



At malls, 'end-of-season' sale not to end so soon

To extend till third week of this month; retailers now staring at reduced margins and profits

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Mumbai: Wanted to bargain-hunt more at the raging sale across stores in your neighbourhood mall?

Well, you still have a couple of days more to sift through the stacks and stuff bags for rock-bottom prices.

The sale season, which kicked off late December, is likely to be extended in the second fortnight of this month despite retailers seeking to wind it up.

Extended sale is good news for consumers, but for retailers it means reduced margins and profits. The sale season, which is usually limited to four weeks, has been spilling over to seven to eight weeks for the last two years.

Nirzar Jain, vice-president at Oberoi Mall, said though the sale season has been encouraging, it will get extended. "Several brands had started sale from December 25. This was a silent period of sale. They went full swing from January 1. It is definitely going to be extended till February 23 for several brands," he said.

This is because sale season started on a rather slow note.

A check at several leading stores such as Lifestyle, Pantaloons and Central showed that the sale season picked up pace only after two weekends. And in order to make up for that, it will need to be extended, said retailers.

Anand Sundaram, CEO, Pioneer Property Zone, said while retailers know that the sale is not a profitable proposition it has to be extended as this has been a trend for the last few seasons and so not possible to change suddenly.

Mukesh Kumar, vice-president of Infiniti Mall, concurred.

"Customers have been spoilt by the end-of-season sale and to change is difficult. So retailers will extend the period, may push new inventory and reduce the goods on sale, but the overall sale may continue."

Experts said as a result of a longer sale period, consumer behaviour has also been changing.

Now, consumers generally wait for sale period to start as they have essentially become bargain-hunters and as a result withdrawing sales early is becoming difficult, experts said.