

## Air India to start non-stop flights between Mumbai and Melbourne from Dec 15

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**New Delhi** : Tata-owned Air India on Tuesday (October 31) said that it will operate thrice a week between Mumbai and Melbourne starting December 15, becoming the only non-stop operator between Mumbai and Australia currently.

According to the airline, the new Mumbai-Melbourne services will add nearly 40,000 seats per year into the Australian state of Victoria, where the Indian community is estimated at over 200,000, constituting about 40 per cent of the total Indian diaspora in Australia.

"We look forward to launching the only non-stop flight between Mumbai and Melbourne. This is a great step forward in our ongoing transformation programme, which among other aspects aims at connecting India to more of the world with non-stop flights. We are excited to showcase the positively changing Air India flying experience to travellers on this route, of which great Indian hospitality will remain a cornerstone," said Nipun Aggarwal, Chief Commercial & Transformation Officer, Air India.

"We're very excited that the first direct flight from Mumbai to Australia will land in Melbourne. This new route will boost tourism, create local jobs and open more

pathways for Victorian businesses to reach one of the world's fastest growing economies," said Natalie Hutchins, Minister for Jobs and Industry, Victoria State Government, Australia.

The airline spokesperson said that the passengers from 17 Indian cities can take convenient, one-stop connections to and from Melbourne via Delhi or Mumbai.

"The new Mumbai-Melbourne route further enables seamless two-way connectivity between London Heathrow and Melbourne via Delhi and Mumbai. The flights on the Mumbai-Melbourne route will be operated by Air India's Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft, featuring 18 flat beds in Business Class and 238 spacious seats in Economy," said the spokesperson.

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