

MALL TALK



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TRENDWATCH

FROM RETAIL SPACE TO CULTURAL STAGE:
HOW INTERACTIVE ART REINVENTS THE MALL EXPERIENCE

05



INSIGHTS

HOW TO COLLECT CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR INFORMATION
IN SHOPPING MALLS

06



PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH

NITISH, ONE OF THE YOUNGEST AND MOST DYNAMIC
EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS AT PRANAMI GROUP,

09



MARKET INSIGHTS

SMART MENU DESIGN:
THE SECRET INGREDIENT TO RESTAURANT SUCCESS

16



MALL MAESTRO

NAVIGATING REAL ESTATE EXCELLENCE:
THE LEADERSHIP JOURNEY OF SUMAN LAHIRI

17



FOOD TRENDS

TENANT MIX IN TURMOIL:
WHY YOUR F&B LEASING STRATEGY NEEDS A HARD RESET

19



WELLNESS

HOW TO RECHARGE WHILE WORKING
IN THE OFFICE

20



INDUSTRY NEWS

PVR INOX PLANS TO ADD 200 SCREENS IN 2 YRS

22



WARM WELCOME

WARM WELCOME TO SCAI NEW MEMBER-
SPINDLETOP GROUP INDIA PVT. LTD.

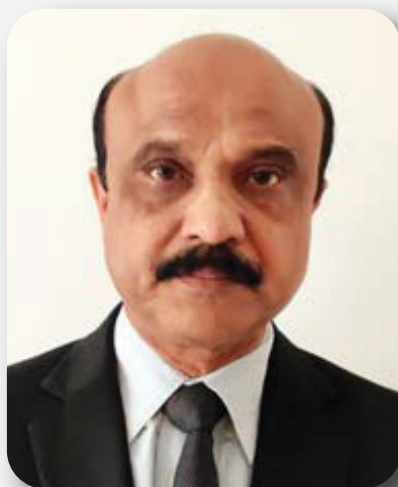
23



EVENT WATCH

SCAI SUCCESSFULLY ORGANISED A MASTERCLASS ON 13TH JUNE 2025 |
YOGA DAY | TIMEZONE OPENING AT INORBIT MALAD |
VAARI VANDHAN

23



Anjeev Kumar Srivastava
COO, SCAI

With the monsoon rains drenching much of India, the season brings a mix of welcome relief and urban challenges like waterlogging and traffic woes. Amid this unpredictability, indoor spaces especially shopping malls—emerge as comfortable refuges for consumers seeking both shelter and entertainment.

Recognizing this seasonal shift in consumer behavior, malls across the country are seizing the opportunity to position themselves as go-to destinations. Monsoon-themed food and fashion festivals, along with the much-anticipated End of Season Sale (EOSS), are taking center stage. These timely campaigns aren't just reactive—they're part of carefully curated annual calendars that shopping centers now plan with strategic foresight, a practice refined in the post-pandemic era.

The EOSS in particular has grown into a national retail phenomenon. With customers eagerly awaiting deep discounts and attractive offers, malls are pulling out all the stops to create a high-energy environment that turns every visit into an experience.

To keep the momentum going, shopping malls are going beyond just deals. They're curating immersive experiences—live music, fashion showcases, chef-led food workshops, and kid-friendly zones—to engage different audience segments. Interactive games, loyalty perks, and thematic decor further elevate the ambiance, transforming malls into vibrant hubs of culture, commerce, and community.

As the rains continue to fall, malls are proving that a cloudy day can still deliver silver linings—through thoughtful engagement, festive spirit, and memorable moments for every shopper who steps inside.

Anjeev Kumar

SHOPPING CENTRES
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

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Retail is evolving — and sustainability is at its core. Discover how shopping centres and retail assets can transition to Net Zero with practical frameworks, innovative design, renewable integration, and green certifications.

DATE 17TH JULY, 2025

TIME 3.00 - 4.30 PM



MR. AUDHESH PANDEY

Head - Commercial, Retail Emerging Business,
JLL property Asset Management, India

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From Retail Space to Cultural Stage: How Interactive Art Reinvents the Mall Experience

The Art of Becoming a Shopping Destination

As shopping centers morph into mixed-use, lifestyle-driven hubs, art has emerged as retail's most under-leveraged strategic lever. Far beyond decoration, curated art permanent, rotating or interactive reshapes how spaces are experienced, shared and remembered. The payoff? Higher footfall, longer dwell time and a deeper sense of place.

Interactive Art: Retail's Secret Weapon

Today's visitors crave more than merchandise; they want emotion, authenticity and share-worthy moments. Responsive light sculptures, immersive digital tunnels and community-painted murals transform passive spectators into active participants, forging emotional bonds and fuelling organic social content.

Strategy, Not Scenery

While e-commerce keeps chipping away at retail's transactional core, art investments future-proof physical destinations can turning malls into living cultural ecosystems. Done right, art elevates community wellbeing, drives repeat visits and cements long-term economic vitality.

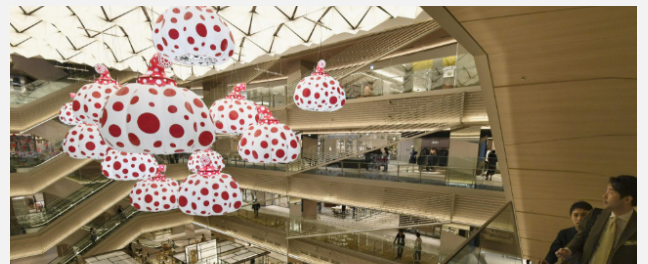


Proof in Action

- **Promenade Riviera, France**
Partnering with curator Jérôme Sans, the center installed Lilian Bourgeat's outsized everyday objects — instant Instagram bait that turns a shopping trip into a cultural outing.



- **Ginza Six, Tokyo**
In collaboration with Mori Art Museum, the mall debuted with Yayoi Kusama's polka-dotted pumpkins floating in its atrium, plus works by Shinji Ohmaki, Misa Funai and a teamLab digital waterfall. The result: a luxury destination synonymous with avant-garde art.



The Takeaway

Art isn't a cost line; it's a competitive moat. By weaving interactive, high-impact installations into your space, you build emotional connection, amplify brand identity and create destinations worth the detour. Ready to explore how art can elevate your property? Let's talk.



How to Collect Consumer Behaviour Information in Shopping Malls

Shopping malls are complex, dynamic environments that bring together a wide variety of retailers, services, and experiences under one roof. They serve as key venues for observing and understanding consumer behaviour in real time. Collecting consumer behaviour information in shopping malls allows mall operators, retailers, marketers, and developers to better understand shopper motivations, preferences, and patterns. This, in turn, leads to improved customer satisfaction, more effective marketing strategies, and increased sales. The most effective techniques for collecting consumer behaviour data in shopping malls, illustrated with real-world examples and best practices.

Foot Traffic Analysis

Foot traffic analysis involves monitoring the number of people who visit different areas of a mall, the time they spend, and their movement patterns. This data is often collected using tools such as infrared sensors, Wi-Fi tracking, or cameras equipped with AI.



Example:

A shopping mall in Singapore uses heat-mapping technology to identify high-traffic zones, such as entrances, food courts, and popular stores. When data shows a spike in foot traffic around specific kiosks, the management can use that insight to adjust store placements, lease rates, or promotional locations.

Benefits:

- Identifies most and least visited areas.
- Optimizes store and kiosk placements.
- Helps in mall layout redesign and congestion management.

Observational Studies

Observational studies involve watching and recording shopper behaviour in specific areas of the mall without interacting with them.

This can include how shoppers navigate stores, interact with products, or respond to signage and promotions.



Example:

A fashion retailer within a mall might observe how shoppers approach mannequins, whether they touch or try on clothes, and how long they spend browsing. Observers might notice that placing sale items near the entrance attracts more attention than when they are placed at the back.

Benefits:

- Captures natural, real-world behaviour.
- Identifies shopper preferences and display effectiveness.
- Useful in testing store layouts or in-store marketing strategies.

Customer Surveys and Feedback

Surveys and feedback forms are direct tools to ask shoppers about their experiences, preferences, and opinions. These can be digital (via QR codes or mall apps) or physical (paper forms or kiosks).



Example:

A mall could set up interactive touch-screen kiosks near exits or food courts where visitors can answer quick questions like "Rate your shopping experience today" or "What was your main reason for visiting the mall?" Incentives like free parking or discounts can increase participation.

Benefits:

- Gathers demographic and psychographic data.
- Understands customer satisfaction and needs.
- Offers actionable feedback for service improvement.

Mobile App and Loyalty Program Analytics

Many shopping malls now use mobile apps or loyalty programs to enhance the shopper experience. These platforms collect valuable data such as store visits, purchase history, time spent in the mall, and promotional engagement.



Example:

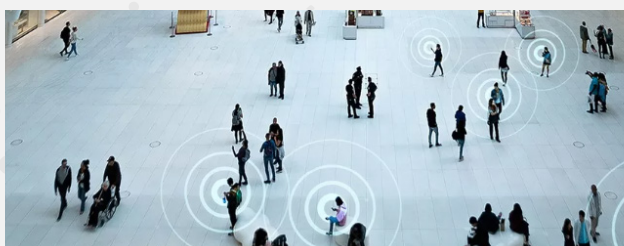
A leading Mall in New Delhi runs a loyalty program that tracks user spending and preferences. By analyzing this data, the mall identifies high-value customers and tailors offers based on their buying patterns, like special discounts for regular food court visitors or early access to fashion sales.

Benefits:

- Offers individual-level behavioural insights.
- Encourages repeat visits through personalized promotions.
- Integrates online and offline data for a 360° view.

Wi-Fi and Bluetooth Tracking

Most modern malls offer free Wi-Fi or use Bluetooth beacons to track how long customers stay, where they dwell, and how frequently they return. This passive tracking is anonymous but powerful for understanding footfall patterns.



Example:

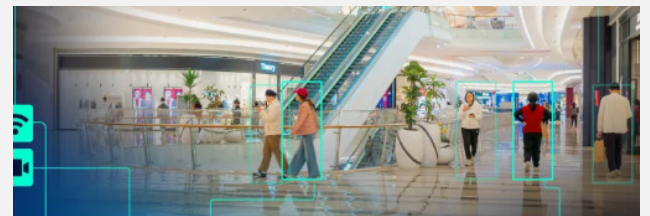
A Dubai mall used Wi-Fi analytics to track the movement paths of shoppers over a holiday weekend. The analysis showed that most visitors clustered around anchor stores and avoided less prominent corridors. This helped inform signage placement and tenant rotation.

Benefits:

- Tracks real-time visitor flow.
- Identifies repeat vs. new customers.
- Enhances location-based marketing efforts.

Video Analytics and AI Cameras

Modern malls are increasingly using AI-powered cameras to study consumer behaviour. These cameras can detect age group, gender, time spent in front of displays, and emotional reactions through facial expressions.



Example:

A cosmetics store in a mall used AI cameras to detect the gender and estimated age of passersby. The store then dynamically adjusted digital signage content—showing anti-aging products to older shoppers and trendy items to younger ones—resulting in increased engagement and conversions.

Benefits:

- Offers deep demographic and behavioural insights.
- Helps in personalized marketing and visual merchandising.
- Automates analysis at scale.

In-depth Interviews and Focus Groups

For qualitative insights, mall operators or retailers can conduct interviews and focus groups with selected shoppers. These conversations uncover motivations, opinions, and emotions that are not visible through analytics.



Example:

A luxury mall in Mumbai invited a group of high-spending customers for a feedback session. Insights gathered helped the mall improve its valet service and upgrade restroom facilities, which were key to retaining affluent clientele.

Benefits:

- Provides context and emotion behind decisions.
- Useful for brand positioning and experience improvement.
- Encourages customer loyalty through engagement.

Point-of-Sale (POS) Data Analysis

Retailers within malls can collect and share POS data to analyze what products are being sold, in what quantities, and at what times. This data reveals what drives purchases and how promotions affect sales.

**Example:**

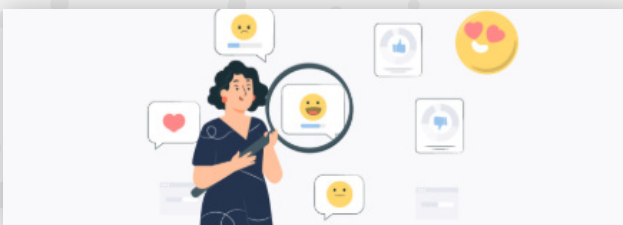
During a mall-wide “Diwali Festive Sale,” analysis showed that ethnic wear saw a 40% increase in sales while accessories lagged behind. This prompted retailers to bundle accessories with clothing in future promotions.

Benefits:

- Identifies purchase patterns and peak hours.
- Supports inventory management and forecasting.
- Measures effectiveness of sales and promotions.

Social Media Listening and Digital Sentiment Analysis

Shoppers often post reviews, photos, and opinions about their mall experiences on social media. Monitoring these channels helps gather unfiltered feedback and detect emerging trends or concerns.

**Example:**

A shopping mall noticed several Instagram posts complaining about long parking queues. By improving parking management and informing users via social media, the mall improved its reputation and visitor experience.

Benefits:

- Captures public sentiment and trends.
- Provides immediate feedback loops.
- Engages users and builds community.

Mystery Shoppers

Hiring mystery shoppers provides an inside view of customer service, store ambiance, staff behaviour, and ease of navigation. This method combines observation with evaluation.

**Example:**

A chain of mobile phone stores inside a mall used mystery shoppers to assess staff courtesy and product knowledge. Based on the results, they retrained employees and saw a marked improvement in customer satisfaction.

Benefits:

- Offers unbiased, real-world assessment.
- Highlights operational strengths and weaknesses.
- Complements quantitative data with qualitative evaluation.

Collecting consumer behaviour information in shopping malls requires a mix of traditional and digital tools. From observing foot traffic and analyzing Wi-Fi patterns to conducting focus groups and tracking social media buzz, each method provides a unique lens into how and why consumers behave the way they do. The key to success lies in combining multiple data sources—quantitative for scale and qualitative for depth—to build a comprehensive understanding of shopper behaviour. When this information is properly leveraged, it helps malls and retailers create better experiences, increase customer loyalty, and drive sustained business growth.



PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH

RENDEZVOUS



Nitish Kumar Agarwal
Director, Mall of Ranchi

Nitish, one of the youngest and most dynamic Executive Directors at PRANAMI GROUP, has been instrumental in modernizing the company's operations through a forward-thinking, technology-driven approach. His innovative mindset and adaptability have helped the Group remain agile in a rapidly evolving business landscape. Under his leadership, PRANAMI GROUP has launched several creative, high-quality projects and streamlined internal processes, significantly boosting efficiency and customer service standards. Nitish's strategic vision and market foresight have played a vital role in the Group's continued growth and relevance. His leadership blends youthful energy with sound judgment, making him a key contributor to the organization's success. Through his commitment to innovation and excellence, he continues to drive long-term value creation and inspire progress across all levels of the company. He gives us some insights into business, what he holds closer to his heart, strategies, and growth plans.

Your achievements are really inspiring. We would love to hear more about your journey – the experiences and choices that have led you to where you are today as a young entrepreneur.

It all started when I took admission in college, studying business and entrepreneurship. I joined my dad business of Real Estates as I had always been fascinated by the idea of creating things simplified and process oriented where your systems works and myself as an owner should manage things rather going into micro level. After a few failed attempts, I finally stumbled upon an idea that I was passionate about and believed in. It was a digital marketing focused on helping small businesses grow their online presence and reach a wider audience. I poured all my time and energy into building the business, learning everything I could about digital marketing and entrepreneurship along the way.

It was not an easy journey, and there were many challenges and setbacks along the way. But through hard work, determination, and perseverance, I was able to overcome these obstacles and grow the business into a successful venture. I learned the importance of networking, building relationships, and surrounding myself with like-minded individuals who could support and mentor me. Today, I am proud to say that my business is thriving, and I am constantly looking for ways to innovate and expand my offerings. The journey to get here has been filled with ups and downs, but I wouldn't change a thing. Being a young entrepreneur has been incredibly rewarding, and I am excited to see where this path will take me in the future.

What exciting trends and developments are set to shape the future of shopping malls in India's tier-II and tier-III markets?

The future of shopping malls in India's tier-II and tier-III markets is definitely an interesting topic to explore. There are several exciting trends and developments that are likely to shape the landscape of shopping malls in these emerging markets:

1. Retail mix customization: As these markets continue to grow and evolve, there will be a greater demand for customized retail offerings that cater to the specific needs and preferences of the local population. Shopping malls will need to adapt and diversify their tenant mix to include a mix of local and international brands that appeal to customers in these regions.

2. Entertainment and leisure offerings: shopping malls are no longer just places to shop – they are becoming entertainment destinations in their own right. In tier-II and tier-III markets, there is a growing demand for entertainment options such as cinemas, gaming arcades, and food courts. Shopping malls that can offer a diverse range of leisure activities alongside shopping are likely to attract more footfalls and stay competitive.

3. Technology integration: With the rise of e-commerce and digital shopping experiences, shopping malls will need to embrace technology to enhance the overall customer experience. This could include implementing features such as smart parking systems, interactive digital screens, and mobile apps for seamless navigation and transactions.

4. Sustainability and green initiatives: With a growing focus on sustainability and environmental conservation, shopping malls in tier-II and tier-III markets will need to prioritize eco-friendly practices and energy-efficient solutions. This could include initiatives such as recycling programs, solar energy integration, and green building certifications to attract environmentally conscious consumers.

5. Community engagement and local partnerships: shopping malls can differentiate themselves by actively engaging with the local community and forming partnerships with local businesses and organizations. This could involve hosting community events, supporting local artisans and entrepreneurs, and collaborating with local nonprofits to build a stronger sense of community within the mall.

Overall, the future of shopping malls in India's tier-II and tier-III markets is likely to be shaped by a combination of these trends and developments. By staying ahead of the curve and adapting to the changing needs of consumers, shopping malls in these emerging markets can thrive and remain relevant in the years to come.

How can shopping malls address the challenge of visitors primarily coming for multiplexes and dining, while preferring to shop on high streets instead?

To encourage visitors who come for dining or movie experiences to also shop within the mall, developers and operators can focus on enhancing the overall retail proposition. Here are some strategies that can help shopping malls pivot from being purely an entertainment and F&B destination into a more balanced retail experience:

1. Curated Retail Mix and Zoning

- Diversify the tenant mix beyond big-box anchors and international brands by including local specialty stores, pop-ups, and unique concepts that may not be easily found on high streets.
- Strategically zone the mall so that F&B, entertainment, and shopping options flow naturally. For example, placing smaller stores and experience-driven retail near multiplex entrances can capture footfall from movie-goers.

2. Experiential Retail and Store Concepts

- Encourage retailers to create immersive in-store experiences through interactive product displays, live demonstrations, or themed events that can only be experienced in person.
- Offer short-term "experience zones" or pop-up spaces for brands to experiment with new retail concepts and seasonal campaigns. This can draw repeat visits and keep the mall's retail landscape fresh.

3. Loyalty Programs and Incentives

- Introduce mall-wide loyalty programs that reward visitors who dine, watch movies, and shop on-site. A consolidated reward system—for example, earning points on movie tickets valid for discounts in retail outlets—encourages cross-category spending.
- Collaborate with retailers to provide exclusive, time-limited promotions that incentivize guests to shop in-mall. Targeting families and groups visiting the multiplex or restaurants is especially effective.

4. Seamless Omnichannel Experience

- Partner with retailers to offer online-to-offline (O2O) conveniences like click-and-collect counters within the mall, or same-day deliveries for items ordered in store.
- Develop a mall app that highlights promotional offers, store locators, and digital queue systems for popular restaurants to improve convenience and direct foot traffic to retailers.

5. Events and Community Building

- Organize events, workshops, and local initiatives that combine both entertainment and shopping. Examples could include weekend markets, fashion shows, influencer-led product demonstrations, or music gigs that feature partner retailers.
- Sponsor community-driven initiatives—like philanthropic events or local schools' art exhibitions—to foster a sense of belonging and frequent returning visits.

6. Renewed Focus on Design and Comfort

- Reinvent the mall's common areas to enhance shopper comfort and dwell time: better seating, improved lighting, interactive art installations, and child-friendly zones can make the space inviting.
- Ease of parking, accessible wayfinding, and clean, safe environments are also crucial to elevating the overall customer experience and encouraging longer stays in the mall.

By integrating these strategies, shopping malls can create a more holistic environment—one that balances the draw of multiplexes and dining with engaging retail experiences. This helps build a loyal customer base and drives footfalls in both entertainment and shopping categories.

What trends are you seeing in the industry as a result of changing customer behaviour? And how do cultural and socioeconomic factors influence consumer choices in Jharkhand differently from other regions?



Across India, customer behaviour in retail and entertainment has been evolving quickly, driven by factors like growing digital adoption, demand for immersive experiences, and increased brand consciousness. However, diverse cultural and socioeconomic nuances can create distinct regional patterns. In Jharkhand, for instance, the interplay of income levels, local traditions, and emerging aspirations shapes consumer behavior differently than in more urbanized or economically advanced regions. Here are key trends and factors to consider:

1) Rise of Value-Conscious Shoppers:

- **Pan-India Trend:** With inflation concerns and post-pandemic recalibrations, shoppers across India have become more value-conscious, looking for affordability and meaningful brand engagements.
- **Jharkhand Influence:** Jharkhand's predominantly rural and semi-urban population emphasizes "value for money" more strongly than many metros. Quality, price, and durability are especially critical in buying decisions, making mid-range or local brands that balance cost and quality quite popular.

2) Greater Emphasis on Local and Regional Brands:

- **Pan-India Trend:** Amidst global brand presence, consumers increasingly appreciate localized offerings, whether in fashion, eateries, or artisanal goods.
- **Jharkhand Influence:** The state's cultural heritage and tribal art traditions (such as Dokra metal craft and Sohrai painting) resonate well with the local population. Supporting homegrown or regional brands fosters community pride and resonates more than purely aspirational global labels.

3) Growing Digital Adoption with Structural Hurdles:

- Pan-India Trend: Smartphones and affordable data have accelerated online shopping and digital engagement nationwide.
- Jharkhand Influence: Despite rising smartphone penetration, infrastructure gaps such as patchy internet connectivity in certain districts can limit consistent e-commerce adoption. This creates an environment in which consumers blend sporadic online purchases (for deals or brand variety) with offline shopping—often at local markets.

4) Shift Toward Experiential and Family-Oriented Outings:

- Pan-India Trend: Malls, multiplexes, and entertainment zones increasingly serve as leisure destinations for the entire family.
- Jharkhand Influence: Leisure spending is on the rise among an emerging middle class. However, decisions on entertainment and dining out can be more conservative, influenced by cultural norms and budget considerations. Successful retail and entertainment formats often incorporate family-friendly experiences and events reflecting local traditions (e.g., fairs or celebratory events around regional festivals).

5) Influence of Festivals and Cultural Events:

- Pan-India Trend: Festivals remain significant purchase drivers pan-India (e.g., Diwali, Durga Puja, Eid).
- Jharkhand Influence: Tribal festivals (like Karma, Sohrai, and Sarhul) and region-specific celebrations also generate localized spikes in consumer spending, especially for ethnic wear, traditional foods, and festive décor. Malls and retailers that cater to these local festivities and cultural nuances can build loyal followings.

6) Rural-Urban Divide and Socioeconomic Stratification:

- Pan-India Trend: Metros and tier-I cities often drive trends early, with smaller towns following at varying paces.
- Jharkhand Influence: The state's mix of industrial towns (e.g., Jamshedpur, Bokaro, Dhanbad) alongside rural and tribal areas creates heterogeneous consumer segments. There's a marked split in disposable income and brand preference—industrial township populations may seek aspirational, quality-driven goods, while rural customers emphasize affordability and essential commodities.

In summary, while digital innovation, experiential retail, and value-seeking behaviors define broader trends, cultural heritage, inconsistent infrastructure, and strong local identity produce unique nuances in Jharkhand. Successful mall developers, retailers, and entertainment providers in the region will be those that tailor offerings to local aspirations, integrate technology judiciously (mindful of connectivity and budgets), and celebrate Jharkhand's cultural richness in their brand experiences.

With more young people using malls for showrooming—trying products in-store but purchasing them online—how can malls capitalize on their unique strengths to turn this behaviour into sales and position themselves as the preferred shopping destination for the younger generation?

That's a great question! Showrooming can indeed be seen as both a challenge and an opportunity for malls. To capitalize on their unique strengths and convert this behavior into sales, malls can focus on creating a compelling, integrated experience that blends the best of offline and online shopping while catering specifically to younger consumers' preferences. Here are some actionable strategies:

- Enhance Experiential Retail
- Omnichannel Synergy
- Incentivize Immediate Purchases
- Create Social and Shareable Spaces
- Leverage Data and Personalization
- Promote Sustainability and Ethical Shopping

Shopping malls can turn showrooming into an advantage by transforming from mere retail spaces into engaging lifestyle hubs that combine sensory experiences, social interaction convenience, and personalized service—all tailored to young shoppers' values and habits. This positioning creates a compelling reason for them to not only try but also buy at the mall, making it their preferred shopping destination.

Any process or strategy shifts that you have brought in for your organisation keeping this thought in mind?

We've implemented several process and strategy shifts to adapt to the changing retail landscape like, Omnichannel Integration, Experiential Retail, Partnerships, Digital Marketing, Customer-Centric Approach. We're creating a unique and engaging shopping experience that drives sales and positions our mall as the preferred destination for younger customers. Our goal is to provide a seamless and enjoyable experience that keeps customers coming back.



In today's digital age, how vital is marketing to a shopping mall's success? While traditional marketing has deep roots, are modern digital strategies now taking precedence?

Marketing is absolutely vital to a shopping mall's success in today's digital age. The retail landscape is highly competitive, and effective marketing helps malls attract foot traffic, engage customers, and differentiate themselves from other shopping destinations.



Traditional Marketing vs. Digital Strategies:

- **Traditional Marketing:** Techniques like print advertising, billboards, events, sponsorships, and in-mall promotions have long been foundational in building brand presence and attracting local shoppers. These methods are tangible and can create memorable physical experiences that resonate with shoppers visiting the mall.
- **Modern Digital Strategies:** With widespread internet access and smartphone use, digital

marketing has become increasingly crucial. Strategies such as social media marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), influencer partnerships, email campaigns, mobile apps, location based advertising, and data-driven personalized promotions allow malls to target specific audiences more efficiently. Digital tools also enable real-time engagement, customer feedback, and the ability to track campaign effectiveness with greater precision.

• Why Digital is Taking Precedence:

1. **Changing Consumer Behavior:** Shoppers frequently research products online, check reviews, compare prices, and discover promotions before visiting physical stores. Digital marketing meets them where they spend much of their time—online.
2. **Cost-effectiveness and Measurability:** Digital campaigns can often be more cost-effective than large-scale traditional efforts and provide detailed analytics to refine strategies quickly.
3. **Personalization and Engagement:** Digital channels allow malls to tailor messages to different customer segments and maintain ongoing engagement via social media or mobile apps.
4. **Omnichannel Integration:** Successful malls combine digital and traditional marketing to create seamless customer experiences. For example, digital campaigns might drive awareness for an in-mall event promoted via posters and in-store signage.

In Summary:

While traditional marketing still plays a valuable role—especially for local community engagement—modern digital marketing strategies have become the centerpiece of effective mall marketing. A hybrid approach leveraging both provides the best opportunity to attract and retain shoppers in an increasingly digital world.

What is the best and worst part of being Head of the institution?

The role of a Head of an institution—whether it's a company, or any organization—comes with unique challenges and rewards. Here are some commonly cited best and worst parts of being in such a leadership position:

Best Parts:

Opportunity to Lead and Influence

You get to set the vision, shape culture, and make strategic decisions that drive the institution forward. This can be highly fulfilling when positive change and progress are achieved.

Making a Difference

Leading an institution gives you a platform to impact employees, customers, or stakeholders in meaningful ways. Seeing others grow and succeed because of your leadership is rewarding.

Professional Growth and Learning

The role exposes you to complex problems, diverse teams, and high-level decision-making, fostering continual personal and professional development.

Recognition and Respect

Being the face of the institution often brings respect both within and outside the organization, opening doors to networking and influence beyond the immediate environment.

Worst Parts:

High Pressure and Responsibility

Heads are ultimately responsible for the institution's performance, finances, reputation, and well-being. This pressure can cause stress and long working hours.

Difficult Decision-Making

Leaders often face tough choices that may not please everyone—such as budget cuts, staff changes, or policy shifts. Balancing competing interests can be emotionally taxing.

Isolation

Leadership can be lonely because you must maintain authority while needing support. It's not always easy to find trusted advisors or share vulnerabilities.

What are the key challenges your company is striving to overcome?

Our key challenges include adapting to changing consumer behavior, managing competition from e-commerce, maintaining foot traffic, and creating engaging experiences that drive sales and customer loyalty.

What strategies do you utilize to effectively manage people, overcome obstacles, and foster a positive work environment?

I prioritize open communication, empowerment, recognition, training, and a positive culture to effectively manage people and foster a supportive work environment. By focusing on these strategies, we build a strong team, overcome challenges, and drive success.



How do you cope with the demands of the workplace, and what stands out as the most substantial obstacle you have faced in your professional path?

I cope with workplace demands by prioritizing tasks, delegating effectively, and maintaining a work-life balance. The most substantial obstacle I've faced is adapting to rapidly changing market trends and consumer preferences, which requires continuous innovation and strategic planning to stay competitive.

How do you define success? What three fundamental habits should budding entrepreneurs develop to enhance their likelihood of achieving success?

Success, to me, is about creating lasting value, building a legacy that transcends generations, and making a meaningful impact on the lives of others. As a real estate businessman and mall owner, I've learned that it's not just about financial gains, but about leaving a mark that inspires and uplifts. To achieve this kind of success, I believe budding entrepreneurs should focus on developing three essential habits like, Relentless Learning, Strategic Risk-Taking and Resilience and Persistence.

How do you strike a balance between your professional responsibilities and personal commitments?

I strike a balance by prioritizing tasks, setting boundaries, delegating effectively, and making time for self-care and family, ensuring that both my professional and personal life thrive.

What hobbies or sports are you involved with outside of work?

Outside of work, I enjoy traveling with my family. Exploring different cities and destinations allows us to spend quality time together, and through these experiences, we continuously learn and gain new perspectives. I find that the insights and lessons from our travels often inspire and inform both my personal life and my approach to business.

Name an individual whose life and accomplishments inspire you the most?

The individuals who inspire me the most are my Dad and our Prime Minister. My Dad has always been a personal source of motivation through his values, work ethic, and dedication. At the same time, I deeply admire our Prime Minister for his selfless service to the country. Despite having no personal interest, his commitment to the nation's progress is truly admirable. As entrepreneurs, there's a lot to learn from such dedication, integrity, and the willingness to work for a greater cause beyond oneself.

What do you think young professionals need to know to succeed in today's job market?

Young professionals looking to succeed in today's job market need to focus on several key areas:

- Adaptability and Continuous Learning.
- Digital Literacy.
- Networking and Relationship Building.
- Communication Skills.
- Resilience and Problem-Solving.
- Personal Branding.
- Work-Life Balance and Well-being.

By focusing on these areas, young professionals can navigate the complexities of the modern job market and build fulfilling, successful careers.





Smart Menu Design: The Secret Ingredient to Restaurant Success

A menu is more than just a list of dishes—it's a restaurant's most powerful branding and operational tool. In a competitive dining landscape, where guests often decide where and what to eat before leaving home, the design and strategy behind a menu can make all the difference.

With most diners checking menus online in advance, the role of a menu has expanded far beyond the table. It must now engage, reassure, and entice before a customer even steps inside. Successful menus don't happen by accident—they're guided by a deep understanding of concept, customer, and consistency.

Know Your Concept, Know Your Guest

Every effective menu starts with clarity. Restaurants must first define who they are and whom they serve. Understanding the brand's voice and identifying customer personas helps sharpen the menu's direction—whether that means catering to health-conscious professionals, casual diners, or adventurous foodies.

Some concepts take this further by designing dishes around specific customer profiles. The goal is to serve a diverse set of needs without losing focus. A balanced menu doesn't try to please everyone but ensures each item has a clear purpose and resonates with a target audience.

Combine Familiar Comfort With New Discoveries

While innovation is essential, familiarity builds trust. Successful menus offer well-executed classics alongside inventive creations. Comfort dishes—like burgers, pasta, or signature coffee drinks—anchor the experience, while bolder, globally inspired options keep it fresh and memorable.

The key is progression: once guests feel confident in the basics, they're more likely to try new flavors. A menu that strikes this balance encourages repeat visits and nurtures loyalty over time.

Keep It Clear, Curated, and Operationally Smart

A concise, focused menu enhances both the customer experience and the kitchen's efficiency. Streamlined offerings reduce decision fatigue for guests and simplify prep, staffing, and inventory management for the team.

Restaurants benefit from auditing their menus every few months. Dish-level performance data reveals what's truly resonating and what isn't. Removing underperforming items frees up resources and keeps the menu agile and effective.

Use Seasons to Stay Relevant

Seasonal changes inject energy and anticipation into the dining experience. Limited-time dishes give regulars a reason to return and align with natural shifts in craving—from warm, comforting meals in winter to lighter fare in summer.

However, too much change can disrupt brand consistency. The best approach is to rotate a small portion of the menu—around 10 to 15%—on a quarterly basis. This keeps things fresh without alienating loyal customers who return for their favourites.

Simplicity and Consistency Are Key

Trend-chasing can lead to confusion. The most enduring menus are those that deliver a focused vision with reliability. Whether it's a perfect taco, a standout salad, or an exceptional espresso, doing one thing exceptionally well can be more powerful than trying to do it all.

Restaurants that align their menu strategy with their brand identity, operational strengths, and customer expectations are best positioned to thrive. In the end, a great menu doesn't just sell food—it builds loyalty, reinforces brand promise, and drives long-term success.



Navigating Real Estate Excellence: The Leadership Journey of Suman Lahiri

At the helm of Lido Group's strategic growth and operations stands Suman Lahiri, a seasoned industry veteran with over 30 years of experience in real estate, hospitality, and asset management.

His journey exemplifies the rare blend of operational expertise, financial acumen, and leadership finesse qualities that have defined his ascent from hotel management to steering P&L for shopping malls and diversified real-estate portfolios.

Foundations in Hospitality & Operations

A graduate of IHM Calcutta, Suman began his career in hospitality has been cutting his teeth with giants like Hilton, ITC Hotels, Intercontinental Hotels Group, and Inox Leisure Limited. This early period laid the foundation for his meticulous attention to service excellence, operational efficiency, and customer satisfaction. In parallel, he earned his MBA in Operations Management (2008), anchoring his practical experience with academic rigor.

Ascending to Asset & Yield Champion

For 17 years, Suman delved deep into Real Estate Asset & Yield Management, navigating complex asset classes shopping malls, commercial buildings, residential complexes, STPIs, and warehouses. His approach, rooted in common sense and design discipline, is complemented by a rigorous focus on execution and hygiene traits he himself emphasizes. Whether from the developer's standpoint or within REIT-like fund structures, his stewardship spans the complete asset lifecycle from acquisition and leasing to performance optimization and exit strategies.

Commanding P&L Leadership

In the last 15 years, Suman has steered full-fledged P&L responsibilities, transforming operations into profit centers.

His calendar in roles at Future Group, IL&FS Milestone Capital Advisors, and others, demonstrates a clear progression from operational leadership (COO) to executive leadership (CEO/ Business Head). Since the past 10 years, he has helmed Lido Group, shaping it into a recognized player in the mall ecosystem.

Financial Expertise & Certified Planning

Beyond operations, Suman is a Certified Financial Planner® (FPSB, USA, 2019). This certification complements his financial management of large P&Ls and augments his strategic decision-making. Whether evaluating capital expenditure, optimizing yield, or forecasting revenues, his finance background ensures outcomes are both visionary and viable.

Leadership Style: Strategy Meets Simplicity

Suman's leadership philosophy is anchored in clarity, common sense, and discipline. He believes in identifying practical solutions, designing efficient workflows, and executing them with precision. This approach fosters collaboration, ensuring teams live and breathe process and quality, while remaining nimble enough to pivot when real-world radars demand it.

Milestones at a Glance

- COOs & Executive Roles**
Suman has served as COO of a listed entity within Future Group. Milestone, Inox Leisure, and Intercontinental Hotels, scaling operations and deepening domain expertise.
- CEO of Lido Group**
Over the past decade, he has helmed P&L and overall strategy, managing leasing, tenant relationships, marketing, mall operations, and financial performance.



Suman Lahiri
Chief Executive Officer - Lido Malls

- Diversified Asset Experience**
 From commercial offices to warehousing (STPIs) to residential, his exposure to diverse asset classes gives him a 360° view of real estate dynamics.
- International-Level Standards**
 His tenure with global brands instilled robust frameworks in customer service, operations, and stakeholder management attributes he brought into the real estate domain.
- Calculated Risk & Innovation**
 A CV peppered with new launches, process rollouts, and financial optimization reveals a leader who isn't afraid to challenge the status quo and succeed.

The Personal Side of Leadership

What sets Suman apart isn't just skill or scale it's his personal touch. Colleagues note his calm under pressure, ability to simplify complexity, and knack for turning insights into front line impact. As one peer put it, "Suman brings common sense into every conversation no jargon, just results." He believes in mentoring, a leadership trait that fosters growth in the teams around him. From onboarding new GMs to steering cross-functional initiatives, his presence is equal parts coach and executor.

Vision for the Future

Looking ahead, Suman's vision for Lido is clear: continue smart expansion, deepen asset monetization, and enhance customer experience across properties. He advocates sponsorship backed events, food & beverage innovation, and seamless mall-digital integration. With macroeconomic shifts and evolving shopper behavior, his leadership is more relevant than ever.

Final Word

Suman Lahiri's career is a testament to sustained excellence. From hotel floors to mall atriums, he has navigated asset classes and leadership levels with consistent purpose and effectiveness. At a time when retail real estate is rapidly transforming, his combination of operational grit, financial insight, and personal leadership makes him the quintessential CEO for the modern mall



We welcome your feedback at
editormt2008@gmail.com



Tenant Mix in Turmoil: Why Your F&B Leasing Strategy Needs a Hard Reset

In India's dynamic shopping mall environment, a well-optimized food and beverage (F&B) tenant mix is no longer a "nice-to-have"—it's a necessity. As developers seek to increase dwell time, enhance customer experience, and differentiate from competitors, the right F&B strategy is emerging as a key commercial battleground. But many Malls are still flying blind—operating on legacy leasing practices, anecdotal experience, and reactive decision-making. It's time for a hard reset.

According to our recent industry survey of Indian Mall owners and operators, "curating a strong tenant mix" ranked as a top-three goal among respondents—equal to "differentiating from competitors"—yet only one-third felt confident that their existing mix of cuisines and dining formats was optimising sales potential. The disconnect is striking.

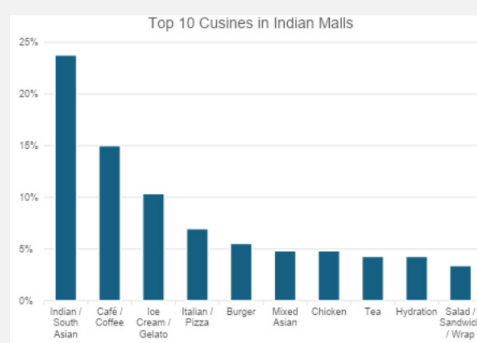


The challenges are familiar, yet persistent: high tenant turnover, difficulty attracting quality operators, and resistance from tenants to pay asking rents. One in three centres report tenants failing to take responsibility for poor concept execution—a direct consequence of misaligned leasing strategies that prioritise short-term occupancy over long-term brand alignment. It's no surprise that performance and retention suffer.

Our firm's extensive F&B leasing audits reveal a recurring pattern: centre managers often rely heavily on internal benchmarks or what their competitors are doing. While these may offer directional guidance, they fail to account for local trade area preferences, competitive positioning, and the centre's long-term vision.

Notably, only 20% of survey respondents currently engage external consultants or research partners when determining space allocation and placement strategy—missing a critical opportunity to leverage data and expertise for long-term leasing success.

The implications are clear. Without a structured, data-backed leasing strategy, malls risk underperformance, poor brand fit, and suboptimal rents. What's required is a holistic tenant mix optimization framework—one that evaluates trade area demand, culinary trends, customer profiles, and operational benchmarks to identify the right operators for the right formats, in the right locations.



Lease restructuring also plays a central role. With performance-based rent models gaining traction globally, it's time Indian Malls revisited how rental structures are negotiated. Turnover-linked leases, incentivized activation clauses, and flexible occupancy terms can better align operator and landlord success especially in a post-pandemic world where agility and performance alignment matter more than ever.

Professional input is critical here. A specialist partner with deep market intelligence and real-world F&B operating knowledge can help you identify which categories are over- or under-represented, pinpoint cuisine gaps, and balance premium and value-driven offerings. This isn't guesswork—it's a strategic science.

The cost of not acting is steep: declining retention, rising vacancies, falling yields, and erosion of customer loyalty. With 66% of survey respondents acknowledging difficulty attracting quality operators, the risk of inertia is no longer acceptable.

As Indian malls mature and consumer expectations evolve, the F&B category is becoming a cornerstone of competitive advantage. It's time to stop treating food leasing as a space-filler and start viewing it as the profit centre it truly is. Is your tenant mix working as hard as it should be?



How to Recharge While Working in the Office

Workdays can be hectic. Between back-to-back meetings, countless emails, and looming deadlines, it's easy to feel drained, stressed, and unfocused by the afternoon. Your energy drops, creativity starts to wane, and productivity slips — all symptoms of overwhelm. But there are simple strategies you can use to recharge without having to leave your workplace or take a lengthy vacation.

Here's a deep dive into how you can boost your energy, reduce stress, and stay motivated while you're in the office.

Take Short, Meaningful Breaks

It might seem counterproductive to interrupt your workflow, but short breaks — even 5 minutes — can profoundly affect productivity and mental clarity. Instead of sitting at your desk all day, consider these small breaks:

- Stand up, stretch, or walk around your office.
- Look away from your computer for a few minutes to ease eyestrain.
- Get a glass of water or a warm drink to stay adequately hydrated.

These short pauses allow your brain to rest and come back more focused and energetic.

Hydrate and Snack Smartly

Dehydration and poor food choices can sap energy and diminish productivity. To stay fueled:

Stay Hydrated:

Keep a water bottle at your desk and sip frequently. Staying adequately hydrated prevents headaches and sluggishness.

Healthy Snacks:

Instead of potato chips or cookies, opt for energy-boosting foods like:

- Nuts and seeds (almonds, pistachios, pumpkin seeds).
- Fresh fruit (apple, strawberries, grapes).
- Yogurt or a small piece of dark chocolate.

These provide sustained energy without causing a sugar crash.

Stretch or Move Your Body

Sitting for long periods isn't just tough on your back and neck — it also drains your energy and dampens creativity. Get up and move at least once an hour. Try these simple stretches at your desk:

- Lift your arms above your head and stretch upward.
- Roll your neck slowly side to side.
- Stand up and do a few torso twists or shoulder circles.

Walking around the office, whether it's to refill your water or check in with a colleague, can help keep your circulation going and your mind engaged.



Foster Positive Relationships at Work

Your coworkers can be a powerful energy boost or drain, depending on your relationships. Take a few minutes during your break to connect with a colleague, share a joke, or appreciate their help on a project. Positive social interaction reduces stress and makes your workplace a more enjoyable place to be.

Prioritize Your To-Do List

One cause of overwhelm at the office is having a hectic, disordered to-do list. Begin each day by identifying your top priorities. Ask yourself:

- What must be done today?
- What can wait until later?

This lets you streamline your workflow and avoid needless stress, conserving your energy for the tasks that matter most.

Reduce Digital Distractions

Your phone, email notifications, and messaging apps can interrupt your flow and undermine productivity. To stay energized and focused:

- Turn off non-urgent notifications while you work on a challenging task.
- Set specific times to check messages instead of reacting to every notification immediately.

Reducing distractions lets you enter a state of deep, uninterrupted flow — conserving energy for your most important responsibilities.

Clear Your Workspace

A messy desk can undermine your ability to concentrate and produce. Take 5 minutes at the start or end of your day to clear away papers, dispose of garbage, and put away items you're not using. An organized space signals your brain that it's time to focus and makes it easier to find what you need quickly.



Practice Mindfulness or Relaxation Techniques

If you're feeling stressed or anxious, a few minutes of deep breathing or meditation can help clear your mind and ease tension. Try this simple relaxation:

- Close your eyes and inhale slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
- Hold your breath briefly, then exhale through your mouth for 6 seconds.
- Repeat this 5–10 times and feel your stress diminish.

This kind of practice brings your nervous system back into balance and restores your ability to concentrate.

Celebrate Small Wins

Don't wait for huge achievements to celebrate

acknowledge small accomplishments to keep your motivation up. Did you clear your inbox or complete a tough phone call? Take a moment to appreciate these small victories. Positive recognition signals your brain to release dopamine, boosting happiness and motivation.

Your ability to recharge while you work directly impacts your productivity, creativity, and overall well-being. Small, intentional habits — from staying hydrated and taking short breaks to practicing relaxation techniques and managing distractions — can collectively make a huge difference in how you feel at the office.

The key is consistency. If you integrate these strategies into your daily routine, you'll find yourself more energetic, more motivated, and less stressed — transforming not just your productivity, but your overall happiness at work.



PVR INOX plans to add 200 screens in 2 yrs

ED Sanjeev Kumar Bijli



Out of the 100 screens, 40 screens are in South India, including Hyderabad, Bangalore and Hubli.

Cinema exhibitor PVR INOX plans to add around 200 screens in two years at an investment of up to Rs 400 crore, its Executive Director Sanjeev Kumar Bijli said on Wednesday.

The company's expansion plans will majorly focus on South India, followed by smaller cities and towns in the next two years, Bijli told PTI in an interview.

"This financial year, 2025-26, we have about 100 screen openings planned, and out of which we have opened about 20 already in the first quarter, and we have another 82 to go. So, we are on track to open about 100 screens this year," he said when asked about the company's expansion plans.

Out of the 100 screens, 40 screens are in South India, including Hyderabad, Bangalore and Hubli. At the same time, some cinemas will come up in Mumbai, Delhi, and Gurugram, and some smaller towns like Siliguri, Jabalpur, Leh and Gangtok.

"It is a bit of a mixed bag, but 40% of this (expansion) remains in South India, and about 20% in smaller towns," Bijli said.

Even going forward, he said, "We have quite a few cinemas (lined up) for 2026-27 as well. We have 80 screens opening (planned), but we can easily get it stretched to about 100...but visibility (as of now) is of 80 screens and out of that also about 40% is again in South India".

When asked about the investment for the expansion, he said, "Roughly, if you look at this year, if we're opening about 100 screens, then an average screen costs about Rs 3.5 crore per screen. So, that comes to about Rs 350 crore. If we assume that 50% of that is coming from a combination of FOCO (franchise owned company operated) and asset light, then our contribution would be half at about Rs 175 to 200 crore".

For 200 screens that the company has planned, its investment will be around Rs 350-400 crore.

Bijli said that after adding 200 screens in the next two years, PVR INOX will have "close to 2,000 screens" in total.

As part of the company's expansion in South India, PVR INOX will open a four-screen property later this week in Hyderabad, which will take its total screen count in Telangana to 110. It has lined up a total of 26 new screens to be added in the state in FY26.

"Telangana is a very significant market. It has always done very well for us because of the very strong content from Telangana. Telugu films are extremely loved and accepted. The propensity to watch movies there is very high," he noted.

There are still pockets in Hyderabad that do not have a good multiplex. There are certain catchments which are unserved, he said, adding that "we are excited about expanding into the city of Hyderabad, which is a growing city".



WARM WELCOME

Warm Welcome to SCAI New Member- Spindletop Group India Pvt. Ltd.

Happily announcing the joining of Spindletop Group India Pvt. Ltd., Hyderabad as a SCAI Member.

Spindletop Group, through its flagship brand HighVolt Entertainment, is a 9-year-old company and the only one in India that not only sets up but also operates and maintains Family Entertainment Centres.

With 17 successful projects across metro and tier-2 cities, the company offers turnkey solutions that elevate the entertainment quotient of malls. Backed by deep market expertise, HighVolt transforms retail spaces into profit-generating zones. For anyone looking to upgrade or make a business out of fun, HighVolt is the trusted partner.



EVENT WATCH

SCAI successfully organised a Masterclass on 13th June 2025

SCAI successfully organised a Masterclass on 13th June 2025, on Operational Excellence in Retail Asset Operations by Mr. Audhesh Pandey Head – Commercial Retail & Emerging Business, JLL Group, India at the Princeton Club, Kolkata.

The session was attended by professionals from shopping malls across the region and was widely appreciated for its practical, actionable insights. Mr. Pandey shared valuable real-world strategies that attendees can implement to enhance operational efficiency and performance.

SCAI sincerely thanks the Merlin Group for their generous sponsorship and for making impeccable arrangements that contributed to the seamless execution of the event.



Yoga Day in Shopping Malls

Elpro City square, Pune



R city, Ghatkopar



Oberoi Mall, Goregaon



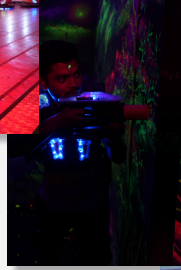
Sky City Mall, Borivali



Mall De Goa, Goa



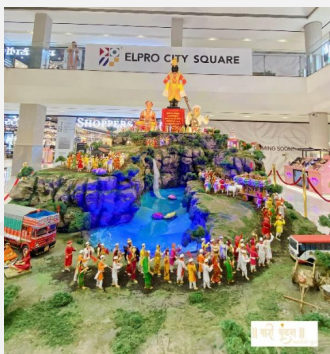
Timezone opening at Inorbit Malad



Vaari Vandan at Elpro, Pune

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The palkhi yatra begins – and we bring it to life through an artistic celebration of faith. Come, be a part of Vaari Vandan at Elpro City Square Mall.





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