

# ODYSSEY AI – 68 with Shariar Karim's “MILESTONES AND MEMORIES”

LAST FLIGHT : AI -68 on 3rd May 2021 “A MEMENTO OF A LIFETIME”

FLIGHT : AI -68 A on 7th May 2021 “ Past is Present”

NEXT FLIGHT: AI- 69 on 11th May 2021 “ The Game of the Name”



7.5.1995

18.7.2018

**“ MILESTONES AND MEMORIES”**

NAMASKAAR, WELCOME ABOARD FLIGHT AI-68A,  
ON FRIDAY THE 7TH OF MAY, 2021

Turning back the pages of history,  
Today we have reached the 7 TH OF MAY, 1995

This Day, That Year,  
“ THE PAST IS PRESENT ”

It is often said, that once the PAST is PASSED, it never  
comes back again.

But sometimes, just sometimes, the PAST catches up  
again and comes back to meet the PRESENT.

This was one such MEMORY of the Past that came back  
after 23 years, to remind me of an incident that was  
forgotten by me but was never forgotten by someone.

S. SHARIAR KARIM

## THE PAST IS PRESENT

1

My 1<sup>st</sup> Innings was with Air-India for 38.4 years. After that ended, destiny brought me to the International Association of Lions Clubs which is the oldest and largest Service organization club in the world. On invitation, I joined a leading Club in our District in 2011 and ‘Served’ in a different way – by caring for the poor, underprivileged, impoverished and destitute. In 2018, I was appointed as President of my Club and it was on the day of my first Board of Director’s Meeting that the Past, which I thought I had left behind for ever, caught up with me in the Present.

July 18, 2018, I was making final preparations, getting ready for the start of my first BOD Meeting, when just a few minutes away from the scheduled commencement, the Joint Secretary of the Club came charging into the Board room more excited and exuberant than usual, bubbling with child-like enthusiasm and demanded my attention for five minutes to share something sensational. She brandished a document in her hand and was insistent that I gave her my immediate attention. I politely explained that I simply could not give her my time just then and assertively managed to postpone an audience with her till after the meeting. Reluctantly, she conceded.

As soon as the BOD meeting was over, whilst all the Directors adjourned for Dinner, she cornered me and held me to my promise. For the life of me, I couldn’t imagine what could have enthralled her so much. Finally, she won my undivided attention and asked me to be seated. I did. She asked me to close my eyes and then unfolded the carefully guarded document, spreading it out on the table in front of me. On a cue from her, I opened my eyes and stared in utter disbelief at what I saw ! It was the xerox copy of an old Air-India menu card that had my handwriting on it from 23 years ago. The Past had indeed caught up with me in the Present!

She then explained the connection. She, works for a leading law firm in the city, when just a day ago, the owner, her boss, casually got talking about Air- India. Before long he made a reference to an enterprising young man, whom he kindly remembered from one of his flights in the past. It did not take her long to establish that it was me whom he was referring to. Once the identity was confirmed, he took out the original menu card which he had preserved all those years and showed it to her. He recalled how on his flight from London to Bombay on the 7<sup>th</sup> of May, 1995 he asked for a PTV Menu Card to select the video programmes he was planning to view on the flight, but was informed that there were none left. As the Inflight Supervisor, I was informed by my crew about this lapse on our part. Being a CIP passenger in the First Class, I immediately went up to him and apologised for the shortcoming but assured him that given a little time, I would redress the issue.

I immediately got to work, creating a substitute. Removing the pages of the Lunch menu from a Menu Card, I used the art paper of the cover page which depicted a miniature painting from the Collection of the Prince of Wales Museum Bombay, to write down the names of all the PTV programmes to be screened on that sector and within a short time, I presented it to him. He was so overawed by the replica and so impressed with my effort that he has not forgotten the incident and has preserved that card till this day.

My Lion Member associate asked him for the card but he refused to part with it. She managed to make a photocopy of the original and triumphantly presented it to me that day. I couldn't thank her enough for connecting the two innings of my life 23 years apart with just one simple piece of paper.

For me, I could never imagine that a small, simple act of innovation and creativity, done on the spur of the moment, in the line of duty, which I had forgotten all about, would be valued so much by a valued guest of our Airline and would become such a treasured memento for me in life as it connected my Past with my Present.

*(Interestingly, the No. of words in this narrative is - 747 !!)*



P. T. V.  
PROGRAMMES  
II

1. Entertainment Express-I.
2. Radio Club.
3. F. J. V. Club.
4. Ladies Open Open.
5. Entertainment Express-II.
6. Navarajam-I.



AI-102; London - Bombay; 1<sup>st</sup> May '25

P. T. V.  
PROGRAMMES  
III.

1. F. J. V. Club.
2. Ladies Open Open.
3. Radio Club.
4. In. F. J. V. Club.
5. Radio & Music-I.
6. Navarajam-II.



City of Gold

- a film on Bombay.

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