

# WINDOWS TO A CITY

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The modern epithet of a high-tech hub notwithstanding, Hyderabad is a wonderful mosaic of culture, art and old-world charm. This 400-year-old city, and the capital of India's newest state of Telangana, is famous for historic monuments, culinary delights and lustrous pearls.

The distinctive character of the Hyderabad milieu, however, is its laid-back vibe and unhurried pace. Many visitors feel at ease here, largely due to the innate warmth and friendliness of the locals, to whom hospitality is second nature.

A stroll through the lanes and by-lanes around the city would reveal stories around every corner. The fluttering of pigeons, vibrant street art, playful children plotting mischief, or the tinkling of a cyclist's bell all underscore Hyderabad's *joie de vivre*.



**Previous spread:** Walk through the streets and chances are, you'd run into a group of boys who will not pass up an opportunity to have fun or play pranks

**This page, from top:** In the bustling bazaars, a large variety of delicious street food beckons from numerous joints. Sweets and savouries accompanied by a cup of *chai* can be a welcome refreshment after hours of shopping and bargaining; the rich imagery from regional festivals unique to the Telangana state makes Hyderabad's street art vibrant and eye-catching. The Bonalu festival, depicted here, has goddess Mahankali flanked by two strong men wielding whips to drive away evil spirits



Cinema posters, usually an eye sore, can provide a dramatic distraction from the humdrum of daily life. Tollywood, the movie industry of Hyderabad, makes movies for the Telugu-speaking audience

Bird-feeding is popular at this spot. Here, a man stands amid a flurry of wings, with the iconic Charminar in the background. The Charminar, meaning four (*char*) towers (*minar*), was built by the founder of Hyderabad, Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, in 1591 to commemorate the eradication of a plague



The gods and demigods on the upper storey seem far removed from the hustle and bustle on the street. The visage, however, makes one wonder if they are not tempted to descend and partake in the mortal life below

**Below:** A *devdi* (grand mansion) that was once a palatial home of a nobleman. Yet, even its status as a heritage building can't protect it from neglect and encroachment

**Bottom:** In the lanes leading to a temple, vendors sell articles typically needed for a *puja* (prayer ritual) – flowers, coconuts, and incense sticks. They also sell bunches of lemons and green chillies, which are usually tied to vehicles or at entrances of homes and shops to ward off evil

 SilkAir flies 10 times weekly between Singapore and Hyderabad

