



RELAX. THE WEEKEND'S HERE

# brunch

DEC 21, 2024

## Ready player eleven

Sunil Chhetri sifts through two decades of career highs to pick the best moments as he retires. The goal that changed it all, the injury that almost broke him, the surprise pick... It's all in here

### Rude Food

The best bites of 2024

### No to nepos

Celeb kids that are breaking free



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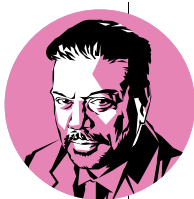
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# This week, we're.

## Team Brunch

letters@hindustantimes.com

### Acting childish.

Amazon Prime's Christmas present to us is here: Cartoon Network Rewind. There's Johnny Bravo, The Powerpuff Girls, Looney Tunes, Tom and Jerry, Scooby Doo and more. It's aimed at kids. But it's us grown-ups who'll be watching. The shows are from a time when life was simple, rent-free, drama-free, phone-free and Zoom-free. Can we unsubscribe from the adulthood package already?



**On team Ananya.** Caught the Spotify ad with Ananya Panday and Jackie Shroff? Each mimics the other. Of course, Shroff plays it snobbish ("Baaya, mere paani mei gluten hai kya?") But when Panday, scarf around her neck, launches into Shroff's Bhidu bhasha, it's all over. The hashtag for this duo: #Baedu!



**Only happy in the building.** Congratulate Selena Gomez on her engagement to Benny Blanco. Work out the price of her six-carat marquise diamond too (\$225,000, BTW). But stop with the Finallys and Thank

INSTAGRAM/  
@SELENAGOMEZ



Gods. Hold the

pity. Yes, she got hurt over her break-up with Justin Bieber. But let's stop pretending like she's been salvaged. If you think marriage is a rescue, you're part of the problem. ➔

03

**Stopping this thing he started.** Bryan Adams came to India and dutifully posted photo dumps from his Mumbai and Delhi trips. Yawn. It's his sixth time here, and he's still going to Gateway of India, eating vada pao, and posting pictures of goats on the streets. Oh, we get it! "Still feels like... the firrsst time togetherrrr."

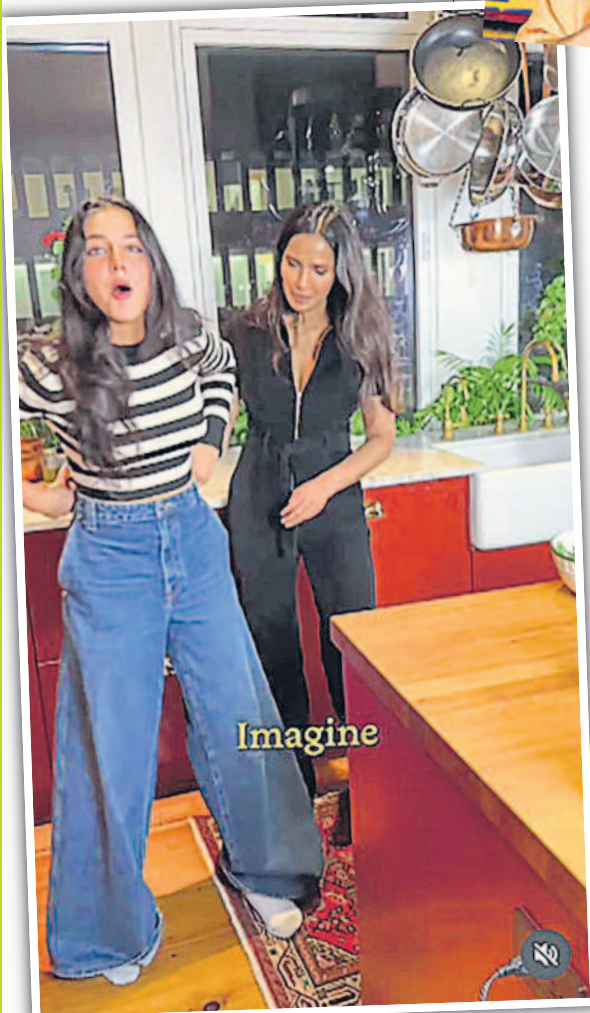


INSTAGRAM/@BRYANADAMS

**Keeping Mum.**

Padma Lakshmi, model, activist, food critic, author, is totally everyone's mom. In an Insta video with her teen daughter Krishna, they argue about the right way to wear jeans. Lakshmi takes the high-waist approach. Krishna rides low, Y2K style. Mum is horrified. Turns out, even cool moms want us to pull up our pants!

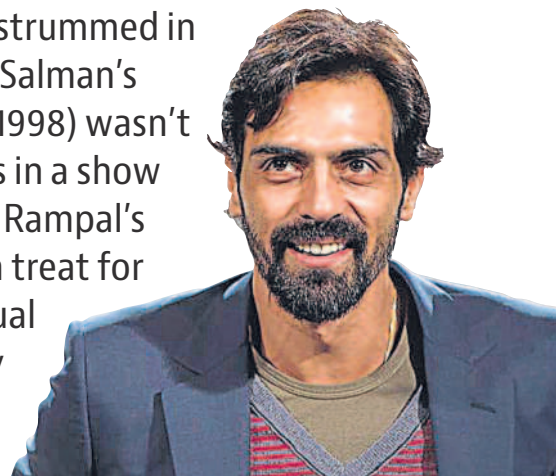
INSTAGRAM/@PADMALAKSHMI



**Pitching for change.** Is it too much to ask Bollywood to play musicians properly? Kareena fake strummed in *Main Prem Ki Diwani Hoon* (2003). Salman's electric guitar in *O O Jaane Jaana* (1998) wasn't even plugged in! But to be careless in a show about music is unforgivable. Arjun Rampal's cameo in S2 of *Bandish Bandits* is a treat for the eyes. Rampal is delish. But actual scenes of musicians at work – they feel like nails on a chalkboard.



**Verse off.** Hugh Jackman and Ryan Reynolds play grown-up (hopefully not worn-out), musicians in the upcoming movie *Boyz n the City*. Both men can sing. Both men can also move. We should have seen it coming, given that Reynolds seemingly dances to NSYNC's *Bye Bye Bye* in *Deadpool & Wolverine*. Who else is cast? Are they pretty too?



**Not logging out.** Of course, we're talking about *The Office*. The gang can't seem to quit the show either. We get regular Insta updates from the cast, especially from Angela Kinsey and Mindy Kaling. They hang out together often, have podcasts, give us so much BTS content. It helps that Kaling was also a writer on the show and has more control over what she can share. 🌸

INSTAGRAM/@ANGELAKINSEY





# Make every second count

**History rarely celebrates the runner-up. But we should. It's where the tales of grit and comebacks lie**

**Christalle Fernandes**

christalle.fernandes@hindustantimes.com

What does the world at large remember from the 2024 Paris Olympics? Chances are, we only recall Yusuf Dikec, the silver-haired Turkish shooter who stood there nonchalantly (no gear, nothing), looking almost bored as he took aim against the world's best.

Dikec and his teammate won silver. But his hitman pose was so epic, no one even remembers who won. Let that be a reminder to anyone assessing their accomplishments in 2024, that coming in second isn't so bad after all.

Silver-medal syndrome is a real thing. A landmark study in 1995, the first of its kind, published in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, analysed video footage of winners' reactions from the 1992 Barcelona Games. It found that silver medallists tend to feel more disappointed than bronze winners.

Indian athletes know the feeling. "For three consecutive years at the Nationals, I was winning only silver medals, and it left me feeling desperate, and unhappy, and, honestly, took the joy out of competing," recalls Suma Shirur, former Indian shooting team coach and founder of Lakshya Shooting Club. "It is

painful to come so close."

No one is interested in those who almost made it – but we should. Because second-place finishes are where stories of hope and grit lie. Aishwarya Rai lost the Miss India title to Sushmita Sen in a close competition in 1994. The media played up ➡



**Turkish shooter Yusuf Dikec and his teammate finished second at the Paris Olympics. He's the athlete we remember best from the games.**

INSTAGRAM/@YUSUFDIKEC; ADOBE STOCK



AISHWARYA RAI  
LOST THE MISS  
INDIA TITLE TO  
SUSHMITA SEN IN  
1994. SHE WON MISS  
WORLD THAT YEAR,  
SILENCING HATERS



Oppenheimer won an Oscar but Barbie (above) was a pop-culture phenomenon. Ariana Grande outshone everyone on Victorious.



their rivalry. But she went on to win the Miss World title in the same year, silencing the haters. The Adam Lambert - Kris Allen rivalry on S8 of American Idol had us hooked in 2009. Allen won. But it's Lambert who landed bigger music opportunities.

Sometimes, coming second can literally taste sweet. Pepsi and Coca-Cola have been competing since the late 1800s. Coca-Cola dominates the market. But blind taste tests – there seems to be one in every generation – show that consumers prefer the sweeter flavour of Pepsi. Even sportspersons say that placing second isn't something to cry over. "You've reached that point in your journey because you were good enough to get there," says Karman Kaur Thandi, tennis player. "There are things I believe I could have done better on the court, but I got that kick of hitting the tennis ball with my racquet."

There's a silver lining for every runner-up: They escape the glare of public scrutiny. Some use it to launch the ultimate hater showdown. Malaysian-Australian chef Poh Ling Yeow was eliminated in the final rounds in S1 of MasterChef Australia in 2009. She admitted feeling as though she'd failed herself. But the show helped springboard her career as a chef, cookbook author, and TV host, and as a judge on the same show, 11 years later.

There can be only one winner in a competition. But there's always more than one lesson to learn. For Shirur, focusing on the competition, not the outcome, helped her win gold for the first time in 2004. Kaur says competing taught her to "play my match, and not think about winning or losing". And in case you've forgotten, the team that beat Dikec are Serbian shooters Zorana Arunović and Damir Mikec. 🌸



# Try these new party tricks

**The good news: This season's fashion staples can create a party look, a holiday fit and a wedding look too. There is no bad news**

**Riddhi Doshi**

letters@hindustantimes.com

A well-fitted coverup or jacket is great for creating different looks. Wear it over a dress or corset, or use it to glam up a wedding outfit. FOREVER NEW



December is demanding on the wardrobe. There's a friend's wedding, the office Christmas party, countless catch-ups, descending NRIs to meet, and the big night of the 31st. Ease up a little with stylist-endorsed hacks on how to make a few looks stretch out over a month (and more) of events. Here's what to pick.

## ● **The maxi dress.**

It's a season essential, says stylist Anushree Sardesai. "Pick one in silver, gold or any metallic colour and you are set," she says. It needs minimal styling. For a chill party in the city, wear it with toe-loop sandals or kitten heels, a classic watch, hoop earrings and a small cross-body bag. On a holiday or for a destination wedding event, wear a stack of chunky bracelets, statement earrings and style the hair in beach waves. Complete the look with tie-up sandals and a pop-coloured clutch. "You can't go wrong with

this ensemble," says Sardesai.

## ● **The draped jacket.**

Fashion designer and stylist Dipti Advait believes that a well-fitted festive-looking (velvet, embroidery, metallic finish, handloom) coverup that wraps around the body is great for creating different looks. Wear it over a dress, add statement jewellery, and the fitted shape turns the look into eveningwear. Wear the jacket over a corset, skirt, slip dress, tube dress or a shift dress to change up the mood right before photos.

**The bro code****A light-coloured shirt.**

"High-quality basics add a bit of detailing, like a motif on the sleeve or pocket," says Advait.

**Trouser with a low yoke.** "So trendy. They go well with white, blue, black and grey shirts."

**Short-cut.** "A fitted coat in a fun print will cover any boring outfit."



A pre-pleated, block colour sari works with a crop top, a bustier or a corset-style blouse. Or go more modern with a co-ord set that is easy to dress up or down.

PANAAACHE; CICCERONI



● **The pre-pleated sari.** Keep it simple – single colour, not too much bling or heavy embroidery. And pick the blouse with care. A corset style, a fitted cropped top, a bustier or a bright-coloured fitted style. "It's a 'not too much, not too little' kind of look," Sardesai says. For a formal party, dress it up with chunky metallic jewellery or a traditional polki jadau maang tika, choker and earrings. No handbags. Carry a festive-style potli. For a dinner event, even on vacation, lighten up the look with coloured gemstones and a fun clutch. Bags with cane and marbled effects are trending. They'll elevate a simple look.

● **The silk shirt and skirt.** The co-ord set is still a big trend, and remains versatile, says Sardesai. "It's very easy to dress it up or down," she says. For

engagement ceremony parties, wear it with a jadau choker, juttis and stacked rings. For a posh dinner, switch to a heavier necklace, a tennis bracelet, stilettos. On a holiday, pair the skirt with a bikini top and wear the shirt unbuttoned, and wear the shirt later with shorts.

● **The palette.**

Everyone wears black, white, champagne, silver and gold around this time. So, pick outfits that stand out for their shape, texture, and quality. "This season, I'm also loving burgundy and hot pink," says Sardesai. Both are day and night colours and can be casual and dressy. If the dress is in a neutral hue, Advait advises wearing metallic or earthy blue footwear. "Also, it's Christmas time. Red, white or black will also look great," says Advait. 🌸



# Thinking on their feet

**Viral moves, hook steps, even fakers. Insta has changed how dance evolves. See how creators stay on their toes**

**Karishma Kuenzang**

letters@hindustantimes.com

On the 'gram, we're all just one viral Reel away from fame. On the 'gram, moonwalks, shuffles and grand jetés look doable. On the 'gram, the algorithm tap-dances from one trend to the next. On the 'gram, group dances often get cropped out of the vertical frame. Three choreographers talk about what being on the 'gram really means for those dancing and those watching.



**Aarushi Vikram, 28, Delhi**

**@AarushiVikram23**

Everything is about content creation, so obviously, dance is too. Vikram's Insta features moves for beginners and experienced folks. It's more strategy than self-expression, she says.

"You have to market yourself in a saturated field. Dancers need to think as content creators do: What's viral right now? What's going to get people dancing? What viral step can you incorporate in your choreography?"

Short-form content plays better on mobile screens. So she's tweaked her web choreography to be quicker, with moves people can pause and replicate. Hook steps have been around forever. But new generations discover classic ones and try to follow suit. So, it's a mix of old and new genres.

"Insta has given creators more agency," Vikram notes. "We no longer have to struggle to build a network or a tribe." But don't believe everything you see. Some dancers cleverly edit moves, showcasing routines that are impossible to follow in real life. "There's also pressure to post the most ➔

Dancer Aarushi shares quick steps that viewers can pause and replicate. [INSTAGRAM/ @AARUSHIVIKRAM23](#)



Hana, part of an Afro-Caribbean dance crew, says that showcasing different cultures is a good way to stand out from the crowd. [INSTAGRAM/@AFRO.HANA](#)



perfect version of yourself. And that is not something that you can do on a stage or in a live performance.”

The genres most likely to go viral are hip-hop, Afro, and dancehall, rather than forms that require formal training. “We’re at a point where genres kind of bleed into one another too,” Vikram says.

### **Hana aka Archana Kujur, 25, Delhi**

**@Afro.Hana**

Hana, is part of an all-girl Afro Caribbean group, Irie Dance Crew, and has been dancing since 2019. There are so many one-hit wonders online, that the scene is full of viral sensations hoping to hold on to fame, she says. A professional dancer’s work can sometimes get lost in the mix. A good way to stand out is to “bring different cultures together via dance,” she says.

For performers, a social-media feed is the best portfolio of all. Dancers carefully curate every clip so it appeals to both an idly scrolling viewer, as well as a talent scout. “People today check how consistent you are,” Hana says. And production quality is crucial. A dancer doesn’t only think

about the steps today, but also the costumes, lighting, and background. But tutorials barely fit the 60- to 90-second Reel length. “So, you end up posting multiple videos, or highlights. It drives up costs and it’s hard to be consistent.”

Above all, dancers who’ve honed their skills on a big stage, and hoped to make it to the big screen are realising that all eyes are now on the vertical frame of the smartphone. “We have to keep it all compact, and edit well so the transitions looks smooth,” Hana says. “There’s a reason most Reels have smaller movements.” There’s only that much ➔



Akshay Murarka, co-founder of AnD Choreography, says that the focus is now on one single viral step – all the better to catch everyone's attention.



wiggle room.

Over the coming months, Hana says Afrobeats will be on everyone's feeds, thanks to songs such as Calm Down by Rema ft. Selena Gomez. "Apart from K-Pop with BTS and Blackpink of course."

### **Akshay Murarka, 31, Mumbai**

**@Akshay.Murarka**

Murarka, co-founder of AnD Choreography, trained in jazz, contemporary, ballet and hip-hop, and has been dancing for 15 years. On Instagram, "everyone wants something that looks good and is easy. The easier it appears, the more viral you will go," he says.

"A lot of students attend dance classes only so that they can post their videos on Instagram."

It means, for dancers, the focus has shrunk from a whole routine, to a set of moves, to one single viral step – to catch everyone's attention quickly. "Honestly, the viral step in Tauba Tauba is not easy at all," he points out.

"It became popular precisely because so many people took on that challenge."

But despite the mash-ups and the exotic costumes, there's no real fusion of genres happening on social media, Murarka says. Dance can only evolve from a good foundation. "A dancer may add a tap-dance move or a mudra into a routine, but it's hardly a substitute for learning the dance and its background properly."

In India, Bollywood and hip-hop remain popular. And Reels have power that ticketed concerts don't. "It makes you connect with each viewer, since their focus is solely on you. It's more relatable than a movie." 🌸



# Man of the **moments**

**Sunil Chhetri has retired from football, but he's not done yet. The 40-year-old legend talks about the moments that defined his career – and why his biggest achievement is off the field**

**Christalle Fernandes**

[christalle.fernandes@hindustantimes.com](mailto:christalle.fernandes@hindustantimes.com)

Captain Fantastic. Legend. India's top goal-scorer. Sunil Chhetri is known by many names. But perhaps his greatest achievement has been to shift the focus of a cricket-crazy country to football. Chhetri, 40, played professionally for 19 years. He was captain of the national team for 12 of them, from 2012 until 2024. Chhetri is also among history's top scorers, managing 94 international goals across 151 matches – an achievement that's only behind Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo, Iran's Ali Daei, and Argentina's Lionel Messi.

So, when he announced his retirement in May, fans and athletes across disciplines mourned the end of an era. "Your impact on Indian sport can never be erased," javelin champ Neeraj Chopra commented on his Instagram post. Abhishek Bachchan simply commented, "CAP!" Nineteen years after his first match, he looks at the moments that ➔





Chhetri's biggest contribution to football is getting a cricket-crazy nation to pay attention to the relatively lesser-watched sport.

PHOTOS: HT ARCHIVE



shaped his life.

### **That first match: June 12, 2005**

Chhetri says he must have been around four or five years old when he first started kicking a ball around a field, when his family lived in Kolkata in the 1980s. He was luckier than most; his father, KB Chhetri, played on the Indian Army's football team, his mother Sushila had been on Nepal's national football team. "Most kids

my age weren't as fortunate to have professional football players, who'd play with them," he recalls. "I grew up knowing the sport was in my blood."

It wasn't until he was 20, playing against Pakistan in a three-match friendly series in 2005, that his future started to take shape. Up until then, Chhetri had only played for City Club Delhi and in domestic leagues. "Playing for the country is a feeling that is second to none. I was happy, honoured, grateful." He was on the field against Pakistan only because legendary player Bhaichung Bhutia had pulled out after an injury. Chhetri had an injury too – a sprained ankle. But he ended up scoring the sole goal for India in the second half of the game, which resulted in a 1-1 draw. "I did not know that match would define my career." He still has the jersey .

### **The turning point: February, 2011**

"The moment I really started feeling a shift in my journey as a player was when I became captain of the national football team in 2011," Chhetri recalls. Coach Bob Houghton handed over the captain's armband to ➔



Becoming captain of the national football team in 2011 changed the way Chhetri viewed the game.

Chhetri in Malaysia in 2011. He was only 27. Bhutia, Chhetri's idol, had just retired from international football. Chhetri, by his own admission, was a backbencher and loved pranking the team.

Everything changed overnight. "Earlier, I would sit at the back of the bus and create a ruckus. But I started sitting in front, thinking of the team, how to play better, how to behave, on and off the pitch."

### **The epic miss: November 5, 2018**

Chhetri says he played some of his best football in the 2017-18 season, when he played for Bengaluru FC. "In terms of performance, we were at the top of our game."

Then, in 2018, in an Indian Super League game against Kerala Blasters, Chhetri broke his ankle while tackling an opponent. "It was one of the worst moments," he recalls. "I was out for six months; one of the most challenging times I can remember." Though he was in pain, limping around the field, he continued playing, leading Bengaluru FC to a 2-1 victory. The fracture needed surgery, though, and it was when he was off the field, that Chhetri realised how much football had come to mean for him. "Missing out on goals, losing games – I was struggling, physically and mentally. But I was fortunate to be surrounded by the right people – my family, my teammates, and a great team of doctors and physiotherapists. They were all very helpful, and very positive."





## What's going on in your head when you win, or when you lose?

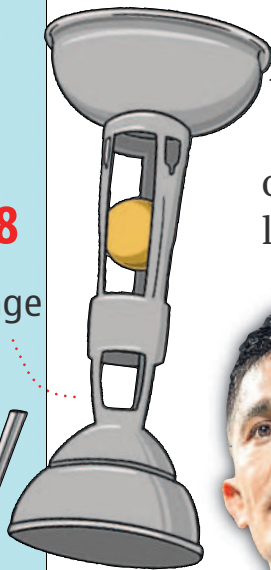
"I go to my family. When you're winning, everything is hunky-dory – everyone is making jokes. But when you are not performing well, it's just your loved ones. My year-old son Dhruv can't watch the match yet, but for me, it's a comfort knowing he's there."

### Trophy haul

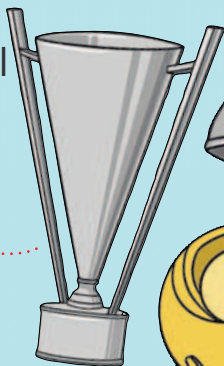


**2021**  
Khel Ratna  
Award

**2008**  
AFC  
Challenge  
Cup

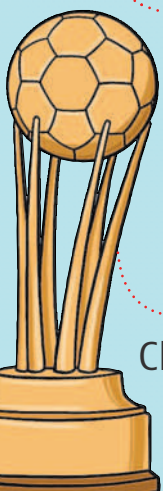


**2018**  
Hero  
Intercontinental  
Cup



**2007**  
Nehru Cup

**2011**  
SAFF  
Championship



## The trickiest goal: June 13, 2017

Of the 94 goals Chhetri has scored in international football, his most challenging, he says, was at the 2019 AFC Asian Cup qualifiers in Bengaluru. The Indian team was facing Kyrgyzstan; they were known to be quick on their feet. Teammate Jeje Lalpekhlua passed the ball to him in an impossibly narrow space, sending the stadium erupting into cheers. "I always talk about that goal because of the way we defended our game," he recalls. "For about 16 to 17 minutes in the second half, we were just defending ourselves." They'd gone over their formations the day before, planning every possible opportunity to strike. Jeje got the ball, passed it, and Chhetri didn't hesitate for even a moment, sending it straight into the net. It missed the goalkeeper by an inch. That split-second move changed the game. "To get that goal the way we did was amazing, and very fulfilling. A lot of moving parts had to come together the way they did for us to get the goal."

In football, a single second can change the outcome of a 90-minute game. It's precisely these last-minute finishes that the footballer uses to his advantage. And yet, Chhetri says it's just a function of knowing how to be in the right place at the right time. "To be honest, I don't think any goals I've scored were easy," he admits. "From a spectator's perspective, it looks effortless. But it takes the whole team to work together to get to the result."



## Off the field: June 12, 2023

Chhetri says the best moment of his life didn't even take place on the ➔



I don't think any goals I've scored were easy, man. But it takes the whole team to work together to get to the result.

For the footballer, his wife Sonam and son Dhruv are his biggest achievements.

INSTAGRAM/  
@CHHETRI\_SUNIL11

pitch. At the 2023 Hero Intercontinental Cup, he scored a winning goal against Vanuatu at Bhubaneswar's Kalinga Stadium. Moments later, he picked up the ball, tucked it into his blue jersey, and gestured towards the stands where his wife Sonam Bhattacharjee was present. "We were expecting a baby. This is how she wanted me to announce it. That gesture was for her and the baby," he said in post-match interviews.


### Number one: December 04, 2017

And yet, with all he's achieved, football will always come second. For his wife's

33rd birthday in 2021, the

footballer wrote in a social media post, "I chose football very early in life, and it gave me joy and happiness beyond measure. And yet, it remains the second-best choice I've made."

The footballer calls his wife his best friend, critic and guide.

"They say the choices you make shape the rest of your life, so choose well," he added. "I'm going to credit myself here when I say you've been my best decision ever." 





# Rewind, reheat, taste, repeat



VIR  
SANGHVI

For anyone tracking the food scene, 2024 has been a year of spectacular highs. See which chefs, restaurants and trends made the cut and will shape the year to come

What a year in food it's been! Indian restaurants have shone abroad. And within the country, our restaurants have demonstrated creativity and flair.

Here's my recap of the best of the year in food and of the people who made it happen.

## Star of the year: **Vikas Khanna**

Vikas was already India's best-known chef, but the opening of Bungalow in New York City was an enormous risk. He chose the world's most competitive restaurant city. He also wanted to give Indian fans a place to treat as their own.

Bungalow has been full since the day it opened. The New York Times gave it three stars, something it has not done for any Indian restaurant in this century. On any given night, the majority of guests at Bungalow are Indians. I reckon he'll get a Michelin star at Bungalow next year. And his life will have come full circle.

## Phenomenon of the Year: **Bastian**

Bastian is a Mumbai restaurant that opened some years ago, with Kelvin Cheung as the chef. It was an instant success, but it was still regarded as a suburban phenomenon. It has since also opened in midtown locations, moved away from focusing on a single chef, and has become the most successful restaurant ever in Mumbai.

Bastian is expanding to Bengaluru, Pune and ➔

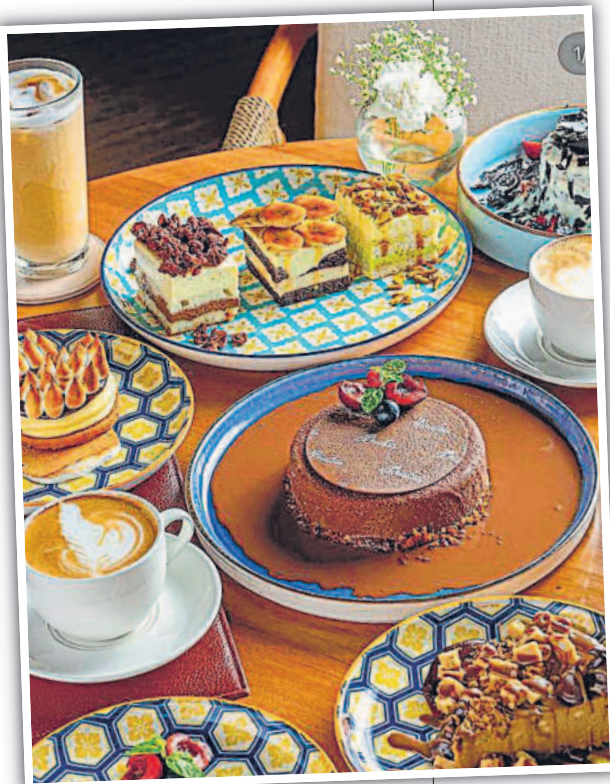


Vikas Khanna's restaurant, Bungalow, got rave reviews, and cemented him as a star chef internationally.





Seefah (top) is a cult favourite in Mumbai. Bastian (below), also in Mumbai, is the envy of the industry. Nobody can figure out how it manages to pull in so many customers.



other cities. The group will open an Asian restaurant soon.

### **Chef of the year:** Hussain Shahzad

Ever since Hussain opened O Pedro for the Bombay Canteen group, he was marked as the Chef to Watch. He then took over all of the group's operations and launched Veronica's sandwich shop. This has been his best year yet, with the success of Papa's Bombay, a small counter-seating restaurant above Veronica's, which is the hardest booking in Mumbai and may also have the best, most inspired food in India.

### **Restaurant of the year:** Avartana

ITC has finally rolled Avartanas out at many of its hotels. Calcutta came first and the Avartana there took the city by storm. The Mumbai Avartana, where I ate recently, was, I thought, even better than the Chennai original. The newly opened Delhi Avartana will take a little time to find its feet. There's even an Avartana in Colombo.

It wins every award you can think of and is very much the restaurant of the moment.

### **Restaurateur of the year:** Samyukta Nair

Samyukta is the granddaughter of the late Captain Nair who founded the Leela group. Jamawar, one of her two Indian restaurants in London, has a Michelin star. Mei Mei Mayfair, a Chinese restaurant, is a huge success. Koyn, a Japanese restaurant with a Thai sibling, also in London's most expensive area, has got the city talking. No Indian has made such an impact on the London restaurant scene so quickly.

### **Food trend of the year:** South-east Asian

Garima Arora, whose Bangkok restaurant has two ➔





Avartana has been a hit this year. (Clockwise) Samyukta Nair, Hussain Shahzad, Gresham Fernandes, and Ranveer Brar have done stellar work in their fields.



*The views expressed by the columnist are personal*

Michelin stars, has just opened a Thai restaurant in Gurgaon, in partnership with Riyaaz Amlani. Vinesh Johny, the celebrated pastry chef, has found enormous success with Kopitiam in Bengaluru. Also in Bengaluru is Kavan Kutappa's sensational Naru Noodle Bar.

In Mumbai, Seefah, run by the eponymous Thai chef is a cult favourite. And high-quality Japanese food has never been hotter with such restaurants as Mizu Izakaya and firm favourite, Izumi.

This is the real thing, with no compromises on authenticity, and Indians are loving it.

### **Comeback of the Year:**

#### **Gresham Fernandes**

Gresham is back with Mumbai's Bandra Born, a restaurant that pays homage to his roots. That description can be misleading because this is astonishingly complex food made to look easy. You don't get such deep flavours unless you know all the secrets of the kitchen and have years of experience.

### **The individual chef: Ranveer Brar**

Ranveer Brar is now a superstar chef. He is the first chef to have gone beyond cooking and become a success in Hindi movies as well. Given that his stardom owes so much to his charisma, it is just as well that he is also an outstanding chef.

### **RIP hotel restaurants; standalones have won**

There are still some outstanding hotel restaurants, but the trend is clear. Chefs prefer working outside of a hotel hierarchy. And, let's face it, hotels have stopped innovating. 🍷

# Mess around and find out



SEEMA  
GOSWAMI

**Live while you're young. It's the time to make mistakes, experiment with jobs and relationships, and flirt with new cities**

I always thought it was a bit of a cliché. But now, as I grow older, I am beginning to think there is something to that old aphorism: “Youth is wasted on the young.”

And as I get on in years, I realise that there are many things I wish I had known and appreciated better when I was young. So here, for the benefit of my younger readers, are just some of them, in no particular order of importance.

**Make the most of the luxury of time.** When you are young, you have your whole life before you. There is plenty of time to make mistakes, to change careers if you so wish, to call time on a relationship if you feel it is not working. Don't make the mistake

of thinking that just because you have spent a few years in a job or a relationship it is too late to start afresh. This is actually the best time to do so, when you have decades ahead to make good on these changes.

**Don't be in a hurry** to tie yourself down to a particular city by buying a house and saddling yourself with an onerous mortgage. Yes, it may seem like a waste of money to pay rent every month with nothing to show for it. But what you are paying for is flexibility, and the ability to up sticks and move ➔



In *Kho Gaye Hum Kahan*, the trio of friends plunged into relationship drama and experimented with careers with all the heedlessness of their youth.





Dear Zindagi (above) showed us it's okay to struggle in our careers. Chhichore (below) taught us the importance of going on adventures.



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when a better opportunity presents itself. That is far more important at this stage of your life than the stability that your own house (and the EMI payments that come with it) represents.

**If you are lucky enough** to have some disposable income, then don't spend it on material things. Instead, invest in experiences that will give you memories that will last a lifetime. That designer bag will get dated in a year or so. But

that trip to Italy or Egypt or Japan with your family or friends will remain fresh in your mind forever.

**Make the most of your fitness levels** because they will decline with every decade of your life no matter how much time you spend in the gym. Don't

put off that trip trekking in the Himalayas or walking the Alps because you think you have all the time in the world to do that. Your knees will give up on you sooner than you expect and then you will regret the holiday not taken.

**Don't make the mistake** of confusing your job with your life. You may think that you can make up for lost time with your family once you have clambered up the career ladder. And that all those late nights at your desk will be worth it when you finally make it to the corner office. But by the time you do, you may well have missed that magic window when your kids needed you the most. And not even the biggest salary bump will make up for that time lost forever. 🌸

# It's rally been a treat



HORMAZD  
SORABJEE

**For car lovers, the 1000 Miglia Experience UAE is an opportunity to see – and talk about – rare, timeless cars in all their glory**

As far as motor sport events go, the Mille Miglia is among the greatest. Conceived as a 1,000-mile race across Italy (hence the name) from 1927 to 1957, it was recreated in 1977 into a slower paced regularity rally, at which precision and consistency are prioritised over speed. The Italian rerun each year is for vehicles manufactured before 1957, and those that either participated in or were registered for the original races.

The UAE joined this storied tradition in 2021, hosting the 1000 Miglia. The difference: There is no vintage requirement. Even modern classic cars can participate. It's dramatically widened the appeal of the UAE event, officially called the 1000 Miglia Experience UAE. The organisers, Octanium Experiences, delivered a show worthy of the Mille Miglia's legacy.

On the eve of the flag-off, the Emirates Golf Course transformed into an automotive catwalk. Chrome polished to a mirror-like sheen, leather seats steeped in history, and the unmistakable scent of unburned petrol in the air. This wasn't just a gathering of old cars. It was a

celebration of obsession. Owners swapped notes about impossible restorations, rare parts found



The event wasn't simply about vehicles. Owners swapped notes about impossible restorations, rare parts found in the strangest places and the storied history of their fabulous cars.







Mercedes-Benz brought several of their iconic 300 SLs. The Ferrari lineup featured the 308 GTB and the 246 Dino.



*The views expressed by the columnist are personal*



in the strangest places and the history of their fabulous cars.

And boy, were they fabulous. The Ferrari lineup, featuring the sensual 308 GTB and the charming baby 246 Dino — both of which once adorned my childhood bedroom walls as posters — was a personal highlight. For sheer beauty, however, it was hard to outshine the Jaguar E-Types. Mercedes-Benz brought its usual star power, with several 300 SLs — widely regarded as one of the greatest sports cars of all time.

I took part in this event behind the wheel of a Mercedes-Benz W116 450 SEL. The rare 6.9 variant. In the late '70s, this was the fastest-production sedan in the world. Its 6.9-litre M100 V8 engine, a feat of engineering, produced a tidal wave of torque that can humble even modern sports cars. It was the quintessential Autobahn stormer.

From the urban sophistication of Dubai, to the rugged mountains of Ras Al Khaimah, to the breathtaking hairpins of Jebel Jais, to the tranquil beaches of Fujairah, every mile was an incredible experience. Jebel Jais, often hailed as the ultimate driving road in the UAE, was a highlight.

Due to time constraints, I could only complete two days of the four-day event, which was a real pity, as I was just getting into my stride. But it was one tick off the bucket list — a rally where the journey was every bit as epic as the destination. 🌸



# Raising the nepo rate

**Who said privilege was a bad thing? These 10 celeb kids are clapping back at their family legacies and forging ahead on their own**

**Urvee Modwel**

urvee.modwel@hindustantimes.com



**1 Navya Naveli Nanda.** Granddaughter of Amitabh Bachchan, daughter of businessman Nikhil Nanda. She chose business over Bollywood, founding the gender non-profit Project Naveli, and is pursuing an MBA at IIM Ahmedabad. Here's how a professor put it: "India has been debating why elite families move out of India for higher education... One lady makes it to IIMA... & everyone's worked up."

**2 Vivian Jenna Wilson.** Wilson and her twin brother Griffin were born to tech billionaire Elon Musk's first wife, author Justine Musk. His transgender daughter has revealed, publicly, that Musk was

an absentee father, who was cruel to her when she was a child simply because she was queer and feminine. While she's largely stayed out of the public eye, Wilson, in 2022, finally cut ties with and denounced her father. Good for her.





**3 Elle King.**

Full name:  
Tanner Elle Schneider.  
Occupation: Singer.  
Dad: Rob Schneider,  
that guy in every  
Adam Sandler movie.  
On a podcast in  
August, King said that

growing up, Schneider had  
been incredibly harsh about  
her weight, he'd make her  
wear sweaters in the heat  
to cover her tattoos, and he  
sent her to fat camp. She  
went four or five years  
without speaking to him.  
No wonder she's not a fan.

**4 Ronan Farrow.**

Son of actor Mia  
Farrow and filmmaker  
Woody Allen (though  
gossip, and blue eyes  
suggest he might be  
Frank Sinatra's son).  
Farrow cut ties with Allen  
years ago and, as an  
investigative reporter,  
helped break the story  
about Harvey Weinstein's  
history of sex abuse. He  
read law at Yale, has a  
Pol-Sci DPhil from Oxford  
and worked with  
Obama and  
Hillary  
Clinton.  
Basically,  
Sharmaji ka  
beta.

**5 Charles Shaffer.**

Vogue editor-in-chief  
Anna Wintour has a son and a daughter,  
Charles and Bee. Neither work in fashion. Bee is a TV  
producer, Charles, like his father  
David, is a psychiatrist.  
Although we occasionally see  
him sitting courtside at  
Wimbledon with his famous  
mum, Charles stays incredibly  
low-key. But he is always  
impeccably dressed.

**6 Abigail Disney.**

Yes, that Disney. Walt's  
grand-niece. The documentary  
producer and philanthropist is part of  
Patriotic Millionaires, a group that  
supports hiking taxes for the rich. In  
April 2019, through several tweets,  
she criticised Disney CEO Bob  
Iger's salary. And has criticised  
working conditions at  
Disneyland.  
What a hero.

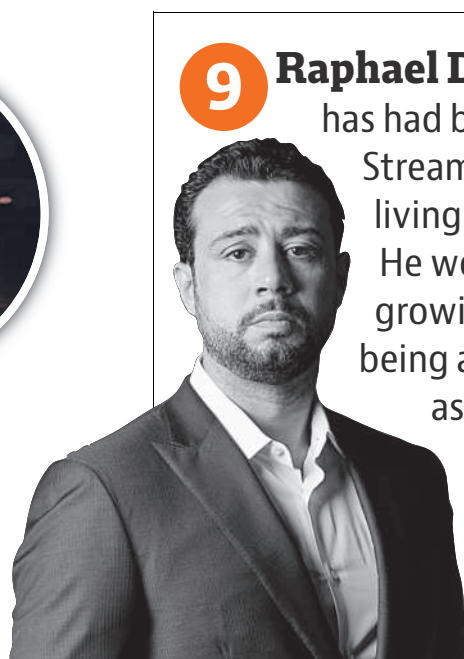


**7 Jennifer Katherine Gates Nassar.** Bill Gates's eldest daughter is a paediatrician who stays so far off-grid, she has no Wikipedia page. Nassar attended Stanford and Columbia and in the rare interviews she's given, she's been open about her privilege.

"I think it's about using those opportunities and learning from them to find things that I'm passionate about and hopefully make the world a little bit of a better place." Good answer!



**8 Megan Ramsay.** Dad Gordon is famous for his outbursts on TV. Megan, the oldest, is his most reclusive child. She was the first family member to receive a college degree back in 2019. She studied psychology and is now a police officer.



**9 Raphael DeNiro.** Robert De Niro's son has had bit parts in some films (Love Streams, Raging Bull) but makes a living as a high-end real-estate broker. He worked many jobs while he was growing up in New York, including being a doorman, a production assistant on movie sets for his father, and a busboy at his father's restaurant, Nobu. But selling homes makes good money.

**10 Tindyebwa Agaba Wise.** The adopted son of British actors Greg Wise and Emma Thompson was a refugee from Rwanda. He lost his biological father to AIDS when he was just nine. Today, he has two degrees,

including a Masters in Human Rights Law, speaks eight languages and works with the Metropolitan Police, helping refugees just like him. A true hero. 🌸





## this is us

**For advertising and marketing enquiries:**

Gautam Buragohain  
gautam.buragohain  
@hindustantimes.  
com

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**HT Media Group**,  
8th Floor,  
Lotus Tower,  
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New Delhi 110025.

**Email: letters@hindustan times.com**

**Editorial**

**Editor:** Rachel Lopez

**Assistant Editor:** Urvee Modwel

**Correspondent:** Christalle Fernandes

**Principal Visualiser:** Mandeep Dhir

**Cover:** Photograph courtesy BFC Media.  
Design by Mandeep Dhir.

**{ A LITTLE EXTRA }**

This week's story about party dressing took Brunch editor **Rachel Lopez** back to the brief time when she actually enjoyed going out on New Year's Eve. She was in college, the world was new, and she knew all the lyrics to Eminem's The Real Slim Shady. She also had a tube of matte black lipstick. The thing to know about black lipstick is that anyone who wears it looks ghostly pale. It makes teeth look yellower. It stains lips for hours. But when it's the year 2000, and all your girlfriends are wearing black low-rise faux-leather pants with platform sandals, then black lipstick is the ultimate accessory. She's lost count of how many girls borrowed that tube. 🌸



ADOBE STOCK

# Sonal Kaushal

Voice artist, YouTuber, content creator,  
@The\_Motormouth

**Christalle Fernandes**

christalle.fernandes@hindustantimes.com

## Currently I am:

Working on my podcast, The Motormouth Show on YouTube, and lending my voice to some amazing shows on Netflix, Amazon Prime, Crunchy Roll, and Disney. I also play Sita in the Japanese Ramayana, which is all set to release in India.

## On my playlist:

Tose Naina Lage, by Shilpa Rao; Saiyyan Hato Jao, from Heeramandi; Nacho Nacho from RRR.

## On my speed dial:

My dad, my husband and my baby's nanny.

## My secret skill:

I connect dots and solve mysteries like Sherlock Holmes.



ADOBE STOCK



## A magic tool I wish I had:

Doraemon's Anywhere Door to help me reach where I need to be, in seconds!

## Today I'm craving:

Chinese food.

## Advice I'd give my 18-year-old self:

Keep going. Don't be scared. Stay away from negative people.

## My favourite Sunday memory:

Watching TV with my grandparents and having home-cooked food.

## My most star-struck moment so far:

Talking to Kareena Kapoor during an online meet-and-greet. She appreciated my voice and talent. 🌸