**2 OCTOBER 2017**

**Virgin Trains becomes setting for international chef competition**

Virgin Trains opened its onboard kitchen to top chefs when one of its east coast services became the setting for the final judging event of the International Indian Chef of the Year Award. The award, which is now in its 26th year, celebrates the cuisine of India and attracts chefs from all over the world.

The event was staged between London King’s Cross and York and saw seven chefs and their assistants create an array of exquisite dishes for a panel of judges to sample during the journey. The judging panel will now go on to decide who wins the award, which will be announced at a ceremony in London on October 9.

Celia Knott, Onboard Commercial Development Manager at Virgin Trains on the east coast, said: “We are delighted to play our part in this award which showcases the extraordinary skill of the contestants. Foods inspired by India have always been a popular choice on our onboard menu and it’s been exciting to see the chefs at work on our trains.”

Originally established by Edinburgh restauranteur, Tommy Miah, in 1991, the competition promotes innovation and quality in Indian cuisine worldwide. For more information on the award, please visit www.indianchefoftheyear.com/

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**About Virgin Trains**

Stagecoach and Virgin are working in partnership to operate the East Coast and West Coast inter-city routes under the Virgin Trains brand. Together, they are on track to revolutionise rail travel across the UK.

The combined network connects some of the nation’s most iconic destinations including Glasgow, Liverpool, Birmingham, Manchester, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Leeds, York and London.

Virgin Trains is committed to delivering a high speed, high frequency service, offering shorter journey times, more comfortable travel and excellent customer service. Customers consistently rate Virgin Trains as one of the top long-distance rail franchise operators in the National Rail Passenger Survey (NRPS) commissioned by industry watchdog, Transport Focus.

On the East Coast route, £140m is being invested to create a more personalised travel experience. We have already invested £21m to completely revamp our existing fleet and customers can now benefit from 42 additional services (22,000 extra seats) per week between Edinburgh and London. 2018 will see the introduction of completely new Azuma trains being built in the UK by Hitachi.

The West Coast route has a proud record of challenging the status quo - from introducing tilting Pendolino trains, to a pioneering automated delay repay scheme and becoming the first franchised rail operator to offer m-Tickets for all ticket types.

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Press Office: 0845 000 3333.