



A VARIETY OF CHRISTMAS TREES IN TOWN

## 'I CAN'T BE EMOTIONALLY MANIPULATED ANYMORE'

Spirituality makes a lot of things very apparent, like you start seeing things for what they are. I am a regular meditator now

**Akash Wadhwa**  
T amannaah Bhatia talks to us about her journey in the entertainment world, her spiritual side and more. "For me, I was always intrigued as in who am I? Those questions were very prevalent at a very young age. I feel lucky to have been in an artistic field where exploration is a part of the job we do," says the actress. Excerpts from a candid conversation:  
**Your last item number, Aaj Ki Raat, still continues to be a rage. Did you anticipate that it would be such a**

**massive hit?**  
For me, it is different when actors try to attempt a song. Because, I felt like I wanted to perform like the character Shama would do it. I had a character to back it up and not do just another dance number. And I think that's why it also got a distinct flavour of its own. Also, there was fluidity and grace in a rather fast paced song. It was a fusion of a *ghazal* and techno. But yes, we didn't imagine it while shooting that people would love it so much.

CONTINUED ON P 13

TAMANNAAH BHATIA

Tamannaah Bhatia in still from the song Aaj Ki Raat

## 'It took me 20 yrs of hard work to earn my spot as Shankar's music director'

"The sound in *Game Changer* is going to be massive. We've experimented a lot with the songs," said Thaman on collaborating with Shankar & Ram Charan



Thaman in a still from Boys

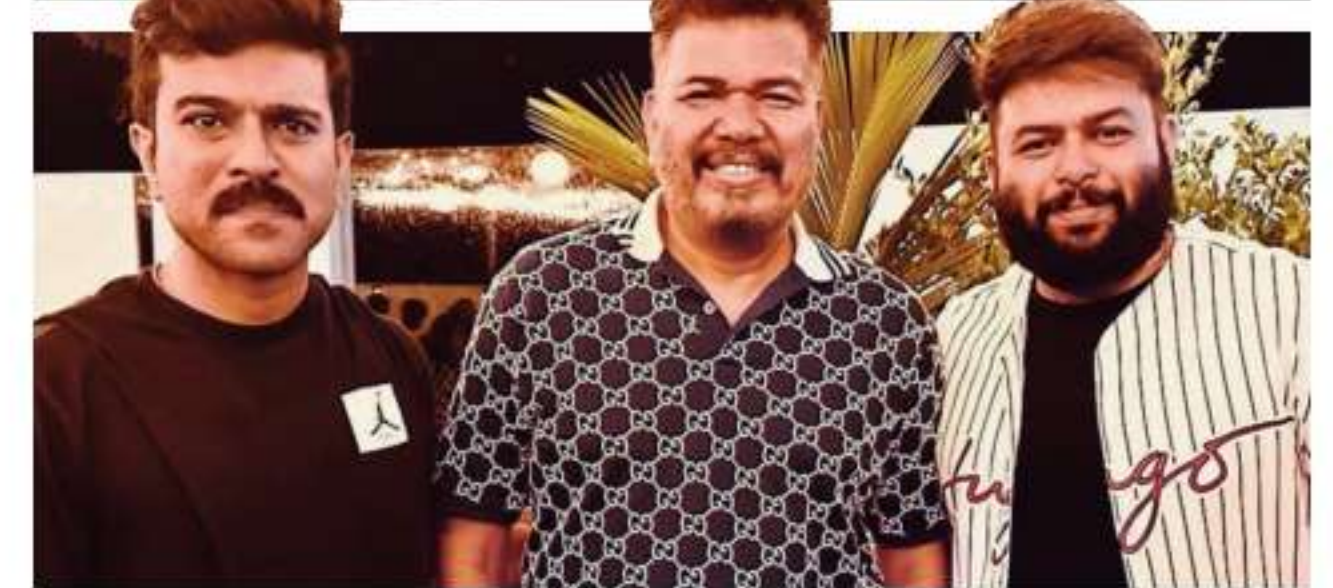
Paul Nicodemus

It was in 2003 that Thaman made his debut as an actor with Shankar's *Boys*. Now, over two decades later, he's reunited with the celebrated filmmaker for the first time as a music director. "At that time, I was drumming for AR Rahman sir. He saw me as a stout guy and thought I'd be a good fit. That's how I got into the film," he says, adding, "Now, it feels like my life has come full circle. It has been a long journey to get to this point with him. It took me 20 years to catch Shankar sir's attention as a music director."

Collaborating with Shankar and Ram Charan to compose music for *Game Changer* has been an incredible experience says the music director. "The sound in *Game Changer* is going to be massive. We've experimented a lot with the songs, and tracks like *Jaragandi* and *Raa Macha Macha* have already garnered impressive numbers."

It feels like a full-circle moment to work as the music director for Shankar. 20 years ago, I debuted as an actor with *Boys* and now, working with him again is a dream come true

- Thaman



Ram Charan, Shankar and Thaman

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# Premium watch retailer hosts unboxing event of solar-powered timepiece in city

One of South India's well-known watch retailers, Zimson, hosted an exclusive watch unboxing event at their premium watch showroom in Adyar recently. The event saw the presence of Chennai's top influencers, watch enthusiasts, and the retailer's leadership team.

"The evening unfolded with the unveiling of the Tissot T-Touch Connect Sport watch, blending Swiss craftsmanship with modern technology," the management says.

"Encased in a 43mm titanium frame, the wristwatch features an AMOLED touchscreen. It can track heart rate, distance, speed, and calories and offer timely notifications," they share.

"One can dive deeper with its dedicated app that offers performance analysis, trends, and well-being insights. This timepiece is driven by solar power and the SwALPS system; it ensures extended usage with minimal recharging," the management states.

According to them, the watch is a "true game-changer in the world of luxury timepieces", and showcased "the legacy and innovation that Tissot and Zimson bring to their patrons".

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(L-R) Balagopal, Matheen, Imran, Shitija, Paloma Rao, Shakeel and (below) Zaid



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## New study shows music can boost plant growth

Playing a monotonous sound stimulates the activity of a fungus that promotes plant growth, says a study, raising the possibility that playing music could be good for gardens. According to a study, the role of acoustic stimulation in fostering ecosystem recovery and sustainable food systems remains under-explored. Based on previous work that exposed *E. coli* bacteria to sound waves, a team of Australian researchers set out to assess the effect sound has on the growth rate and spore production of the fungus *Trichoderma harzianum*. Researchers

built little sound booths to house Petri dishes full of fungi. Instead of pop bangers, they were played Tinnitis Flosser Masker at 8 kHz. Study author Jake Robinson of Flinders University said, "We chose this monotone for controlled, experimental reasons, but it might be that a more diverse or natural soundscape is better."

The petri dishes were played with this sound at a level of 80 decibels for half an hour a day. After five days, the growth and spore production were higher in the fungi that were played the sound, compared to those that sat in silence.

## LUXURY HOTEL IN CITY PROMISES FESTIVE CHEER & DELECTABLE DINING OPTIONS THIS CHRISTMAS

This Christmas, Hyatt Regency Chennai is offering an array of delectable dining experiences and joyful celebrations for guests of all ages.

"Focaccia will transport guests to the enchanting Italian Riviera this Christmas Eve from December 24, 7pm onwards. Indulge in a lavish Mediterranean-inspired buffet featuring traditional Christmas delicacies and regional specialties," states its management.

For those seeking an exotic culinary adventure, their restaurant Stix, presents 'Bangkok on Your Plate', on December 24 and 25, 7pm onwards. "Immerse yourself in the vibrant flavours



of Thailand with a specially curated menu by Chef Kanjana, featuring authentic dishes and festive specialties," they share.

Meanwhile, Spice Haat, will be hosting a lively Latin Christmas Fiesta on Christmas Day, December 25, from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. According to the management, "Experience



the warmth and passion of Latin America with a festive buffet featuring traditional dishes, lively music, and a vibrant atmosphere."

"Christmas is a time for togetherness, celebration, and creating cherished memories. We are

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delighted to offer our guests an unforgettable Christmas experience, filled with festive cheer, delectable dining options, and heartwarming moments. Our team is dedicated to providing exceptional service and creating a magical atmosphere where guests can celebrate the spirit of Christmas with their loved ones," says Ruban Das, General Manager of Hyatt Regency Chennai.

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## Tintin fans and tourists can now visit historic tomb linked to Haddock



Mary Haddock's tomb in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex



A 17th-century English tomb linked to the beloved Tintin comics has been granted official protection as a "remarkable" historic place by heritage chiefs. In sleepy Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, far from the snowy mountains of Tibet where the intrepid young reporter Tintin roamed, lies the tomb of Mary Haddock, mother of Admiral Richard Haddock. The admiral is believed to have inspired the character of the ill-tempered Captain Haddock in Belgian author Herge's *Adventures of Tintin*. Mary Haddock's tomb is "notable as a single monument dedicated to a named woman in a period of gender inequality", according to Historic England, which announced "17 remarkable and unusual historic buildings and places" listed this year on Wednesday. The annual roundup highlights little-known heritage sites among the 211 buildings and sites of historic interest listed in 2024. Other quirky additions include a Baptist church in Bristol, southwest England, which has a Tesco supermarket on its ground floor and is known locally as the "church above the shops".

AFP

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## Here's another viral pup: Tupi, a baby capybara

As the largest rodents in the world, most capybaras spend their days munching on grass and water plants in dense vegetation around bodies of water. At a zoo in Texas, however, one capybara has stepped up as the latest in a series of baby animals to capture the internet's attention this year.

Tupi - pronounced two-pee - was born on December 3 at the San Antonio Zoo, and is the first of the species, scientifically known as *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*, to be born at the facility in 25 years, according to a statement from the zoo. Thanks to the power of social media, he is already famous.

The zoo announced Tupi's birth on its social media accounts late last week, getting an outpouring of internet love. But in a twist that seemed perfect to close out 2024, less than an hour after the announcement, the zoo followed its post with a statement that Tupi and the zoo are not affiliated with a memecoin - \$TUPI - that had been named after the animal.

In Tupi's case, the zoo gave him a mantra to head into the new year: "Unbothered. Moisturised. Happy. In My Lane. Focused. Flourishing."



A zoo in Texas announced Tupi's birth on its social media accounts late last week, getting an outpouring of internet love

New York Times



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# 'I was surprised that Sandhya trusted me for this role after Panchayat'

Niharika Lal

Sandhya Suri's critically acclaimed crime thriller *Santosh*, a cop drama about the investigation of a rape and murder case, has been shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film. The British Academy has officially selected *Santosh* as the UK's submission for this category. The film stars Shahana Goswami and Sunita Rajwar as police officers. Following its success at Cannes, the Oscar selection marks a dream run for the film.

We caught up with Sunita, who has received widespread acclaim for her roles in *Gullak* and *Panchayat*. Did she ever imagine something like this would happen? She says, "Your status in the industry and your identity define the kind of dreams that you will have! You want to ensure that you keep getting work. I don't even care if anyone recognises me or not. For me, everything changed after *Gullak* and *Panchayat*."



SUNITA RAJWAR  
In a still from Santosh

## 'IT WAS A SURPRISE THAT AFTER WATCHING PANCHAYAT, SANDHYA TRUSTED ME FOR THIS ROLE'

Talking about her role in *Santosh*, where she plays an SHO, Sunita says, "I have been doing very light-hearted roles - Bitu's mummy (in *Gullak*) and Kranti Devi (in *Panchayat*). People see me in those roles and think I can only do those kinds of roles. It was a surprise that after watching *Panchayat*, Sandhya trusted me for this role."

She shares that, prior to this, she had only seen SHOs and police *thanas* in films. She adds, "I had this image that they must be talking to their juniors arrogantly. After meeting real-life women police officers, however, I realised they are just like any of us." Talking about the brief Sandhya gave her for the role, she says, "The thing she told me was to not play loud and not try to be what I have been doing. She wanted me to change my body language and speak in lower tones."

## 'THERE WAS NO SPECIAL TREATMENT FOR ANYONE ON THE SET OF SANTOSH'

Sunita has worked in numerous TV

**The thing Sandhya told me was to not play loud. She said, 'I don't want any smiling either with your eyes or expressions, nothing. This lady won't smile'**

serials, films, and web series, and now this international project. So, how was the shoot different from her experience on sets of Indian productions? She says, "Work remains the same. When we were shooting for *Santosh*, it was so normal. Our team was all from other countries. But they are a little more disciplined."

She continues, "Shahana is also very down-to-earth. The star-like vibe on set - the hierarchy where the shoot happens according to the star's arrival, their scenes being shot first, and yours later - none of these used to be there. There was no special treatment for anyone."



Sunita in Panchayat (above) and in Gullak

## 'At Cannes, we got a standing ovation for 5-6 minutes - I had tears'

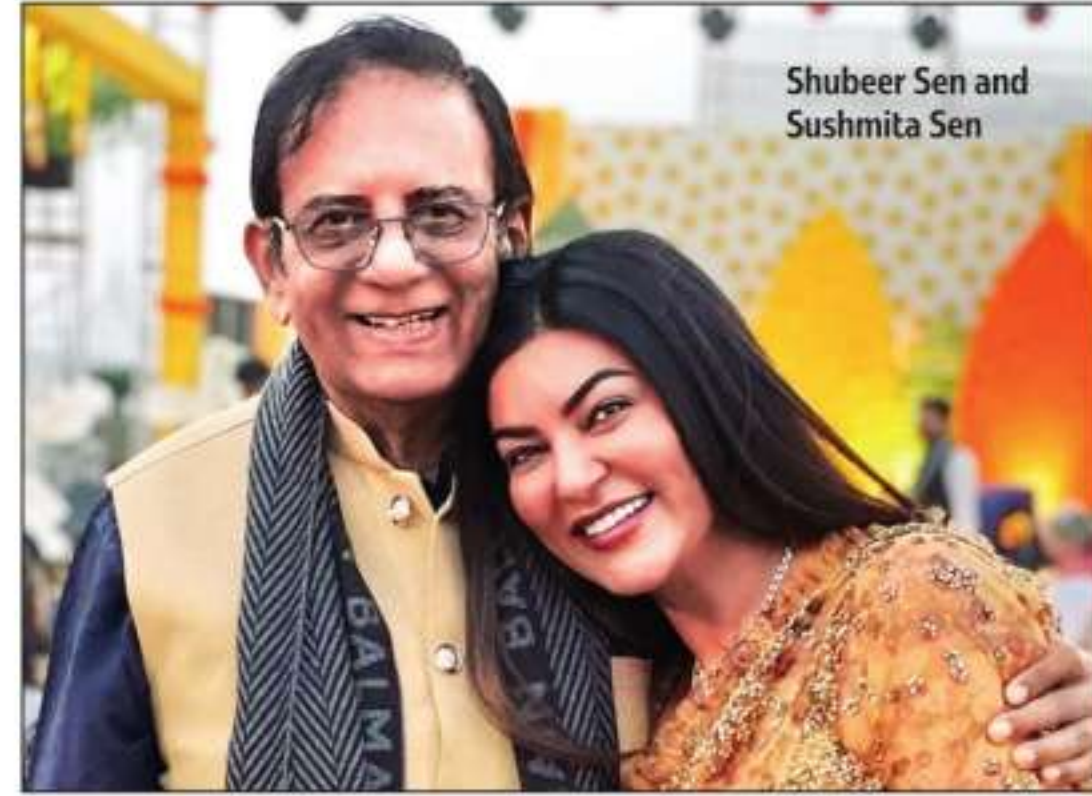
The movie recently won Best Screenplay and Best Breakthrough Producer at the BIFAs after making its global premiere in Un Certain Regard at this year's Cannes Film Festival. She shares, "Cannes was weird because even in my dreams, I never ever thought it would happen. Even having the film selected for the Un Certain Regard at Cannes was a big thing for me."

She recalls, "At Cannes, after the screening, when we got a standing ovation for 5-6 minutes, the claps weren't stopping at all. I was no one for them, and still, they were appreciating my work and the character. I had tears in my eyes - I'm getting so much love for my work. I didn't think about it even in my dreams. And now, this Oscars shortlist - it is beyond my dreams. How has this been written in my destiny? I'm so shocked. There are goosebumps - I'm this close to the Oscars."

**Now I wish that I get more such projects, more characters, a little respect, as well as good work**

# Sushmita's sweet birthday wish for her father

@sushmitason47



Sushmita Sen took to social media to shower birthday love on her father, **Shubeer Sen**. The *Aarya* actress shared a heartfelt note accompanied by a sweet picture of them together, calling him the "nicest human being". Sharing a series of photos, she wrote, "Happpppyyyy Birthday to the nicest human being, I am blessed to call my Father!!! Happy 80th Baba. Here's to a life filled with glorious milestones & divine grace!! To your health & happiness always. I love you soooooo much!!! (sic)."

# Elli AvrRam set to play the lead in first Marathi film

Known for her roles in films like *Naane Varuwan*, *Mickey Virus* and *Malang*, **Elli AvrRam** is all set to make her Marathi debut soon. The actress, who has Swedish roots, will be playing the lead in Ajinkya Phalke's romantic film *Ilu Ilu*.

Speaking about it, Elli said, "I have an affinity towards learning new things. After working in Swedish, Hindi, Tamil and Kannada films, I am excited to explore the sensibilities of a Marathi character." TNN



# Opening for Dua Lipa felt incredible, says Jonita Gandhi



Pics: @jonitamusic

Jonita Gandhi says "international concerts push us to constantly evolve and improve", (left) with Dua Lipa

Masumi Shah

Jonita Gandhi, known for hit tracks like *Arabic Kuthu*, *What Jhumka?* and *Jimikki Ponn*, recently opened for Dua Lipa, serenading the crowd with her voice. In a chat, she talks about her experience, the dynamic shift in India's concert scene, her latest rendition *Noorie* (*Two Sides*), which is a reimagination of Lata Mangeshkar's classic song *Aaja Re O Mere Dilbar Aaja*, and more.

## 'INTERNATIONAL CONCERTS GIVE US A CHANCE TO EXPAND FANBASE'

Talking about opening for Dua Lipa, she says, "It was an incredible experience. The energy of the crowd was electric. While concerts allow for a more intimate connection with the audience, opening for a global superstar like Dua gave me a chance to reach a wider audience and showcase my music to a new generation of fans. International concerts expose Indian artists to a global audience. It's a great opportunity to gain international recognition and expand our fanbase."

Elaborating on the prep behind her opening act, the *Gilehriyaan* singer adds, "We put a lot of thought into the setlist, choosing songs that would excite the crowd and showcase my versatility. The costume was designed to complement the stage setup and the overall vibe of the performance. It was important to look and feel my best on stage."

## 'GAINED MANY FANS BECAUSE OF MY RECREATIONS'

Jonita also performed *Noorie* (*Two Sides*) at the concert. She says, "I chose *Noorie* because of its timeless melody and powerful lyrics. It's a classic that



A still from Jonita's hit song What Jhumka?

resonates even today. I wanted to add my own spin to it, and I related to the message, mood, and melody."

While reimaging a classic, things can be tricky in terms of audience reaction. The *Chellamma* singer feels, "There's always a bit of pressure when

**While concerts allow for a more intimate connection with the audience, opening for a global superstar like Dua gave me a chance to reach a wider audience**

you're reimaging a classic. But I was excited to share my take on it. Over the years, I've gained many fans because of my recreations of songs. I believe that music is meant to evolve, and I hope people will appreciate my unique interpretation."

# I unapologetically say I'm maharani of OTT: Huma



Huma in a Leila still

Yesha Bhatt

While **Huma Qureshi** has played some feisty characters, and the *Kaala* and *Valimai* actress says that she "never picked those roles consciously". She adds, "I like playing characters that I have not done before. They just happened to be feisty and fierce because I don't know women who are not like that. I always want to play real women."

Huma shares, "I observe people around me closely and incorporate certain aspects of their personality in my work." However, Huma has never really got to play herself on screen. She says, "I'm so amazing, they haven't figured out a way yet (laughs)! I only get to be myself during promotional tours."

She further adds, "I think I have a great sense of humour, but it never really comes to the fore. Most of my directors like to see me doing strong roles. I think I'm ready to do a slapstick comedy. I'm a goofball in real life."

## 'PEOPLE HAD TOLD ME NOT TO DO OTT'

The *Maharani*, *Mithya* and *Leila* actress seems to be enjoying doing OTT. She says, "I must unapologetically say that I am the maharani of OTT. I think I was the first actress in this country to be leading a show called *Leila*. At that point, a lot of people told me not to do OTT. They said it would look like my career was over. However, I knew OTT was the future; it's just that it happened faster due to COVID."

## 'YOUR SELF-WORTH HAS GOT NOTHING TO DO WITH OTHER PEOPLE'S VALIDATION'

Huma, who has also authored a book and produced a film, says, "I feel like I've just scratched the surface. To an extent, what you do as an actor depends on other people offering you the right role at the right moment. I am really enjoying my journey as a producer - putting out stories that I like and resonate with. I want to be a part of more films that people will remember."

Talking about audience's appreciation, the actress adds, "Awards, rewards, everything matters. Those who say it doesn't matter are probably lying. As an artiste, I live on people's appreciation and acceptance. But are these the only things that matter? Perhaps not. I feel your self-worth has got nothing to do with others' validation. Even without it, you will always remain the same person."



Ancela Jamindar

Huma Qureshi

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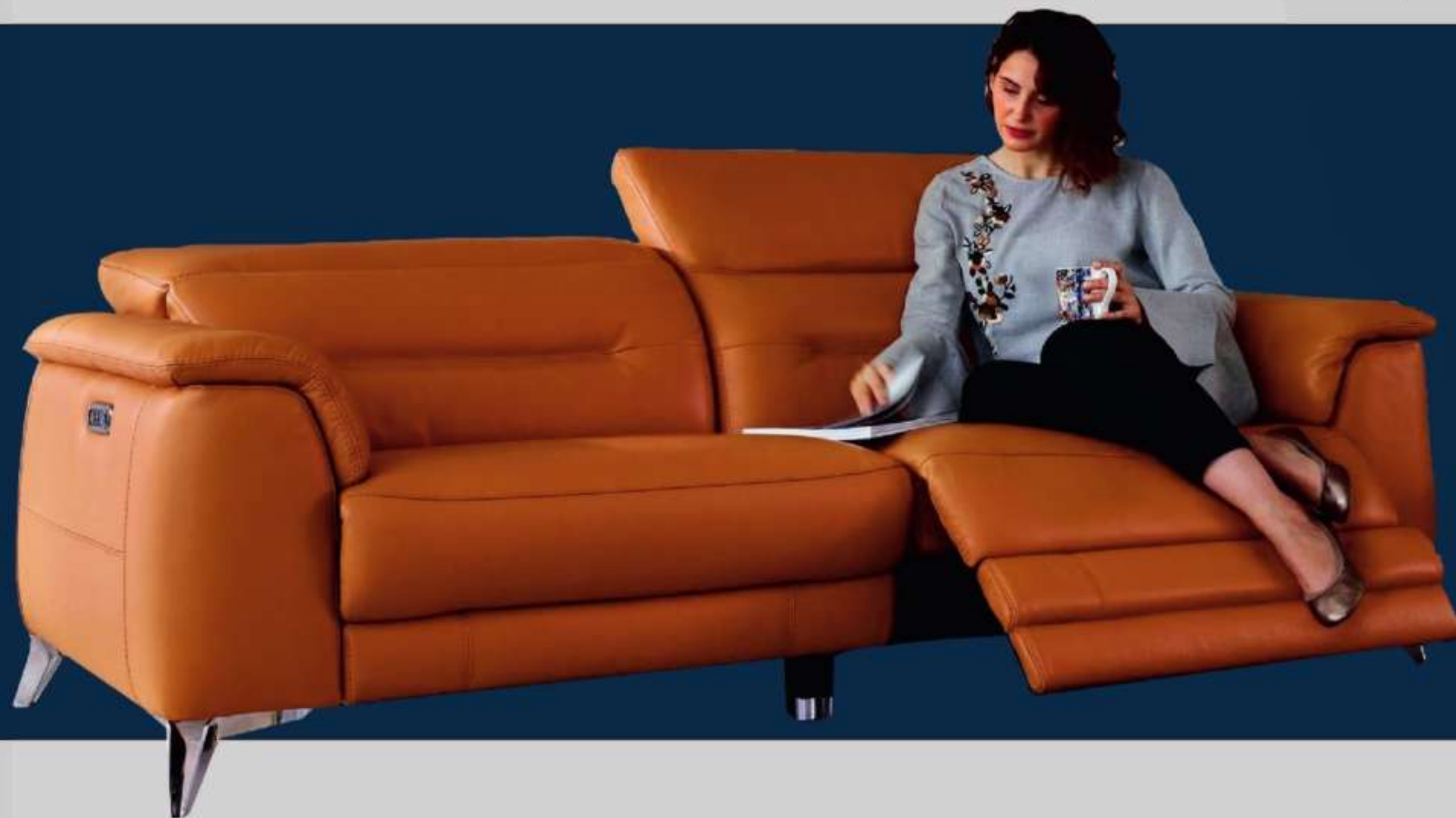
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# X-MAS CHEER IN MALLS & HOTELS

It's that time of the year when Chennaiites bask in the festive cheer, and city hotels and malls amplify the celebratory mood with their Christmas trees, which take different forms every year. This time around, we spotted trees made of gift boxes, sustainable materials, and even pottery.





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Pics: Praveen Tyagarajan



# Mada streets ring to tunes of Margazhi bhajanais



Margazhi in Chennai is not only synonymous with Carnatic music concerts but also with *bhajanais* on the *mada* streets along some of the city's iconic temples. Since Monday, groups of devotees braving the early-morning showers and singing *bhajanais* has been a common sight in Mylapore, one of the city's cultural hotspots



Even Carnatic singers could be spotted in these *bhajanais*. On Friday, our photog spotted vocalist Sreeranjani Kaushik (top, extreme left) singing along with a group of devotees

Carnatic singer Saketharaman and his students sang *bhajanais* on the first day of Margazhi along the *maada veedhis* of Kapaleeswarar Temple. The children, playing instruments like tambourine, *chapla kattai* and *jala* with delight, made for an enthusiastic and colourful atmosphere



Dynamic duo Shijith and Parvathy performed an enchanting Bharatanatyam duet at Krishna Gana Sabha

## MAYAKKUM Margazhi



Prithvija Balagopal's performance at Narada Gana Sabha left the audience spellbound



Srinidhi Chidambaram marvelled the crowd with a solo Bharatanatyam presentation

# 'It was difficult to handle the crowd in Sabarimala premises'

Roopa Radhakrishnan

**Y**ogi Babu is starring in *Sannidhanam (PO)*, an emotional drama helmed by debutant Amutha Sarathy. The first-time filmmaker tells us, "The story revolves around devotees who go on the Sabarimala pilgrimage in hope of a wish fulfillment. On the way, an unexpected incident happens, and the film deals with the events they encounter as a result."

"It was difficult to handle the crowd in the Sabarimala premises with a popular actor like Yogi Babu, especially since we shot during the festival season of Vishu," he adds.

Kannada actor Roopesh Shetty will be playing a key role in the film. "We initially thought of doing the film in Tamil, Kannada, and Malayalam in parallel. As Roopesh is also known in Tulu, we are releasing the film in Tulu as well. He understood Tamil, but initially faced difficulty in speaking the language. But we did a workshop before the shoot where he worked on pronunciation. This made it easy for him while filming," reveals the director.

While Amutha Sarathy has also written the dialogues for the film, Ajinu Ayyappan wrote the story and script. The filmmaker shares, "Initially the plan was to film different versions simultaneously with different directors. We got permission to shoot in sannidhanam, and we have also shot in Pamba, Erumeli, Pollachi, and Chennai."

A fan of the Dhanush-starrer *Seedan* (2011), the director says, "Similar to that film, ours will also be in the melodramatic zone, but it will also have Yogi Babu's comedy portions."



(L-R) Yogi Babu, Roopesh Shetty, Varsha Viswanath

There's no big change look-wise for Yogi Babu, but in terms of acting, there's a difference. Usually, we see him do comedy. But, in this film, we will see him in a new dimension — Amutha Sarathy

## Saguni director Shankar Dayal passes away

**S**hankar Dayal, who directed Karthi's 2012 political satire *Saguni*, passed away due to a heart attack on Thursday night in Chennai. Our sources say that the filmmaker suffered a heart attack hours before the promotional event for his upcoming film, titled *Kuzhandigal Munnetra Kazhagam*, was set to begin. The movie, starring Senthil and Yogi Babu, was to be his return to direction. Before donning the director's hat, he had written the dialogues for the 2003 action film *Parasuram* and Jayam Ravi's *Deepavali* (2007). TNN



Shankar Dayal



Pranitha Subhash and Karthi in a still from *Saguni*



Lavanya Sundaram performed with her guru and aunt Nithyasree Mahadevan at the Margazhi Maha Utsav 2K24



Saraswati veena player Nirmala Rajasekar's concert at Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha was an absolute treat



Legendary violin exponent Kanyakumari held the audience in a thrill by creating an immersive experience

Preethi Sethuraman's mesmerising vocals at Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha proved to be a perfect Margazhi delight



# For me, work has been my only pleasure: Tamannaah Bhatia

CONTINUED FROM K 1

**You spell your name differently and had changed it as per numerology.**

Yes, in my childhood itself, I had changed it to this. When I had started working in my teens, at that time, I had changed it to Tamannaah. And clearly, it has been a fairly good decision.

**How has the overall journey been in the entertainment world?**

For me, it was a very strong urge to do what I am doing today. While I was doing theatre and some kind of work initially, the performing arts also brought a kind of joy to me. Even though sometimes the timings have been crazy, it never felt like work to me. Strangely, people keep asking me what I do for pleasure, but for me, only work has been my pleasure, and I never seek pleasure anywhere else. Having said that, do I like that every day? Yes! Do I have dreadful days? Yes! And would I still do this? Yes! I do have days like, 'Mummy, I do not want to go to school,' but largely I wake up enthusiastically for my work.

**How do you see the industry changing with the OTT boom?**

The OTT boom has actually done a great thing by giving people variety. Now, the viewers are not restricted to watching a certain kind of genre. When we were growing up, I remember we didn't have that kind of exposure and had to rent out a handful of international CDs available in the market. Today, literally everybody has choice. So, what OTT brought is a platform for different kinds of cinema to be showcased. Now, because of the OTT, one can be focused on the art form more and not worry so much about the numbers. With theatres, there is always a number game, which is very important for it to survive because it is a very expensive art form. We can't make very experimental films with theatre audience because it is still community viewing and has to appeal to the masses to do well. But with OTT, now, we have movies that only a certain section enjoys. OTT has created a choice situation for the viewers.

**With so much debate over the censorship of the medium, what are your views on the topic?**

I am not in the right position to answer this question, but I do feel

like there has to be some space for creative people to make things that they really feel strongly about. I do feel that something that is really problematic, the platforms are taking care of it. OTT platforms today are so careful about the kind of content they are putting out and they are doing a great job being sensitive to most people and understanding that we want people to consume content.

**How do you see the rise of regional cinema, especially down south?**

We have always been doing good work, but somehow it has gotten into the limelight now. With films, we are now more bothered about if it evokes some kind of emotion in

**Strangely, people keep asking me what I do for pleasure, but for me work only has been my pleasure, and I never seek pleasure anywhere else. Having said that, do I like that every day, may be not!**

us as a viewer, language is no bar. South has told a lot of rooted stories that are about their land and about their people and projects there are now magnum opus kind, especially the folklore ones. And we also have a *Baahubali* from South, which is exceptional.

**Being a very spiritual person, how do you see spirituality today?**

For me, I was always intrigued about who I am? Those questions were very prevalent at a very young age. I feel lucky to have been in an artistic field where exploration is a part of the job we do. We are playing different people in each character, and you can't do that unless you understand yourself well. The best thing that spirituality has done for me is that I can't be emotionally manipulated anymore. Spirituality makes a lot of things very apparent, like you start seeing things for what they are. I am a regular meditator now.

## I learnt to live life to the fullest from my Bangalore Days character: Parvathy



Parvathy Thiruvothu

V Nichita

Acting is a way of life, shared Parvathy Thiruvothu during an interaction session. The Malayalam actress, who has acted in many notable Tamil films like *Thangalaan*, *Mariyann* and *Poo*, said, "With age, I feel I am more aware of my mental ability and things around me, and it helps me as an actor."

Speaking about one of the characters that she is most known for, Parvathy said, "My character from *Bangalore Days* had a zest for life and that is something I learnt from it."

She further noted, "Any role that an actor plays needs a level of commitment and dedication. I need to be extremely thorough with the script before she goes on to the set.

**'Experimenting with my look helps me get away from fame'**

The actress, who is also known for her distinct looks, added, "I love experimenting with my hairstyles; it helps me get out of my character and sometimes it helps me get away from my fame."

I prepare a lot as an actor; I gulp the script before performing."

"If a character doesn't resonate with me, I won't do it. I look for characters that challenge the status quo and are called out. I like moments in cinema where the character is called out and that is rare," added the actress.



Aditya Yadav

Tamannaah Bhatia

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**Egmore:** Guild Of Service, 18, Casa Major Road - 600008

**Anna Nagar:** D. K. Kalyana Mandapam, W-114, 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Near Round Thana - 600040

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# Discover Chennai like never before with this cycling treasure hunt

**Fahad Hussain**

This weekend, Chennai Times Chancey Trails has an exciting activity — a cycling treasure hunt led by Cycling Yogis! Get set for a thrilling 28km trail that will take participants through the iconic heritage spots of Chennai.

“Participants will receive 10 unique clues to uncover hidden gems of the city while cycling. The trail promises not just physical fitness but also a deep dive into the history and culture of Chennai. The main goal of this trail is to help people connect with their own city,” shares Ramanujar Moulana, founder of Cycling Yogis.

The trail will begin at 5.30am from The Times of India office in T Nagar.

**Cycling is the best way to explore and understand a city's layout and landmarks. By joining this trail, participants will no longer feel like foreigners in their own city — they'll truly become kings of their city**

**Note for Participants:**  
This is not a walk-in trail. Participants are selected based on specific criteria, such as their previous cycling experience and fitness levels.

### What to Expect:

- Spreading awareness about bicycle tourism
- Explore the heritage of Chennai while showcasing that the city is cycle-friendly
- Rediscover your own city — don't feel like a foreigner in your own backyard
- Understand the city's landscape and layout better through cycling
- Boost both your fitness and mental agility during this trail
- Enjoy the unique experience of a treasure hunt while discovering Chennai's rich heritage

Location for the trail: The Times Of India Office, Kochar Towers, Venkatanarayana Road, T Nagar



# Unlocking perception through music

**Praveen Kumar S**

A visit to a home for the underprivileged or disabled persons can invoke plentiful emotions in a person. But for pianist Anil Srinivasan, a visit to Gnanadarshan Seva Home, a shelter for visually impaired women and young girls, invoked a responsibility to spread awareness and do more than provide monetary support. Thus, began Concert In The Dark.

“I began the initiative seven years ago and I believe that it is unique as a concept, at least for India. It's a concept wherein I, as the main performer, as well as Krishna Kishor on percussion and Naveen Napier on bass guitar, play blindfolded, which is very, very difficult for an ensemble,” says Anil.

“We literally put ourselves in the shoes of the visually impaired. The audience is also invited to sit in complete darkness. I believe that by creating a unique format like this, it would help people empathise with the women,” he adds.

He adds that pop duo and internet stars Kiran and Nivi will be lending their voices for the event this year while 16-year-old Anandita Arun will open the performance.



**I'm very thrilled about the fact that Gen Z and Gen Alpha want to be part of this performance. It's becoming a movement**

— Anil Srinivasan

### An experience in the dark...

“The first year I did it, the audience was not kept in the dark. I realised that it can be distracting, and therefore, from the second year onwards, we decided to place the audience under full darkness as well. It's usually very, very difficult for the members of the audience to sit in pitch darkness without their phones. However, I believe that music can create a space where one can close their eyes and immerse themselves in this experience, and it is completely transformative as an experience,” says Anil Srinivasan.



## If you're looking for Margazhi concerts

**Dr. Ambi Subramaniam**

**TIMES THYAGARAJA AWARDS**  
Vocal concert by Dr. Ambi Subramaniam  
Where: Muthamizh Peravai, RA Puram, Adyar  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 5pm

**THE INDIAN FINE ARTS SOCIETY**  
Musical concert by Srimathi BR, Shri Hari Bhat NH, Mohan Santhanam, and Sandeep Narayan  
Where: Ethiraja Kalyana Nilayam, TTK Road, Alwarpet  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 2pm-7pm

**OHMARGAZHI**  
Vocal concert by Sooryanarayanan, and OS Arun  
Where: Janakiammal Auditorium, MCN Nagar, Thoraipakkam  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 5pm

**SASTRA SATSANGH**  
Thematic concert by Dr. Radha Bhaskar, Padmashree Srinivasan, and Gayatri Vibhavari  
Where: SASTRA Chennai Campus, Vadapalani  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 6.45pm

Gayatri Vibhavari

**LAKSHMINARAYANA GLOBAL MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
Jugalbandi by Dr. L. Subramaniam and Ustad Amjad Ali Khan  
Where: Sundareswarar Hall, RR Sabha, Mylapore  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 6pm

**GLOBAL HERITAGE MUSIC FESTIVAL**  
Tamil stage play by Kathadi Ramamurthy, followed by Carnatic concert by Ramana Balachandran  
Where: Sri Sankara Vidyashramam Matriculation Higher Secondary School Auditorium, Thiruvannamiyur  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 10am-7pm

**NARADA GANA SABHA**  
Carnatic concert by Girija Shankar followed by Bharatanatyam by Aishwarya Ananth  
Where: Narada Gana Sabha, Alwarpet  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 10am-7pm

Girijashankar

**BRAHMA GANA SABHA**  
Performances by Pooja Narayanan, Anugrah Lakshmanan, Shankar Ramani and Vignesh Ishwar  
Where: RR Sabha, Mylapore  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 1.15pm-6.15pm

**THE MUSIC ACADEMY**  
Vocal concert by Dr. Subhashini Parthasarathy, Abhishek Ravishankar, Anahita, Apoorva, and Dr. S. Sowmya  
Where: The Music Academy, Royapettah  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 9am-6.45pm

**BHARAT KALACHAR**  
Bharatanatyam performance by Shobana  
Where: Bharat Kalachar, T Nagar  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 7.15pm

**BHARAT KALACHAR MARGAZHI MAHOTSAV**  
Margazhi performances by Rajhesh Vaidhya, Soorya Gayathri, and Alamel Valli  
Where: Sri YGP Auditorium, T Nagar  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 10am-7.15pm

**KARTIK FINE ARTS FESTIVAL**  
Performances by Dr. Jayaprada Ramamurthy, Shakthi Muralidaran, and Shreya Devnath  
Where: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mylapore  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 10am-6.15pm

**THE MYLAPORE FINE ARTS CLUB**  
Carnatic concert by Swarthmika Srikanth, Dr. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, R. Ashwath Narayanan, and Malladi Brothers  
Where: Mylapore Fine Arts Club  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 9am-6.30pm

**SRI PARTHASARATHY SWAMI SABHA**  
Carnatic concert by Dr. R. Suriya Prakash, V. Deepika, V. Nandhika, and Papanasam Ashok Ramani  
Where: Vidya Bharathi, Mylapore  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 8.30am-6.30pm

**SRI THYAGA BRAHMA GANA SABHA**  
Margazhi concert by Malladi Sindhu Rageswari, Uma Ranganathan, Spoorthi Rao, and Sandeep Narayanan  
Where: Vani Mahal, T Nagar  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 1pm-6.30pm

**NAADA INBAM**  
Concert by Sunil R. Gargyan, Dr. Shankar Srinivas, and Thamarakkadu Govindan Nambudiri  
Where: Raga Sudha Hall, Mylapore  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 10am-6.15pm

## If you love comedy



**SIT DOWN ASHISH**  
Stand-up comedy show by Ashish Vidyarthi  
Where: Medai - The Stage, Alwarpet  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 7pm

**BLACK TICKET**  
A Tamil stand-up comedy show by Manoj Prabakar and Guna Kannan  
Where: IDAM - The Art & Cultural Space, Kodambakkam  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 4pm



**THEY PAID NO !?**  
Telugu stand-up comedy show by Syama Harini  
Where: Madras House, Lasya's Kalki Theatre, VR Mall  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 4pm

## If you're looking for a workshop

**CHRISTMAS THEME: FLUID ART**  
Where: Hundreds Bistro, Chetpet  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 11.30am

**KOLLYWOOD DANCE WORKSHOP**  
WHERE: ZIMMER STUDIOS, THARAMANI  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 6pm



**ARMAAN MALIK - LIVE IN CHENNAI**  
Where: YMCA Royapettah  
When: **Sun**  
Time: 6pm

## If you're interested in theatre

**MARGAZHI COMEDY GALATTA**  
Tamil stage play 'Marriage Made In Saloon' featuring Maadhu Balaji and Crazy Mohan  
Where: Vani Mahal, T Nagar  
When: **Sat**  
Time: 7pm





SHAKIRA SAYS CHRIS MARTIN 'WAS CHECKING IN EVERY DAY' AFTER GERARD PIQUE SPLIT



Any feedback related to stories in Chennai Times?  
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# Chennai Times

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2024  
ADVERTORIAL, ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY  
PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



PAMELA ANDERSON 'DIDN'T REALISE HOW DIFFICULT' IT WAS FOR HER SONS TO SEE THEIR 'MOM BE SEXUALISED'



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JONITA GANDHI ON OPENING FOR DUA LIPA'S CONCERT



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21, 2024  
ADVERTORIAL, ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY  
PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

# Chennai Times

## Our country is diverse and we must represent that in cinema also: Payal Kapadia

Pics: Kiran Bose



Gopika IS

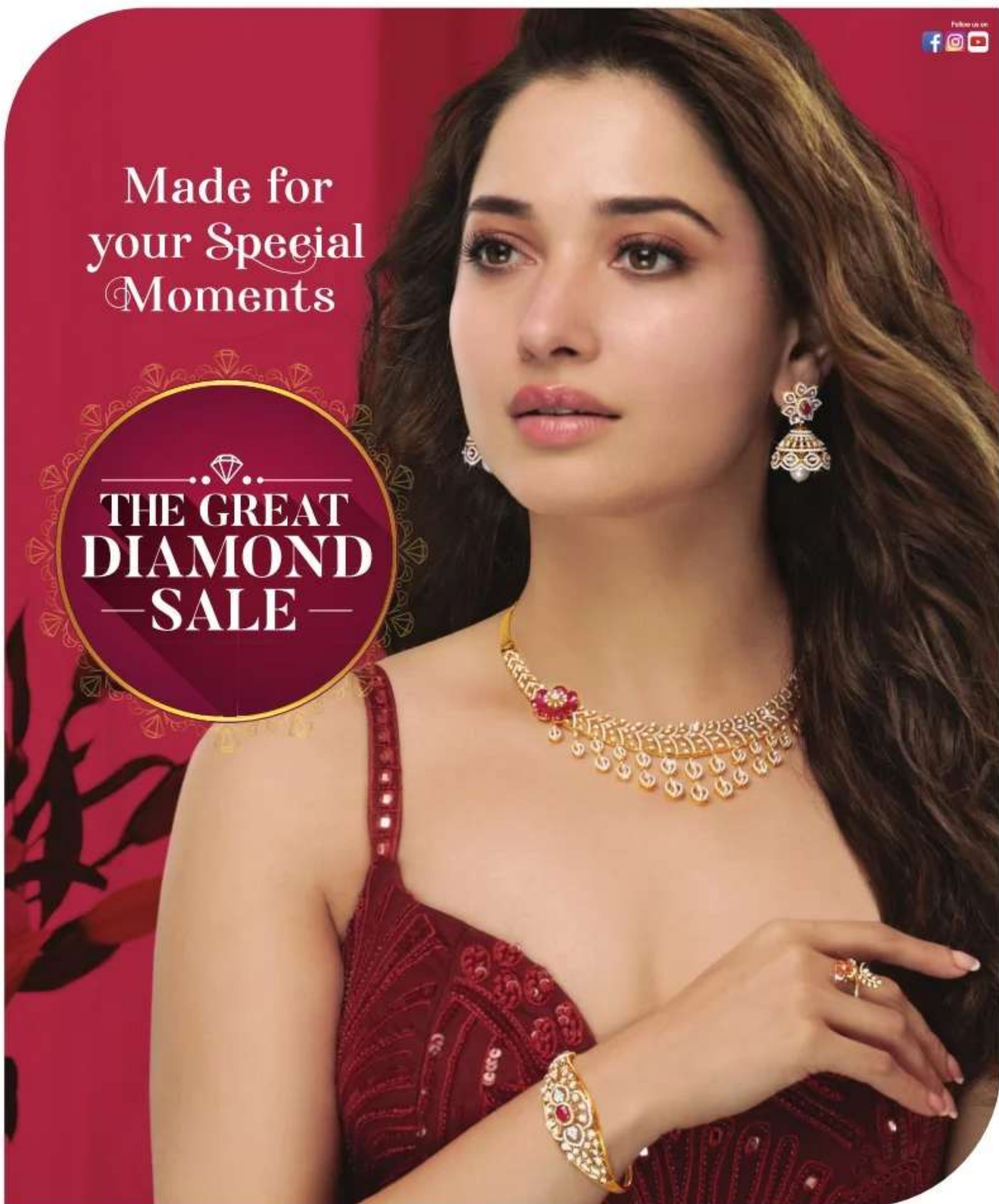
**P**ayal Kapadia, director of this year's Grand Prix winner *All We Imagine As Light* at the Cannes Film Festival, spoke about how the diversity of the country must find representation in cinema at the International Film Festival of Kerala (IFFK). Payal discussed topics such as giving chances to marginalised filmmakers, men in women's lives, cinema being a collaborative effort and more.

Responding to whether women make female-oriented films better, she said, "All people have male and female sides in them. The gaze depends on your politics and who you are as a person."

CONTINUED ON 3

### 'All We Imagine As Light was a collaborative effort'

Divya Prabha, Kani Kursruti and Payal lived together for a while before filming, doing workshops. "For me, too, it was a period of learning. How do you direct in a language you don't speak? We even did scenes that weren't in the script. One such scene worked so well that we put it in the film. That's why I always say it's a collaborative effort."



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# 'WATCHING FILMS WITH MY MOTHER INSPIRED ME IN MY FILM JOURNEY'



Payal noted that Indian audiences are open to watching all kinds of films. "We have a long history of different bodies of work. It's just that now, because of the commercialisation of more and more cinema spaces, we don't have access to watch films that are smaller," she said.

Film Festivals are the spaces for discourse. There cannot be democracy without discourse. We must not have censorship in spaces like festivals



CONTINUED FROM K 1

Payal continued, "Sometimes, even women may make a film that may seem problematic, while men may make films that we connect to. That said, I always feel that women's works are extremely under-represented. It is when you start giving a fair chance to filmmakers, that we will see different voices. Not just women, but even filmmakers of marginalised castes have been denied that chance. Our country is diverse. We must represent that in cinema also."

She spoke about exploring the impact men have on women's lives, whether in their presence or absence. "It's a recurring theme in my short films. I think a lot about the lingering ghosts of the men in women's lives. I come from a family where many women have been single, but feel tied down by this absent man. It's a pity and that shouldn't be the case. My grandmother was in her late 90s and was losing her memory, and she would be

writing a diary to remember. In that, she wrote that her husband is coming and she could smell the tobacco. This husband had died when she was 55 and she had lived without him for many years. She didn't even like him very much and at that age, she felt he was coming back. That was frustrating. I could see she was agitated and I put that in my film. That's why I wrote about these men in women's lives."

Speaking about how social media facilitates a film's reach among the audience, she said, "The only way we have is to promote our films through social media. I had to join Twitter (now X) to promote my movie (laughs). In some other countries, they give small grants to advertise films if we can't afford it. We got that too."

Payal's mother, Nalini Malani is one of the first video artistes in the country and her life has inspired her in many ways. Recalling her childhood days, Payal said, "It was a real privilege. When you are a child, you don't realise it, you just want to protest. My mother would always take me to watch movies. In Mumbai, at that time, we used to have a lot of documentary films, especially in spaces like Films Division. We used to go to watch Anand Patwardhan's films and many others. I may not have understood everything but they stayed in my mind. Then, we would go to the second-hand bookshops where we would get art books for low price, near Churchgate. We could return them, too, so we always went there. At that time, I didn't realise how important all of this was. It left such a deep impression on my mind."

## 'I love films that are set in cities'

There is something about cities, we love them and we hate them. I love city-based films. Even amongst Satyajit Ray's filmography, my favourite is the Calcutta Trilogy, especially *Pratidwandi*. Then there is Chantal Akerman's *News From Home*, Agnes Varda's *Cleo From 5 to 7*, Edward Yang's *Taipei Story* to name a few of my favourites.

# Tabu to play the lead in a Telugu thriller, her first in 16 years, next

Tabu is ready to make a long-awaited comeback to Telugu cinema as a lead actress after a 16-year break. The National Award-winning actress, who made her debut with the 1991 Venkatesh-starrer *Coolie No. 1*, has appeared infrequently in Telugu films over the years. Although Tabu staged a comeback with *Ala Vaikunthapurramuloo* (2020), her last lead role was in *Pandu Rangadu* (2008). Chandra Siddhartha, who had previously directed Tabu in the 2008 film *Idhi Sangathi*, is helming the film.

Sharing his excitement about collaborating with Tabu again, Siddhartha shared, "We've been in touch ever since, and she often asked about interesting scripts. Recently, we developed a thriller and I felt the story would be perfect for her. She loved the plotline and said she'd be more than pleased to be part of it."

He added, "Tabu's character is going to be a revelation. She has played many interesting characters but this is going to be something that will showcase a hitherto unseen side of her. My writers Pulagam Chinnarayana and Patriketya are presently developing the script. Once it's finalised, we hope to go on floors in the latter half of the year."

Tabu's character is going to be a revelation. She has played many interesting characters but this is going to be something that will showcase a hitherto unseen side of her  
— Chandra Siddhartha, director



Tabu





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