplace. Some artists would digitally prepare these images and then paint them on canvas, while others directly printed onto canvases or other supports. Simultaneously, many artists began using video cameras, incorporating video art into their creative practice.

Though numerous artists explored this direction, Baiju Parthan stands out. He employed image-making software to generate images and printed them using lenticular techniques. The resulting artworks were astonishing,

producing an illusion of movement and dynamism when viewed from different angles. These pieces not only captivated viewers but also established a visual language where multiple viewpoints could be combined within a single work, adding layers of content. His work often alludes to mythical creation tales and delves into realms of coded, simultaneously-existing multiple realities.

Vivek Vilasini created monumental images that were collages of hundreds of smaller images, forming a singular visual. The micro-images composing the macro-images and their inter-relationships shifted the work's meaning. In one such piece, he depicted a massive *gopuram* where ordinary people replaced the traditional idols of gods, goddesses, and other mythological figures.

In the analogue era of photography, it was once considered the ultimate proof of truth. However, digital photo editing software challenged this notion. The new tools allowed for image manipulation, enabling the addition or removal of figures, and other alterations. Pushpamala N views all images as constructs shaped by various forces. She deconstructs them, making viewers aware of the politics inherent in image-making. The images she has deconstructed range from famous works by Raja Ravi Varma and depictions of Bharat Mata to photographs of Vasco da Gama's arrival. Her display of paraphernalia used in the creation of photographs further emphasises her intent.

In recent years, the combination of digital and AI tools has further propelled the boundaries of New Media art.

The internet and the ability to source and access images, globally, transformed how artists visualised, created, exhibited, and circulated their work. The opening up of the Indian economy and globalisation further invigorated this evolution.

PREMILLA BAID
GALLERY SUMUKHA, BENGALURU



A CATALYST *for change*

Art can step out of museums and into people's lives—enriching them, employing them, inspiring them

words by **Ambica Beri**

Our vision was to build a space where creativity could flow freely, where artists and communities could coexist. Our commitment to nurturing creativity goes hand in hand with our respect for tradition. At Art Ichol, we do not view art in isolation—it is intrinsically tied to history, environment, and identity. That is why we actively preserve indigenous techniques, materials, and motifs, collaborate with master artisans, and encourage intergenerational knowledge-sharing. When local craftsmanship meets contemporary artistic vision, something truly magical happens. The centre becomes not just a place of learning, but one of dialogue—between past and present, local and global, individual and collective.

From the very beginning, we wanted Art Ichol to be inclusive. It was important to us that the centre not only celebrated artistic excellence but also became a catalyst for change within the local community. We have been incredibly fortunate to witness how local talent—some of whom had never held a chisel or worked with stone or wood—have grown into accomplished sculptors, carpenters, and metalworkers. This kind of transformation goes beyond just skill-building; it is about self-worth, confidence, and economic empowerment.

We have been incredibly fortunate to witness how local talent—some of whom had never held a chisel or worked with stone or wood—have grown into accomplished sculptors, carpenters, and metalworkers. This kind of transformation goes beyond just skill-building; it is about self-worth, confidence, and economic empowerment.

•
AMBICA BERI
ART ICHOL, MAIHAR

GETTING THERE

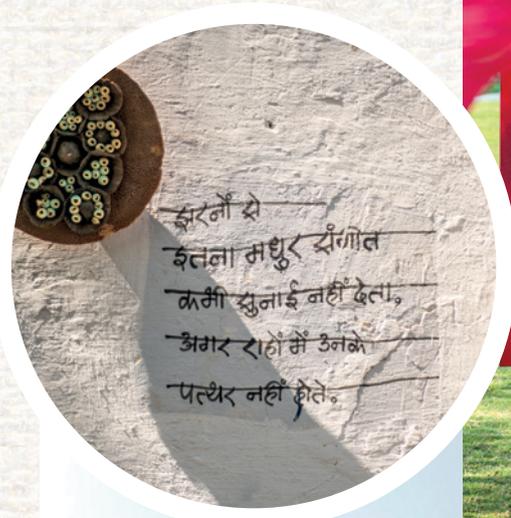
Air India flies non-stop to Bhopal from Delhi and Mumbai.

And it does not stop there. The ripple effect has touched every corner of the community. People who were once hesitant to step into an art space are now integral to the ecosystem—whether it is as housekeeping staff, gardeners or logistics managers. They take pride in the work they do because they see themselves as part of something meaningful and creative.

The impact on women and children has been particularly moving. It is the first time many of these kids have been encouraged to imagine, express, and create. Residencies and workshops have brought in artists from all over, leading to friendships, collaborations, and a cross-pollination of ideas. These interactions sow seeds—not just of art, but of curiosity, self-expression, and possibility. Especially for young girls, who may not always have access to such spaces. For our local community, this fosters a sense of pride, seeing their region on the global map.

Art Ichol is a living, breathing example of how art can step out of museums and into people's lives—enriching, employing, and inspiring them. For young minds, this exposure can shape not just careers but character. It teaches empathy, patience, beauty, and the importance of preserving our cultural legacy.

In the end, art is not just about aesthetics. It is about transformation—and we are honoured to be a part of that wonderful journey.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
A compilation of poetry written on the walls by artist S Rao; Paresh Maity painting a series on Maihar at Art Ichol's Sculpture Garden; A workshop by Odissi dancer Shashwati Garai Ghosh for local schoolchildren; In the front is a sculpture by Arunkumar HG, while a 35ft-high iron sculpture by Vanita Gupta stands at the back.

Art Ichol

GOING BEYOND *just visual art*

Holding a performance along with opening an exhibition allows people to approach the gallery without a sense of intimidation

words by **Purva Damani**

Earlier, art was promoted as a very intellectual and expensive endeavour. But now, we are seeking to break through that barrier and do this in different ways. We find that the outlook is changing—we want people to feel that they can collect art at every level.

PURVA DAMANI
079 I STORIES, AHMEDABAD

GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Ahmedabad from Delhi, Mumbai, and London Gatwick.

Even though we live in a digital age, an art gallery still has a pivotal role to play. For a person to see and respond to art, establishing a connection with it in a physical space is important. However, I will acknowledge that it is challenging to get people to come to galleries on an ongoing basis. With everyone keeping such busy schedules, it is not always easy to plan a visit to an art space, which is why we need to go the extra mile to enable such experiences.

The way that the team and I at 079 I Stories go about it, is that once we have identified the theme for a show (provided it is not a solo show), we look at our roster of artists and those represented by other galleries, go on studio visits over a couple of weeks, and figure out the best fit. Once the exact number of artists are fixed, we produce a digital catalogue that is sent to our database (which numbers around 5,000); then we start to promote the show on social media.

We sometimes have a special preview for invitees a day before the show officially opens to the public. The ideal length of a show is two to four weeks, though we do put on smaller ones sometimes. The idea is to ensure a continuous footfall of guests.

One unique way that we strive to make our shows memorable and worth attending actually arose from the planning we did when we set up the gallery. At that time, we decided not to limit it to only visual arts, and

planned a small amphitheatre so that we could hold performance art displays and workshops. This allows us to promote art on different levels. For example, when we curated a show called *Travelling Narratives*—a two-artist show displaying the works of Alexander Gorlizki and Santana Gohain in 2021—we held a dance performance to celebrate the event.

Holding a performance along with opening an exhibition and using the space for other events allows people to approach the gallery without a sense of intimidation. Earlier, art was promoted as a very intellectual and expensive endeavour. But now, we are seeking to break through that barrier and do this in different ways.

We find that the outlook is changing—we want people to feel that they can collect art at every level. Of course, serious collectors work from the perspective of both a love of art and that it is ultimately an investment. Though the works of younger artists do have the potential to someday become valuable, people can just acquire pieces that speak to them on an emotional level.

Finally, the role of a gallery owner is not just limited to the buyer; there is a lot that we do for the artists. There are occasions where we encourage them to go on art residencies, support them over their career, and make the larger public aware of their talent. Ultimately, we are the bridge between collectors, students and artists—and that is a relationship that can only grow.



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
A glimpse of the exhibition titled A Symphony of Quiet Chaos; A peek into the gallery; A performance at the opening of a two-artist show; The gallery also uses its space for talks and workshops.

ENCOUNTERS WITH MF Husain

All my interactions with the legendary artist form some of my most cherished memories

words by **Rakhi Sarkar**

CIMA's relationship—and mine, personally—with Husain saab was one of deep affection, mutual admiration, and trust. To borrow the words of the famous artist Ganesh Pyne, "Husain truly bore the burden of the entire Indian art world."

•
RAKHI SARKAR
CENTRE OF INTERNATIONAL
MODERN ART, KOLKATA

GETTING THERE

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

I first met Maqbool Fida Husain in the late 1970s. Kolkata was always his favourite city. He had innumerable friends here and found plenty of resources, inspirations, and supporters—from Mother Teresa, Russi Mody (former Chairman and Managing Director of Tata Steel) and tennis player Naresh Kumar to the Victoria Memorial and *Pather Panchali*—culminating in the Goddess Durga and the Bengali script. He was always at home in our city.

My close relationship with Husain saab started from the time I had already embarked on the planning for the Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA) in the late 1980s. In those days, I was more inclined towards setting up a non-profit centre to help young artists. Husain, who was normally a soft-spoken person, got excited for a change. "Okay, so how do you want to help young artists?" he asked, and continued, "Provide them with grants? How much do you want to give each artist? Perhaps ₹5 lakh? Do one thing, Rakhi. Call them over, give them the money, and ask them to disappear and live happily ever after."

I was slightly taken aback. "Don't you like my idea?" I asked sheepishly.

"Absolutely not!" came the emphatic reply. Having stretched out his palms, he said, "Look at these hands and fingers. These are what make an artist. I stood for days together on the pavements of Bombay under the burning sun to draw and paint hundreds of posters and hoardings for the Bombay film industry. These hands and tenacious, hard work alone can shape an artist, not money. Don't spoil the artists. If you want to help them in your art centre, try to feature, promote, and sell their works. Merely giving them money will ruin them. Don't kill their struggle. Art cannot happen without creative struggle."

But my most memorable interaction with Husain saab happened in 1998. He came to Kolkata, visibly affronted by an incident of vandalism at his studio in Ahmedabad. He suggested that my husband, who is a journalist, write about it. I explained that my husband would, of course, do his job, but Husain the artist should also do something. Maybe protest with his most potent instrument—his art. "Okay, Rakhi," he said, "tell me honestly, which gallery will allow me to express what I am really feeling right now?" "CIMA will, Husain saab," I promised. "And the gallery will be completely

MF Husain strongly felt that hard work alone can shape an artist, not money





yours for a month.” The very next day, I found a vacancy in our calendar and allotted the month to him. *Husain Now*, an exhibition showcasing one of his most powerful and breathtaking collections of black-and-white semi-abstract paintings and installations, was live at CIMA from 30th January to 15th February 1998.

Husain completed the entire series in two weeks, working day and night with minimal rest. He ate very little—fruits, dried nuts, the occasional biryani (his favourite), *raita*, salads, and plenty of water. The resulting series, *Dabs and Wounds*, can safely be termed as one of his most poignant and powerful expressions of existential dissatisfaction. He painted in a frenzy, with wide brush strokes, across CIMA’s walls, ceiling, and floors. Doordarshan recorded the entirety of his actions on camera while CIMA preserves a few of those walls to this day.

Husain decided to price a series of black-and-white works on paper at giveaway prices—far below the usual market value of his art—for the benefit of Kolkata’s aspiring collectors. The entire show was a sell-out. I distinctly remember a young air hostess dipping into her hard-earned savings to buy one of his works. That was so satisfying.

In another exhibition, titled *The Knight Watch*, he covered the floor with crushed newspapers and seated

a policeman with a firearm in front of his famous black-and-white work titled *Knight Watch - 11* (2002). This exhibition also followed major political strife. Before long, the Bengali audience started complaining, as they hated the idea of walking on newspapers, which they worshipped as a symbol of Goddess Saraswati. “Well, we have succeeded, Rakhil!” the artist said. “I am most excited. Viewers have finally reckoned how it feels when precious ideals and values are trampled upon.”

There was a third interaction with Husain *saab* that was hilarious. Belonging to a publishing family, I was used to going through eight or nine newspapers in the morning. One day, I suddenly spotted an article and photograph of Husain meeting the then Chief Minister of West Bengal, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. The article highlighted Husain’s invitation to Bhattacharjee to inaugurate his exhibition at CIMA.

I immediately called Pratiti Basu Sarkar, Chief Administrator of CIMA, to ask whether an exhibition with Husain was indeed scheduled. “Not that I know of,” she replied in utter surprise. I was a trifle confused and decided to clarify the matter. I was at my office, focusing on the files on my desk when I sensed a shadow entering my room. As I looked up, there he was—in his immaculate white kurta and churidar, his signature

long brush in hand, smiling at me. “Please sit down,” I stammered, “Did I read correctly in the papers today, Husain *saab*? Are we really having your show here?” “Of course,” he said.

“But when and on what? Do we have a date?” “You give me the date, and I provide the art. It is as simple as that,” he suggested. We both burst out laughing and a date was soon finalised for a show of Husain’s graphics.

CIMA’s relationship—and mine, personally—with Husain *saab* was one of deep affection, mutual admiration, and trust. To borrow the words of the famous artist Ganesh Pyne, “Husain truly bore the burden of the entire Indian art world.”

LEFT AND RIGHT
The Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), in Kolkata, retains some of MF Husain’s art on its walls to this day; A work from the *Husain Now* show that was hosted at CIMA.



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THE ART OF *acquiring*

To begin your own collection, a sound knowledge of art history is imperative, among other requisites. Here's a guide

words by **Dr Alka Pande**

ART EDITION

The Hayward Gallery in London is one of the few renowned art spaces that showcases works of contemporary artists in solo, making it a great place to learn about promising artists



Left and right: Getty Images; Chemoild Prescottt Road



Always buy from a reputed gallery with a lineage like Chemould Prescott Road. Featured here are the works of Shakuntala Kulkarni (titled *Of Bodies, Armour and Cages*) that was a part of the Dior Autumn/Winter 2024-2025 runway. This later became the subject of a solo exhibition at the gallery



“Collecting art is like a drug. It is both intensely pleasurable and highly addictive.” —Sir Norman Rosenthal, curator and art historian.

With MF Husain’s 1954 *Untitled (Gram Yatra)*, a 13-panel painting selling for a record-breaking price of US\$13.8mn at the New York Christie’s Art Auction, new records for Indian art have been set. Right now, Indian art is having a major ‘moment’. When the market starts booming, the art market starts booming, too; artists, curators, gallerists, auction houses, art fairs—all play a big role in this ecosystem.

With the growth of wealth in India, a growing number of art galleries, patrons, and collectors—both in India and the diaspora—are increasingly getting richer. Art is being looked upon as an investment. It is no longer a

part of interior décor but is inching its way into becoming bankable, i.e. the Impressionists of Europe.

To start, when you are looking at the creative process, you have to see the seriousness of the artist. What is his/her educational background? What has been their journey? Their visual language, the materiality, and their education—all these aspects play an important role. Of course, there are a lot of self-taught artists as well, but an education in art from an innovative school, where they teach you to think differently and experiment boldly with ideas instead of copying the masters, is generally accepted.

The movement of Indian art practice today is rhizomatic; it has moved from the decorative to a more critical arena, and even though Indian art comprises about one per cent of the global market, it shows tremendous potential.

In art, it is all about personal relationships; a piece of art is like a piece of jewellery. It is about having faith in either your own trained eye or the advice of your art consultant the same way you have faith in your jeweller.

DR ALKA PANDE
NOTED ART HISTORIAN, CURATOR,
AND AUTHOR



HOW TO BUILD A COLLECTION

- **Educate yourself:** A good art history book will help clarify concepts. Try *Indian Art: A Collector's Handbook* by Dr Alka Pande and *20th Century Indian Art*, edited by Partha Mitter, Parul Dave Mukherji, and Rakhee Balaram.
- **Find a connection:** What kind of art do you like? Consider time span (how old the art and senior the artist is, and their timespan in the market) and genre (contemporary, indigenous folk, tribal, tangible and intangible, and digital art). Do not see just the value; buy what you like.
- **Think beyond the price:** This should not be your first and only criterion. Look at the average price you pay over time. Also, do not let just the price tag guide you. You can get great buys at reasonable prices at art fairs, exhibitions, and online marketplaces, including Artblr., Artsy, etc.
- **Evaluate:** Has the artist's work been bought by a museum or known collector? How has he/she been reviewed critically? See websites of auction houses and art platforms like Pundole's, Sotheby's, Christie's, and AstaGuru to assess.
- **Do your homework:** Research before buying. Stay abreast by reading up on art. *The Economic Times*, *The Wire*, *The Print*, *Open*, *India Today*, and *Mint* are good starting points.



A sculpture at the Centre Pompidou (Paris), a space dedicated to modern and contemporary art

To begin, it is advisable to buy directly from the artist's primary dealer—usually the gallerist. This is because the primary sale price is likely to be lower than the auction price. However, before buying, understand the field's fundamentals.

"Over the past couple of years, we have seen the ecosystem for the arts in India really expanding. There are lots of new participants and a new-found confidence that is driving demand," says Nishad Avari, Head of South Asian Modern and Contemporary Art, Christie's, New York.

For global artists, keep your ear to the ground—look at art magazines and newspapers, and keep a tab on

artists who are getting solo shows at important public galleries like the Barbican, the Hayward Gallery (both in the UK), and the Centre Pompidou (Paris). For upcoming artists, look at art fairs in Miami, Basel, Dubai, and recently-flourishing ones like Hong Kong and Singapore. For emerging artists, see Frieze Art Fair, Indian Art Fair, Kochi-Muziris Biennale, and Art Mumbai, along with Venice Biennale and Documenta.

Also, build a relationship with artists, galleries, and curators, because in art, it is all about personal relationships; a piece of art is like a piece of jewellery. It is about having faith in either your own trained eye or

your art consultant the same way you have faith in your jeweller.

You can also track important auction houses like Pundole's, AstaGuru, and Saffronart (India), and Christie's and Sotheby's (abroad). In galleries, Pundole Art Gallery and Chemould Prescott Road (both Mumbai), CIMA Gallery (Kolkata), and Gallery Time and Space (Bengaluru) are well reputed, with a long lineage. A number of younger galleries like the Ikon Gallery (UK), the Sundaram Tagore Gallery (USA), and Nature Morte (Delhi) are also doing important solo shows.

Eventually, to build a serious collection, consider working with an art consultant who can guide you.



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WICKED THE MUSICAL TO MAKE SPELLBINDING INDIAN DEBUT

NMACC presents the theatrical sensation in collaboration with Broadway Entertainment Group, in March



Building on the success of global favourites such as *The Sound of Music*, *MAMMA MIA!*, *West Side Story*, *Matilda the Musical*, *The Little Prince*, *Life of Pi*, *Phantom of the Opera*, and *The Nutcracker on Ice*, the Nita Mukesh Ambani Cultural Centre now presents its ninth international showcase with this iconic musical.

A true global phenomenon, the show has captivated more than 65 million people worldwide and has been staged across 130 cities in 16 countries, making it one of the most popular musicals in the world. This awe-inspiring new production brings the untold story of the witches of Oz to life like never before, featuring over 100 performers, crew, and orchestra members, across 22 spectacular performances at NMACC. Audiences will be mesmerised by breathtaking sets, more than 350 stunning



costumes, and show-stopping musical numbers including *Defying Gravity*, *Popular*, and *For Good*.

Wicked The Musical reveals the incredible journey that unfolds long before Dorothy's iconic arrival in Oz. It follows two extraordinary young women—Elphaba, brilliantly talented yet misunderstood with emerald-green skin, and Glinda, beautiful,

ambitious, and admired. What begins as an unlikely friendship soon evolves into a riveting rivalry that shapes their destinies as Glinda the Good and the Wicked Witch of the West. The production brings its own vitality and creativity while continuing to celebrate themes of friendship, love, courage, and staying true to oneself.

From *Wicked's* multi-platinum, Grammy-winning Broadway cast recording to its record-breaking film adaptation starring Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo—grossing over US\$750 million globally and reaching more than 70 million viewers—the musical's enchanting legacy continues to captivate audiences around the world. Bringing the spectacle to India for the first time offers an extraordinary opportunity for audiences to experience the magic live on stage.

The authors behind the original production are composer and lyricist

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Taupe Grey



Stephen Schwartz and book writer Winnie Holzman, based on Gregory Maguire's iconic novel. The production's creative team is led by John Stefaniuk as director. The set and costume design is by Morgan Large, video design by Aaron Rhyne, choreography by Floriano Nogueira, and lighting design by Ben Cracknell. It features sound design by Shannon Slaton, wig design by Feliciano San Roman, makeup design by Malwina Suwinska, musical supervision by Richard Morris, and musical direction by Chris Ma, with Sophia McAvoy serving as resident director and choreographer.

The showcase is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI), with all authorised performance materials supplied by MTI. This production was originally presented in São Paulo, Brazil, in 2023, by Instituto Artium de Cultura and original producers Carlos A Cavalcanti and Cleto Baccic.

Audiences are invited to witness the spectacle, emotion, and unforgettable magic of *Wicked the Musical* live on stage, in a theatrical experience that promises to linger in the memory long after the curtain falls.

From 12th-29th March, at The Grand Theatre, NMACC, Mumbai. Tickets start from INR 2,000 and are on sale at nmacc.com and bookmyshow.

CHECKLIST

Everything worth checking out

- 68 → IN FOCUS
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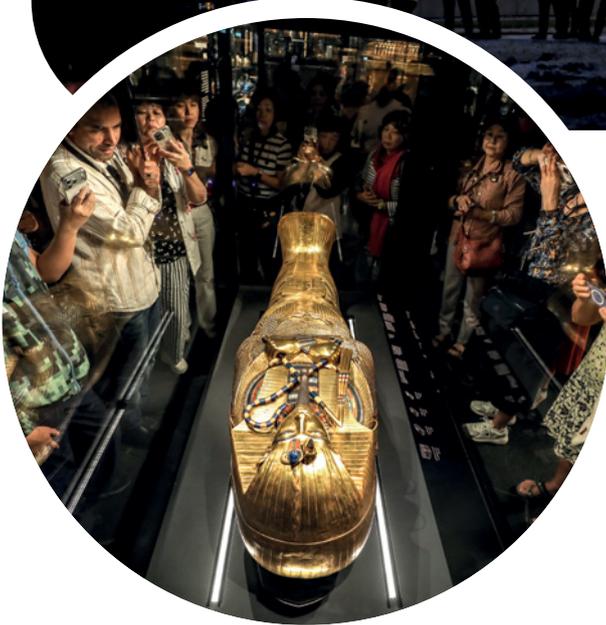
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GEM OF ANTIQUITY

Explore the world of the Pharaohs at Cairo's new Grand Egyptian Museum

words by
Mignonne Dsouza

Aptly nicknamed GEM, the Museum is a magnificent treasure trove of ancient wonders. While statues of Egyptian kings feature on the Grand Stairs, the Museum also boasts a staggeringly majestic Grand Hall, and 12 exhibition halls in the Main Galleries with objects and artefacts dating from 3100 BCE to 400 CE, spanning Egypt's history from prehistoric times to the Roman era.

The star attraction is the Tutankhamun Galleries, featuring the famous burial mask, golden throne, and royal diadem—all found in the tomb discovered in 1922 by archaeologist Howard Carter. Over 5,000 artefacts from the tomb are displayed together for the first time. Also see Khufu's Boats Museum, that displays five boat pits found at the funerary complex of the Great Pyramid of King Khufu at Giza. The site also has a Children's Museum along with restaurants and shops, all set within gardens.

gem.eg

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
This Museum is said to be the largest archaeological museum in the world; King Tutankhamun's burial mask; His (King Tut's) golden coffin.



GETTING THERE

Fly to Cairo with Air India's Codeshare Partner, Egyptair.

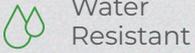


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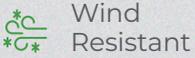
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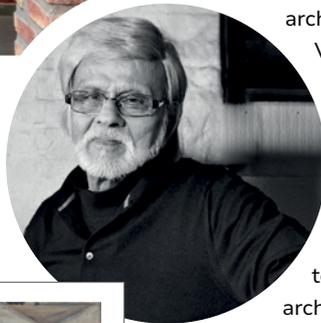
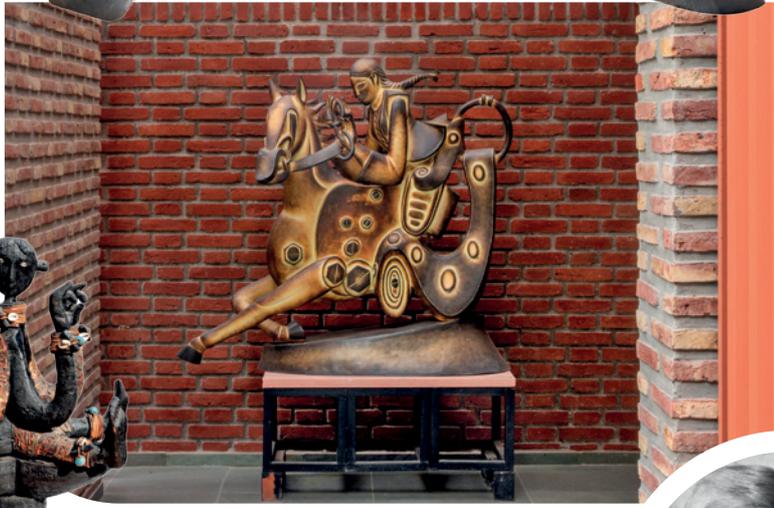
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ODE TO AN ARTIST

A year-long, pan-India celebration charts the artistic and architectural legacy of Satish Gujral, one of India's most versatile modernists



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP Satish Gujral worked with diverse media, including metal; Works of the artist are showcased at Gujral House; Satish Gujral; A self portrait; A burnt wood sculpture by the artist.

This month, the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in New Delhi will open one of the most significant retrospectives of the decade: *Satish Gujral: A Century in Form, Fire, and Vision*. Organised by the Gujral Foundation in collaboration with NGMA and the Ministry of Culture, the exhibition marks 100 years of the artist who helped shape the contours of modern Indian art and architecture.

Curated by Kishore Singh, the showcase traces Gujral's remarkable seven-decade practice—a life lived across mediums, disciplines, and geographies. Painter, sculptor, muralist, architect, thinker, and Padma Vibhushan recipient, he built an oeuvre that was as expansive as it was intimate.

The centenary year unfolds as a constellation of exhibitions and programmes that map Gujral's evolution from muralist to modernist, and from artist to architect. NGMA Delhi opens the year with the flagship retrospective, followed by an architectural exhibition at the Gujral House.

Through 2026, the celebrations continue across the country: a book launch at the Jaipur Literature Festival, a dedicated installation at the India Art Fair, architecture and design showcases at CEPT Ahmedabad, retrospectives at NGMA Bengaluru, and an exhibition at the National Museum, Chandigarh.

Taken together, these presentations form a panoramic tribute to an artist whose legacy refuses to be contained. Gujral's art was born of fire; his architecture, of imagination; his vision, of a century that he helped define.

9th January to 31st March (NGMA, New Delhi); 15th January to 31st March (The Gujral House, New Delhi)



BESPOKE PENTHOUSE AND LOW RISE ABODES

AT SECTOR - 107 NOIDA



Representational Image

 **7669995449**

Disclaimer: Ace is the Development Manager responsible for overseeing the planning, coordination, and execution of the Project.

8 dishes TO TRY IN LUCKNOW

Chef Ranveer Brar takes us on a culinary journey to celebrate his home city being named as a UNESCO Creative City of Gastronomy in 2025



➔ BAND GOSHT

This is one of the best mutton recipes that you will try in Lucknow, the original *dum ka gosht*. In this recipe, the trick is that you put everything in at one go and cook it on a very slow flame. You do not stir the pot or do anything. You just basically close the lid and what you get is the finished dish. As they say, the best cooks are the ones who do not have to look. So, this is the ultimate test of a chef. Some eat it with *roomali roti* and some with *kulcha*—but not with overly rich breads. And for me, the best place is a small hotel called Alamgir, where it was earlier served in *kulhars* (clay cups).

Where to try it: Alamgir Hotel, Old Nazirabad Road, Aminabad

➔ KALI GAJAR KA HALWA AND NIMISH

For people in Lucknow, winter does not start until they have eaten these desserts. *Kali gajar* (black carrot) is in season for just a month and a half, and the halwa made from it is sweeter, more caramelised, and richer than the regular *gajar ka halwa*. Another dessert, which can be had right after the halwa, is *nimish* (*makhn malai*), similar to Benaras' *malaiyo* or Delhi's *daulat ki chaat*. A unique, traditional, winter treat, it is made from milk foam and is light and airy, melting in the mouth.

Where to try it: Street food vendors in the Gol Darwaza Chowk





Actual View

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➔ **CHICKEN MASALA**

Like a *dum ka murgh*, this preparation is slow cooked for a really long time, in a rich onion and cashew paste. The best way to savour it is with *roomali roti*. You get a really good chicken masala at Saraca Lucknow and, of course, Dastarkhwan.

Where to try it: Dastarkhwan. While it has many branches across Lucknow, I suggest the original one opposite the UP Press Club

➔ **BASKET CHAAT**

This is already pretty famous, but the chaat culture of Lucknow and the whole vegetarian culture of the city needs to be spoken about. See, chaat originated in the ghats of Benaras and spread from there. It first reached Lucknow, then Delhi. So, you will notice that as you travel from Delhi towards Benaras, chaat changes and inches closest to the original in terms of textures and body-balancing masalas, which are added not just as mere spices but because they are good for the gut.

Where to try it: Capoor Hotel, Hazratganj



➔ **PASANDA**

When we talk about Lucknawi kebabs, it is the *galawati* (or *galouti*) kebabs that have become famous. But we should not stereotype a few cities with a few dishes. And that is why I always insist that people try *pasanda* in Lucknow, especially lamb. Scallops of meat are beaten, marinated, and cooked on skewers over coals. Curd and ginger-garlic are added for tenderising, and then the aromatic masalas take over. It gets its smoky flavour from the way it is cooked, with more surface area of the meat exposed to the fire. It is very difficult to get it right. If you over marinate, it drips off. If you under marinate, the meat becomes too chewy. Mubeen's gets it just right. Chicken (pictured here); lamb on order.

Where to try it: Mubeen's, 334/37, Akbari Gate, Chowk



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➔ **MUTTON YAKHNI PULAO**

There is always a debate between Lucknow and Hyderabad, as to whose biryani is better. The *yakhni* style that

Lucknow does is more of a pulao and not too spicy. There is no *kachha gosht* in this. The mutton is cooked in a *yakhni* which is then strained. So, you don't get whole spices or strong masalas; instead, all the essence is extracted into the *yakhni*, and the rice is then cooked in this. It is eventually layered with the lamb. For me, Idrees stands out. If you don't go on time, the food runs out.

Where to try it: Idrees Biryani, Jauhari Mohalla, Raja Bazar



➔ **MALAI PAAN GILLAURI**

Also called *paan ki gillauri* or *malai gillauri*, this Lucknawi speciality has everything similar to a paan (*mishri*, *mawa*, desiccated coconut). However, unlike the regular paan, it is wrapped in a layer of *malai* instead of a betel leaf. Paper-thin sheets of *malai* are laid out, cut, and wrapped, with the filling inside, resulting in a sweet, unique dessert.

Where to try it: Ram Asrey, Hazratganj

GALAWATI (GALOUTI) KEBAB

It is hard to leave out the most famous kebab from Lucknow. Made from mutton keema, it is marinated overnight, and the speciality of this preparation is that it literally melts in your mouth. I would recommend going to the original Tunday Kababi outlet at Chowk, established in 1905. You can also try Sakhawat's, near Oudh Gymkhana Club, Kaiser Bagh.



➔ **LAMB NAHARI**

The beauty of this dish is that it is not super spicy, so you can have a larger helping. The unique element in it, which you will only find in Lucknow, is the *teera*—a flavoured, spicy ghee—that is added on top. Akin to a stew, this is a popular breakfast dish. It needs extremely slow cooking so, it is usually simmered overnight and served with *kulcha* (not the stuffed Amritsari one) cooked on the *tandoor*.

Where to try it: Raheem's Kulcha Nahari, Shahganj, Akbari Gate

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NOT JUST A KEEPSAKE

Shopping responsibly is one of the ways to support local communities while exploring myriad cultures and acquiring lasting memories

words by **Simran Kaur**



TOP AND BOTTOM
When on holiday, look for homemade jams and honey made by local cooperatives; The Mor Milagai chilli is a great edible souvenir to bring back from Kerala.



Vacations make up some of the best moments of our life. And very often, the souvenir or trinket we bring home serves to remind us of those happy times. But rather than just picking up mass-produced goods, thoughtfully chosen gifts or items bought for personal consumption can make a difference, in more ways than one.

I traversed this path on a getaway to Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. Near Nainital, I found a roadside stall where women were selling flavoured salts called 'Pahadi Noon'. I discovered that they grind mountain herbs, garlic, and chillies into rock salt by hand, using a traditional *sil batta*. Later, on Shimla's Mall Road, I chanced upon an astonishing variety of local produce, including pickles, syrups, and juices. I

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
The markets in Chiang Mai, Thailand, offer a wide variety of local knick-knacks; The author chanced upon crochet dolls here; Kullu caps are functional as well as a good example of craft from Himachal Pradesh.



tasted the apple pickle, a unique blend of sweet and spicy, and Lingad pickle, made from a seasonal mountain fern. I also filled my bag with five different types of Kinnauri *rajma*, surprising my family with the diversity of mountain grains. These items, shared around a table back home, become a favourite conversation starter.

On a journey to Kerala, I found a region whose history is literally defined by spices. Wandering through the spice markets of Kochi, I realised regional specialities were just waiting to be discovered, like the Mor Milagai (chilli) that is usually served during a traditional *sadya* meal. Curious, I asked why it tasted faintly sour, and was told that the

chilli is first soaked in buttermilk, then sun-dried, and then fried before serving, a process that captures and preserves the flavour for year-round use.

In the cold valleys of Himachal Pradesh, community textiles warmed both my body and heart. Here, I found that the famous Kullu shawls and caps, hand woven with vibrant geometric patterns, are not just functional art. Their true value lies in knowing that each thread comes from the hands of a local weaver, allowing artisan families to flourish and keep skills alive. Another garment that defines a state is the Rajputana Poshak, with its intricate embroidery, which is found throughout Jaipur and Jodhpur. The hours of

painstaking work invested in these garments make them true heirlooms. I bought two sets, and to complement them, I bought a beautiful Bodla (a traditional *tika* or hair ornament) from the street market.

This joy of discovering unique items is not restricted to India. I found the same held true at the Sunday Walking Street Market and Saturday Night Market in Chiang Mai, Thailand. These were like a festival of local arts, from delightful cloth bookmarks and embroidered diaries to pottery and handmade bags. Places like the Free Bird Cafe CNX Donation Center and Thrift Store and the Baan Kang Wat artisan village showcased mindful commerce.

Thus, every handmade item you carry home is a small act of connection. Such commitment ensures that spending flows directly into the community. It's a simple choice that makes every souvenir feel purposeful. So, the next time you are on a trip, make it a goal to acquire the stories that are stitched, woven, and bottled by local hands.



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NEW YEAR *Cheer*

Start 2026 with a choice of literary events, music concerts, and some art appreciation



A TOAST TO GOOD TIMES **SULAFEST**

 **Nashik, Maharashtra**

31st January and 1st February

The 15th edition at Sula vineyards will feature a stellar music line-up—including Italian music producer Gaudi—expanded wine experiences, immersive tasting sessions, and curated food stalls showcasing artisanal produce and global flavours.  in.bookmyshow.com



CULTURAL MOSAIC **SYDNEY FESTIVAL**

 **Sydney, Australia**

8th–25th January

This popular arts extravaganza is spread over several locations across the city like the iconic Sydney Opera House, and includes both free and ticketed events. Visitors can experience a variety of installations, theatre, music, and dance performances.  sydneyfestival.org.au



JAIPUR LITERATURE FESTIVAL

 **Jaipur, Rajasthan**

15th–19th January

One of the biggest highlights of this year's celebration is the legendary Stephen Fry. Equally distinguished individuals who will speak at the event include Sir Tim Berners-Lee (inventor of World Wide Web), Booker Prize recipient Kiran Desai, and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Percival Everett.  jaipurliteraturefestival.org



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SAADIYAT NIGHTS-DIANA ROSS & SEAL

 **Abu Dhabi, UAE**

9th January

Get ready for an incredible night of music by two legendary artistes. From Ross' soulful numbers *Endless Love* and *Thank You* to Seal's melodious *Kiss from a Rose* and *Stand by Me*, and more—you do not want to miss this one.  saadiyatiland.ae



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BHOPAL LITERATURE & ART FESTIVAL

Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

9th-11th January

The 8th edition of the 'Knowledge Kumbh of Central India' would be held at the famous Bharat Bhavan. This year, the festival will host nearly 56 sessions with literary legends like William Dalrymple, Salvatore Babones, Ashwin Sanghi, and Piyush Mishra, among many other luminaries. Expect live performances and a three-day art camp-cum-fair too.

bhopalliteraturefestival.com



TATA MUMBAI MARATHON

Mumbai, Maharashtra
18th January

Spanning multiple categories, including Full and Half marathons and a Senior Citizens' Run, the race draws runners of all ages and capabilities, across industries. This year, actor Aamir Khan and his family will join too. tatamumbaimarathon.procam.in

FESTIVAL ROUND-UP

KERALA LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Kozhikode, Kerala
22nd-25th January

The 9th edition will host 400 speakers from 17 countries, and have dance performances. keralaliteraturefestival.com



RANN UTSAV

Rann of Kutch, Gujarat

All through January
Explore folk traditions, crafts, music, and the cuisine of the state. gujarattourism.com

UDAIPUR TALES

Udaipur, Rajasthan
9th-11th January

A one-of-a-kind international storytelling festival, this year will mark its 7th edition. udaipurtales.com

Top to bottom: Bhopal Literature & Art Festival; Getty Images; Kerala Literature Festival
All dates correct at the time of going to press



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GILDED LUXURY

Traditional culture and modern architecture coexist beautifully in Riyadh, the capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

words by Soumya Gayatri

At 99 storeys, the Kingdom Centre is an iconic landmark in the city



🕒 9:00AM
Historic beginnings

📍 National Museum of Saudi Arabia

Start your day at one of the Kingdom's most impressive cultural institutions. Check out interactive exhibits and archaeological displays that showcase the Arabian Peninsula's history, Islamic heritage, and the story of the Kingdom. Do not miss the limestone façade that is strongly reminiscent of the *wadis* of the country.

🕒 10:30AM
Heritage walk

📍 Old Riyadh

Admire the Najdi architecture featuring mud-brick walls, geometric patterns, and handcrafted wooden doors adorned with decorative motifs. Nearby, visit the Al Murabba Historical Palace, the once royal residence of King Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, the founder of Saudi Arabia.

🕒 11:30AM
Bazaar spree

📍 Souk Al Zal

Shop till you drop at Riyadh's oldest bazaar, where tradition lives in every corner. Browse stalls selling antiques, abayas, perfumes, carpets, incense burners, rare coins, and more. Do not miss the oud and *bakhoor* shops that fill the souk with heady aromas. As you walk through the lively alleys, take a moment to cool off with a glass of orange juice (a local staple).

🕒 1:00PM
Saudi feast

📍 Najd Village

Head to this restaurant, modelled after a traditional home, which offers you a taste of the rich flavours of the Najd region. Enjoy dishes like *jareesh*, *temman*, *freek*, *matazeer*, *qishd*, and *mohala*. Or try the Village Sofra, a platter that includes *sambosa*, stew, bread, *kabsa* rice, salad, dessert, and more.

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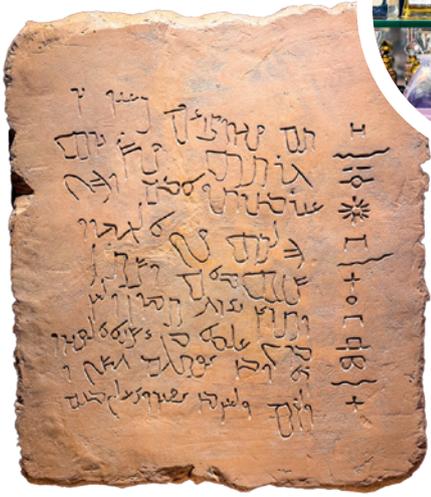
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checklist on the clock

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP
The Al Murabba Historical Palace; Fattoush salad is a local delicacy; Buy oud perfumes from Souk Al Zal; The National Museum boasts comprehensive archaeological displays.




GETTING THERE

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

STYLISH STAYS

- 1/ Four Seasons Hotel Riyadh:** Housed in the Kingdom Centre, this is where footballer Cristiano Ronaldo stayed when he first arrived in Riyadh.
- 2/ Jareed Hotel Riyadh:** Named after the palm fronds used to create roofs of local houses, this features opulently-furnished suites, complete with outdoor patios and stunning views.
- 3/ Narcissus Hotel & Spa Riyadh:** Blending fine European architecture with traditional Saudi hospitality, this five-star retreat offers both comfort and sophistication.

🕒 03:00PM
Luxe indulgence
📍 Kingdom Centre
Explore this luxury shopping destination, featuring designer boutiques, perfume brands, luxury watchmakers, and high-end jewellery stores. It is also home to King Abdullah Mosque, the world's second-highest such, located on the 77th floor.

🕒 05:00PM
Stunning sunset
📍 Sky Bridge
Take the Kingdom Centre's direct high-speed elevator to the 99th floor for one of the city's most spectacular vantage points. Enjoy the panoramic 360-degree views and gaze at the desert extending far beyond the city. As the sun sinks toward the horizon, do not miss the perfect orange glow that envelops Riyadh, making it even prettier.

🕒 07:00PM
Coffee stop
📍 Tahlia Street
This trendy area is home to speciality coffee spots like Half Million, Urth Caffé, and Sociale Café, each offering a curated selection ranging from aromatic Saudi *gahwas* to creamy matcha lattes. Grab a cup and take in the lively atmosphere, as Riyadh truly comes alive after sunset.

🕒 09:00PM
Arabian finale
📍 Awani restaurant and Mercury Lounge
End your day at Awani (in Tahlia Street) with a sumptuous Middle Eastern dinner, featuring hummus, tabbouleh, *manakeesh*, grilled meats, *fattoush*, and desserts served in a setting perfect for winding down after a full day of exploration. Wrap up with a traditional shisha experience at the nearby Mercury Lounge.



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← STEP IN STYLE

Couturier Manish Malhotra, in collaboration with luxury brand Golden Goose, has designed two limited-edition sneakers. While the women's one, in cream suede, is embellished with gold floral embroidery, the men's version mirrors the same motif on a sleek black suede base.

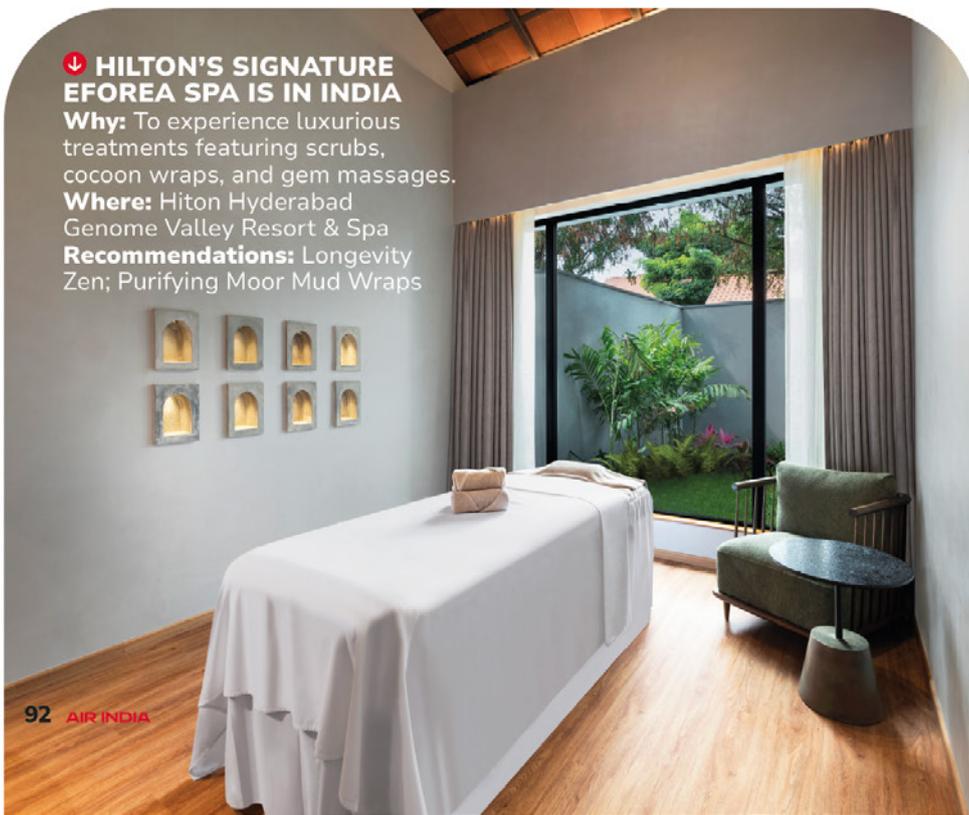


↓ HILTON'S SIGNATURE EFOREA SPA IS IN INDIA

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Where: Hiton Hyderabad Genome Valley Resort & Spa

Recommendations: Longevity Zen; Purifying Moor Mud Wraps



↑ CHORUS FLAGSHIP OPENS IN MUMBAI

Why: This new atelier showcases apparel, artefacts (under Chorus Concept), wellness products, and even houses a café. **Where:** Kala Ghoda, Mumbai **Recommendation:** Try their bespoke services



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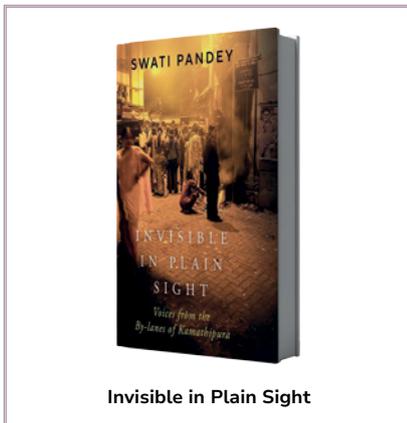
TRUE GRIT

A National Award-winning filmmaker, Postmaster General of Mumbai, and now author, **Swati Pandey** wears several hats

You work across disciplines. How did the journey begin?

With a never-ending curiosity about life. I grew up in Bhubaneswar and Nagpur with big dreams. In conservative Odisha, girls were often expected to take the back seat, but my father believed fiercely in his daughters. He told everyone that we would fulfil our dreams on our own terms. That shaped everything for me.

I moved from Chemistry to Anthropology because chemicals don't talk to me—people do. Travelling alone for fieldwork taught me to observe, adapt, and understand the alternative truths that shape different ways of living.



Invisible in Plain Sight

What inspired the book?

A difficult professional phase coincided with my regular visits to the women I work with in Kamathipura. Their stories, humour, survival, memories of who they once were... that inspired me.

One day, Kajol, one of my girls, said something that shook me out of my despair: she was sold off at the age of 14 by people she trusted, yet she carries beautiful childhood memories. In fact, all of them do. That contrast compelled me to document their journeys—their childhoods, trafficking, transformations, and the women they became. In each story, there is a part of them and a part of all of us.

What pushed you to write?

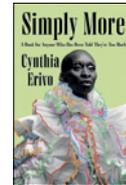
My girls. They are my inspiration and my heroes. I wrote the book exactly as I felt it—raw, honest, and unfiltered.

Any book that has had a profound impact on you?

To Kill a Mockingbird. My father resembled Atticus Finch in many ways and taught us that we define our destiny.

— As told to **Shrabasti A Mallik**

NEW ON THE SHELF



SIMPLY MORE (Cynthia Erivo)

From a Grammy, Tony, and Emmy winner comes this heartfelt part-memoir, part-inspirational manual for better living.

Pan Macmillan India; ₹2,016



TELL MY MOTHER I LIKE BOYS (Suvir Saran)

A personal exploration of identity and self-acceptance, it is the story of a shy boy who grew up to become a Michelin-starred chef and change how the world tastes Indian food.

Penguin Random House; ₹699



THE OUTSIDER: A MEMOIR FOR MISFITS (Vir Das)

Born of the comedian-actor's wit and humour, this coming-of-age narrative is a powerful reflection on how being a misfit can shape your identity.

HarperCollins India; ₹533



Language

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SCAN HERE FOR
STORE LOCATION

A RAINBOW OF SENSATIONAL OFFERINGS AT PURPLE MARTINI

Nestled in Goa's tropical landscape, Purple Martini serves up delicious cuisine and cocktails amid chilled-out afternoons, gorgeous sundowners, and star-studded nights



SAARTHAK GUPTA
CEO/Founder, Purple Martini

A beacon of culinary excellence, Purple Martini is a much-loved destination among locals, tourists, and celebrities. Founded by Saarthak Gupta, the restaurant began as a passion project and has since ascended to the pinnacle of Goa's dining scene. Purple Martini is not merely a dining experience, it is a symphony of flavours, an embodiment of luxury, and a testament to Saarthak's unwavering commitment to gastronomic innovation. With its stunning sunset views, eclectic menu, impeccable service, and an ambience that fuses sophistication with a relaxed Mykonos-style vibe, Purple Martini, a gem along the Anjuna coast, remains a place where unforgettable memories are crafted. Whether you're seeking culinary delight or a brush with stardom, this lively restobar offers an experience that transcends expectations, making it an enduring icon of Goa's culinary landscape.

DELICIOUS BLISS

Be transported into a world of relaxation and indulgence as soon as you walk in. The bar features a wide selection of signature cocktails, including the famous Purple Martini, Stylish Turkey, Red Decor, and the Floral Whiskey Sour. The menu also boasts an impressive selection of wines, beers, and spirits from across the globe.

But it's not just the drinks that make

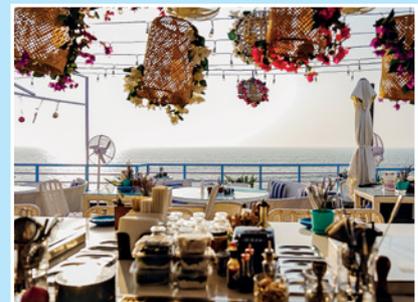


Purple Martini a must-visit spot in Goa. The kitchen also offers a delectable cuisine selection that blends Indian and international flavours. From appetisers like Peri-Peri Chicken Skewers and Recheado Prawns to entrées like Banana Wrapped Snapper with fiery chillies and tamarind, the menu has something that tantalises every taste-bud.

Purple Martini's crown jewel, however, is its breathtaking sunset views. With its beachfront location, guests can enjoy a front-row seat to the spectacular hues of orange, pink, and purple that light up the sky during sunset—the perfect backdrop for a romantic dinner, a lively get-together with friends, or a relaxing evening alone. No wonder it's the top restobar in Goa.

ABOUT THE FOUNDER

Saarthak Gupta, an alumnus of The Doon School and the University of Leeds, has been recognised as a leading entrepreneur in the hospitality industry. With his passion for hospitality, astute leadership, marketing prowess, and an eye for detail, he has transformed Purple Martini into one of



the most popular restobars in Goa. His commitment to excellence has been recognised by various institutions, and he has received several prestigious awards for his contributions to the hospitality industry, as well as being named amongst the Times 50 Most Influential Personalities.

Purple Martini has won several accolades, including the Times Nightlife Award for the Best Sundowner Bar and The Most Popular Restaurant four years in a row. The restaurant has also been featured in various publications, including *Conde Nast Traveller*, *Vogue India*, and *The Economic Times*. And we expect many more under Saarthak's leadership in the coming years!

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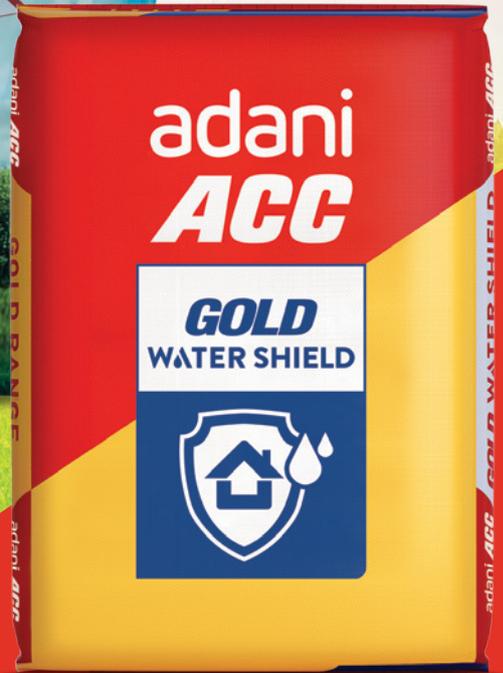


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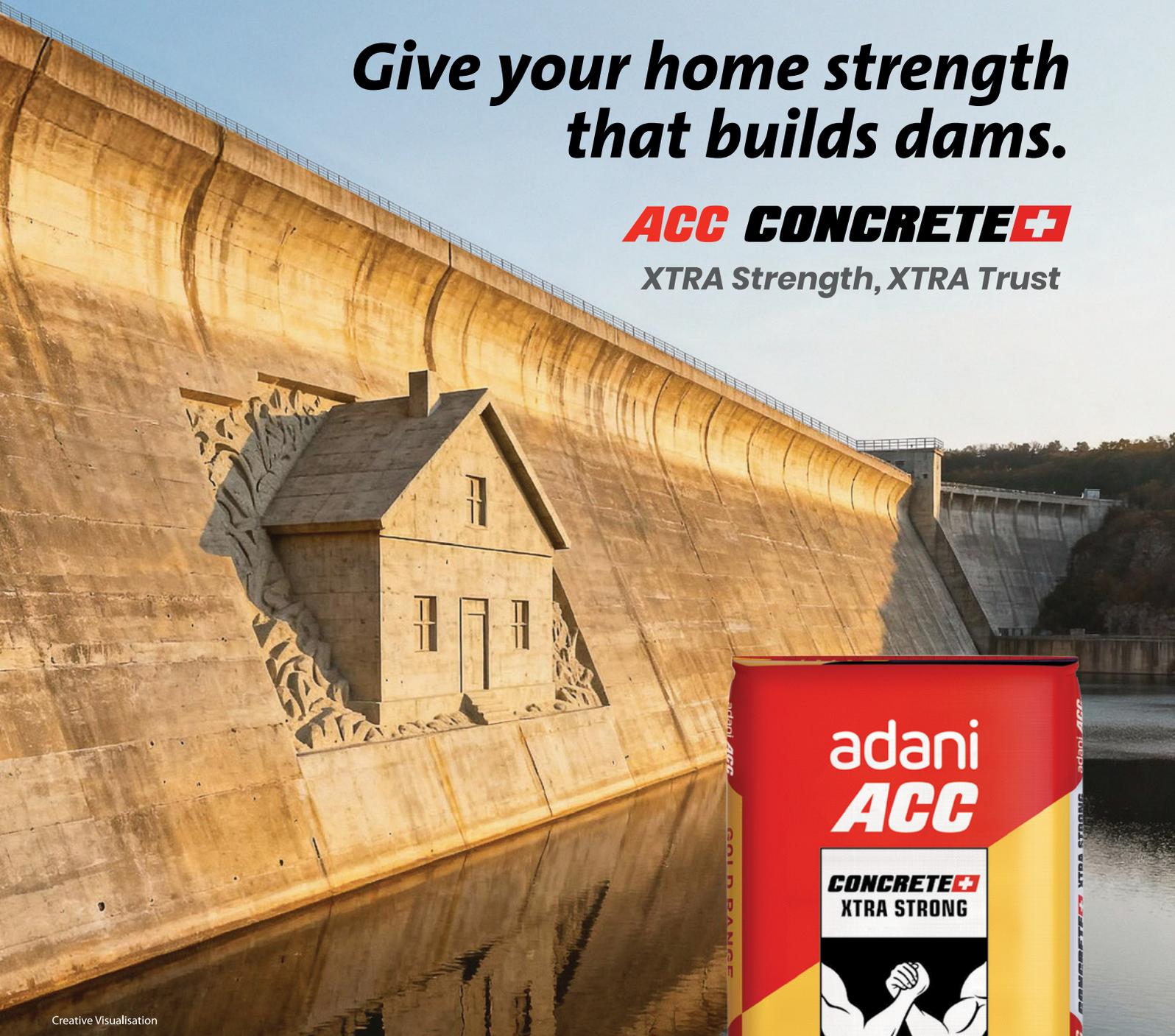
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FLEET

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ROUTES

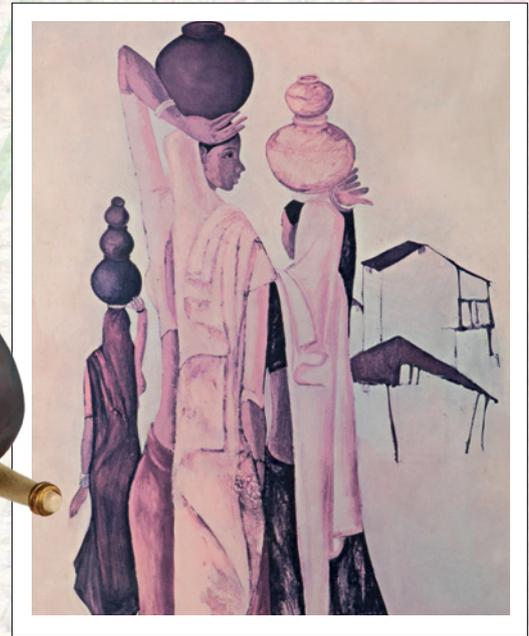
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p 113 

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p 124 



CELEBRATING INDIA *worldwide*

Air India played an important role in furthering Indian art and craft globally by creating multiple platforms for its display

words by **Dr Meera Dass**

LEFT AND RIGHT

One in a series of travel agent counter displays, this hand-painted piece dates back to the 1950s-1960s. It features a caparisoned elephant with a satin blanket with Air India written on either side and the Maharaja seated under an umbrella; B. Prabha was still at Sir J.J. School of Art when Air India bought their first few paintings from her. The airline continued to commission and acquire her work throughout her career. The Air India Art Collection holds one of the largest repositories of her paintings.

In 1946, Tata Airlines carried one out of every three passengers in the country. The coming of the 'Constellation' aircraft by Lockheed ushered in a new phase in the history of aviation in India. Tata Airlines had to take a decision to go international and decided to do so as Air India International, in collaboration with the government. "It was a risky venture," said JRD Tata. "Who would entrust himself on a long overseas journey to a small Indian airline, its planes flown and maintained by Indians?"

JRD was the Chairman and knew Air India could not compete in size with well-established airlines and, therefore,

it had to be the best. From the start, Air India was conscious of the importance of creating an appealing atmosphere within the cabin. Art and artists found their first appearances in the public sphere when Air India unrolled its underlying philosophy of 'being unique by being Indian'. All public spaces, like the aircraft, booking offices, sales materials, hoardings, events, etc., acquired significance in the airline's bid to create a 'Little India'. The airline started acquiring visual art materials of Indian identity—paintings, textiles, antiques, and crafts materials.

Small vignettes of Indian *pushpak vimanas* and *gandharvas* decorated the interiors of the Constellation aircraft in



TOP TO BOTTOM

MF Husain's horses are legendary and this large canvas is iconic in the way the seventh horse is meaningfully represented; This is one of the early works of celebrated artist Satish Gujral; Air India gifted hand fans with wooden handles to its First Class passengers in the 1960s and they often featured a vibrantly-illustrated map of India.



the 1950s. In 1971, Air India introduced its 'Emperor' fleet of Boeing 747s. The iconic Maharaja Lounges were located on the upper decks of these aircraft. Branded as 'Your Palace In the Sky', these First Class cabins were designed by the in-house art studio. The murals in the lounge were adapted from the celebrated frescoes of the 5th-century Ajanta caves that illustrated the Buddhist Jataka tales. The interior panels of the aircraft were made by the art studio before they were sent to Boeing manufacturing units to be converted into actual panels.



The in-house art studio was established by Air India with Jal Cowasji as its Art Director and Head of Publicity, and Bobby Kooka as the Commercial Director. The creation of the studio ushered in one of Air India's most artistic and clever phases of marketing and promotion. The Maharaja—the only

ever human mascot of any airline—was wonderfully used to narrate stories of Indian hospitality, politeness, and humbleness, which he enacted with grace, sophistication, and humour.

The Maharaja would adopt different personas for each destination—a monk in Rome, a lover boy in Paris, and even a sumo wrestler in Tokyo. These were tongue-in-cheek takes on the characteristic cultural features of the 'destination' countries. This caricature of the mascot was one of the most powerful tools of expression developed by any corporate body in the world.

Posters, diaries, calendars, hoardings, were designed with satirical visuals

creating a genre that stood tall in the history of advertising. Some of the posters were pretty bold and candid. One of these was a poster on London in which The Maharaja is shown reading a newspaper amidst Londoners with top hats, on a gloomy and cloudy day; the paper had an Air India ad to fly to sunny India. A clever work of art.

Booking offices were converted into cultural display centres of not just ancient Indian arts but also had murals, paintings, and sculptures by modern Indian artists. Large Nataraj bronze pieces and carved wooden panels were displayed beside large murals commissioned to modern Indian painters like Shanti Dave and MF Husain. This had a profound impact



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Other than commissioned works, Air India also purchased several caricatures by Mario Miranda; This poster from the 1960s boasts landmark monuments of destination countries with The Maharaja featuring on London's Big Ben; The poster, showing the Maharaja eating noodles in Rome, is one of many such printed by Air India.

ART EDITION



Air India's art collection, gradually built over 60 years, narrates the story of the art movement of the nation, layer by layer.

DR MEERA DASS
ART HISTORIAN, WRITER, AND
CULTURAL POLICY EXPERT

across borders and an opportunity to showcase their works in various countries. The success abroad gave birth to a new genre of modern artists in India. Many even gained global recognition with their works becoming part of noted art gallery collections.

Murals were the new thing in interiors and Air India was commissioning large canvases for the walls of lounges and receptions of booking offices. B. Prabha's mural in Bangkok's Booking Office drew from the

Indian village and showed village belles doing their daily chores. Large scenes from India's rural landscapes were the preferred subject of such murals and may have had the desired exotic effect on the sophisticated interiors of the offices.

Kalamkaris from Andhra Pradesh, embroideries from Kutch, and other large textile panels showcased the richness of Indian textiles. Woodcarving from demolished old houses, brass and metal sculptures, and modern art canvases were all on display.

With the passage of time, a changing ticketing system rendered these booking offices redundant and when they were shut down, the artworks were packed away. An effort to bring them back to India was undertaken some years ago and, for the first time, the entire collection was seen all at one place.

Air India's art collection, gradually built over 60 years, narrates the story of the art movement of the nation, layer by layer. It is the story of India's arts and craft movement.

on the perception of Indian art in the destination countries, where the artists got invited for one-man shows. Air India issued round-trip tickets to artists in exchange for their works. This arrangement gave artists recognition

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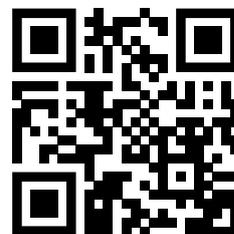
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CHANGE IS IN THE AIR

A first-hand experience of Air India's A350 Business Class reveals how thoughtful design and warm hospitality can transform a journey

**words by
Kamiya Jani**

There are flights that take you from one city to another. And then there are flights that signal a shift. A quiet turning of the page. A reminder that even the most familiar experiences can feel unexpected again. My recent journey from Delhi to London on Air India's A350 Business Class was one such moment—a subtle but unmistakable indication that change is in the air.

As someone who has spent years in transit—more than 1,500 flights

and counting—I rarely step onboard expecting surprises. Yet this time, the transformation was evident the moment I entered the cabin. The A350 did not just look different; it felt different. Softer lighting, calmer colours, refined textures—the aircraft's design language spoke of a new chapter unfolding quietly, confidently.

A new kind of privacy

The heart of the experience is the private suite—complete with sliding doors, a 79-inch lie-flat bed, and



thoughtful storage details that make the space feel more like a personal cocoon than an airline seat. It is the kind of privacy that lets you exhale, stretch out, and forget you are cruising at 35,000ft with hundreds of other passengers.

Technology that keeps up

Another sign of change is the Wi-Fi that keeps pace with you. Not the patchy, temperamental connectivity travellers have learned to tolerate, but smooth, uninterrupted access that allows



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT
Kamiya Jani, YouTuber and Founder of Curly Tales, rests comfortably in the A350 Business Class seat; The author with the crew members of her flight; She enjoys a meal of flavour-rich Indian dishes.



meal rather than the formality of inflight dining. Even coffee feels more considered, brewed fresh and served with a sense of ceremony.

Design rooted in India

One of the most charming touches comes wrapped around you—a wool-blended blanket inspired by *sozni* embroidery from Jammu & Kashmir. Air India is the only airline in the world to offer this in its premium cabins, and it adds a layer of elegance and warmth that feels authentically Indian. Paired with a Salvatore Ferragamo amenity kit and soft pyjamas, the long flight takes on the ease of a night spent unwinding rather than enduring.

A new chapter takes flight

Somewhere mid-journey, as I closed the suite door and settled into the quiet of the cabin, it struck me: this was not just a new seat or a new aircraft. It was a new intention. A new standard and a new way of thinking about what Air India can be.

Change is in the air. You feel it in the design, the service, and the details that reimagine comfort. You feel it in the confidence of the A350—modern, spacious, and thoughtfully crafted. And long after landing in London, that feeling stays with you.

emails, browsing, and social media to continue seamlessly. Add to it a crisp HD screen and over 3,500 hours of curated entertainment, and the long-haul hours slip by in the blink of an eye.

A culinary shift

Meals onboard have always been one of Air India's strengths, but on the A350 Business Class, they arrive with renewed finesse. The Maharaja-inspired chinaware, premium glassware, and warm, flavour-rich Indian dishes evoke the comfort of a well-prepared



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OUR WINGS

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

Airbus A319



06

Boeing 777-300ER



19

Airbus A320neo



94

Boeing 777-200LR



01

Airbus A320ceo



04

**Boeing 787-9
Dreamliner**



06

Airbus A321ceo



13

**Boeing 787-8
Dreamliner**



26

Airbus A321neo



10

Airbus A350-900

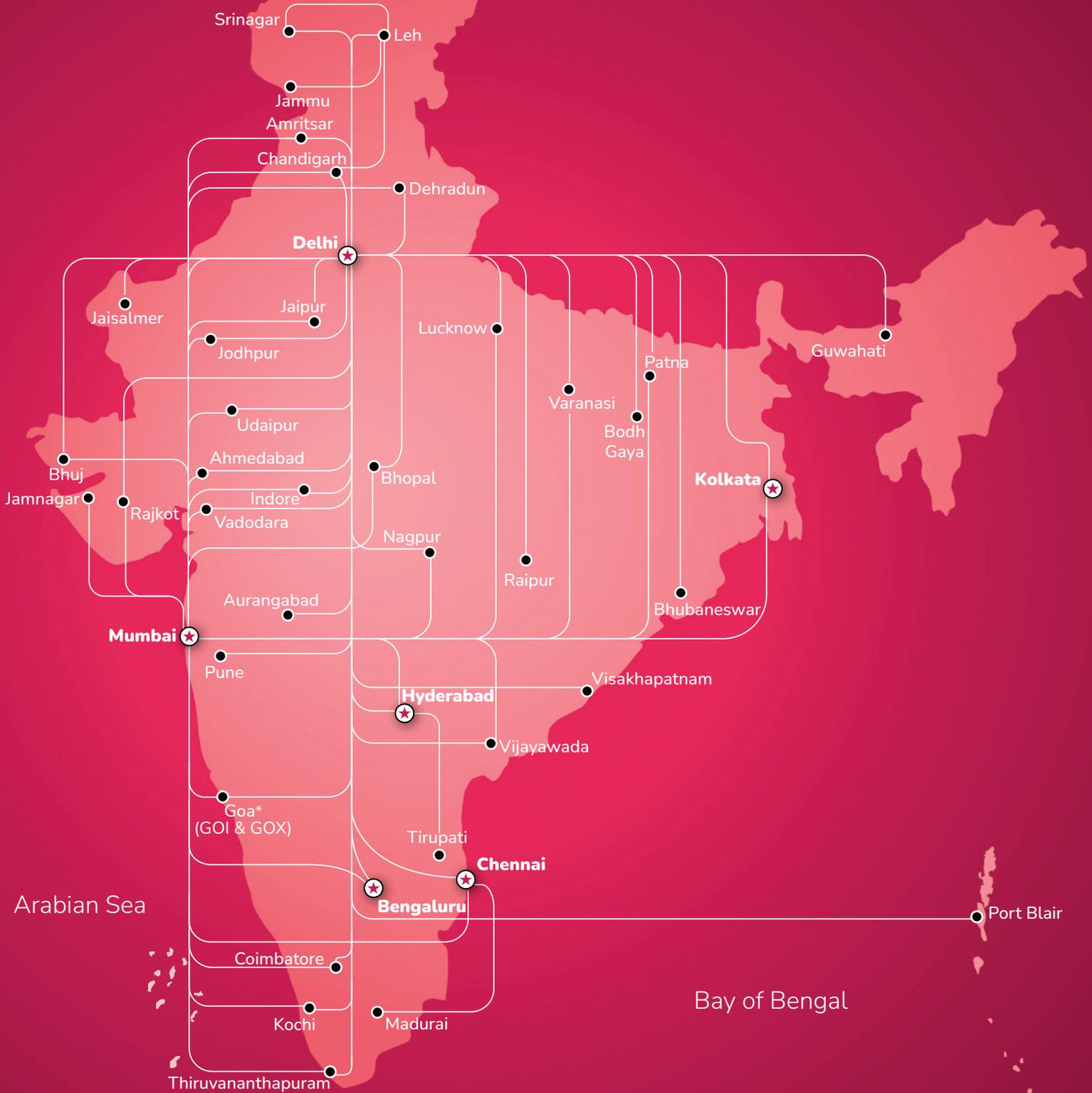
06

**FLEET
STRENGTH
185**

*Total number as on 9th December 2025;
This fleet count is exclusive of Air India Express
(Air India Group's low-cost carrier)



DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



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

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

This route map pertains only to destinations served by Air India

Route map as on 11th December 2025

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Air India flies non-stop to 39 destinations across five continents from multiple Indian cities (pinned on the map of India)

Europe



Amsterdam (AMS)	←.....→	DEL	
Copenhagen (CPH)	←.....→	DEL	
Frankfurt (FRA)	←.....→	DEL	BOM
Milan (MXP)	←.....→	DEL	
Paris (CDG)	←.....→	DEL	
Vienna (VIE)	←.....→	DEL	
Zurich (ZRH)	←.....→	DEL	
Tel Aviv (TLV)	←.....→	DEL	

UK



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

North America



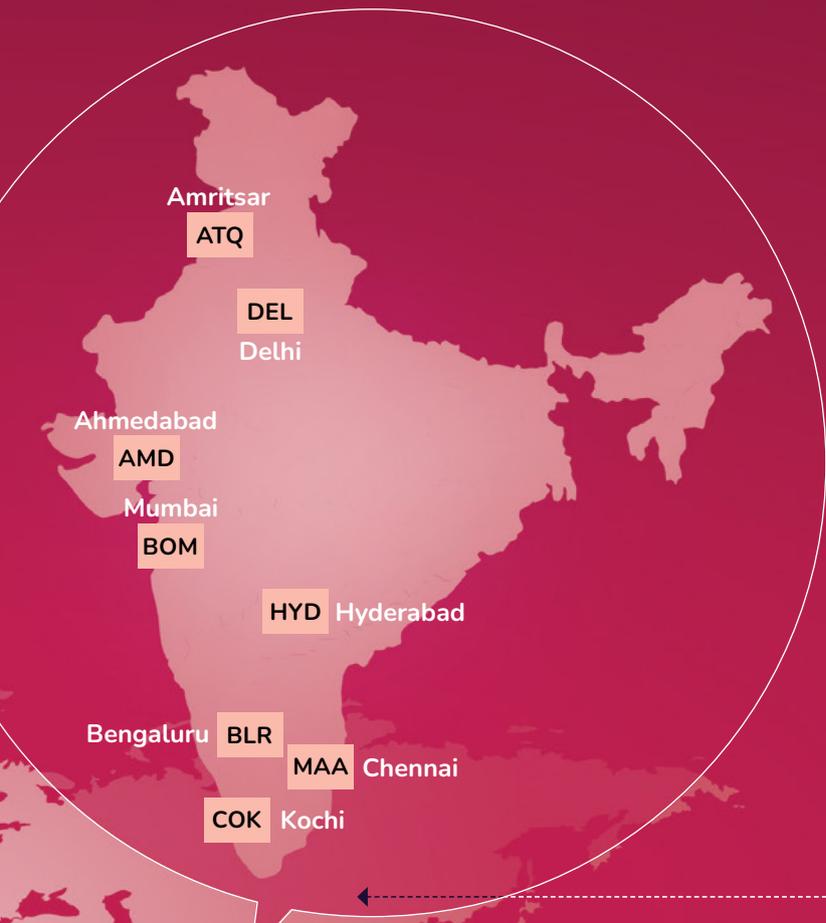
Chicago (ORD)	←.....→	DEL	
Newark (EWR)	←.....→	DEL	BOM
New York (JFK)	←.....→	DEL	BOM
San Francisco (SFO)	←.....→	DEL	BOM BLR
Toronto (YYZ)	←.....→	DEL	
Vancouver (YVR)	←.....→	DEL	

Middle East



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

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 **Far East**

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

 **South East Asia**

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

 **Australia**

- Melbourne (MEL) <-----> DEL
- Sydney (SYD) <-----> DEL

Indian Subcontinent

- Colombo (CMB) <-----> DEL BOM
- Dhaka (DAC) <-----> DEL BOM
- Kathmandu (KTM) <-----> DEL
- Malé (MLE) <-----> DEL
- Yangon (RGN) <-----> DEL

 **Africa**

- Mauritius (MRU) <-----> BOM

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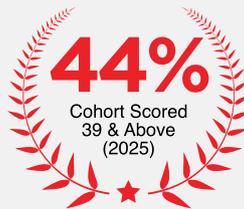


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ABOARD AIX

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

 **Airbus A321neo**
04

 **Airbus A320neo**
12

 **Airbus A320ceo**
12

 **Boeing 737 NG**
26

 **Boeing 737 Max**
51

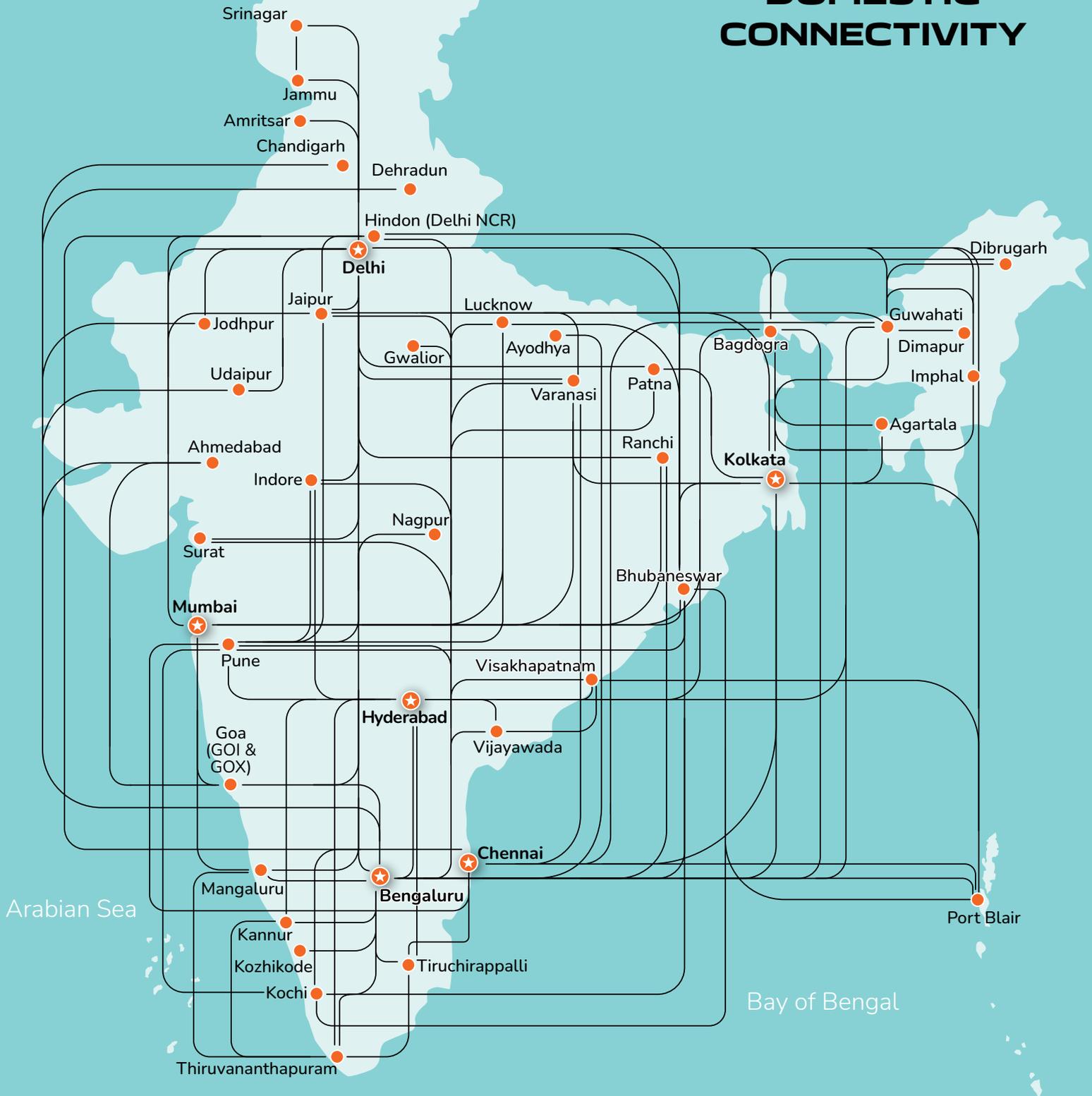
**FLEET
STRENGTH
105**



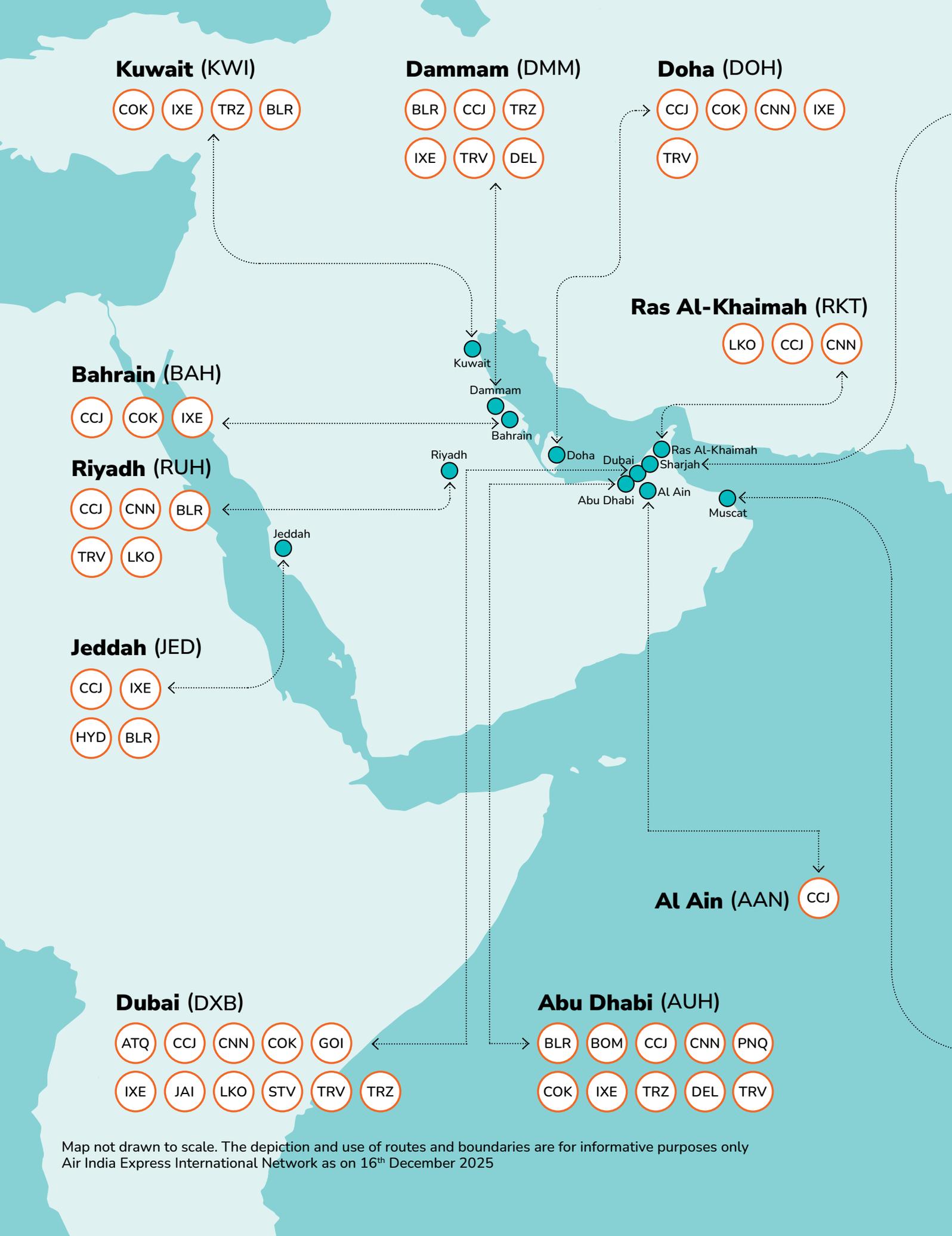
*Total number as on 22nd December 2025

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DOMESTIC CONNECTIVITY



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Kuwait (KWI)

- COK
- IXE
- TRZ
- BLR

Dammam (DMM)

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

Doha (DOH)

- CCJ
- COK
- CNN
- IXE
- TRV

Ras Al-Khaimah (RKT)

- LKO
- CCJ
- CNN

Bahrain (BAH)

- CCJ
- COK
- IXE

Riyadh (RUH)

- CCJ
- CNN
- BLR
- TRV
- LKO

Jeddah (JED)

- CCJ
- IXE
- HYD
- BLR

Dubai (DXB)

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

Abu Dhabi (AUH)

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

Al Ain (AAN)

- CCJ

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 Air India Express International Network as on 16th December 2025

AIR INDIA express

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Sharjah (SHJ)

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

Kathmandu (KTM)

- BLR

Bangkok (BKK)

- PNQ STV BLR

Phuket (HKT)

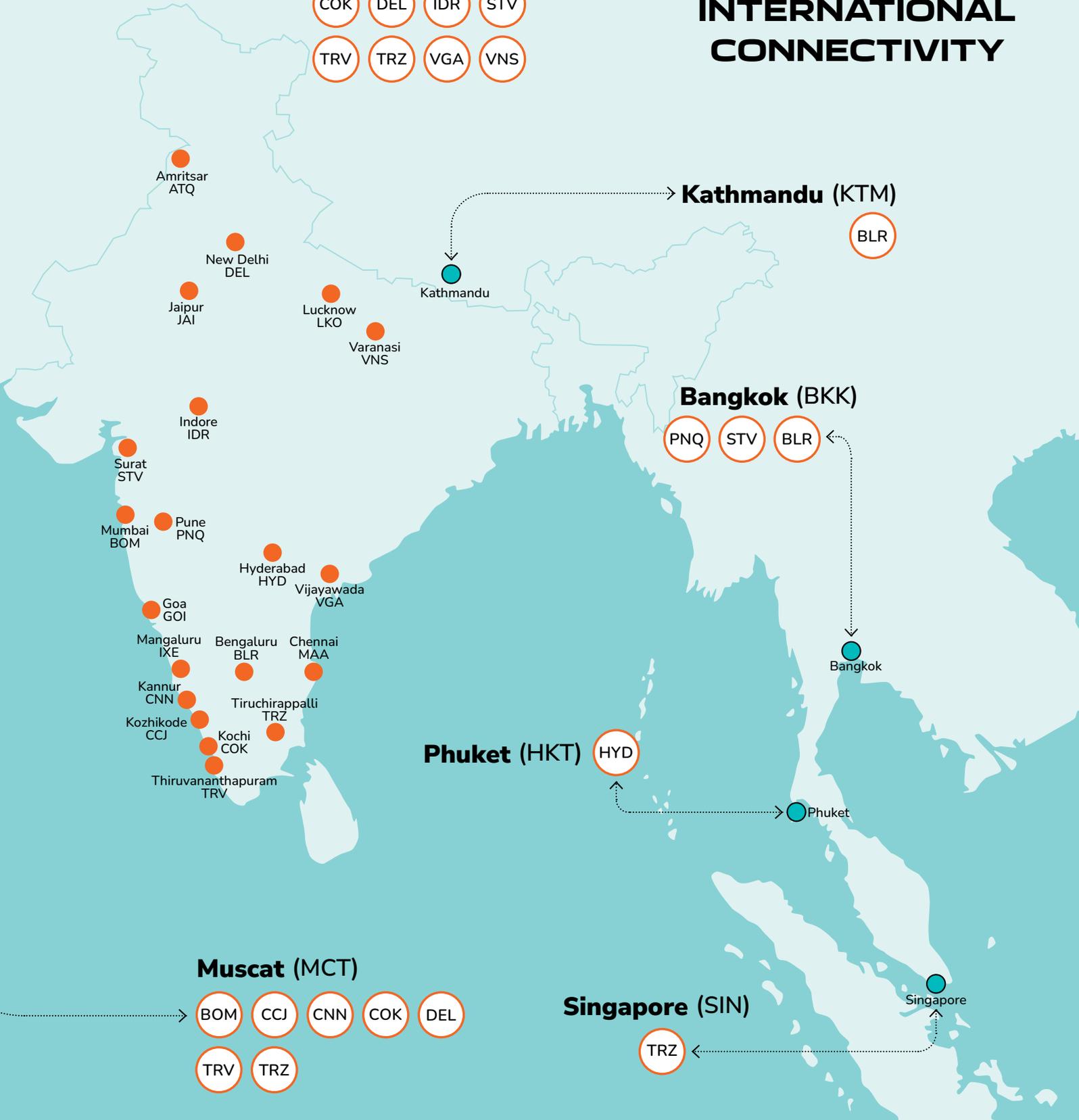
- HYD

Muscat (MCT)

- BOM CCJ CNN COK DEL
- TRV TRZ

Singapore (SIN)

- TRZ



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Take a taxi to Rideau Canal in Ottawa



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REGULATORY INFORMATION FOR ALL INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS LANDING INTO INDIA

विदेश से कोई भी सैटेलाइट फोन भारत में लाने की अनुमती नहीं है।

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

MISSION LIFE

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

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

AIR-SEWA

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

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

DIGI YATRA

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

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has



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

PROHIBITION OF AERIAL/ GROUND PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEOGRAPHY, AND CARRIAGE OF SENSORY EQUIPMENT – SECURITY GUIDELINES AT DEFENCE AIRFIELDS (IAF JUAs - Joint User Airfields)

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

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

Please be informed that aerial or ground photography and videography are strictly prohibited at all times during a passenger's travel, including when he or she is inside the terminal; in vehicles en route to or from the aircraft; outside the aircraft; during

landing; at the airport; during pushback, taxiing, take-off, and while the aircraft is flying below 10,000 feet.

FTI - TTP (FAST TRACK IMMIGRATION – TRUSTED TRAVELLER PROGRAMME)

भारत सरकार द्वारा भारतीय पासपोर्ट एवं ओसीआई कार्ड धारकों के लिए ट्रस्टेड ट्रेवेलर प्रोग्राम शुरू किया गया है। अब आप ftittp.mha.gov.in पर केवल 30 सेकंड में निशुल्क पंजीकरण करके स्वचालित ई-गेट से तेजी से इमिग्रेशन प्रक्रिया पूरी कर सकते हैं। We are pleased to inform you about the Government of India's Trusted Traveller Programme for Indian passport and OCI card holders. You can now complete your immigration quickly through automated e-gates by registering at ftittp.mha.gov.in – it's free and takes just 30 seconds.

FOR FLIGHTS ARRIVING IN DELHI (DOMESTIC FLIGHTS OPERATING FROM TERMINAL 2)

हम आपको सूचित करना चाहते हैं कि 26 अक्टूबर से प्रभावी रूप से, चार अंको वाली आंतरिक उड़ान, जिनके नंबर 'AI 1500 से 1999' के बीच हैं, टर्मिनल 2 से संचालित होगी। यदि आप एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की उड़ान से कनेक्ट कर रहे हैं, तो कृपया टर्मिनल 1 पर जाएं। टर्मिनलों के बीच हर 10-मिनट में फ्री शटल बस सेवा उपलब्ध है, टर्मिनल 2 और टर्मिनल 3 के बीच यह सेवा उपलब्ध नहीं है। दोनों टर्मिनलों के बीच पैदल चलने का समय 10-मिनट है। आपके आगमन पर यदि किसी प्रकार की सहायता की आवश्यकता हो, तो कृपया हमारे ग्राउंड स्टाफ से संपर्क करें।

Effective 26th October, domestic flights with 4-digit numbers starting from 'AI 1500 to 1999' will operate from Terminal 2. If you are connecting on Air India Express, please proceed to Terminal 1. Free shuttle buses are available every 10 minutes between terminals, except between T2 and T3, which are connected by a convenient 10-minute walk. Should you require any assistance upon arrival, please feel free to approach our ground staff.

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SEAMLESS TRAVEL

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

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

HOW TO REGISTER



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



Processing of Application by Bureau of Immigration (BoI)



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OF POETRY AND SURPRISE

For connoisseur **Shalini Passi**, Venice is a living, breathing piece of art

MY LOCAL EXPERIENCE

The canals weave like veins through the heart of the city, making movement and stillness coexist beautifully. It reminds me of Varanasi. Both cities exude an ethereal sense of eternity. I enjoyed wandering through Venice's Dorsoduro district, beyond the main galleries, past the smaller ateliers and studios tucked into alleys.

THE WORLD OF ART

While the Venice Biennale venues and the Peggy Guggenheim Collection are iconic, I am drawn to Palazzo Grimani, for its Renaissance architecture. Ca' Rezzonico offers a peep into 18th-century Venetian life. Museo Fortuny feels like walking into a time capsule of an artist's inner world. Giudecca island brings a raw, industrial feel, while Spazio Punch, a modern art space, is edgy and thought provoking.

THE CITY THROUGH MY EYES

Sipping coffee at Caffè Florian feels like participating in a centuries-old ritual. Harry's Bar is iconic, for its Bellinis and storied past. At Hotel Danieli, interiors feel like a continuation of Venetian opulence. For me, the quieter, less-trodden corners of Venice bring in pure poetry, intimacy, and surprise.

— As told to **Shilpi Madan**



Clockwise from top left: Shalini Passi; Shutterstock; Shalini Passi; Shutterstock

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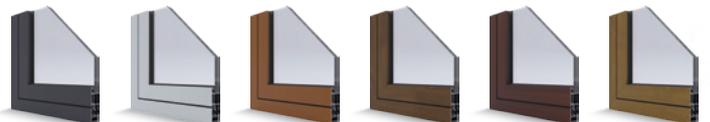
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