

ODYSSEY AI – 78 with Shariar Karim's “MILESTONES AND MEMORIES”

LAST FLIGHT : AI -77 on 16th June 2021 “V.V.I.P. of former P.M. P.V Narasimha Rao”
FLIGHT :THIS FLIGHT: AI -78 on 18th June 2021 “A Tale of Two Cities”
NEXT FLIGHT: AI -79 on 23rd June 2021 “The Crash OF Kanishka”

“ MILESTONES AND MEMORIES- 78 ”

**NAMASKAAR, WELCOME ABOARD FLIGHT AI - 78,
ON FRIDAY 18TH JUNE, 2021**

Turning back the pages of history, Today we have reached the
18TH of JUNE, 2005

**THIS DAY, THAT YEAR WE OPERATED AIR-INDIA'S INAUGURAL FLIGHT
FROM KOLKATA TO LONDON for which I COMPOSED -**

“ A. TALE OF TWO CITIES”

Never before Today, has an Aircraft carrying the Indian Flag, ever
flown non-stop on a commercial flight, over such a long distance as it
did today on the inaugural flight from Kolkata to London. Another
Milestone in the history of Air-India was reached and a new pathway
between two cities of old was bridged today.

A huge crowd assembled and an elaborate send off was arranged at
Kolkata airport, where folk dancers swayed and sashayed to the beat
of the ‘dhaks’. A brief meeting followed to wish Bon Voyage to this
special flight before it took off on its maiden flight Westward towards
London and into the annals of Indian civil aviation history.

I happened to be present in Kolkata during those days to mourn the
passing away of my dear mother when the Air-India officials from the
city Office contacted me and requested me to compose something
special for the occasion. Thru my grief, I composed “ A Tale of Cities”
which I dedicated to my Mother and share with you today.



Air TALE OF TWO CITIES

OLD TIES – NEW CONNECTIONS

Let the “dhaks” beat and the “shanks” blow
From the east coast of INDIA to the east coast of U.K – today we go,
A new chapter in our saga today unfolds,
Connecting directly by air, two cities of old.

Across the Hooghly, over the Howrah Bridge,
On to Thames and over the Tower Bridge.

From Rabindranath Tagore and Shantineketan,
To William Shakespeare and Stratford on Avon.
From the “Angel Of Mercy” to the “Queen Of Hearts”
Mother Teresa and Princess Diana both played their parts.

From the lush green lawns of Eden Gardens,
To the flower bedecked bed of Kew Gardens.
From the hustle and the bustle of Dalhousie Square,
To the tourist attraction of Trafalgar Square.

From “Eeleesh Maach” with “Sorse-baata”
To “Fish and Chips” with sauce “Tartar.”

From the beauty of the LOTUS to the fragrance of the ROSE,
Thru mud statues and wax figures, devis and divas arose.

A new Tale of two Cities thus begins today,
As old ties are strengthened and new connections are in the air,
So Westward Ho! to London on AIR INDIA’s “Palace in the Sky”
With greetings from KOLKATA – The City of Joy.

- Shariar Karim



A Memento which I read out and presented, to the Minister of Civil Aviation, Chief Minister and other Dignitaries, on the dais on the occasion of AIR INDIA'S Inaugural Flight from KOLKATA – TO – LONDON ON JUNE 18, 2005

