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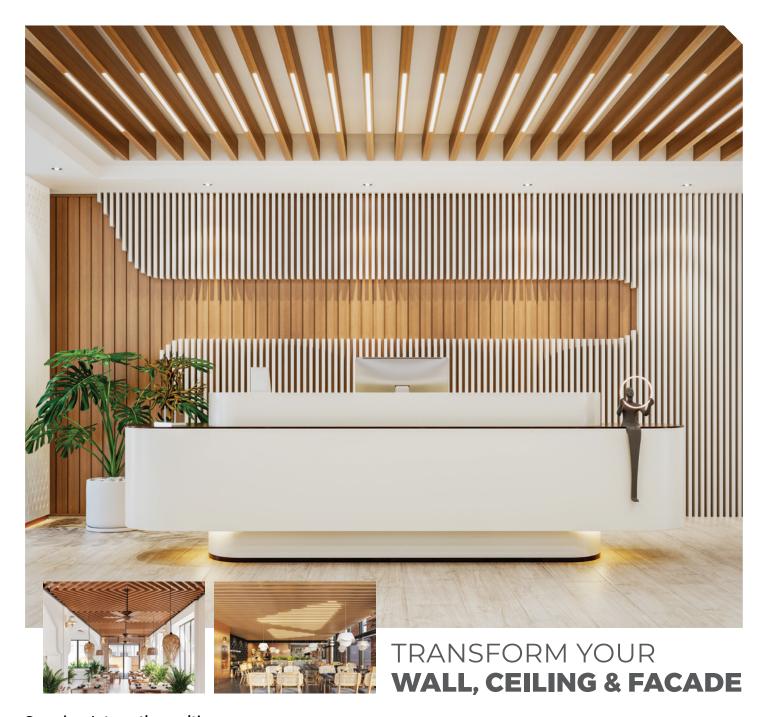




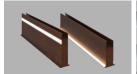








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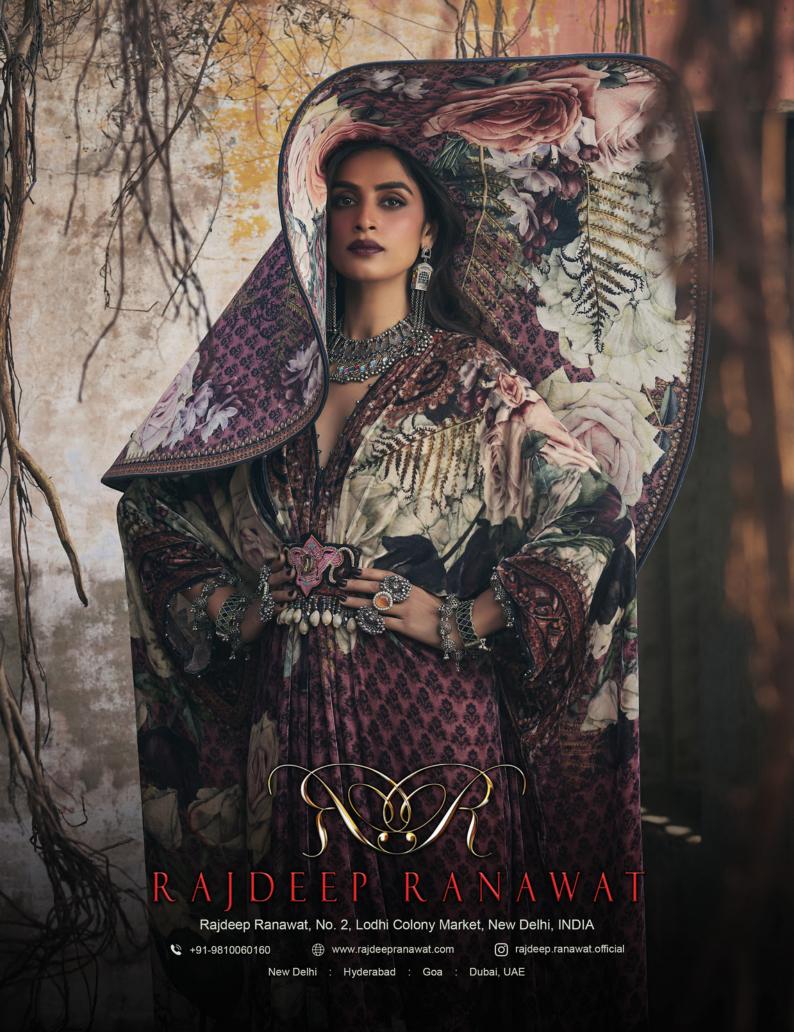
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Top to bottom: Shutterstock; Chef Garima Arora, Old Ebbitt Grill; Shutterstock

EDITOR'S NOTE

s we head into March. winter bids us goodbye and the promise of good weather puts a spring in our step. We're ready to step outdoors, travel plans are afoot, and there's just something so happy about the season.

> Adding to the cheer is the sound of music. Attending live concerts is no more the purview of a few; the entire world has woken up to the thrill of catching their favourite artistes perform live—with their tribe. It's a community bonding experience like none other and this has given the experience economy a massive push.

In our Cover Story, we delve into this trend, bringing you first-person accounts of excited fans who travelled to attend concerts when they couldn't get tickets in a city close by, and also showcase four global destinations where upcoming concerts are slated—Seoul, Philadelphia, Frankfurt, and Toronto. We've curated an itinerary for each of these cities so you can truly make it a trip for the soul.

Closer home, we celebrate spring by taking you to Srinagar, where flowers recur as a motif, stringing the city together in harmony (look out for the tulip festival). It's also cherry blossom season in Washington, DC, where we embark on a culinary ride, raising a toast to its iconic bars and discovering new dining options where the person on the next table could well be an influential politico!

Celebrating International Women's Day, we honour some of the women who make Air India the success it is, and chat with the first Indian woman to receive two Michelin stars, Chef Garima Arora, who's just opened her first-ever restaurant in India.

So much to celebrate, so much to cheer.

Happy reading and Namaste!

– **Namaste.ai** Editorial Team





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







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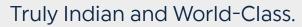
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Rashmi Gopal Rao

A freelance writer based in Bengaluru. Rashmi writes on travel, food. architecture. design, and culture for several publications. When not exploring new places, cultures, and cuisines. you'll find her at flea markets.



Nive Raitz von Frentz

Having studied and worked in London and Oxford through the 1990s, Nive is now a full-time diplomatic spouse. Accompanying her family to Croatia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Sri Lanka, and most recently, Pakistan, she has morphed into an internationally published features writer. Her monthly posts on Mumbai can be found on her blog, niveraitzvonfrentz.

substack.com **0** page 62



Ayswarrya

@@ayswarrya

Avswarrva creates content for B2B tech while slow-travelling through lush landscapes, serene blue seas, and snow-capped mountains. She seeks soulful connections with local communities, embracing slow, mindful, and conscious living in harmony with the world around her.



Veenu Singh

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As a respected lifestyle journalist, Veenu has been writing on fashion, art, trends, celebrities. relationships, and health for more than two decades. She has also mentored young journalists. Her motto in life is to remain happy with whatever life offers.

1 page 94













AI-Driven Transformation: Productivity takes off with Copilot+ PCs

Al is rapidly reshaping the workplace across industries in India, driving efficiency and unlocking new possibilities for innovation. With the rise of hybrid work models and a growing need for smarter tools, Windows 11 Copilot+ PCs−powered by AMD Ryzen™ Al 300 Pro Series high-performance processors—are helping businesses enhance productivity, security, and creativity.

India's digital transformation can be further propelled by AI-powered technology by enhancing efficiency and innovation, with Copilot+ PCs leading it.

- Al's Transformative Impact: Al is significantly changing how companies operate by optimizing processes and enhancing productivity. According to a global study by IDC² focused on the business value and opportunity of Al in the workplace, 71% of organizations are currently using Al, and for every \$1 a company invests in Al, it is realizing an average return of \$3.5X.
- Employee Challenges and Al Solutions: A recent Work Trend Index report¹ revealed 64% of employees face challenges managing work tasks due to lack of energy and time, and 70% would use Al to lighten their workload, highlighting the potential of Al to improve productivity and innovation.
- Business Leaders' Al Vision: Business leaders aim to use Al to accelerate workforce innovation, solve problems faster, and stay competitive, while employees seek Al to simplify their workday and make a bigger impact.

- Copilot+ PCs Introduction: Copilot+ PCs are designed to accelerate innovation, solve problems faster, and drive business impact with high performance, security, and AI capabilities.
- Enhanced Security: Copilot+ PCs offer advanced security features such as enhanced phishing protection, malware safeguards, and secured-core PC protection, ensuring the highest level of cybersecurity.
- Why wait to benefit? With Windows 10 support ending on October 14, 2025, businesses are encouraged to replace aging devices with Copilot+ PCs equipped with cutting-edge processors such as AMD Ryzen™ AI 300 Pro Series. Stay competitive with continuous innovation and equip your employees with Copilot+ PCs and get the latest features and security updates delivered right to their desktop.

To read the full article and know more about Copilot and Copilot+ PCs, scan the QR code and complete a short survey. All eligible entries qualify to enter the raffle draw and stand a chance to

own a Copilot+ PC at zero cost!*



Scan the QR Code to complete a short survey



*Conditions apply | The contest is brought to you by ThinkROI India Pvt. Ltd.

Footnotes

- 1. Will Al fix work? Work trend index annual report, Microsoft, May 9, 2023
- 2. The Business Opportunity of AI, IDC research study, November 2023

CONTENTS MARCH 2025



SPOT LIGHT

IN FOCUS
A Cartier retrospective
in London will display
iconic pieces of fine
jewellery

FOOD
Join a chef-food
blogger to explore
London through
eight special dishes

80 ON THE CLOCK Tradition, cuisine, and faith seamlessly blend in the ancient city of Varanasi

Top: Mercedes-Benz; Bottom: Shutterstock

Cover Story

10 MUSICAL ODYSSEYS Watching a live concert by a favourite artiste or band has now become a must-do travel experience

The People

- **28** INSPIRING INDIA Chef Garima Arora on introducing the authentic flavours of Thai food to India
- 33 CONSCIOUS **TRAVELLER** Find out how community tourism has the potential to create better explorers

The Checklist

48 IN FOCUS Unwind and relax at the International Yoga Festival in Rishikesh

The Places

62 TRULY INDIA Witness the beauty of Srinagar's full bloom this spring



70 WASHINGTON, DC Revel in the cosmopolitan and eclectic vibe that pervades the capital of the United States of America

Your Air India

90 THE TRANSFORMATION Bringing the new Air India experience to life for guests

94 VIA INDIA Transiting through Delhi Airport? Try these spas that are close by

97 ROUTES Our connectivity

102 WOMEN ON THE RISE Four women in Air India share their stories

107 FLEET Our magnificent machines

AUTOMOBILES

New luxury launches of 2025 that are already exciting both experts and consumers

114

A TRAVELLER'S TALE

Actor Ahsaas Channa loved her trip with friends to Himachal Pradesh



56 EVENTS

Art, flower shows, theatre—a few mustsees this season

On The Cover

Attending a live concert offers a unique, shared experience

> Cover image courtesy Shutterstock/ JuShoot

*All pages marked as Special Feature are paid advertorials

















Seoul > 14





Toronto > 20

Experience Economy > 22

The thrill of attending live concerts has given the 'experience economy' a massive impetus. We explore the business of music, give you first-person accounts of those who recently travelled to attend concerts, and showcase exciting destinations where you can catch gigs in 2025 while making it a fun holiday with your tribe

Coldplay's Music of the Spheres World Tour has been packing out stadiums worldwide

DREAM OF PARADISE

Sold-out tickets for the Mumbai concert led these fans to travel to Abu Dhabi from Amritsar for Coldplay

> usic is an intrinsic part of my family—my daughter being a singersongwriter—and we have been fans of Coldplay for years. It was only when Chris Martin announced (around 2021) that they would stop recording music as a band in 2025 [as reported], that it struck us that we had missed the bus for the rest of our lives. Till this tour came about.

One of my children told us about the tour dates in Mumbai, but we were unlucky. Simultaneously, a friend sent me a link to the band's concert in Abu Dhabi. "If not Mumbai, you will be pre-registered for that," he said. We put in our all for the Abu Dhabi tickets because it is just one direct flight away from where we are based-Amritsar. Even if it were not a direct flight, we would have gone, that's how desperate we were to see Coldplay.

With concert tickets confirmed for 11th January at Zayed Sports City Stadium, we decided to make a holiday out of it from 7th-12th. With Coldplay, the experience is not just about the music but

the entire event—with the sound, people, and the magic it creates with the lights. The lights, safe to say, are the biggest attraction and takes the visual spectacle so many notches higher. The music, undoubtedly, was incredible, and Chris is a phenomenal performer.

Having said that, my husband and I have watched Sting in Central Park and U2 in Mumbai, and they were amazing too—from a music perspective. But here's where Coldplay was different. Expert management—from security to crowd management, and everything in between—was unbelievable. Everyone stood in line (we walked right in as there was no queue), there was no

pushing or shoving, and water was free, a trademark Coldplay aspect.

Outside, there were over 100 buses ferrying attendees from the parking lots; the frequencies were such that we did not have to wait even two minutes.

This concert is special because it also changed my view of Abu Dhabi. The city surpassed every expectation that I had. And owing to the number of concerts that are held here, I plan to visit again soon.

> —As told to Shrabasti A Mallik

LEFT AND RIGHTChris Martin performs a set;
Praneet Chopra Bubber and her husband at the band's Abu Dhabi concert.



ALL ABOARD FOR DILJIT

This couple made its way from Pathankot to Lucknow to catch the Punjabi singing sensation live

am currently posted at the Indian Air Force station in Pathankot. Punjab. When my wife decided she wanted to attend a Diljit Dosanjh concert (during his recent 10-city Dil-Luminati tour in 2024), we had a choice between Delhi, Chandigarh, and Lucknow.

Sara is actually the big Diljit fan—we had attended a concert in 2018 in Delhi, and buying tickets for that was very easy. This time, we were astounded at how fast the venues filled up, but we managed to secure two tickets in the silver section at the Ekana International Football Ground in Lucknow for Friday, 22nd November.

Our travel was quite the adventure. We drove two hours to Amritsar a day before the concert. Then, we caught a flight to Delhi, and the train to Lucknow the next day.

After having tunde kebabs for lunch, we realised that there was traffic to the venue so, we hired an auto to get us there. The gates opened at 6pm and security check was a breeze. The real magic began as the stadium filled up and the fans waited eagerly for the concert to begin. Once Diljit came on

stage, the crowd just went wild—I could see people crying, and everyone knew the lyrics to all the songs, especially Ek Kudi from Udta Punjab. It was very exciting to be surrounded by so many people who were all as enthused to be there.

Diljit also goes in for a lot of crowd interaction. At one point, a woman came up on stage and related how she had manifested really hard that she would meet Diljit (and she did).

Even after the concert ended, we were still caught up in the excitement. We staved on in Lucknow over the weekend, coming back to Delhi on Sunday and then took the train to Pathankot. reaching home on Monday.

from the Coldplay concert we attended in Singapore last year. But some aspects stayed the same. The energy and the excitement is a uniting force for the thousands of fans present

This event was a change

at the venue. I'm definitely planning to see more bands live in the near future—we are thinking about going for Coldplay in the UK later in the year.

> — As told to Mignonne Dsouza



LEFT AND RIGHT Group Captain Azam Ally and his wife Sara Faruqi had quite the journey from Pathankot to Lucknow and back; Diljit Dosanjh live on stage.



SPRING SYMPHONY

Do this year's plans include watching Coldplay in South Korea? Be sure to extend your visit, for there's much to see and do

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





GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Seoul from Delhi. ith pleasant spring weather, blooming cherry blossoms, and as many as six Coldplay concerts lined up, Seoul is the place to be this April. There are stunning monuments and heritage neighbourhoods to explore,

cutting-edge galleries and diverse shopping avenues to visit, boisterous karaoke bars, and globally loved popculture trends that originate here—all ensuring that no moment is dull.

WHERE TO GO

The capital's centuries-old history is best unravelled

at Gyeongbokgung Palace, a sprawling complex built by the Joseon kings in the 14th century. Catch the colourful Guard Changing in front of the Gwanghwamun Gate before exploring the pavilions and ceremonial halls that lie beyond. The futuristic Dongdaemun Design Plaza, designed by





WHERE TO STAY

Sono Calm Goyang

Offering sleek rooms with city vistas, this hotel is close to the concert venue. Three restaurants and a rooftop pool make for a wholesome stay.

Kintex by K-tree

The hotel has an eye-catching façade and is also not too far away. They have a cinema too.

K-Hills The Terrace

Located in Paju-si, this lakefront property, with balconies, offers stunning views of the city.





Zaha Hadid, is a cultural centre straight out of science fiction. Inside its sensuously-curved form are rotating exhibits, a design museum, and chic stores. Don't miss the rooftop lawns for some iconic views.

Stretch your legs and catch some respite at Cheonggyecheon Stream, a regenerated stream and urban park sprawling across 11km (which passes under 22 bridges) downtown. Once covered by a highway, it's now a vibrant urban space much loved by locals and visitors alike.

WHAT TO EAT

A hearty bowl of bibimbap is a must, and Gogung serves this wholesome goodness of rice topped with vegetables, meats, and egg yolk in earthen bowls. Be sure to get kimchi and some banchan (side dishes) too. For Korean barbeque, head to Namyeongdon, a name quite literally meaning 'a mouth full of delicious pig'. Servers grill the cuts of hangjeongsal (pork shoulder) and gabrisal (pork jowl) to perfection. For contemporary fine dining, two-Michelinstarred Mingles shines

with assorted mandu (dumplings), seon (steamed vegetables stuffed with meat), sundae (pork sausages), and doenjang (soybean) crème brûlée.

WHERE TO SHOP

Namdaemun, in the city centre, has everything from snacks to hanboks (traditional clothing). Myeong-dong is a must for skincare and fashion brands. For handmade crafts sold by artists, go to Hongdae Free Market. Lastly, there is Starfield COEX Mall, said to be the largest underground mall in Asia.

FACING PAGE

Cherry blossoms in Seoul typically bloom from early to mid-April

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

The Changing of the Guard ceremony at Gyeongbokgung Palace; Namdaemun Market is the best place to pick up souvenirs; Dongdaemun Design Plaza is renowned for its 24-hour shopping and cafés.

TIME TO PLAY

Even as you rock with Metallica live, make the most of this historic, cultural, and culinary metropolis

words by Kiran Mehta













hiladelphia is the 'birthplace of America'. This is where the Founding Fathers came together to create a free nation. Locals quip that visitors come for history but stay for the cheesesteaks. Work off the extra pounds by strolling through museums that introduce you to Vincent van Gogh, Picasso, and other greats. Or walk through neighbourhoods, splashed with colour, where murals are a tool for social justice.

WHERE TO GO

The city has many historic sites but two icons top the list. Step into Independence Hall, an 18th-century Georgian building and **UNESCO** World Heritage Site, where the Declaration of Independence was signed. Close by is the

Liberty Bell Center. The bell, installed in the mid-1700s, is a symbol of freedom.

Philly also sports over 4,000 murals, spread across the city. Ironically, the extensive wall art is the result of an anti-graffiti movement dated 40-odd years ago. Sign up for a tour and hear the backstory behind each artwork.

Finally, pose with a lifesize statue of the ultimate underdog, Rocky Balboa, a character portrayed by Sylvester Stallone. Or, recreate a scene from Rocky by sprinting up the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art (which houses works by artists Paul Cézanne and Auguste Rodin).

WHAT TO EAT

Cheesesteak can be found everywhere, from delis to street carts. The origin

story dates back almost a century ago to Pat and Harry Oliveri, who ran a hot-dog stand. Bored with their lunch, they threw in shredded meat and sliced onions into their hotdog. A passing cabbie wanted to try it. The rest is history. The Oliveri family still runs Pat's King of Steaks in South Philly. Across from Pat's is stiff competition in the form of Geno's Steaks.

For fine dining, treat yourself to SkyHigh at Comcast Center.

WHERE TO SHOP

Bring back fridge magnets shaped like cheesesteaks, from the Independence Visitor Center. Chinatown is home to beauty stores and gift shops. A 45-minute drive away is Philadelphia Premium Outlets, where you will find branded clothing and accessories.



Metallica: Lincoln Financial Field on 23rd and 25th May

Watch the kings of heavy metal live in concert.

WHERE TO STAY

The Ritz-Carlton, Philadelphia

This neoclassical landmark property, dating back to 1908, is located close to the venue.

W Philadelphia

Luxurious yet laidback, this hotel boasts 1970s-inspired décor and is pet friendly.

The Rittenhouse Hotel

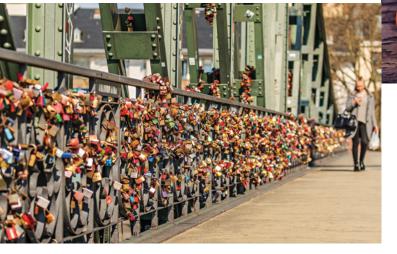
This boutique property spells elegance and offers a relaxing atrium pool.

ROCK WITH THE BOSS

Headed for the Bruce Springsteen concert? Take time to explore the city's attractions—from medieval buildings to apple wine







iversity could very well be Frankfurt's last name. but it is really 'am Main', which literally translates to 'Frankfurt on the Main' (river). This buzzing German city is popular as the financial capital and the bustle on the streets reflects the moniker. It is best viewed on foot or via trams (Straßenbahn). There are also convenient train options and batteryoperated scooters at every nook and corner.

Cabs might be a bit heavy on the pocket but are reliable, especially through apps like FREENOW and Uber. Given the lovely weather in June (a pleasant 14°C to 24°C), a walk along

the river, with a light jacket in tow, is unmissable. If a busy city is not your vibe, Frankfurt also offers a variety of parks and ponds for a relaxed stroll.

WHERE TO GO

Get a bird's-eye view of the city from atop the Main Tower. If floral blooms are what you fancy, the Palmengarten is a must visit. Also, don't miss out on medieval buildings in the centre, like the City Hall (Frankfurter Römer) and stop by the bridge of locks (Eiserner Steg) on the Main river.

WHAT TO EAT

Döner, of course. You can't be in Frankfurt and not eat Germany's favourite

fast food. The Meral Imbiss boat-restaurant is the perfect 'sandwich with a view' option. For traditional German dishes like Schnitzel (veal escalope, breaded and fried) or Bratwurst (sausage), step into the colourful Zum Gemalten Haus restaurant on Schweizer Straße. An absolute must-try here is Frankfurt's special green sauce (Grüne Soße), made with seven fresh herbs, served with fried potatoes.

Frankfurt is also known for its apples, which makes the apple wine (Apfelwein/ Ebbelwoi) the star of any restaurant you plan to visit. We wouldn't dare pick one beer as the best, because all German beer is good.

WHERE TO SHOP

A walk through Zeil, the shopping street, offers luxury brands like Louis Vuitton, Massimo Dutti, Rolex, and Chanel, and high street brands like Zara, Birkenstock, Adidas, and Puma. For souvenirs, head to the shops near Frankfurter Römer.



Bruce Springsteen: Deutsche Bank Park on 18th June

You'll love dancing in the dark with Springsteen and the F Street Band as he performs his hit songs.

WHERE TO

Lindner Frankfurt **Sportpark**

A Hyatt hotel, it is a favourite among sports fans and in close proximity to the concert venue.

Leonardo Hotel Frankfurt City Center

This property has rooms for solo travellers and is a short cab ride away from the venue.

Blasky Hotel Frankfurt

Located close to the concert venue, it offers e-bikes and has a rooftop restaurant.



ALWAYS ON THE GO

Want to see Dua Lipa live? Plan a trip around her concert and make it an experience with sights, bites, and shopping

words by **Debobrata Dutta**

The CN Tower is said to be the tallest free-standing structure in the Western Hemisphere

FACING PAGE

(Clockwise from top)
Ripley's Aquarium of
Canada; Browse
St. Lawrence Market for
souvenirs; Bar Isabel offers
tapas and cocktails; Casa
Loma is a heritage landmark.



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Toronto from Delhi. oronto isn't just Canada's biggest city—it's a whole mood. A place where global cultures mix as seamlessly as a Dua Lipa remix. It is packed with energy, history, and some of the best culinary fare you'll ever taste. Whether you're a first-timer or a repeat visitor, there's always something new to explore.

WHERE TO GO

Toronto is one of those few cities that engages all ages and preferences. If you love a visual feast, the Art Gallery of Ontario's massive collection—including works by the Group of Seven, Peter Paul Rubens, and Yayoi Kusama—is a must visit. Fancy a castle experience? Casa Loma is your wish come true. Wander through its grand halls, hidden tunnels, and lush gardens, to pretend you're in a fairytale.

Motor enthusiasts will love the Automotive Museum, displaying a stellar collection of turn-ofthe-century cars. You can alternatively take in jawdropping views from the CN Tower or enjoy a scenic walk along the waterfront. For marine lovers, the Ripley's Aquarium of Canada is a total splash—you must walk through the fascinating underwater tunnel.

Green seekers can soak up fresh air at its many open spaces, including the charming Berczy Park (complete with the iconic dog fountain) and the scenic Ann Tindal Park along the waterfront, or go big with a stroll through Queen's Park or the sprawling High Park













Arena on 1st and 2nd September Expect fire vocals, flawless choreography, and a whole lot of energy. You bring the vibes, Toronto will handle the rest.

WHAT TO EAT

A true-blue Toronto feast should include poutine, peameal bacon, butter tart, and Corned Beef Sandwich (Schwartz's-style), but there's more to the city's culinary offerings. You could start with PAI Northern Thai Kitchen that serves authentic Thai street food. Do try their Khao Soi; it is life changing.

If a cosy ambience and

light-bites are what you seek, make your way to Michelin-starred Bar Isabel for Spanish-style tapas, candlelit vibes, and some of the best cocktails in townperfect for a pre-show indulgence.

The Keg Mansion also deserves mention. A true Canadian classic, this steakhouse serves up toptier cuts in a Romanesque-Gothic heritage building.

WHERE TO SHOP

Browse through artisanal goods and local souvenirs at St. Lawrence Market. For a more upbeat vibe, check out Queen Street West. This hip stretch has everything from indie boutiques to big-name brands. Those looking for deals, Vaughan Mills and **Toronto Premium Outlets** are worth the trip. They offer discounts on designer and branded goods.

WHERE TO **STAY**

The Ritz-Carlton, Toronto

This five-star property boasts lake views and a spa, and is walking distance from the venue.

Shangri-La Toronto

This stylish stay features live music in the lounge and is a few minutes by car.

Bisha Hotel Toronto

A chic hotel with a rooftop bar, it is five minutes away by car.

LEFT AND RIGHT

Fans cheer in Copenhagen as Coldplay performs during their Music of the Spheres World Tour in the city; Ed Sheeran brought his Mathematics tour to India this year. arly in 2024,
when it became
clear that India
would not be on
Taylor Swift's 'Swiftonomics'
map, many observers of the
experience economy in the
country felt that the global
icon had underestimated
India's potential in the

sector. As the year unfolded, Indian fans gave artistes, organisers, and allied sectors of the experience economy enough reasons to cheer—mimicking the success of Swift's muchstudied Singapore tour.

By the time The Eras
Tour ended—held after the

successful tour of British band Coldplay—Singapore had witnessed a spurt in tourism activity with a combined sale of 5,00,000 tickets, concluded the Monetary Authority of Singapore in April 2024. The organisation endorsed private estimates that this





concert economy brought in between US\$257 million and US\$330 million in the first three months of 2024.

A GLOBAL MANIA

Back home, event organisers capitalised on other music acts, like the multi-city tour of Punjabi singer and

actor Diljit Dosanjh, who could be credited with helping the concert-centric experience economy mature in India. Dosanih not only attracted fans in hordes in the country, many of whom travelled across cities to watch him, his foreign tours were also marked by new highs in ticket sales.

According to Dosanjh's manager, Sonali Singh, the North American shows (as part of the Dil-Luminati tour) earned him around ₹234 crore. Dosanjh mania did not stop there. If 80,000 fans were waiting to get inside the concert venue in the UK, about 30,000 tickets were sold for his Abu Dhabi concert. When he resumed

his India tour in October, it became usual practice that all tickets were sold out online within minutes.

LARGEST STADIUM CONCERT IN THE WORLD

Coldplay was touted as the next big thing on the concert circuit in India with its multi-city tour in January 2025. And it did live up to the hype, continuing the momentum created by Dosanjh and other artistes like Bryan Adams.

Not just that, Coldplay performed for two days in Ahmedabad, totalling the attendee count to around 2.23 lakh, making it one of the largest stadium concerts ever.

Even its original ticket seller. BookMvShow, the market leader in online ticket-booking business, has been posting significant revenue increases in the live events segment. In 2022-23, it posted a rise in this segment by 9.5 per cent over the previous financial year to ₹237 crore. In 2023–24, it consolidated its live-events gains, hitting a revenue of ₹455 crore.

The success of Coldplay's India tour also compelled Prime Minister Narendra Modi to push for concerts as an important segment of the economy. "Big artistes from around the world are attracted to India. I expect the state and the



"In the coming years, the extended impact of the concert economy can touch a figure between ₹6,000 crore and ₹8,000 crore in consumer spending."

—Bank of Baroda Research Team private sector to focus on developing necessary infrastructure and skills for the concert economy," the PM said.

A SIDE OF TRAVEL

Increasingly, Indians now travel abroad to catch their favourite artistes. Avani Patel, a business consultant who also runs a travel company based in Anand, Gujarat, has been a die-hard Coldplay fan since her college days in the UK. "I could not snag tickets for the Mumbai show. However, a friend in Doha managed two tickets for their Abu Dhabi concert. I was on my way back from the US and my niece Nandini joined me

on the trip, flying in from India," she says.

The aunt-niece duo enjoyed themselves in Abu Dhabi on an itinerary that explains the concept of the experience economy. They spent half a day at the Louvre, relaxed at Yas Mall, and also fit in trips to Universal Studios and Ferrari World.

In India, the trend now also encompasses segments like food and beverages, hotels, transport, general tourism, and merchandising. And it's in top gear. A team of economists at the Bank of Baroda Research estimated the size of the concert economy and its offshoots in December 2024, noting that a big concert pushes spending ranging from around ₹1,600 to ₹2,000 crore within two to three months from its announcement. The team also noted that in the coming years, the extended impact of the concert economy can touch a figure between ₹6,000 crore and ₹8,000 crore in consumer spending.

With a long list of international artistes scheduled to perform in India this year (Shawn Mendes and Green Day, among others), it's safe to say that the experience economy will only drum up more business in the future.

THE PEOPLE

33 O CONSCIOUS TRAVELLER



DEFENDER

- JOURNEYS | EDITION III



THAR

Jaipur - Jaisalmer - Udaipur

18 NOV - 21 NOV '24 4D / 3N

27 NOV - 3 DEC '24 7D / 6N

25 DEC - 31 DEC '24 7D / 6N



KONKAN

7D / 6N

Goa - Bekal - Bengaluru 11 JAN - 17 JAN '25

Bengaluru - Bekal - Goa 08 FEB - 14 FEB '25 7D / 6N



DRUK YUL

Siliguri - Paro - Siliguri

01 MAR - 08 MAR '25 8D / 7N

11 MAR - 18 MAR '25 8D / 7N

20 MAR - 27 MAR '25

8D / 7N

12 MAY -19 MAY'25 8D / 7N



BRAHMAPUTRA

Guwahati - Tawang - Guwahati

10 APR - 17 APR '25 8D / 7N

22 APR - 29 APR '25 8D / 7N

01 MAY - 08 MAY '25 8D / 7N



LADAKH HIMALAYAN

Chandigarh - Nubra - Leh

07 JUN - 15 JUN '25 9D / 8N

30 AUG - 07 SEPT '25 9D / 8N



ZANSKAR HIMALAYAN

Leh - Purne - Chandigarh

15 JUN - 23 JUN '25 9D / 8N

14 SEPT - 22 SEPT '25 9D / 8N



SPITI HIMALAYAN

Chandigarh-Kaza-Chandigarh

25 JUN - 03 JUL '25

9D / 8N

05 JUL- 13 JUL '25

9D / 8N

15 JUL - 23JUL'25

9D / 8N

24 SEPT - 02 OCT '25

9D / 8N



UMLING LA HIMALAYAN

Leh - Hanle - Leh

07 SEPT - 14 SEPT '25 8D / 7N

The itineraries & dates listed above are indicative and subject to change without prior intimation.

ROARING THROUGH THE THAR: THE ULTIMATE DEFENDER EXPERIENCE

Defender Journeys is a series of curated travel and luxury lifestyle adventures to explore India's diverse terrains, cuisines and culture, behind the wheels of the iconic Defender.

eady for the drive of a lifetime: a luxurious road trip that redefines the art of travel? Then join Defender Journeys, a first-of-itskind luxury self-drive experiential program. Each journey is thoughtfully designed, encompassing the drive through epic landscapes, encounters with diverse cultures, an array of cuisines and world-renowned luxury stays. These specially curated trips across awe-inspiring vistas are designed to give travellers a chance to explore India's myriad landscapes while navigating through challenging terrains. From the stark beauty of Ladakh to the mountainous curves of Bhutan, from the green grandeur of Guwahati to the wild majesty of Kaziranga, these journeys offer elevating experiences like none other.

Apart from traversing varied terrains, the trip is also designed keeping Indian culture in mind, with some of the finest luxury stays and local cuisines built into the experience.

A dedicated team of expert instructors ensures that the rides are extremely pleasurable and completely hassle-free.

THAR JOURNEY - A DESERT ADVENTURE

The third edition kicked off with the Thar Journey, a spectacular trip that winds its way through Rajasthan, connecting the vibrant 'Pink City' — Jaipur with the serene 'City of Lakes' — Udaipur. The route through Jaipur-Khimsar-Bikaner-Jaisalmer-Jawai-Udaipur gave travellers an immersive experience of Rajasthan's vibrant culture, historic palaces and forts, and delectable cuisine.

Day One of the Thar Journey began with a scenic drive from Jaipur to Khimsar, followed by an exciting expedition to Bikaner. As participants explored the city, a visit to the revered Shree Karni

Mata Deshnok temple proved to be a fascinating highlight, thanks to its unique claim to fame: sacred rats that roam the premises.

The next morning, the journey continued to Jaisalmer, where the group embarked on a historic drive to Tanot Mata and Longewala. These iconic border landmarks, steeped in history, gave a poignant glimpse into the region's storied past.

One of the travellers on this journey recalled the excitement and shared that the experience of driving on the sand dunes was out of this world as the Defender was extremely capable, and could tackle all sorts of terrain.

The journey culminated in an exhilarating leopard safari in Jawai, followed by a breathtaking drive to Udaipur, the picturesque City of Lakes. Throughout the journey, clients indulged in luxurious stays at iconic hotels like Khimsar Fort, Narendra Bhavan, and Suryagarh Jaisalmer. In addition to the thrilling drives, they also savoured Rajasthan's renowned authentic cuisine, immersing themselves in the local flavours and aromas that define this vibrant region.

Ready to embark on your own Defender Journey?

Visit https://www.landrover.in/experiences/defender-journeys.html for more information.



"THE BIGGER THE PROBLEM, THE CALMER I AM"

Two-time Michelin star recipient Chef Garima Arora recently opened Banng, her first-ever restaurant in India

words by Geetika Sasan Bhandari

YOU'RE THE FIRST INDIAN WOMAN TO WIN TWO MICHELIN STARS AND RETAIN THEM. WHAT IS YOUR ADVICE TO BUDDING CHEFS?

Hard work. That's always my advice to any chef who's starting off in my kitchen. There are no shortcuts; you keep your head down, you work hard, that will always pay off. A lot of times they say that young chefs start chasing the glamour of being a 'celebrity chef'. but that simply does not exist. Being a chef is hard work. It's long hours on your feet. It's literally through cuts and bleeds that you gain your reputation and your success. So, this profession is anything but glamorous. But sometimes it's misrepresented in the media and people think that it's a very easy job, but it's not.

WHAT WERE THE APPREHENSIONS WHEN YOU OPENED GAA IN BANGKOK WITH INDIAN CUISINE?

At that point, the best restaurant in Asia was in Bangkok and it was an Indian restaurant. But when you are young, you are bolder and take more risks, and you feel that you're bulletproof in so many ways. So, I didn't think about what could go wrong. I was only 28/29 when we thought about opening Gaa. With a little bit more experience in hindsight, if I had to do the same thing today, I probably wouldn't. But back then I was ready to start with what I wanted to do with Indian food and, luckily, it paid off.









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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT
Tom Kha Pani Puri is already hugely popular at Banng; The Grilled
Chicken is crispy perfection; Coconut ice cream with Khanom Bueang
Waffle Shells features on the dessert menu.

NOW YOU'RE DOING THE REVERSE—BRINGING THAI FOOD TO INDIA VIA BANNG. WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

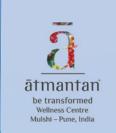
There are some young chefs like Chef Seefah [Ketchaiyo] and other Thai chefs who are doing amazing work. But before her, or earlier when we had Thai chefs coming and cooking, I felt for the longest time that what I'd experienced in India wasn't a real representation of Thai cuisine. It's how Indian cuisine is represented in a certain way outside of India, where there are two or three dishes that are tweaked to suit the local audience. The original Tom Yum or the green curry or the stir-friesthey are very different from how they're actually done in Thailand.

So, what we're trying to do is bring those real flavours. And we're doing that by

producing all our curry paste here. All the ingredients are coming fresh from Thailand and we're staying true to herbs and spices as much as possible. So, it's a lot of hard work—more than just making the menu. It's putting together the logistics of the ingredients to get to Delhi in time and making sure that the flavours are 100 per cent or as close to being authentic as possible. But that's not to say that we don't have fun with it. I mean, the Tom Kha Pani Puri, which people absolutely love at Banng, is a must-order. Every table orders and preorders that.

YOU JUST OPENED
BANNG AND HAVE
DELIVERED YOUR
SECOND CHILD—YOU'RE
STRADDLING TWO
COUNTRIES, TWO
RESTAURANTS, AND





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LEFT AND RIGHT Banng evokes a distinct vibe in its decor as well; Chatuchak Champa references the popular weekend market of Bangkok.



I LEFT MY COUNTRY **WANTING TO WORK** WITH FRENCH CHEFS... NOBODY WAS TALKING ABOUT INDIAN FOOD. **BUT 20 YEARS LATER,** TO SEE THIS TREND **COME AROUND... WAS** OVERWHELMING.

NOW, TWO KIDS. WHAT DO YOU DO FOR A MOMENT OF CALM WHEN THINGS GET OUT OF CONTROL?

It's never easy, especially as women, to balance your professional and personal life. But I'm very lucky. I am surrounded by some very supportive people, whether it is my team or my husband. For me, the busier I am, the more calm. The bigger the problem, the calmer I am.

HOW DIFFICULT IS IT TO BE A WOMAN IN WHAT IS PERCEIVED AS A MALE-DOMINATED **PROFESSION? HAVE YOU**

HAD TO WORK HARDER TO PROVE YOURSELF?

Absolutely not. I have never experienced any bias but I'm not saying it doesn't exist; it probably does. But I've always maintained that there is no big conspiracy theory to keep women out it's always been open and there have been successful women in this profession earlier as well. It's just not been a lot because it may appear like a very glamorous industry but it is a difficult, physically-demanding profession. That is why you don't see a lot of women even today as compared to some other professions.

I've been very lucky to work with some amazing chefs where I don't think I have been stopped or given less responsibility because of my gender or race.

WHAT DID JUDGING **MASTERCHEF INDIA SEASON 7 IN 2023 TEACH** YOU ABOUT NEW INDIA?

It was my first time back in India for a longer period after 14 or 15 years and I saw young chefs, home chefs, so proud of their regional cuisine, their micro cuisines, ingredients from their part of the country, and how much they wanted to showcase that. The conviction in their

efforts was remarkable to see. And this pride that I saw in new India was amazing. I left my country wanting to work with French chefsback then, nobody was talking about Indian food. But almost 20 years later, to see this trend come around and the pride—it was very overwhelming.

ANY OTHER CUISINE YOU'RE LIKELY TO **EXPLORE IN THE FUTURE?**

Professionally, for now, it's Thai cuisine. We're going to open more Banngs in Indiathe next one, hopefully, in Mumbai in the middle of the year. So, watch out for that.





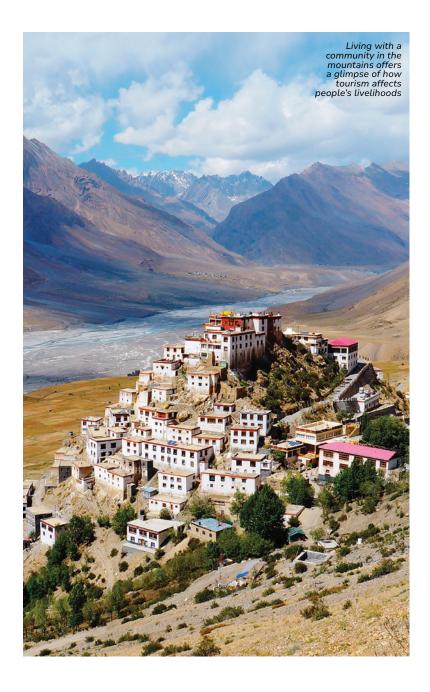




SOJOURNS THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Community tourism empowers people living in remote areas, ensures authentic experiences, and makes you a more responsible explorer

words by Ayswarrya



e share a world with a common future. While appreciating its beauty and numerous wonders, we're also responsible for respecting its sanctity and diversity. Community tourism offers a way to travel with awareness—by immersing ourselves in local cultures, supporting local livelihoods, and understanding how travel choices impact the world.

As a 33-year-old woman traveling solo since 2013, my most valuable lessons have come from local communities. Whether it's sharing meals, listening to stories or learning traditional crafts, these interactions have shaped how I travel and see the world.

WHY COMMUNITY TOURISM?

When you're a city dweller like me trying to do it all—juggling a 9-to-6 job, ensuring one's personal well-being, plus fulfilling responsibilities towards family and friends—it's easy to feel disconnected from the environmental and social impact of our choices.

But when you step into a local community, those connections become clear. You see first-hand how tourism affects people's livelihoods, the land they live on, and the traditions they preserve. You also witness its unintended consequences—waste in glacial streams, forests, and remote villages.

Community tourism allows travellers to be part of the solution. It gives locals a say in how tourism develops while providing travellers with a soulful insight into a place. Staying in family-run homestays and travelling with indigenous guides enrich your journey and help sustain communities that rely on tourism.

SEE IT IN ACTION

When I visited Spiti, I stayed in Demul, a village where residents curate your experience. In summer, they farm and send produce to cities, while winter is reserved for weaving carpets. Summer also brings travellers, with homestays assigned by a village representative. This approach distributes tourism income fairly while giving travellers an immersive way to connect with village life.

During my stay, I cooked with my host family, spun yak wool into rope, fixed their smartphone while chatting about life in Mumbai, and spent nights under a sky full of stars. Demul offered a glimpse of a way of life shaped by shared resources and traditions. But even in this high-altitude haven, 4,320m above sea level, plastic waste could be spotted, a stark reminder of tourism's impact.

In Arunachal Pradesh's

Bishum Phudung, near
Dirang, I hiked the
Shapchang trail, walking
alongside a river sacred
to the native tribes. Along
the way, I witnessed the
la-shoichi rituals, where
villagers gather to honour
nature—while sharing meals
and home-made rice beer in
a picnic-like setting.

But here again, discarded snack wrappers and beverage packets could be found lying between foliage. No matter how deep into the wilderness I ventured, traces of consumer culture followed, a reminder of irresponsible choices.

DISCOVER COMMON CONNECTIONS

Closer home, I went on a sensory experience to the Aarey forest in Mumbai. Our host from the Maroshi hamlet led us through the area, informing us of its biodiversity and ways of indigenous co-existence alongside the urban sprawl. She spoke of their struggle to protect what remains of green spaces and water.

The walk ended with an open-air cooking session, where 10 city dwellers became a temporary forest community—sharing stories over a meal and talking about art, nature, and ways to preserve what's left.

These experiences remind me to be more conscious of my travel choices and make me realise that community tourism can be a force for good, ensuring that the places we visit continue to thrive long after we leave.



COMMUNITY TOURISM GIVES LOCAL RESIDENTS A SAY IN HOW TOURISM DEVELOPS.









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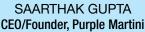
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A RAINBOW OF SENSATIONAL OFFERINGS AT PURPLE MARTINI

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









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!

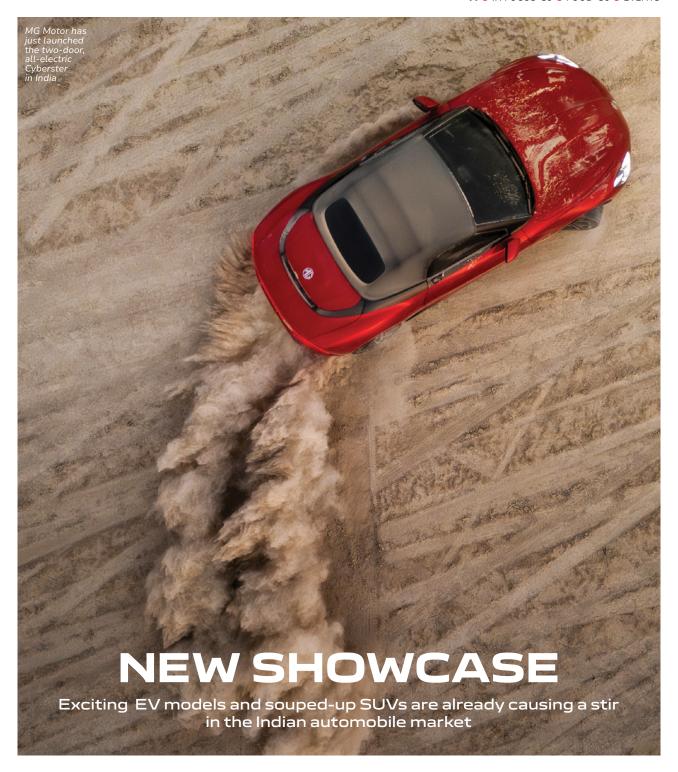
Disclaimer: Connectivity details are subject to change. Please visit airindia.com for the latest flight schedules.

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4G Motor

CHECKLIST

44 €) IN FOCUS 50 €) FOOD 56 €) EVENTS



FULL OF DRIVE

The Indian automotive sector is in top gear this season. Here are some of the new launches that we test drove and picked out for you

words by Riaan Jacob George

For Indian car enthusiasts—and consumers—the year got off to an excellent start with major brands coming out with new, innovative models. In the wake of an extremely well-received Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, here are our choices—from electrified versions of the cult G-Wagon and Creta to nifty electric sports vehicles—there is a lot to look forward to.



TATA MOTORS HARRIER.EV

Price not announced

Tata Motors is stepping up its electric SUV game with this launch. The traditional avatar has garnered a significant fan base in India and this electric iteration retains the SUV's rugged road stance. The car delivers in terms of highway and city road performance with its Quad Wheel Drive (QWD), which produces a hefty 500Nm of torque. Cabin experience has become a focus lately for Tata Motors and this SUV features an interactive infotainment system, ambient lighting, and an overall futuristic, minimalist design, with plush seats. The rear row also sees a major upgrade with multiple charging points, an increased sense of space, and soothing colour tones.

Why buy? Homegrown luxury



Why buy? An electrified cult icon

on a single charge.

most important part, it promises a range of 473km







₹17.99 lakh The Creta has a massive fan following in India due to its smart design, reliability, and tech features. Hyundai takes it one step further this season by launching its Creta Electric, built with a 51.4 kWh

HYUNDAI CRETA ELECTRIC

battery, promising a range of 473km on a single charge (for the higher variant), an impressive feat for an ideal city-cum-family SUV. Barring a few design touches on the grille and bumpers, this model retains the quintessential design. It's the cabin that gets us raving with its nifty 10.25-inch screen. The digital driver

graphics while the seats are designed to minimise any fatigue. A fantastic package all rolled into one. Why buy? A bestseller's new avatar

display is laden with immersive



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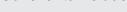




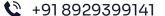














KIA SYROS

₹9 lakh onwards

We're huge fans of Kia's design language and constant focus on technology and safety. The Korean manufacturer, hugely popular in India, got the market interested in its new SUV, the Syros, with its eye-catching geometric design. We test drove the car and found it to be a performer, both under the hood and inside the cabin. It is a safetyfirst design with Level 2 ADAS and 16 autonomous safety features. The Syros scores high for the rear passenger experience with, for the first time, ventilated, sliding, and reclining seats, paired with USB

C-type chargers. Technology, as always, is impressive in Kia cars and this one comes with a massive sweeping 30-inch Trinity Panoramic Display connected to the navigation cockpit and features 64 ambient mood lighting colours in the cabin. Why buy? For the futuristic design and safety quotient



MG CYBERSTER

Price not announced

MG Motor pulled a rabbit out of the hat with its two-door, all-electric sports car the Cyberster, which is also called the world's fastest MG, sprinting from 0 to 100kmph in 3.2 seconds, pumping out a thumping 725Nm of torque. A Bose sound system, ultra-sporty interiors with leather and metallic trims, make it a delight to drive, topped with a multi-screen cockpit. We are thrilled to see a host of hard keys on the interactive centre console, for most of the main features. The statement element of this car is the scissor doors that turn heads. Inspired by the original MG B, the Cyberster is the best-looking e-sports car in the Indian market right now and will find many takers in India.

Why buy? For the scissor doors



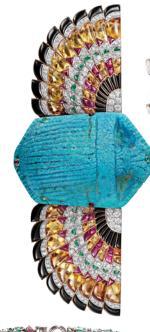


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OF ROYAL LINEAGE

A major retrospective featuring over 350 pieces of fine jewellery from Cartier, will open in London this April



he Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in South Kensington, London, is set to host a landmark exhibition showcasing over 350 pieces of fine jewellery from Cartier, the iconic French house. The exhibit, which will run from April to November 2025, will feature some of the maison's most celebrated creations, including the Scroll tiara (1902), worn by the wife of Winston Churchill, Clementine, to the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. This was also worn by Rihanna on the cover of W magazine in 2016.

Another piece on display will be Grace Kelly's engagement ring (1956), a piece from the Monaco Princely Palace Collection, famously worn by the actress in her final film, High Society.

Founded by Louis-François Cartier in 1847, the house has dressed royalty over the decades, and is credited with crafting renowned designs like the Panthère necklace, the Love bracelet, the Crash watch,



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

The Scarab Brooch (1925) is adorned with rubies, emeralds, diamonds, and other gems; Commissioned for the Countess of Essex, the diamond Scroll tiara is from 1902; The Crash wristwatch was made by Wright & Davies for Cartier (1967); The Patiala Necklace (1928) was especially made for Bhupinder Singh, Maharaja of Patiala; Once owned by Edwina Mountbatten, this bandeau has emeralds, rubies, and sapphires.

and the Trinity ring. This exhibit will chronicle many of these iconic designs and showcase the evolution of Cartier since the 20th century.

At The Sainsbury Gallery (the V&A) from 12th April to 16th November 2025



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to London (Heathrow) from Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, and (Gatwick) from Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Kochi, and Goa.





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







TRAVEL MEETS TRANQUILLITY

Named after Bengaluru's trunk dial code, the 080 Lounges at T2 of BLR Airport are an ode to the Garden City





here's something about Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru (BLR Airport) that lingers in the memory.

Maybe it's the sprawling greenery of T2,
The Terminal in a Garden, or the seamless efficiency, but if you've stepped into the 080 Lounges at T2, you know—that's where the journey truly changes. Named after Bengaluru's trunk dial code, the 080 Lounges are an ode to the Garden City. With culture-infused interiors, local artistry, and botanical elements, every space tells a story.

WHERE TRAVEL PAUSES, TRUE COMFORT BEGINS

As weary travellers find themselves at the 080 Domestic Lounge on Level 4 of T2, they are transported at once as each space whispers of Karnataka's culture and heritage. Here, the grandeur of history meets the sophistication of the present. As designer Payal Khanna puts it, "A soulful design born from love and dedication—that's the heart of the 080 Lounges." The air is rich with the aroma of freshly brewed Coorg coffee, as a quiet corner in the Kodagu Café transports them to the coffee estates of Chikmagalur. They settle in, drawn to a menu curated by celebrity chef Ranveer Brar. The dishes tell a story of Karnataka—fresh, locally sourced

ingredients woven into global cuisines. The warmth of the Courtyard Club, the music at Radio House which references the city's pub culture—all come together to create a lounge celebrated for its 'Sense of Place'. No wonder the 080 Domestic Lounge earned the 'Airport Lounge of the Year' at the FAB Awards—an honour that recognises excellence in airport F&B globally. "The 080 Lounge aims to showcase the vibrant spirit of Karnataka while offering a world-class experience. By championing local artistry, hyperlocal flavours, and cultural design, it transforms travel into a sensory journey," says Chief Commercial Officer Kenneth R. Guldbjerg.

A GLIMPSE OF INDIA

The minute you step into the 080 International Lounge at T2, the hustle and

bustle of the terminal halts. Walking around, you realise how multifaceted India is as each area showcases her plurality. At The Talkies Bar, a signature cocktail makes you forget you're between time zones; the Tea Lounge offers delicate blends and rich aromas that pay a tribute to North-east India; Haveli, a salon and spa inspired by Rajasthan's grand palaces, offers R&R amidst indulgence.

A GENTLE LANDING

Then there's the moment you return.

Stepping off a flight, exhausted, but not quite ready to dive into the city's energy just yet.

That's when Level 0's 080 Arrivals Lounge feels like a welcome home. A fresh artisan coffee, a quick but thoughtful meal, a deep breath before heading into Bengaluru.

A COCOON OF STILLNESS

For some, the journey demands more than a moment—it needs adequate rest. That's where the soon-to-be-opened 080 Transit Hotel will come in. Inspired by Karnataka's silk cocoons, this hotel will offer private rooms, 24/7 service, and a place to recharge. If you've ever had a layover that felt too short to book a hotel but too long to sit in a chair, you know just how much this space really matters.







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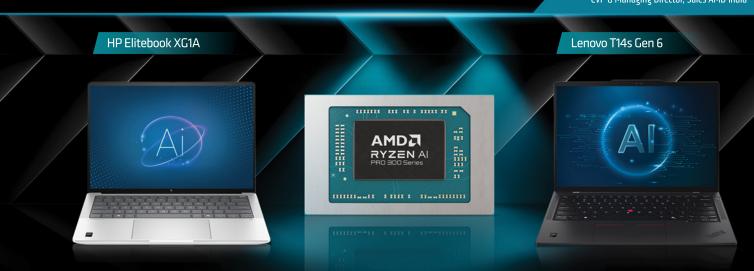
AMD Ryzen™ AI PRO 300 Series Processors also prioritize enterprise-grade security and manageability. AMD PRO technologies

ensure robust, hardware-based security without compromising performance, offering businesses exceptional ROI with faster deployment and enterprise-quality reliability.

These processors are engineered for the AI era, empowering Microsoft Copilot+ experiences to streamline productivity while ensuring enhanced privacy, whisper-quiet operation, and extended battery life. Imagine effortlessly juggling video calls, data analysis, presentations, and email tasks—all seamlessly powered by AMD's cutting-edge technology.

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VINAY SINHA CVP & Managing Director, Sales AMD India





GET STRETCH GO

Find a physical and spiritual connection at the International Yoga Festival in Rishikesh this March

ith over 2,000 participants from around the world, this annual festival that celebrates and propagates overall wellness will, once again, take place along the banks of the Ganges. The seven-day celebration brings together practitioners of yoga from all over—from students and teachers to noted experts. Held at one of the largest interfaith yoga institutions in India, it offers the opportunity to embrace every major style of yoga.

The programme offers an extensive choice for attendees from

4am to 5pm, continuing to 10pm with traditional *kirtans*, *aartis*, and cultural performances by the river banks. This event, which was founded in 1999, incorporates over 70 hours of yoga classes from world-class teachers practicing multiple styles, including *kundalini* yoga, power *vinyasa* yoga, lyengar yoga, and *kriya* yoga. The Sacred Sound Stage showcases several aspects of the yoga of sound, including *nāda* yoga experiences, Sanskrit mantra workshops, sound healing, and more.

At Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, from 9th to 15th March







Bengaluru.

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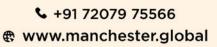
Ms Ruchi Rawat

BA BEd MA MPhil
Principal - CBSE

RECOGNITIONS









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8 Dishes NII ONDON

From a deeply-satisfying truffle pasta to the ultimate chocolate chip cookie, celebrated baker and cookbook author Shivesh Bhatia points you in the right gourmet direction

BIANG BIANG **NOODLES**

I have a soft spot for noodles, and these were love at first bite. Thick and chewy, they soaked up the fiery, garlicky sauce like a dream. Each slurp packed a punch of bold, comforting flavours that warmed me from the inside out. It's messy, satisfying, and exactly the kind of food you crave when you want a big bowl of happiness. The eatery has been going viral, so be prepared for the queue. Where to try it: The Noodle Inn, Old Compton Street

HOT CHOCOLATE

I love visiting London in winter. The cold weather calls for a hug in a mug and this hot chocolate is just that. I tried the rich, dark blend, and what made it unforgettable was the gingerbread marshmallow on top. Fluffy, spiced, and slightly caramelised as it melted into the hot beveragethis topping was pure magic. I've never had a hot chocolate experience quite like this. It's cosy, indulgent, and just makes you feel all warm and

Where to try it: Knoops, at multiple locations in London



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One bite of this dish and I felt like I'd stumbled upon edible gold. The creamy sauce was rich, with that unmistakable earthy truffle aroma, and the pasta was perfectly al dente. Each bite was a little love letter to my taste buds. It's one of those dishes that makes you want to close your eyes and just savour every mouthful. Trust me, this one's worth the hype.

Where to try it: Osteria Romana, Park Close



O PISTACHIO CHOCOLATE ESCARGOT

When I first saw this, I couldn't resist grabbing one—it looked too good to pass up. This flaky, snail-shaped pastry, filled with rich chocolate and topped with crunchy pistachios, was everything I didn't know I needed in a dessert. It's buttery, indulgent, and every bite was a reminder of why I love pastries this much.

Where to try it: Arôme Bakery, Mercer Street and Duke Street





O BLACK TRUFFLED SCRAMBLED EGGS ON TOAST + FRENCH TOAST WITH BLUEBERRY COMPOTE & CRÈME CRUE

Breakfast is my favourite meal of the day, and these options took it to the next level. The truffle scrambled eggs were so creamy and packed with flavour, it felt like luxury on a plate. But then came the blueberry French toast—soft, fruity, and perfectly sweet. It's the kind of meal that makes you want to start every day on a high note.

Where to try it: Hide, Piccadilly

AMUL CHEESE, YES PLEASE



Amul Cheese A Culinary Journey of Flavour and Nutrition

For over five decades, Amul Cheese has been a beloved staple in Indian kitchens, transforming ordinary meals into extraordinary culinary experiences. Crafted from 100% pure milk, our range of cheeses offers not just exceptional taste, but also essential nutrients like protein and calcium.

Amul Cheese Spread **Endless Possibilities**

Is there a more beautiful sight than seeing nutritious and delicious cheese spread over your bread and parathas and kulchas and dosas and naans? Available in Yummy Plain, Punchy Pepper, Spicy Garlic, Creami, Jeera, Red Chilli Flakes, Oregano Pickle, and Tikka Dip, Amul Cheese Spread offers something for every palate.



Amul Feta Cheese

plate. Instantly recognizable by its Brings the vibrant spirit of characteristic large holes formed Mediterranean cuisine to Amul's during fermentation, this cheese collection. This Greek classic, is widely used in classic cheese reimagined with an Indian touch, is a favourite among health-conscious food enthusiasts. It transforms salads, pizzas, flatbreads, wraps, and sandwiches with its tangy distinctive taste.



Amul Gouda Cheese

Named after the historic Dutch city, represents a pinnacle of cheese-making artistry. Amul crafts this cheese from pure milk, and it is perfect for toppings sauces, cheese platters and soups.

Amul Edam Cheese

Tells the story of Dutch cheese-making tradition, presenting a unique flavour profile that evolves beautifully with age. Amul's Edam proves exceptionally versatile in the kitchen, excelling in gratins, salad toppings, smooth sauces, and elegant cheese platter.



Amul Processed Cheese The Versatile Favourite

Amul Processed Cheese stands as a testament to culinary versatility, delivering rich flavour and nutritional value. Available in slices, blocks, and cubes, it seamlessly integrates into both Indian and international cuisines



Amul Emmental Cheese

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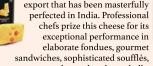
fondues, salad enhancements,

and sumptuous gratins.



Amul Cheddar Cheese

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Amul A+ Cheese Slices

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Amul Cheese Sauces

Amul cream Cheese

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has the creamiest texture that fluffs

up all your cakes. It is also perfect

for toppings and dips.

connoisseurs of cheese. This cheese







Amul Pizza Cheese

Is embodiment of the perfect pizza cheese. This mozzarella is creamier, softer and more flavourful, making it a delightful companion to your pizza. Available in two variants, Mozzarella and Buffalo Mozzarella, now is the time for you to plan your pizza party.

Amul Diced Cheese The perfect cheese for Pizzas

Our Diced Cheese range brings authentic Italian flair right to your kitchen. Perfectly diced and ready to use, this convenient cheese blend adds a creamy, tangy dimension to pizzas, salads, and countless other dishes.

Made from 100%

Pure Milk









O BOW TIE

When I spotted this pastry, it was love at first sight. Buttery, flaky, and just sweet enough, it's the kind of treat that feels like a little celebration in every bite. I loved how delicate and simple it was—proof that sometimes less really is more. Paired with a cup of coffee, it's everything I want in a midday pick-me-up.

Where to try it: Layla, Portobello Road

• CRUSHED MILK CHOCOLATE COOKIES, FROSTIES SOFT SERVE

Imagine a warm, gooey chocolate chip cookie topped with creamy cereal-flavoured soft serve. This combination is nostalgic, playful, and absolutely indulgent. The cookie's chocolate chunks were perfectly molten, while the soft serve had this comforting, childhood vibe. It's the kind of dessert you don't just eat—you devour.

Where to try it: NAC, Mayfair





OHOT HONEYFRENCH TOAST

French toast is already a favourite of mine, but this hot honey twist made it unforgettable. The thick slices were caramelised to perfection, and that drizzle of hot honey added just the right amount of sweet and spicy. It was like eating a dessert disguised as breakfast. Every bite felt indulgent, and honestly, I could eat this on repeat every weekend.

Where to try it: Eggbreak, Notting Hill





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STEP OUT AND EXPLORE

From floral blooms to big-ticket shows, there's a lot to see and do



Till 30th March

The 15-acre garden at Rashtrapati Bhavan features new attractions this year, like the specially-curated garden for children—Bal Vatika—which also has a treehouse. Visitors can also tour the Bonsai, Circular, and Vertical Gardens and admire the musical fountains. Entry is free.







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Lisse, the Netherlands

20th March-11th May

Besides the world-famous tulips, visitors can also admire freesias, chrysanthemums, orchids, and other shows in the indoor pavilions. Sculptures and other works of art will also be on display.

keukenhof.nl

SALVADOR DALI: THE ARGILLET COLLECTION

Masarrat Gallery, Delhi
Until 16th March

This exhibition will showcase hundreds of works by Salvador Dali for the first time in India. The collection has been curated by Christine Argillet, daughter of Pierre Argillet, a French collector who was also Dali's friend and publisher.

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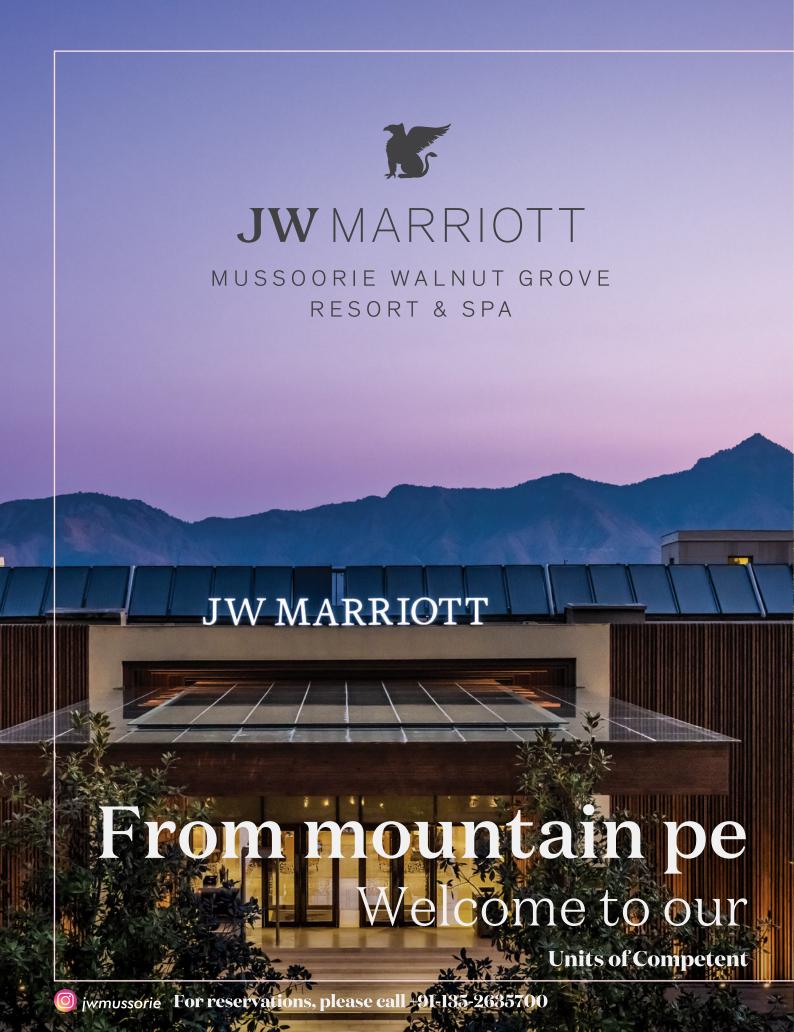






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Abhinandan Sha

BEYOND THE SHALLOWS

Wetlands are of enormous importance in maintaining an ecological balance, and that's why we need to protect them

ne crisp spring air of March beckons outdoorsy travellers out of their winter hideout. As birdsong reaches a crescendo, it is hard to resist the allure of destinations with expansive waterscapes. These ecological features offer not only scenic beauty but also invaluable services—to people and wildlife.

On the east coast, **Chilika Lake** is a natural wetland attracting 40,000 tourists every year. It provides shelter to one of the largest congregations of migratory birds in the country, with avian species arriving from the Caspian Sea, remote regions of Russia, the steppes of Mongolia, Central and Southeast Asia, and the Himalayas, to feed and breed in its fertile waters.

In the west, the **Keoladeo National Park** in Bharatapur, Rajasthan, is a paradise for birdwatchers. This is because it serves as a key stopover on the Central Asian

Flyway, where thousands of migratory waterfowl gather to breed before continuing their journey. Beyond the area's ecological significance, the park plays a crucial role in protecting Bharatpur's settlements from flash floods and replenishing groundwater levels—key for irrigation in surrounding farmlands. During the monsoon, its floodplains transform into natural buffers, preventing soil erosion and enriching agricultural fields with essential nutrients.

Down south, the mangroves of the Andaman Islands draw adventurous travellers with kayaks in tow. But they do more than just set the scene. Mangroves are self-sustaining ecosystems that shield coastlines from storm surges, support local communities, and enrich coastal fisheries through nutrient-rich detritus from fallen leaves. Most importantly, mangroves are powerful carbon sinks, locking away vast amounts of carbon in their dense roots and waterlogged soil, making them invaluable allies in fighting climate change.

These three places represent the wide spectrum that wetlands span. A wetland is any area of land where water sits near the surface—either seasonally or year-round—providing a sanctuary for a rich variety of plant and animal life. From lakes, marshes and swamps to bogs, peatlands, floodplains, mangroves, estuaries, and

#BeWaterWise

- ✓ Plug leaks at home
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- ✓ Repurpose RO & grey water
- ✓ Segregate your waste
- ✓ Harvest rainwater
- ✓ Reject single-use plastic
- ✓ Keep wetlands clean when you visit them

Celebrate Earth Hour with millions around the world. Switch off all non-essential lights on 22nd March, 8.30pm to 9.30pm

even human-made spaces like rice paddies, wetlands take many forms. India alone hosts over 7.5 lakh wetlands, including 89 internationally recognised Ramsar sites. While we often value forests as the lungs of the planet, we forget that wetlands are its kidneys, purifying and provisioning water. Without wetlands, floods and droughts become more devastating, habitats vanish, animals and birds are displaced, and food sources and livelihoods are disrupted.

But wetlands are in trouble. Over the past three decades, India has lost nearly 30 per cent of its wetlands to rapid urbanisation, endangering not just biodiversity but also the natural balance that sustains life. But we can stop this decline. Some of these easy water-positive actions feature in WWF-India's #BeWaterWise campaign this March. As the world celebrates the convergence of Earth Hour and World Water Day on 22nd March, become a part of two global movements and take a pledge to **#BeWaterWise** in your life.

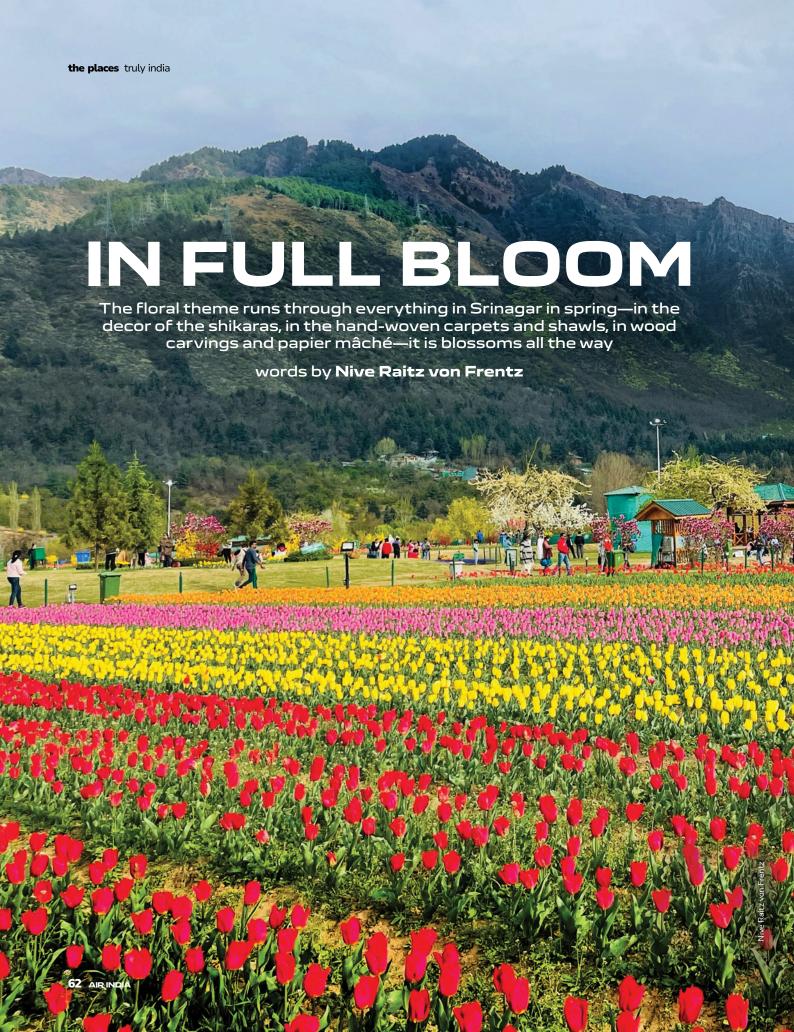
-Laghima Sharma



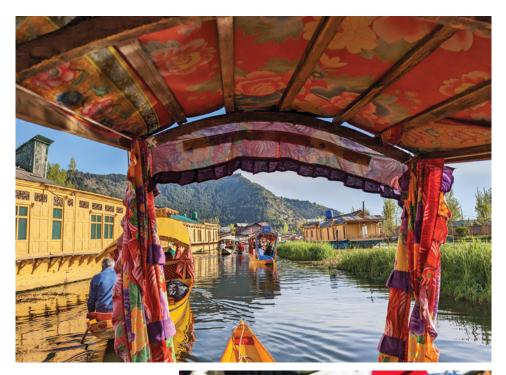












PLACES TO STAY **Fortune Resort**

Heevan The superior club rooms

are worth the extra space and include buffet breakfasts and dinners. Plus, a badminton court, gym, and table tennis.

Taj Dal View

More expensive due to its hilltop location with wide lake vistas, as the name suggests. Nice for a cup of kahwa on the terrace, overlooking tulips in bloom.

Tree of Life Lakeside Cottage

With just four bespoke rooms, this boutique hotel blends Swiss-style chalet and Kashmiri architecture for a warm, cosy vibe.



indulge in a feast—mutton boti, chicken tikka, and paneer, all slow-cooked on a charcoal grill.

Once our appetites were satiated, we glided deeper into the little tributaries entering the Dal Lake floating market, easing past bobbing boats chock-full of gardenfresh veggies and floral bouquets. A serene way to shop (right from the boat), my absolute favourites were

the papier mâché shops, each shelf stacked to the brim with treasures. Flowers are a singular motif of papier mâché art, be it delicately hand-painted on boxes, on the backs of elephants, on vases, trays, and even Christmas decorations—their miniature petals, stalks, and leaves curling this way and that. Despite a power cut, the beauty of this special handicraft shone through,

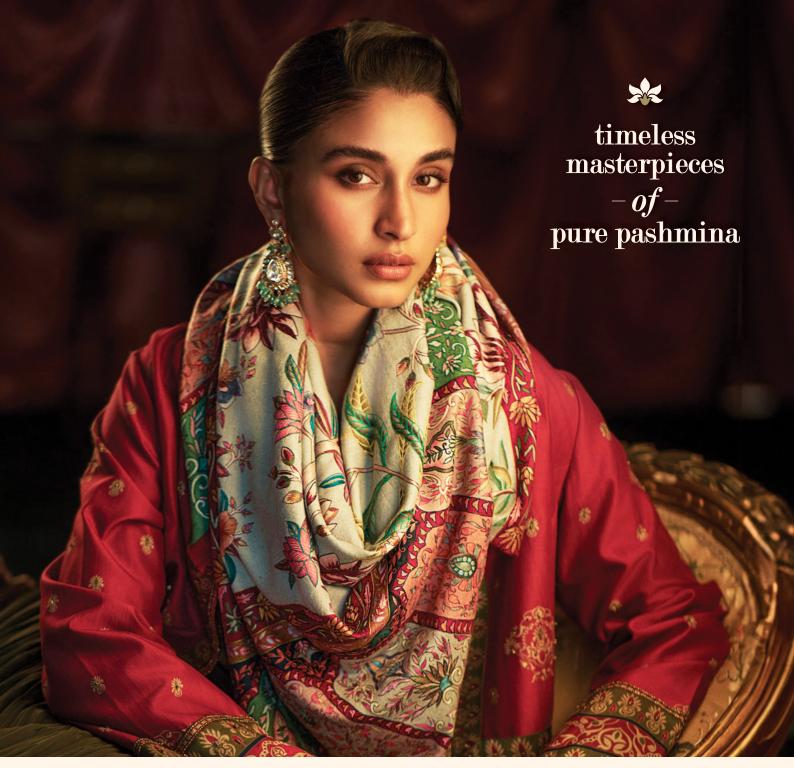
TOP AND BOTTOM The tributaries of Dal Lake are home to a number of handicraft shops: Floral themes are ubiquitous in the Kashmiri handicraft of papier mâché.

and to no one's surprise, we emerged laden with goodies.

With each gentle paddle of the oar, the sun slowly slipped down through the azure sky and the weather turned slightly chilly, enticing us into shops selling scarves, shawls, and pherans (traditional kurtas worn by men and women). Here too, one immediately notices the colours, patterns, and predominance of floral motifs. These are as much a tribute to the area's natural panorama, as they are a reflection of the cultural values of the artisans.

Because you can always do with a scarf, the skilful sales assistants kept showcasing their collection one after another, the floral patterns merging into a mini garden on the carpeted floor, until we bought some.

Another floral spectacle awaited us at the annual tulip festival at the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden, where the sheer expanse and variety of flower beds were a highlight. Cars can only go up to a point; the ticket booth is an adventurous tuk tuk ride away. It will give you enough time to explore the garden. Despite the multitude of tourists, the space was large enough to find less-crowded areas with many chances to absorb the multi-hued panorama.





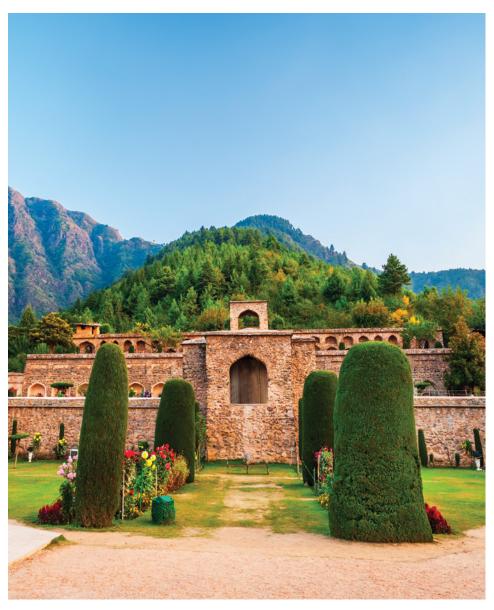
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LEFT AND RIGHTPari Mahal; Kashmiri shawls also abound in

fairground (of sorts) hosts street food vendors, a useful pit stop to rest tired legs.

rewarding, not to forget, therapeutic. Close by, a

Of the numerous gardens that Srinagar boasts—the iconic Shalimar, the regal Nishat, the fountain-spouting Chashma Shahi—the one not to be missed would have to be the hilltop Pari Mahal. Built in the terraced style in the mid-17th century, this beyond elegant, wellmaintained bagh offers expansive Dal Lake and tulip views. Climb to the top to take in the manicured lawns, hedges, and symmetrical flower borders, true hallmarks of Mughal design. The aura of this garden, also called 'The Angels'

Day Trips from Srinagar

Sonamarg

This is a two- to three-hour drive from Srinagar. Rent wellies for exhilarating snowy mountains and sledding experiences. Try the sweetly situated Glacier Dhaba on the way back.

Martand Sun Temple and Awantiswami Temple

The Martand temple has rock-cut statues and pillared arches that one can explore in the well-maintained compound. The Awantiswami complex has a picturesque setting with the Jhelum river on the west and mountains on the North-eastern side.

Gurez Valley

This picturesque location is surrounded by snowcapped mountains, with the Kishanganga river flowing through the valley.

The tulips, planted in rows in every colour imaginable, bloom annually alongside other species like hyacinths, daffodils, and ranunculus, against a backdrop of picture-perfect skies and mountain peaks. A central aisle with flower-shaped waterspouts created a novel sprinkling system. Walking about, soaking in the atmosphere was hugely

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TOP AND BOTTOM A mustard field in Srinagar; Saffron blooms in Pampore, on the outskirts of Srinagar.

Abode', transports you back centuries in the blink of an eye, affording a genuine experience. In various places, stone steps lead to carved arches for further placid green views, the trademark symmetry of architecture quite breathtaking.

Another kind of bloom waited to be discovered in Kashmir's saffron-growing heartland in Pampore, on the outskirts of Srinagar. It's best to buy this spice there than in town; the shops are lined up one after the other, all selling quality, fragrant kesar. We went to Paradise Saffron, which also stocked some divine-smelling attars. The willow wood business is also big in the area; cricket bat shops alternate with saffron in an interesting patchwork. The spice is harvested in October-November but in the spring, the crown goes to the mustard plant. As far as the eyes can see, there are lush fields filled with yellow

mustard flowers. Walking through these thigh-high, ready-to-harvest dusky yellow plants will put a smile on your face—plus you get an alternative view of the mountains in the distance. However, remember to brush off the yellow powder that can cling to your clothes.

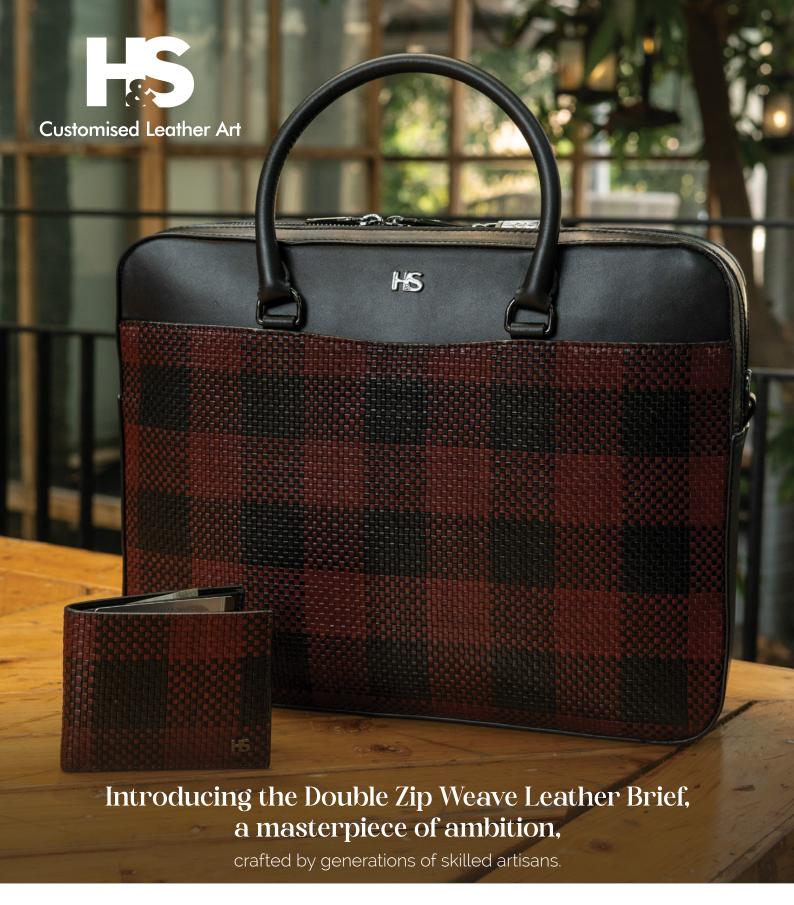
All too soon, it was time to say goodbye to the Valley. We had been dazzled by the wealth of flora on display in spring but one glory eluded us. The famous chinar trees were not in full leaf but their impending magnificence was palpable, beckoning the heart for another trip.



GETTING THERE

Air India flies non-stop to Srinagar from Delhi and Leh.









A trip to Washington, DC after 20 years reveals that it is still a buzzing culinary microcosm of the world, as well as a repository of other delights words by **Shibani Bawa** march 2025 71

first visited this scenic city more than two decades ago, just before my mother retired from the World Bank (she had a long stint with International Finance Corporation in Delhi). My fondest memories from that trip revolve around the incredible people that I spent time with. Besides being the capital of the USA, Washington, DC is a mini-United Nations of sorts with a thriving international community and diverse culture. The World Bank expat community was a great space to experience this—there were inter-cultural families like Sri Lankan-Cuban, Aga Khani followers hailing from Dar es Salaam, many folks of Indian origin ranging from Parsis to Punjabis, a Gujarati-German couple, Irish-Canadian—you get the drift. For all these people, Washington, DC had been their home for decades. So, it's not surprising that all these influences found their way into the culinary offerings of the city as well.

This time round, I wanted to see if the places from my memories were still as popular as they once were. I distinctly remember that in the early 2000s,

Dupont Circle and Adams Morgan

were two vibrant neighbourhoods. While Dupont Circle was predominantly an embassy area, Adams Morgan is where many immigrant communities thrived. While it was infamous for its raffish nightlife, it was also the hub for global cuisine with restaurants run by ethnic communities, including Mexican, Brazilian, Polish, Cuban, Indian, and Ethiopian. **Madam's Organ** was a particularly popular bar with live Blues music, open mic nights,

TOP AND BOTTOM

Oyamel Cocina Mexicana is a favourite of former president Barack Obama; The Adams Morgan area, while still packed with eateries, has been superseded by U Street, which now boasts the buzzing hangouts.





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karaoke, DJ nights, and a rooftop deck. With nostalgia as my guide, I reached the locality to find that while the neighbourhood still exists and there continues to be an unending choice of restaurants and bars—including the aforementioned Madam's Organ—it had lost its erstwhile buzz. The action has shifted to other areas like **U Street**.

So that's where I headed. My first stop was the recently-opened **Mita**, a contemporary Latin American restaurant with one Michelin star. In keeping with global culinary trends, it celebrates plant-based cuisine from Brazil, Bolivia, and Colombia, and the 14-course tasting menu was as delicious as it was revelatory. Besides trendy restaurants, U Street also has a range of rooftop bars, DJ lounges, and historic watering holes. Live music performances at venues here like the **Lincoln Theatre**, **Bohemian Caverns**, and **Howard**

Theatre are very popular, and can have long queues going around the block.
On the Saturday evening that we were there, the queue wrapped around a block and a half.

But beyond visiting old haunts and discovering new hangout places, I also

had another agenda. I have to confess—I was keen on spotting politicos and visiting dining spots frequented by the most powerful honchos. My way of getting a dose of this was to hang out at some of the iconic bars and restaurants in the city that have been frequented by political staffers, senators, and the like for many years.

I started at the **Old Ebbitt Grill** that has a classic charm, with oysters and steaks reigning supreme. This boasts a long list of famous diners who visited regularly, including many US Presidents like Ulysses S Grant, Andrew Johnson, Grover Cleveland, Theodore Roosevelt, and Warren Harding. Another spot was **Rasika**, a fine-dine Indian restaurant that was recognised in the Michelin Guide in 2024. Rasika was also the venue for Barack Obama's 52nd birthday party and the 37th wedding anniversary celebrations of Bill and Hillary Clinton.

At **Filomena Ristorante** in Georgetown, you can savour the delicious lobster linguine that was a favourite of Bill Clinton's or head to José Andrés' **Oyamel Cocina Mexicana** for its vibrant dishes and raise a toast to Barack Obama's favourite margarita that

HOTELS TO STAY AT

The Hay-Adams

Located steps away from the White House, this is a great choice to enjoy an unparalleled blend of luxury and history. At the lively Off the Record bar you'll be as delighted by political cartoon sketches as you will be with the fine mixology.

The Ritz-Carlton, Washington, D.C.

Nestled in the upbeat West End, this is a chic, luxurious retreat with impeccable service.

Pendry Washington DC - The Wharf

Check in to this property for the best waterfront views. The Capitol Brunch at the rooftop Moonraker is ideal for an indulgent Sunday afternoon.



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TOP AND BOTTOM Washington, DC is one of the places in North America where you can see cherry blossoms; The Black Cod at Rasika, a fine-dine Indian restaurant.

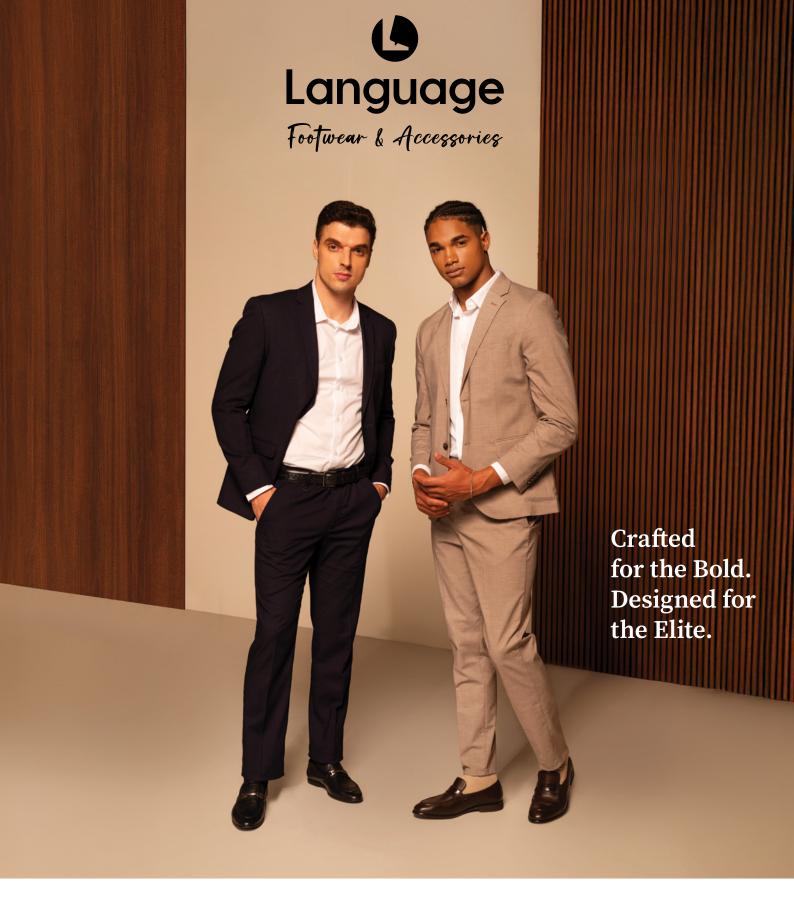


From 20th March to 13th April, DC transforms into a dreamland of pink and white blooms, and vibrant festivities during the National Cherry Blossom Festival. The history of this dates to 1912 when Mayor Yukio Ozaki of Tokyo gifted 3,000 cherry trees to the city. Today, it's a celebration of history, culture, and natural beauty with colourful parades, art exhibits, and culinary events. Hop on to the Cherry Blossom Water Taxi along the Potomac, partake in the Blossom Tea Party or savour seasonal delicacies prepared by participating restaurants under Cherry Picks.

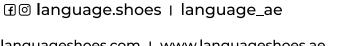
comes with a flavourful 'salt air'. And for a taste of political drama alongside fine dining, a visit to The Monocle near Capitol Hill is a must—I was on the edge of my seat as I overheard conversations that included big names like Biden and Trump, just a week after the 2024 US presidential election.

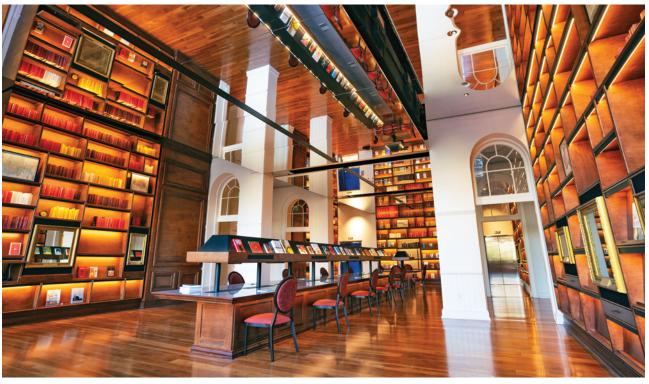
Once satiated, give the beautiful layout of DC your attention. The sprawling green spaces, flanked by monuments and museums, are ideal for slow, intentional wandering, especially after a hearty meal. From the grandeur of the National Mall and the Smithsonian museums that immerse you in their invaluable collections to the iconic memorials that seem to anchor the city in time—DC offers a seamless blend of history and refreshing energy of being at the epicentre of shaping a new world.

The Smithsonian Museums definitely remain as captivating as ever, drawing travellers from all over the world. But this time around, I found myself at the National Gallery of Art. Among its breathtaking collection of over 1,50,000









TOP AND BOTTOM
Planet Word Museum is one
of the newest attractions in
the city; During the Passport
DC festival in May, visitors can
watch street performances and
attend other events.

works, one piece really stood out—Leonardo da Vinci's *Ginevra de' Benci*. One of his first works with oil paint and the only one outside Europe, this masterpiece was painted when da Vinci was about 20. And here's a little insider tip: you can make an appointment to explore the Print and Drawing Study Rooms at the National Gallery of Art for an exclusive, behind-the-scenes view of rare treasures by artists like Picasso and Rembrandt. This incredible private viewing is also available free of charge—just remember to make an appointment prior to your visit.

DC's museums are not only for history buffs; the city also does a great job in blending the new with the old. Case in point: **Planet Word**, a modern museum dedicated to the beauty of language.



From the whimsical Speaking Willow that greets you with whispers of the world's languages to the towering word wall that reveals the story of English, every corner is interactive and thought provoking. The First Words exhibit is a joyful reminder of how language connects us all, no matter where we come from.

If you're exploring DC with kids, there are plenty of options that offer lots of educative entertainment. A stroll down the **National Mall** with Park Rangers brings history alive through storytelling, and if you're lucky enough to snag a spot

at the Smithsonian Sleepovers, imagine exploring Fossil Hall by flashlight, playing survival games, and even dressing up as a T-Rex.

In May, DC also becomes a living tapestry of the world—Passport DC is a month-long celebration of cultures. Embassies throw open their doors, and street festivals, performances, and exhibitions make you feel like you're globetrotting within the city, just another reminder of DC's unique cosmopolitan flavour.





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① 06:00AM A ride at dawn

Assi Ghat

A morning boat cruise on the Ganges is one of the best ways to start your day. If you visit before April, you'll sight flocks of migratory seagulls too. Early risers can attend the aarti at Assi Ghat (which starts around 5am) before taking to the water.

⊕ 8:30AM

Local flavours

The Ram Bhandar

Head to this famous establishment for the quintessential Benarasi breakfast of kachori-sabji and jalebi. The crispy kachoris (resembling puris) are deep fried in ghee and served with aloo curry and black chickpea gravy. Wrap up with jalebis and a steaming cup of kulhad chai or nimbu chai.

10:00AM

Temple run Kashi Vishwanath

No visit to this spiritual city is complete without visiting this revered shrine, where Lord Shiva is worshipped as a jyotirlinga. However, residents hold that a visit to this temple must be preceded by one to that of Kaal Bhairav, the 'kotwal of Varanasi'.

① 12:00PM **Gully tales**

∇ The bustling alleys

Take a guided walk along the winding, narrow lanes that reveal several hidden gems. From hole-in-the-wall eateries dishing out lassi and butter toast topped with cream to shops selling spices, silk sarees, and handicrafts, the streets are waiting to be explored. Take a look at the spirited street art too.



CLOCKWISE FROM RIGHT

An early morning boat ride

is the best way to capture

the city's essence; Savour an all-vegetarian thali for

lunch; The eponymous saree is a great souvenir; The city boasts striking street art.







GETTING THERE

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







STYLISH STAYS

1/ BrijRama Palace

(established in 1812) is a two-minute walk from Dashashwamedh Ghat It features the architecture of the Maratha dynasty and blends history with luxury, making for an engaging stay.

2/ Taj Nadesar Palace, tucked in a rose-trellis-lined mango orchard, is just five km from the Ganges. Built in 1782. it boasts motifs coloured by the hues of flowers offered at the river.

3/ The Clarks, Varanasi, with 104 immaculate rooms, is a luxurious property with distinct colonial vibes and several lush gardens.

① 01:30PM **Culinary haven**

Shree Shivay

After all the walking, stop for lunch at this restaurant that serves one of the best thalis in the city. With more than 20 dishes (including welcome drinks, snacks, main course, and dessert), it celebrates the diversity of Indian cuisine. Go the whole hog and ask to be served in the bronze thali.

© 03:00PM Nine yards of elegance

Vishwanath gully

When in Varanasi, it's mandatory to pick up its famous, eponymous craft—the GI-tagged Banarasi saree. From wholesale spots like Shri Khatu Ji Wholesale Bazar and new-age stores like Myra Creations to shops in Vishwanath gully there are many outlets retailing these creations. Other souvenirs include soft stone jaali work and Varanasi glass beads.

① 07:00PM A visual treat

Dashashwamedh Ghat

A daily ritual entrenched in tradition, the evening Ganga aarti is enchanting in more ways than one. As the priests move their fiery lamps in rhythmic motion while chanting prayers, singing hymns, and offering flowers, the air fills with the fragrance of incense. Pro tip: Reach early to ensure seats with the best view.

OR:00PM

Flavour profiles

Kashi Chat Bhandar

End the day with a lip-smacking meal of utterly delicious chaats tamatar chaat, aloo tikki, palak patta chaat and paani puri. Topped with flavourful chutneys and shredded radish, these sweet-savoury snacks are sure to have you asking for more. Fans of modern flavours can try Brown Bread Bakery at Pandey Ghat. Retire for the day with a bite of the iconic Benarasi paan.





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A PLUNGE INTO THE WILD

The Maasai Mara National Reserve in Kenya is a swathe of never-ending savannah plains and home to a large population of wildlife. One of the most popular safari destinations in the world, it borders Tanzania's Serengeti National Park. "On an early morning safari, I took this shot of an impala, when the sky was painted in myriad hues of red.

Later in the day, we spotted these cheetahs (right) walking towards the river but then suddenly coming to a stop. They had spotted crocodiles waiting to prey on them. These crossing points are where the crocs lurk but we had not seen them. The cheetahs had, which is why they came to a halt."





MOMENTS THAT LEAVE AN IMPRESSION

"Visiting the Savuti National Park in Botswana (left) was special because we did a 'fly-in' safari, where you land on a dirt strip, pitch camp in the middle of nowhere, and stay there for five days." The Park is known for its large lion and hyena populations. "The mama and her lion cubs were having a day out and it was a delight to watch them basking in the sun."

Chobe National Park (also in Botswana) is known for its eco-diversity and for being home to big game. "I took this shot of a leopard and a crocodile (below), both waiting patiently to feast on a dead hippo."





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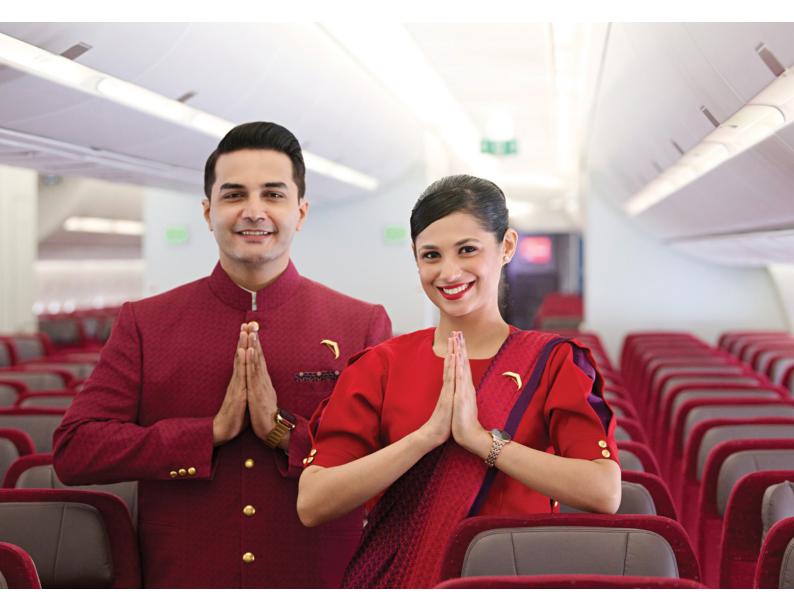
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GETTING THERE

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AIR INDIA



THE TRANSFORMATION

A new series to track how we are elevating your travel experience

p 90 🕡

ROUTES

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Phase 2: April 2023 - March 2024 **Build for excellence**



Phase 3: April 2024 - March 2027 Scale and grow

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Air India is currently at a mid-point in its five-year transformation journey, Vihaan.Al. In this new series, we give you a sneak peek into how the airline is progressively elevating the travel experience to emerge as a world-class airline with an Indian heart.





- Air India is the first Indian airline to operate the Airbus A350, featuring the latest suitestyle Business Class cabin with full-flat beds, a brand-new Premium Economy experience, and the latest generation seats in Economy.
- Stay in touch with your loved ones with Air India's new Wi-Fi service (complimentary for an introductory period) on board its domestic and international flights. This makes Air India the first Indian carrier to offer Wi-Fi internet on domestic flights.
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- Tune into 'Vista Stream', the inflight entertainment system that boasts an extensive library of Bollywood and Hollywood movies, documentaries, TV shows, music, and content for children. Guests can enjoy over 1,800 hours of content.

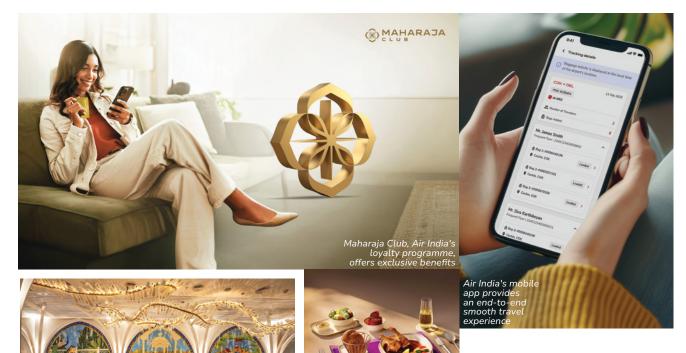
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- lounges, including the new, exclusive lounge at Bengaluru Airport and the refurbished one at the domestic side of Delhi Airport.
- Air India's awardwinning mobile app and website offer seamless navigation, along with real-time flight and baggage tracking. Its virtual travel assistant 'Al.g,' ensures instant support for your queries, creates itineraries, and more.
- Savour delectable inflight meals with Air India's refreshed menu, featuring a blend of gourmet Indian and international flavours. The dishes are prepared with locally-sourced ingredients.

The services mentioned above are subject to the aircraft type/route flown

eing on the go
constantly may give you
an adrenaline rush, but
frequent travel does
take a toll on our bodies. Spending
time at the airport, in the air, and
even the daily commute between
office, home, and other work
locations can lead to a constant
feeling of fatigue. "A good massage

can definitely reduce muscle tension, improve blood circulation, and put you in a happy and relaxed state of mind as it stimulates the release of endorphins (the feelgood hormones) that reduce travelinduced stress in your body," says Devika Sen, Director of Aheli Spa, Roseate Hotels & Resorts.

So, the next time you have

a layover at Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, don't just immerse yourself in work. Instead, book a session at a nearby spa to treat yourself to some much-needed self-care. We have curated specific massages available at hotels near the airport (and one within the terminal) to help you relax.









CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT A treatment room at Pullman Novotel Aerocity; The Encalm Spa is at Terminal 3; Spa Oasis at The Grand New Delhi.

SPA OASIS AT THE GRAND **NEW DELHI, VASANT KUNJ**

GRAND SYMPHONY (FOUR HAND MASSAGE)

Two therapists work in tandem to release the tension from muscles and offer them some relief. The movements are synchronised and promote deep relaxation. This massage is also complemented with a reflexology and scalp massage.

Duration: 45 minutes The hotel will pick and drop spa guests for a fee

R THE SPA AT RADISSON **BLU PLAZA HOTEL, MAHIPALPUR**

BODY STRATEGIST LEG REVIVAL TREATMENT

This treatment promotes an immediate sense of well-being and also makes you progressively feel better. It uses thermal water from Bagni di Pisa Palace and Thermal Spa, a blend of essential oils and laminaria algae (kelp), which come together to make it an intensive treatment for tired and weary legs. Duration: 60 minutes

The hotel will pick and drop spa guests for a fee

physically active individuals or those who are seeking relief from any sort of muscle tension. "It's highly effective for concerns like knots and sciatica. with techniques that are tailored to the body's specific needs," says Lalnun Mawii. Director of Spa and Wellness. Duration: 60 minutes

SPA AT PULLMAN NOVOTEL

DEEP TISSUE MASSAGE

Focusing on the deeper layers of

muscles, this is an ideal therapy for

AEROCITY

ENCALM SPA, INDIRA GANDHI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

ENCALM SIGNATURE MASSAGE

This powerful aromatherapy treatment uses blends of calming oils like lavender, cedar, and bergamot. "The massage is designed to relax the entire body, focusing on relieving muscular tension, while combining soothing strokes for the ultimate experience," says Vikas Sharma, CEO, Encalm Hospitality.

Duration: 45/60/75/90 minutes Located at Terminal 3 international and domestic departures

THE SPA AT ANDAZ, **AEROCITY**

TRAVEL FATIGUE MASSAGE

This therapy uses a blend of rice bran, lavender, and rosemary oils, that helps reduce stress and tension. "It is designed to eliminate fluid retention, enhance lymphatic drainage, and promote better blood circulation," says Sudeshna Pal, Wellness and Spa Manager.

Duration: 60 minutes

THE SPA AT JW MARRIOTT **HOTEL. AEROCITY**

TENSION RELEASE MASSAGE This therapy is designed to provide relief from pain caused by muscle strain in the back, neck, and shoulders. "It aims to release tension and tightness, allowing stiff muscles to function freely," says Neha Kapoor, Director of Rooms. Duration: 30 minutes

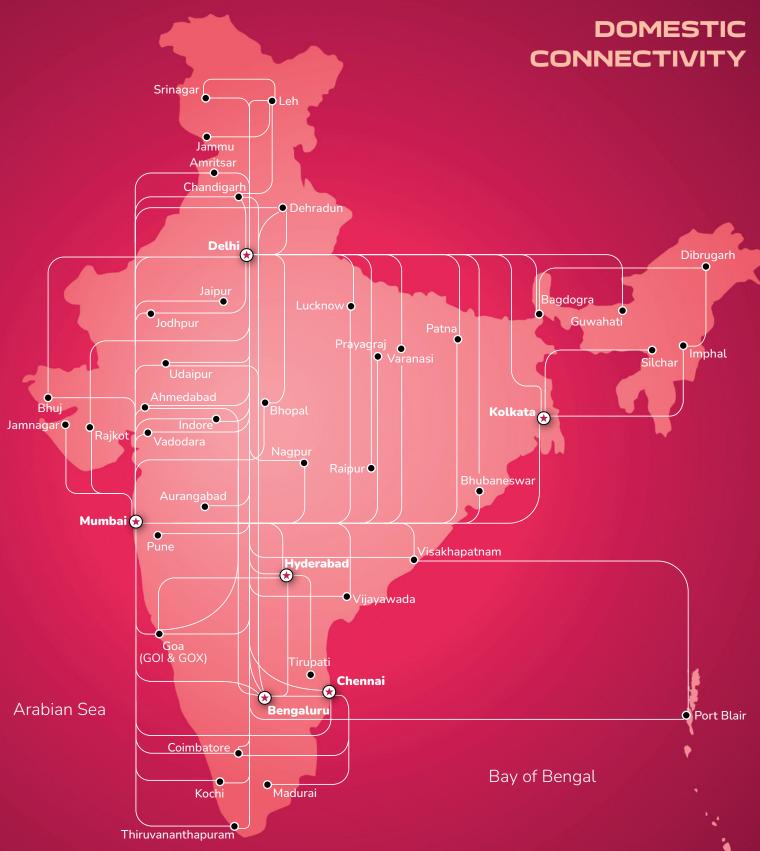
AHELI SPA AT ROSEATE HOUSE, AEROCITY

SHIRO ABHYANGAM

Using authentic Indian techniques and Ayurvedic oils, this massage releases tension in the head and neck region. Duration: 75 minutes/90 minutes









INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY

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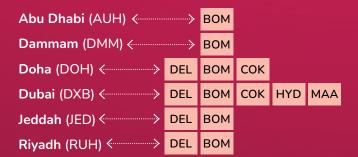
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Middle East





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BREAKING STEREOTYPES

For International Women's Day, we go behind the scenes with four women at Air India who are paving a new path for women in aviation, by making their mark in departments largely perceived as male oriented



A typical day...

I'm on the Boeing 777 fleet (ultra long-haul operations), so the planning starts a day before. I plan my shift with fellow pilots, update my documents, etc. On the day of the flight, I have a pre-flight briefing and after reaching the aircraft, we communicate and coordinate with various departments to ensure a timely departure. Post flight we debrief and log our flight details.

Working in a predominantly male-oriented sphere...

I was lucky to be trained by some of the best aviators of our time. My instructor taught me that leadership in a male-oriented field can be challenging, but you have to be firm but polite, knowledgeable but humble.

Why I love my job...

A pilot is a pilot irrespective of gender and Air India's inclusive work environment has enabled this.

A typical day...

My work hours are irregular, sometimes I work weekends. I am an Aircraft Maintenance Technician at Delhi Airport, and my work involves pre-flight and transit inspections, troubleshooting, and rectifying problems so the aircraft can be back in the air.

Working in a predominantly male-oriented sphere...

When I read this, a thought came to mind— 'An aircraft does not know if I am a man or a woman'. So, who am I to think that I am weak or not good at my work, in comparison to my male colleagues. My dad has always said, "Be good in whatever you do", and that's what has helped me come this far.

Why I love my job...

The opportunities in aviation are vast and varied, which is why I love what I do.



A typical day...

Mornings mean departures, check-in, security, boarding; midday is when I walk thorough lounges, boarding gates; in the afternoon my crises mode is on, handling delays, misconnections, baggage chaos; evenings bring on long-haul flights entailing one last round of checks.

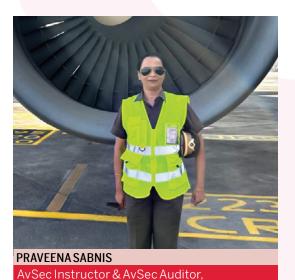
Working in a predominantly male-oriented sphere...

There is a saying, 'Planes don't care who is running the show, as long as they take off and land on time'. That's exactly how I see my journey in aviation. It has never been about gender; it is about getting the job done.

Why I love my job...

It was one of those nights—delays, exhausted guests, anxious families. We stepped up to reassure and restore confidence. In moments like these, you see the true spirit of teamwork. That's what makes this job special.





Coordinator - Flight Handling Unit (FHU) and

A typical day...

I'm often required to respond without loss of time, and thoughtfully, ensuring all actions align with SOPs. Meeting safety and security requirements is my top priority, while striving for optimal on-time performance.

Working in a predominantly male-oriented sphere...

From the initial days, I embraced thinking out of the box and consistently pushed my limits. I firmly believe that if you're focused, passionate, adaptable, and open to learning, you can succeed in any field, regardless of who typically dominates it.

Why I love my job...

One of the most fulfilling aspects of my work-life is the opportunity to interact with a diverse range of people teammates, colleagues from various departments, and passengers. To navigate these interactions effectively, I always strive to balance resilience with understanding.

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Take a connecting flight to Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with Air India's Codeshare Partner, Lufthansa





Book a taxi or take a bus to the Escadaria Selarón, Rio de Janeiro, **Brazil**

ABOUT THE ATTRACTION:

The vibrant Escadaria Selarón stairs are one of the city's most beloved spots. These tiled steps were created by Chilean artist Jorge Selarón as homage to the Brazilian people. The steps now contain tiles from Brazil and other regions of the world, resulting in a stunning mosaic.





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PROUD WINGS

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

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Airbus A321ceo

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Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner

07

William William

Airbus A321neo

14

Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner

27

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*Total number as on 10th February 2025; This fleet count is exclusive of Air India Express (Air India Group's low-cost carrier)

march 2025 107

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

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

150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SHRI BIRSA MUNDA

भारतीय आदिवासी स्वतंत्रता सेनानी, श्री बिरसा मुंडा की 150वीं जयंती के अवसर पर, हम उनके साहस और राष्ट्र के प्रति सेवा के लिए उनका सम्मान करते हैं। On the 150th birth anniversary of the iconic tribal freedom fighter from India, Shri Birsa Munda, we express our respect for his unwavering courage and service to the nation.

MISSION LIFE

मिशन लाइफ़, जिसे 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 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 13 airports - दिल्ली, बेंगलूरु, वाराणसी, पुणे, कोलकाता, विजयवाड़ा, हैदराबाद, अहमदाबाद, मुंबई, जयपुर, लखनऊ, गुवाहाटी और कोचीन के लिए, डिजी यात्रा की सुविधा का शुभारंभ किया गया है। डिजी यात्रा ऐप को डाउनलोड करके खुद को नामांकित करें, और इन एयरपोर्ट्स पर बिना रुकावट के, यात्रा का अनुभव करें।

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

















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Clockwise from top left: Ahsaas Channa; Shutterstock; Shutterstoc

A TRAVELLER'S TALE







MOUNTAIN RUSH

Actor **Ahsaas Channa** recalls her first outstation trip with her friends to Himachal Pradesh

MY LOCAL EXPERIENCE

In May 2024, I went on a 14-day circuit trip in Himachal Pradesh with my friends. It's special because we've been friends for over 10 years and it was the first time we travelled outside of Maharashtra. We visited Shimla, Sangla, Tabo, Kaza, Gue, Losar, Rohtang Pass, and Manali.

MEMORIES FOR LIFE

From the post office in Hikkim, the highest in India, to the country's last village, Chitkul—we visited it all. We took a difficult route, from Kaza to Manali, but crossed paths with the warmest Himachali people. We even saw snowfall in May. I could not believe how beautiful my India is.

A FARE TO REMEMBER

You have to try the Tibetan food here—the momos, thukpas, and more.

I RECOMMEND

Go to Rakcham and camp. Drop by Chitkul and visit the Chicham Brigde. In Kaza, stop at Sól Cafe for its comfort vibe and food. On the Kaza-Manali route, halt at the Chacha Chachi Dhaba for unforgettable hospitality and conversations.

— As told to Shrabasti Anindita Mallik





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