

## Patience and positivity: Celebs reflect on 2024



### 2024 taught me to keep my hopes up: Divya Prabha

Generally, in life, I am a very hopeful person, even when I don't have work. While working on Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light*, I held on to this hope. You don't take on a project thinking it will lead to more work or opportunities; everyone involved in this film was driven by passion, and the film achieved great heights. When I started my career, I used to attend the International Film Festival of Kerala, and later, I had my own films screened there. Now, having had a film at Cannes has made this a very important year for me and strengthened my hope for the future.

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### In 2024, I stopped looking outward for understanding: Nithya Menen

One beautiful thing that happened to me this year is that I stopped looking outward for understanding and acceptance. It's not something you can intellectualise — it has to happen to you in a real way. Something needs to change inside you for good. A lot of my angst came from not being able to understand why the world around me was the way it was. Now, I recognise and understand the inner motives of people. I no longer take on others' shortcomings as my own. I let them keep those where they belong. And I'm on my way.



## I wish that people had used more of my ability: Arshad

Amina Ashraf

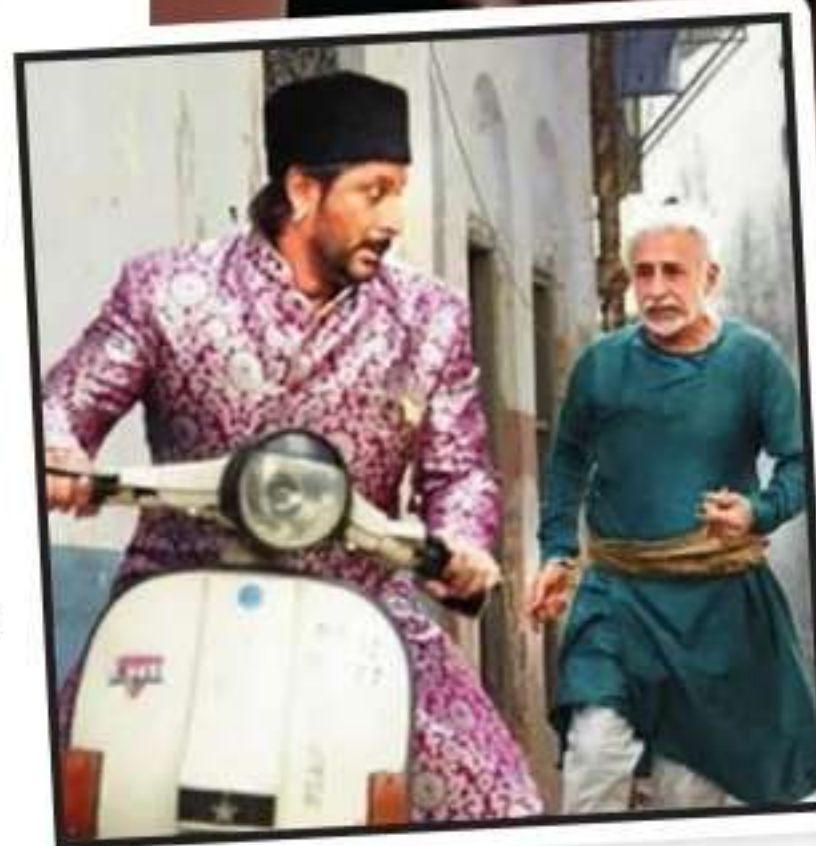
Arshad Warsi, known for his memorable performances in films like *Munna Bhai MBBS* and *Dedh Ishqiya*, recently spoke to us about his career and changes he's seen in the entertainment industry.

Noting that today's platforms, especially OTT, have made it easier for new talent to thrive, he said, "It's always been difficult to be an actor, but it's easier now than when I started. Back then, we didn't have the luxury of multiple platforms, it was just films. Either you succeeded in films or you went back home. Actors today have more spaces to showcase their craft."

### 'ONCE PEOPLE SEE YOU IN A GENRE, IT STICKS WITH THEM'

When asked if he would approach his career differently if he debuted today, he said, "I wouldn't have started with comedy. Once people see you in a genre, it sticks with them and you end up doing more of the same. But for me, it worked out because I started with comedy and then took on serious roles." On whether OTT has affected traditional cinema, Warsi shared, "There are certain things you can only enjoy on the big screen. Movies like *Pathaan* and *The Avengers* cannot be enjoyed on a small screen."

When asked if he felt apprehensive about working on brief roles, he shared, "It doesn't make me apprehensive. I'm interested in doing films that I will be proud of when I get old."



I have an immense amount of talent and I feel I'm wasted. No matter how many years later you ask me this question, I'd still say I wish people had used more of my ability

## 'Nemo took away Shivanna's pain; he is now cancer-free'

Actor Shivarajkumar and his wife Geetha Shivarajkumar posted an emotional note on social media, mourning the loss of their pet dog, Nemo.

Penning a note, Geetha wrote: "From the past one month, Nemo, who usually sleeps with me, was seen sleeping very close to my husband, Shivarajkumar. My daughter Nivedita said maybe Nemo was aware of what Shivanna was going through and hence stayed by him quietly. I couldn't have agreed more. Nemo's absence has created a huge void in our lives. He will always be in our hearts. They say our pets take away our pain and our Nemo left us, and took Shivanna's pain with him. Shivarajkumar is now cancer-free."

Pic: Sanjay MD



A file photo of Shivarajkumar with his dog, Nemo, (left) with his wife Geetha

TNN

## Zeenat Aman: Had resigned myself to a quiet retirement

Reflecting on a busy year, Zeenat Aman shared a post, reminiscing about her initial retirement plans. She wrote, "Spending the last few mornings of 2024 relishing the Bombay chill, accompanied by my trusty shadow Lily. I've been quiet on here but my what a busy year it's been! Shoot schedules in Shimla and Rajasthan, speaking engagements across the country, social media collaborations with some wonderful brands, test photo shoots with my team and more... Two years ago I had quite contentedly resigned myself to a quiet retirement with the odd job thrown in to temper the monotony. Now I find myself struggling to find a spare date on my calendar... Take it from a veteran who's both scraped the depths of despair and tasted dizzying success. So let me sign off for the year with the gentle reassurance that if things are looking bad for you, persevere."

TNN



Zeenat Aman

### From swaras and rasas to sambars and rasams:

## Has the Margazhi music season now turned into a festival for foodies?

Praveen Kumar S

During the entire December music season, if we keep the average price of a ticket at 250, concerts bring in just over ₹1.3 crore at Chennai *sabhas*. Meanwhile, food at *sabha* canteens brings in ₹6 crore! Concert ticket sales are nowhere near canteen sales; people from various parts of the city think there is a food festival going on and dine at the canteens," shared historian and secretary of The Music Academy V Sriram in his recent speech on the topic 'The Economics Of The Season'.

Over the years, *sabha* canteen food has become one of the highlights of the Margazhi music season that not only attracts *rasikas*, but foodies as well. Caterers have been cashing in on the hype by offering an array of delectable dishes throughout the day. In fact, one caterer, Mountbatten Mani Iyer Catering, headed by K Srinivasan, has started holding a Margazhi *Mahotsavam Food Kutchery*, which happens not in a *sabha* but in a wedding hall!

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Rasikas have a taste of the food served at a *sabha* canteen

Concert sales ₹1.3cr Canteen sales ₹6cr

About 60 per cent of our diners have been people who come only with the intention to taste our food

— RS Kumar, Sattvaa Catering

### One season, close to 200 dishes

Over the years, the range of dishes that are being offered has only expanded. If *rasikas* get to enjoy around 60 dishes at Sri Sasthalaaya Catering's canteen at Narada Gana Sabha, Mountbatten is serving close to 200 dishes this year, informs a member from its catering team. While the breakfast menu includes everything from the regular *idlis* and *dosais* to not-so-common *kavuni arisi idiyappam* with *thengai paal* and *Kumbakonam kadappa*, evening snacks range from the *nombu adai*, *ammini kashukattai* to items like apple and pineapple *bajjis*. And fusion dishes like *pizza dosai* make up the dinner menu. Then there are the sweets, such as *Kasi halwa*, *Ashoka halwa*, *gulkand halwa*, *kova jangiri* and *akkarakadisi*.



Manasilaayo singer Deepthi Suresh, who is also performing this season, is a fan of the food served at *sabha* canteens during Margazhi







# This Margazhi, music plays second fiddle as food takes the centre stage



Sasthalaya special cheese dosa



Paruppu poli



Deepthi Suresh enjoying the food at The Music Academy

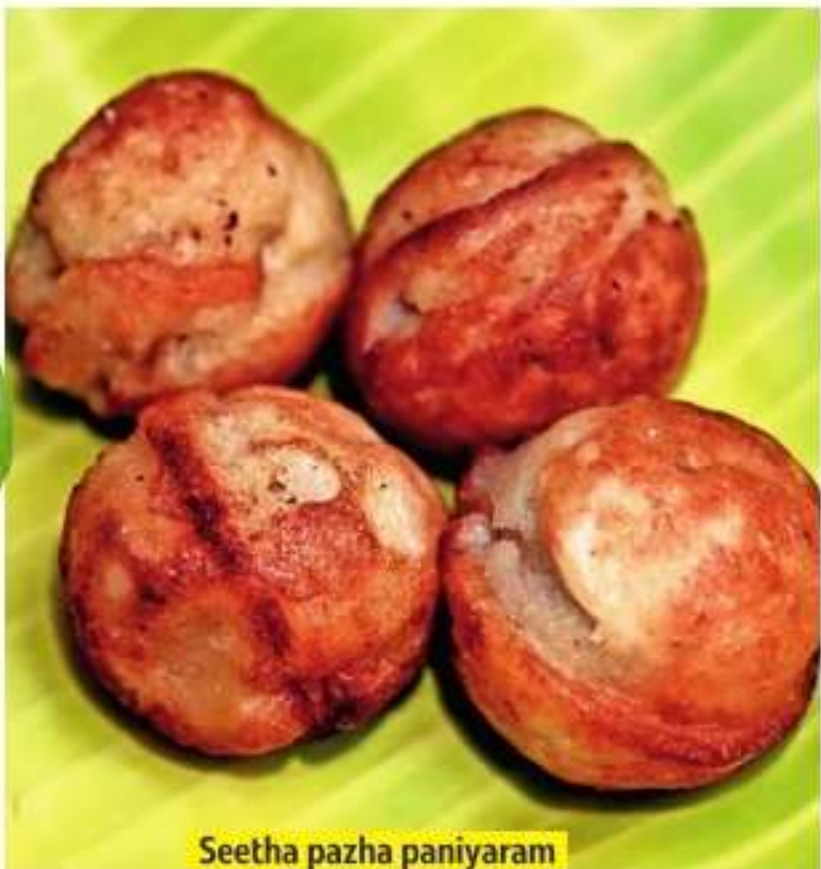
**The atmosphere during lunch at The Music Academy canteen was like that of a wedding, and the food was very nice** — Deepthi Suresh, singer



Elai saapaadu at ABC Catering Services



Varieties of halwa



Seetha pazha paniyaram

**I came away disappointed this year as the caterer served Kerala-style food. I wanted to try a proper Tamil kalyana virundhu** — Ratikha Venugopal, stylist



Paal kozhukattai

CONTINUED FROM ₹ 1

## KALYANA SAMAYAL SAADHAM!

But the highlight remains the *Kalyana Saapaadu* that forms the lunch menu. "Our lunch meal has around 20 dishes, like *cheppankizhangu* roast, *vazhaipoo vadai*, and pineapple *rasam*, all of which are served on a banana leaf. And on New Year's Day, there is a special lunch with more dishes on the menu," says RK Venkatesan, whose Sastha Catering Services has been serving food during the season at The Music Academy for the past eight years.

"Our *elai saapaadu* has 25 items, including a *payasam*, *pachadi*, *kootu*, *kalandha sadham*, and more. We make sure that the dishes served on any given day do not repeat for the duration of the season," states Saptarishi, who runs ABC Catering Services at Mylapore Fine Arts Club.

"I tried the food served by Arusuvai Arasu Caterers at Sri Parthasarathy Swami Sabha. While nothing seemed really exclusive, the dishes were delicious nonetheless. I had gone there during a weekday, and the place was packed," shares Preethi Udhayaraja, a dentist.

## OVERPRICED, OVERHYPED?

However, not all foodies are in awe of sabha canteens and their food. Over the past couple of years, the pricing of the meals — the *Kalyana Saapaadu* begins at ₹350 and goes up to even ₹600 — has become a point of discussion on social media. RS Kumar, the managing director of Sattvaa Catering, which has canteens at four sabhas this year, says footfalls have been very encouraging this year, thanks to their leaf meal costing ₹350. "We are serving over 600 leaf meals during lunch alone every day. We introduce new items every day as our aim is to make people happy. As a result, about 60 per cent of our diners have been people who come from outside with the only intention to taste our food," he says.



Naatu chakkara idiyappam



Rasikas enjoying Sastha Catering Services' kalyana saapaadu



And some, like stylist Ratikha Venugopal, express disappointment at the food on offer this year. "I understand that food at sabha canteens is expensive, but I came away disappointed as the caterer served Kerala-style food during Margazhi season in Chennai. I don't see the point in that. I wanted to try a proper Tamil *kalyana virundhu*," she explains.

She also brings up another important, but often overlooked, point. "The canteen got overcrowded pretty quickly, and there was no waiting area or any amenities. Also, some caterers still do not post their menu online. So, you get to know the menu only when you've reached the canteen, and you eat what they serve," she points out.



Badam halwa



Neer dosai



Vetriilai bajji

# End the year on a high: Hacks to ace your New Year's Eve celebrations

Shrestha Mukherjee & Shweta Watson

As the countdown to 2025 begins, Hyderabadis are gearing up to celebrate New Year's Eve in style. Whether you're hitting the city's hottest parties or planning an intimate celebration, we've got the ultimate guide to partying right. From trending hotspots to tips on staying stylish, satiated, and safe, here's how to make your NYE unforgettable.

**For a themed house party, you can never go wrong with a classic black shirt paired with relaxed yet stylish pants. If you want to keep it versatile, a casual blazer with a sweatshirt and baggy pants works perfectly. For a more formal vibe, nothing beats a well-tailored suit to welcome the year in style**

— Ajit Shukla, an actor/model



The city's New Year's Eve celebrations include a range of rooftop events, outdoor parties, with many hosting intimate house gatherings for friends and family



## The hottest party spots in Chennai:

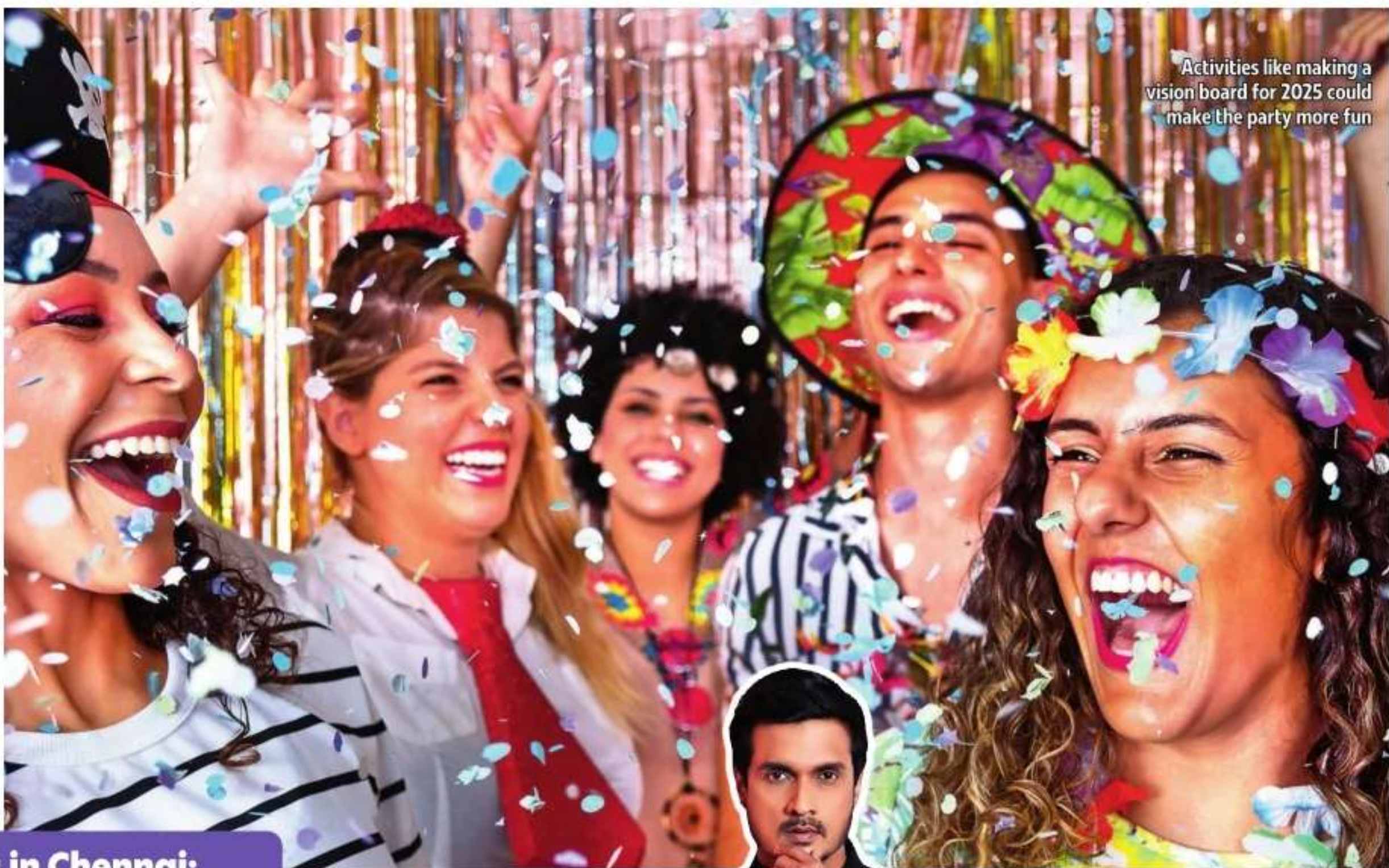
- Marina Beach Road
- Anna Nagar
- ECR
- OMR
- Nungambakkam

**This season, we've noticed a significant spike in orders for cheese platters and grazing boards. Barbecues are also particularly popular right now, as they're perfect for the cold weather** — Arpita Gupta, founder of The Board Story

## Safety first: How to have a secure night out

Celebrations can get overwhelming, so keeping safety in mind is essential:

- Plan your ride: Use a reliable cab service or designate a sober driver
- Stay with your group: Partying with friends is fun and safer
- Limit alcohol consumption: Know your limits and avoid overindulging



Activities like making a vision board for 2025 could make the party more fun

## Fashion tips to dance through the night

Dress to impress, but remember: comfort is key. New Year's Eve is the time to shine — literally — with sequined dresses, metallic jumpsuits, and classic black outfits trending this year. To complete the look, opt for footwear you can comfortably dance in, such as block heels or stylish sneakers. "Accessories are your best friends," suggests Meera Nair, who is attending a rooftop party this year. "A statement necklace or sparkly earrings can elevate even the simplest outfit."

## Eat right to party all night

Food is a big part of NYE celebrations, but pacing is key. Start with a light meal — grilled chicken, quinoa salads, or soups — to stay energised without feeling sluggish. At the party, go for finger foods like sushi rolls, sliders, or fruit platters to maintain stamina. Avoid heavy, greasy dishes, and hydrate by alternating every drink with water to prevent hangovers. "Grazing boards and cheese platters are a favourite this season because they're fuss-free and don't require servers," says Arpita Gupta, founder of The Board Story. "They bring people together, offer flavours for all palates, and pair wonderfully with drinks, making them perfect for hosting."



# HOTTEST FASHION TRENDS OF 2024



What stars like Ryan Gosling started in 2023, caught on with celebs in 2024 as well. There was no doubt that method dressing had arrived. Janhvi Kapoor's fun outfits featuring prints and patterns related to cricket while promoting *Mr and Mrs Mahi*; Shraddha Kapoor in a red sari, kohl eyes and nose pin for *Street 2* promotions; Blake Lively turning up in ensembles with floral elements for *This Ends With Us*; method dressing, which is an approach towards storytelling using fashion as a tool, featured on nearly every movie promotional tour of Holly and Bollywood stars.



Rooted in glamour and unapologetically loud, the maximalist or loud luxury aesthetic screams 'more is more'. Think rich colours, bold and mood uplifting prints and patterns, big on logos, and opulent fabrics and textures. Kendall Jenner's loud fur jackets, Sabrina Carpenter's 1994 Chanel faux fur set, and Emily's wardrobe in the second season of *Emily in Paris*, were proof that maximalism did take over 2024.

The year 2024 has had its fashion moments and trends dominating our social media feeds. Whether it was celebrities turning to method dressing, or a certain green hue dominating everything from pop culture to presidential campaigns, here's looking back at five fashion statements that reigned this year.



METHOD DRESSING WAS ALL THE RAGE



If there was one trend that was everywhere - from red carpet to American politics, it was brat green - the defining colour of 2024. The almost-slime-like, acid green colour that was donned by the likes of Kamala Harris, Nita Ambani and Victoria Beckham among others, had an influence in spaces beyond music. Brat green was about being bold, edgy and channeling one's inner brat.



LUXURY, BUT MAKE IT LOUD



**What's on the 2025 fashion platter**  
If the Spring/Summer 2025 global runway showcases are to go by, the year is set to see a return of boho aesthetics, with a continuation of animal print and maximalist aesthetics, cherry-coded looks, and sporty fits that blend the functional with luxe vibes.



THE 'DEMURE' ERA

If there was a Brat summer, there was also the demure aesthetic - a complete antithesis. The trend kickstarted after TikTok creator Joolie Lebron's social media video on "being demure" went viral. Being demure is embracing understated elegance. Picture earthy tones such as Deepika Padukone's (in pic), classic pieces like tailored trousers, ankle-length skirts, well-cut blazers and trench-coats for winter. Elegant blouses, structured handbags and minimal jewellery are still in vogue, this winter.



FEISTY LEOPARD PRINT

2024 was the year of revival of the oh-so-gaudy print. It found its way through to streetwear as well as luxury wear. Take cue from Tamannaah Bhatia's panelled, leopard print dress with subtle embellishment, or Kim K's co-ord set that she posted a photo of recently, which made leopard print seem daywear-worthy.

— Nandini Ganguly

## 'This year was all about self-care and empathy'

CONTINUED FROM R 1



**In 2024, I learned about the transition from being a student to a teacher: PR SREEJESH**  
An era of my life concluded in 2024, and a new one began as I retired as a player and embarked on my career as a coach. I can't definitively say what the year taught me, but I did learn a great deal about transitioning from being a student to becoming a teacher. There was a lot of excitement leading up to my retirement. It wasn't an overnight decision - it took time and careful reflection. I learned how important it is to make such decisions with patience. Now, I'm focused on preparing to navigate the challenges that my new role as a coach has brought.



**In 2025, I'm committed to focusing on my well-being, and going on solo trips: RAGHAV DIXIT**  
I feel that I have neglected health the past year; juggling through shows being my focus. Now, I have decided to focus on my health in 2025. I also learned that I did not travel for the love of travelling but for work. Next year, I want to go back to taking solo trips.

**2024 has taught me to appreciate others' efforts: PANKAJ ADVANI**  
This year, I've realised that we often tend to focus on the negative aspects of situations and people. Instead of dwelling on shortcomings, we should strive to appreciate the positive qualities and efforts of others. For instance, in my field of sports, we often focus on negatives like poor accommodation or logistical issues. I believe a more positive and empathetic approach can improve our experiences. I've also noticed that it's important to appreciate others' efforts, even if it's just a simple gesture like a compliment. This can have a significant impact on their motivation and self-esteem. In today's world, a sincere compliment can go a long way.



**Patience and perseverance have been my greatest lessons of 2024: PRIYAMANI**  
I have realised that it's not necessary to do 25 films a year or constantly hustle to stay on top. Quality matters more than quantity. I've learned to take things as they come, understanding that it's okay to take breaks, focus on self-care, and indulge in some me time. Sometimes, the best thing you can do is be kind to yourself. I now take each day as it comes - working out at the gym, practising yoga, and meditating. Patience and perseverance have been my greatest lessons of 2024.

— Inputs by Anna Fernandes, Gopika IS, Devika V Menon, Paul Nicodemus, Roopa Radhakrishnan and Shweta Watson



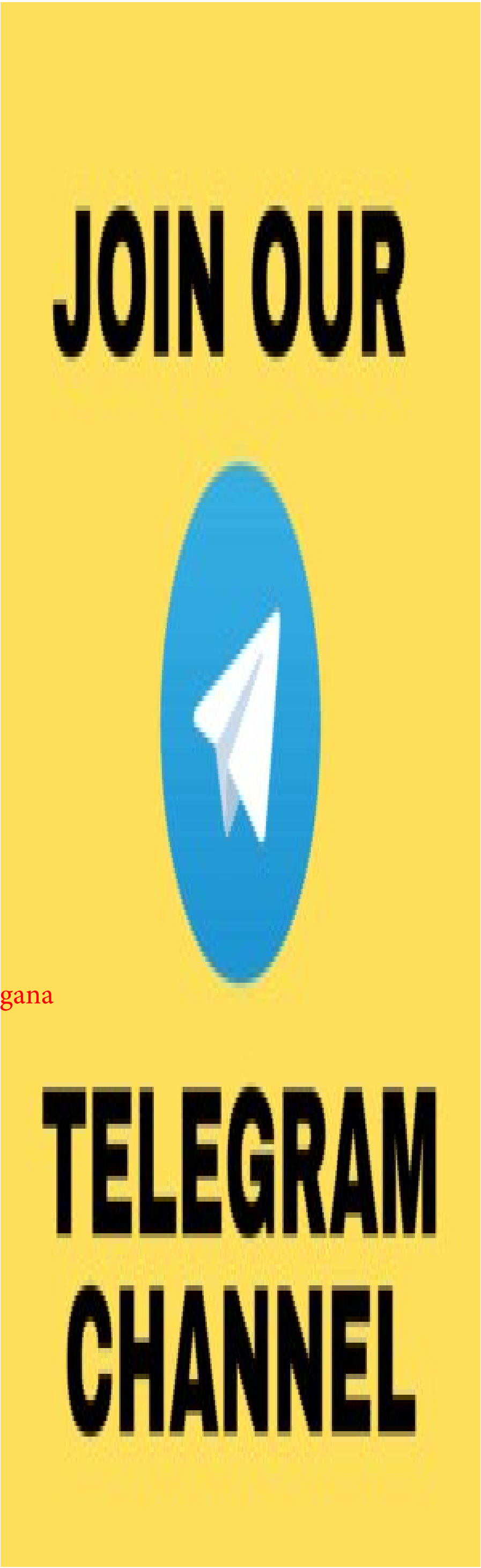
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