



SHOPPING CENTRES
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

MALL TALK

OCTOBER 2025





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ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

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Association of India, Mumbai
Issue 51, October 2025

EDITED & PUBLISHED BY:
Shopping Centres Association
of India
3/116, Pintoo House Marol
Co-Operative Industrial Estate,
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Anjeev Kumar Srivastava
COO, SCAI

Lighting Up the Season of Togetherness

As we step into October, the festive spirit is unmistakable. Diwali — the festival of lights — is not just a celebration of joy and prosperity, but also a reminder of the power of connection, renewal, and shared experiences. For us in the shopping centre industry, it marks one of the most exciting and meaningful times of the year.

The festive season transforms malls into more than just retail destinations — they become spaces that bring people together, where shopping intertwines with emotion, discovery, and delight. From vibrant décor and themed pop-ups to curated events and cultural performances, every initiative contributes to creating moments that linger long after a visit.

Consumer sentiment this year is especially encouraging. With spending expected to rise by nearly 30% during the festive period, this is the perfect time to engage audiences with fresh concepts, interactive experiences, and thoughtful retail storytelling. The challenge — and opportunity — lies in offering not just a place to purchase, but a place to participate.

At Mall Talk, we're excited to witness how malls across the region continue to innovate — blending technology, community, and culture to redefine the festive shopping experience. Here's wishing everyone a prosperous Diwali season filled with joy, light, and meaningful connections.

Happy Diwali !

Anjeev Kumar





LEGAL ADVOCACY COMMITTEE



SCAI has constituted a **Legal Advocacy Committee** to review legal matters and government orders issued periodically by state governments and local bodies that may affect the shopping mall industry, and to recommend appropriate action.

Members are requested to share any relevant issues or concerns at legal@scai.in





INSIGHTS



Loyalty is Earned, Not Bought

In today's retail world, malls are not just competing with each other, they're competing with online convenience, rising consumer expectations, and constantly shifting trends. Yet the winners are not the biggest or the flashiest they're the ones that earn trust. From the Mall of America to Lulu Mall, shopping destinations across the globe prove one truth: when malls invest in safety, consistency, transparency, and emotional connections, they build loyalty that no discount can buy.

From Stores to Lifestyle Destinations

Shopping malls have evolved from being clusters of stores into lifestyle hubs that reflect culture, community, and aspiration. In India, where online shopping has surged, retaining footfalls depends less on flashy promotions and more on one crucial factor: trust.

Discounts, design, and brand mix may bring people through the door once. But what makes them come back again and again is the assurance of a reliable, safe, and enjoyable experience.

Global Lessons in Trust

Across the world, leading malls demonstrate how trust translates into loyalty:



- Westfield London earns repeat visits not just with luxury offerings, but with seamless customer journeys from connectivity to transparent communication.
- Mall of America, Minnesota remains a top U.S. attraction not just for its size, but because families trust it to deliver safe, consistent, and entertaining experiences.
- Dubai Mall exemplifies transparency and reliability, offering clarity on events, loyalty programs, and consistent quality across retail, dining, and entertainment.

The lesson is clear: loyalty isn't built on grandeur, but on dependability.

India's Proof Points

In India, malls like Phoenix Marketcity (Mumbai) and Lulu Mall (Kochi) show how trust fosters loyalty. Families return because they know the mall will be clean, secure, and welcoming. During the pandemic, malls that invested visibly in sanitization, air quality, & contactless services won back customers faster. Safety became the first marker of trust and it remains non-negotiable today.

But trust goes beyond hygiene. It is also about:

- **Transparency:** Clear parking policies, upfront promotions, and reliable return processes.
- **Consistency:** Shoppers knowing what to expect, every time they visit.
- **Community Connection:** From Diwali décor in Delhi to Christmas carnivals in Bangalore, malls that celebrate culture become social spaces as much as commercial ones.



The Human Touch



Architecture and brand mix may draw crowds, but staff interactions cement loyalty. A courteous security guard or a helpful customer service desk can build goodwill that no design can replicate. Singapore and Hong Kong malls invest heavily in staff training to ensure professionalism and warmth something Indian malls can adopt to strengthen “trust through service.”

Digital Trust Matters Too

Trust extends beyond the physical mall. Malls like ION Orchard (Singapore) and Westfield Century City (Los Angeles) build reliability through apps, loyalty programs, and real-time updates. Indian malls are catching up—sending push notifications about sales, parking availability, or swiftly addressing online feedback.

This digital trust reinforces physical trust, making the brand experience seamless across touchpoints.

Beyond Discounts: Trust as a Value System

The future of loyalty programs lies in shared values, not just points. Westfield’s “Better Places” initiative in Europe, which focuses on sustainability, resonates deeply with eco-conscious shoppers. Similarly, Indian malls experimenting with recycling drives, energy efficiency, and eco-rewards are

finding that loyalty grows stronger when customers see their values reflected.

Trust: The Invisible Architecture of Loyalty

Ultimately, trust is the invisible structure supporting every repeat visit, sale, and memory a shopper associates with a mall. Shoppers may try a new or flashier space, but they return to the ones where they feel safe, respected, and valued.

For Indian malls, the takeaway is simple:

- Safety builds confidence.
- Transparency builds credibility.
- Consistency builds reliability.
- Community and service build emotional connection.
- Digital reliability extends the bond.

When these pillars come together, loyalty follows naturally.

In an age of endless options, trust is the most valuable currency a mall can hold. Because at the end of the day, people don’t just visit malls to shop—they visit because they trust the experience will be worth their time.





EXPERIENCE FACTOR



Building India's Retail Future – One Experience at a Time



Pushpa Bector

Senior Executive Director and
Business Head at DLF

At DLF Retail, we have always believed that retail is far more than just a transaction. It is a world of experiences, emotions and memories that connect deeply with people. As one of the pioneers in India's mall and retail landscape, our mission has never been just to build spaces. It has been to create vibrant destinations that inspire, delight and bring communities together.

Our portfolio today reflects this philosophy. We have premium properties that are much more than malls. They are dynamic lifestyle and social hubs. DLF Mall of India, the country's largest mall, is home to over 400+ brands, an exciting variety of dining options and immersive entertainment experiences that make it a true one-stop destination for families and young shoppers alike.



Each of our other flagship properties – DLF Promenade, DLF Avenue Saket, DLF Cyber-Hub have been thoughtfully designed for its unique audience, curating retail, culinary and cultural offerings that reflect the aspirations of their communities.

At the pinnacle of our portfolio are our two luxury icons, DLF Emporio and The Chanakya. These are not just shopping destinations. They are celebrations of fine living where our discerning patrons can experience the best of international haute couture alongside the richness of Indian craftsmanship. Every detail from architecture to brand curation, is designed to deliver elegance, exclusivity and a true sense of refinement.



Our leadership in the industry is built on constant innovation. We know that the modern consumers do not simply look for products but seek experiences that inspire. This insight has shaped the way we design our spaces. Today, F&B makes up more than 20% of our leased portfolio, reflecting our belief that it is an essential part of contemporary retail culture. It is where friends meet, families bond and social stories unfold.



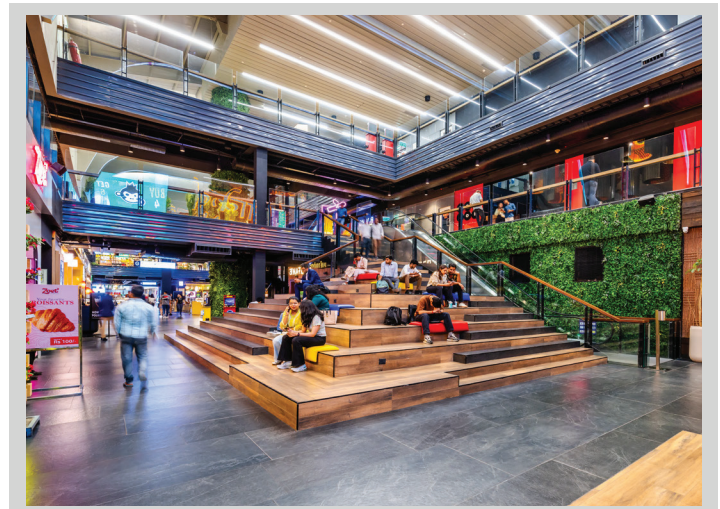
Our upcoming neighbourhood retail spaces, Midtown Plaza and Summit Plaza, will bring premium, convenient and accessible retail closer to where people live and work. Sustainability and technology also form the backbone of our vision. Energy efficiency, water conservation, and responsible waste management are integrated into every project. In FY25 alone, more than 85% of our water was recycled and most of our properties achieved LEED Platinum along with LEED Zero Water and Zero Waste certifications. These milestones stand as proof of our commitment to the environment.

We believe, the future of Indian retail will be defined by thoughtful growth that places the consumer at the heart of the experience. Spaces will go beyond commerce to become cultural and social destinations, equipped by the latest technology and strong sustainable practices. With rapid urbanisation reshaping our cities, these destinations will serve as bridges between brands, culture, leisure and community.



At DLF, we are ready for this future. We are in the process of adding more than 3.5 million square feet of premium, technology-enabled and environmentally responsible retail space across India's most dynamic cities. Our goal is to create destinations that resonate with the lives of modern shoppers, offering them inspiration, convenience and a sense of belonging.

At DLF Malls, retail has always been more than the spaces we create, it is about curating experiences that resonate long after our guests have left. This philosophy remains at the heart of all we do, as we continue to set new benchmarks and reimagine India's retail landscape.





ANALYSIS



Korean Culture: A Smart Bet for Indian Shopping Malls



The Hallyu wave anchored by K-pop, K-dramas, K-beauty, & cuisine is reshaping youth culture in India. Today's mall-goers are not only shopping; they are seeking immersive, shareable experiences. By embedding Korean culture, malls can attract younger audiences, drive footfall, & reinvent themselves as vibrant lifestyle destinations.

K-Beauty: A High-Growth Driver

K-beauty is no longer niche. In 2024, South Korea's global cosmetics exports crossed \$10.2 billion (~₹6,430 crore), powered by innovative formulas and viral social buzz. India has quickly caught on: over 60 K-beauty brands—from The Face Shop to Sulwhasoo and Quench Botanics—are already here, popularizing "glass skin" routines and multi-step regimens.

The growth story is staggering:

- Amazon India reports ~75% year-on-year growth in K-beauty sales (India Today, Fortune India).
- Projections range from \$406 million in 2023 to \$959 million by 2032 (CAGR 10%) to \$1.5 billion by 2030 (CAGR 25.9%) (K-CULT INDIA, Financial Express).
- Imports have quadrupled since 2020, rising 63% annually (Fortune India).

For malls, this is a golden opportunity: dedicated K-beauty zones, skincare masterclasses, & pop-ups can attract engaged shoppers. Innisfree continues to grow at 40–50% annually since its 2013 debut (India Today), while Amorepacific now customizes products for India's climate—substituting heavy oils with light, humidity-friendly gels (Forbes India).

K-Pop & K-Drama: Energizing Public Spaces

K-pop fandom in India is deep and growing. In cities like Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, malls already pulse with screenings and sing-along events. The Hybe Cine Fest 2025, featuring BTS and TXT concert films, ran across multiple PVR and INOX outlets in malls, complete with "Noraebang" karaoke sessions (Indiatimes).

Malls that host K-pop dance contests, drama viewing nights, or themed screenings transform themselves into cultural hubs—boosting repeat visits, dwell time, and organic social buzz.

Korean Cuisine: Turning Food Courts into Destinations

Food courts anchor mall visits, and K-food is the new magnet. From Korean fried chicken to tteokbokki, bingsu, and Banchan, these offerings add novelty and comfort. Select Citywalk, Delhi drew big crowds during its K-food festival, with live demos and tasting stations.

Permanent counters—like a tteokbokki stall or K-chicken kiosk—can become natural gathering points, especially for younger fans already drawn to Korean music and dramas.



Design & Digital: Snapworthy and Shareable

Korean retail thrives on visual storytelling—clean aesthetics, pastel pop-ups, LED walls, and immersive experiences. Indian malls can replicate this by launching “K-Zones”: interactive corners featuring neon phrases, K-drama-inspired sets, or idol walls designed for Instagram and TikTok. Layered with digital innovation—from AR makeup mirrors to VR Seoul tours—these spaces engage digital-native visitors and amplify organic sharing online.

Strategic Advantage: Differentiation in a Crowded Market

With e-commerce on the rise, malls need fresh reasons to pull people out of their homes. K-culture delivers community, novelty, and emotional resonance—all areas where traditional malls often fall short.

Why It Works: Youth, Digital, Growth

India’s Gen Z and millennials are cultural omnivores—digitally engaged, socially curious, and aspirational. K-beauty’s science-backed routines, K-pop’s emotional pull, and K-drama’s immersive storytelling align with their lifestyle values.

Data shows over 50% of Indian beauty consumers already use or follow K-beauty (Financial Express, Fortune India). Leading platforms like Amazon and Tira highlight it as one of their fastest-growing categories, with traction even in Tier 2 cities.

By weaving in skincare pop-ups, K-pop cinema events, photo-worthy design zones, and Korean food kiosks, malls can transform into experiential lifestyle destinations. The strategy not only taps into a powerful cultural wave but also secures long-term relevance in India’s evolving retail landscape.

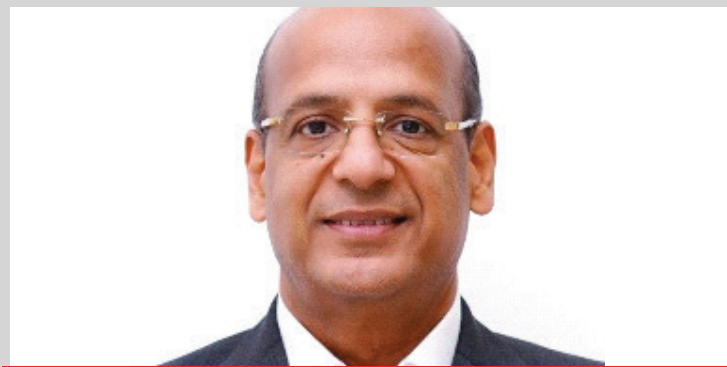




THOUGHT LEADERSHIP



Occupational Health, Safety & Environment (OHSE)



Manoj K. Agarwal

Mall Specialist – Mall Occupancy, Operations,
Business & Profit Sustainability

OHSE is a framework that an organization adopts so that it can set up an eco-system of practices, procedures, and policies so as to protect employees from various workplace hazards, mitigate preventable injuries, illnesses, accidents, risks. This framework optimizes the mall business's environmental footprint by regulating its various ongoing activities.

This framework is set up through identifying and eliminating risks, providing required training on the related dos and don'ts to ensure personal employee safety, monitoring and controlling deviations to it, ensuring compliance with relevant laws & regulations and lastly, creating a safe and healthy work environment that is sustainable & reduces environmental impact.

Having led this process initiative across a mall company, I would recommend using a third party who is well qualified (& certified) and who can undertake a comprehensive risk assessment for the mall across all areas and SOPs and suggest suitable mitigation measures. Further, as the implementation is done at the shop floor level, having an OHSE partner is sacrosanct. This needs to be combined with the partner's simultaneous & continued engagement of all the workers,

team members and mall ownership. Here, one must specifically list down the duties and deliverables of the identified OHSE partner so that a OHSE compliant environment can be created on a sustained basis and is line with leadership's vision.

Let's understand some key components of this framework so as to have a robust system in place in shopping malls.



OHSE
OCCUPATIONAL
HEALTH
SAFETY
ENVIRONMENT

1) Management Commitment

As this is a framework that is strategically adopted by the mall ownership, the initiative must be driven by the mall's top management. A firm commitment from the mall's leadership team assists in adequately driving the policy.

- This commitment must be kick started by the mall management's statement of intent about having a safety culture in the organization and across the various functions and departments of the mall.
- Further, this would need to be backed up by allocation of required resources (man-power including experts, trainers and consultants, money and materials).



- It is key here that the management not only monitors but also appropriately sets it up and undertakes course corrections in tandem with the OHSE partner.

2) Defining Roles and Responsibilities of Personnel



Clear definition roles and responsibilities of all personnel of the mall ensures accountability across the organization's hierarchy.

- Duties and responsibilities of the safety team, supervisory staff, and managerial team must be outlined keeping the OHSE aspect in mind.

- Expectations from vendors & contractors must also be put in place and must be part of every work, services or materials' order given.

3) Hazard Identification & Risk Assessment (H.I.R.A.)

HIRA is a very crucial cog for OHSE implementation and OHSE framework adherence.

- Examples of risk and hazard assessment can vary from a simple wet cleaning process of areas to a hot spot in the electric panel to usage of required personal protection equipment (PPE) for tasks like welding, electric panel servicing, working at heights, storage of hazardous chemicals like acids, bleaches, diesel.

- The appointed third party can then assist in identifying & prioritizing risk by ranking various hazards based on their impact levels and probability of occurrence.

- The OHSE partner must suggest mitigation measures, SOP corrections, PPE provisioning so as to put effective controls in place. They must also champion the implementation and training process.

4) Compliance with Statutory Requirements



- The OHSE partner must identify and create a list of various legal & regulatory requirements that are to be complied with. This is with the view that the mall is not only compliant but also does not attract penalties and preventable action and legal issues that could be initiated by such authorities. Penalties and legal action so initiated is usually harsh and could even implicate top management in case of violations. It is suggested here that a suitable person from the mall team is the nominee or representative under various applicable laws and regulations.

- 
- To ensure that the compliance mechanism is robust, a system of regular audits must be mutually agreed upon with OHSE partner. It is suggested that initially (if not for the long term) the partner conducts periodic follow up audits, compliance audits and reports any deviations to the agreed OHSE framework scope for correction.

- In future, any changes that are notified in the context of legal and statutory requirements, must be updated by the OHSE partner so that newly required compliances are ensured that are in line with the revisions done.
- Training is to be provided to all concerned by the third party partner. Later they would be needed to train various personnel on new compliance requirements as per changes made in OHSE norms.

5) Emergency Readiness and Response

A sound OHSE policy must ensure that the organization is well equipped and prepared to deal with emergencies like fire or natural disaster or hazardous chemical spills / gas leakage. It is recommended to have a dedicated Emergency Response Team (ERT) in place.

For this readiness the following is needed:

- Written down emergency plans and SOPs
- Frequency of mock drill & related training calendar is established to ensure readiness of personnel. It is important that one not only involves the mall personnel but also, retailer and other third party staff.
- Emergency contact list of a key personnel, external agencies and services is maintained and communicated to all.

- It is further suggested that where possible mock drills are conducted jointly and also, these agencies are invited to conduct required training of various mall and retailer staff

6) Holistic Well Being and Health Initiatives

This is about the rolling out the element of care and concern for the mall's workforce.

- In today's high pressure environment with deep online and AI-driven connects, for individuals especially, physical and mental wellness is of utmost importance. Hence, having a health check-up and monitoring system in place is crucial. This not only must be set up by the company but would need to be mandated that it be followed by all as per a specified calendar. This is both in terms of on-site and off-site support.
- Combined with the above, engaging wellness programs like yoga workshops, healthy diet plans, "Art of living" training, help in setting up fitness goals and onsite provisioning of fitness equipment need to be a part of this initiative as well
- Work life balance can be maintained through management's policies. The focus on this could be demonstrated by way of specifying maximum daily working hours & timings, ensuring availing of day-off, mall holidays' list as well as mandating taking of breaks, vacation & long leaves. In addition, engagement activities with employees and their families, recognizing & celebrating individual's achievements, town hall meetings, transparent work culture, sound value system adherence, objective and proactive approach to work must also be put in place.





7) Training Focus

In order to maintain the momentum of an ongoing OHSE program, training, skill development and upscaling knowledge levels, training calendar are good tools to have in place.

- It is recommended that at the time of on-boarding of new hire, a toolkit is provided along with inputs detailing the OHSE aspects to the new joiners.
- Quizzes and refresher programs may be organized to keep the program's "top of mind recall".
- A "do I know" system, could be set up for each role and organogram tier so that awareness is there with all on what they need to know and practice.

8) Performance Monitoring, Enhancement and Optimization

In keeping with the proven adage, "what gets seen, gets done", it is really important to "monitor, measure and modify" performance and compliance levels.

- Develop and set KPIs on OHSE as well as part of goal sheets for individuals with appropriate weightage.
- Initially the KPI monitoring on OHSE aspects may be done monthly or quarterly
- The mall's performance must be compared with the OHSE performance of peers and industry benchmarks, so as to know how one stands in their own company so that one can target how to improve on scores achieved.
- Suggestions and feedback mechanisms can be set up to involve and engage the workforce as well as drive process improvements.

9) Environmental Impact Management

Though this is a subject by itself, some key measure to track, assess and optimize this impact are outlined below.

- As, energy consumption is a major component of operating costs for malls, the optimization of this consumption is really essential. In the context of shopping malls, continuous monitoring of factors like BMS scope & efficacy, HVAC efficiency, power factor maintenance, harmonics levels, lighting schedules, equipment health, HVAC leakages and hot pockets, OLTC settings etc. are needed. Regular energy audits go a long way in tracking and optimizing consumption.
- Poor indoor air quality (IAQ) negatively affects health by causing symptoms like headaches, fatigue, and can lead to serious long-term illnesses including respiratory diseases, heart disease, and even cancer. Thus, maintaining adequate IAQ is important for the wellbeing of all people associated who frequent the mall. This includes mall customers, retailers, mall staff, vendors, visitors as IAQ impacts all and their physical wellbeing. Line items should include proper ventilation, cyclic infusion of fresh air, appropriate number of daily air exchanges, humidity control, use of non-hazardous chemicals and paints, regular dust removal and cleaning, use of air purifiers etc.
- Environmental impact studies must also be carried out regularly in terms of waste generation, recycling and disposal, light and sound pollution, water utilization and recycling and run offs, degree of use of local material etc.

Benefits of A Properly Functioning OHSE policy

For Employees

- Saves lives and prevents injuries
- Protects physical and mental health and covers the long-term well-being of employees.
- Boosts morale and engagement
- Develops a sense of pride in their workplace

For Mall Ownership

- Reduces and optimizes operating costs and utilities' consumption
- Preventing accidents and injuries at the workplace
- Helps in mitigating threats to business issues like fires and calamities etc.
- Lowering of insurance premiums due to a sound safety track record
- Increase in productivity and efficiency.
- Managing risk and ensure compliance.
- Reducing the company's environmental footprint
- Avoiding fines, penalties & legal trouble.
- Enhancement of reputation and brand image.

For the Environment

- Managing environmental risks
- Promote sustainability & protect natural resources.
- Minimizes environmental impact
- Ensures responsible resource use
- Safeguarding air and water quality.
- Reduction in greenhouse gas generation
Inhibits climate change

Key Takeaways

Integration: involves the coming together of all the various Occupational Health, Safety, and Environmental factors and that too simultaneously. Thus, the framework ensures a holistic approach to the wellbeing of the people at the mall as well as the mall business itself.

Balance: The OHSE framework fosters striking a balance between health, safety, and environmental impact.

Work Ethic: OHSE delivers a sustainable and responsible work and thought processes.

Risk Mitigation: A proactive OHSE program identifies and mitigates risks. This in turn helps in reducing the probability of accidents, disease and adverse environmental impact.

Legal and Statutory Compliances: are ensured.

Responsible Corporate Citizen: Maintaining OHSE standards showcases social responsibility thereby enhancing the brand image and reputation.

Efficiency: Optimizing and sustaining operational efficiencies

Wellbeing: Promotes health, wellbeing and productivity of employees

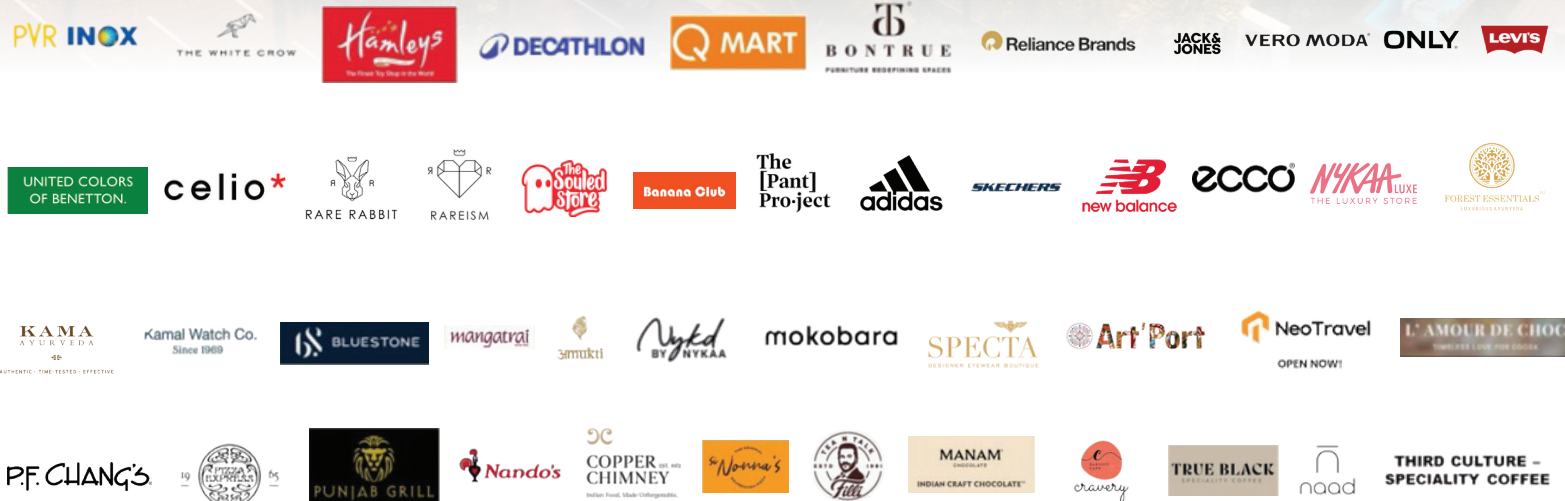
Environment: Ensures low environmental impact & sustainable operations.

In Conclusion

The integrated framework of Occupational Health, Safety, and Environment (OHSE) focuses on reducing & eliminating prevalent risks to having a comprehensive environmentally sustainable work-ethic in place. The OHSE approach to risk management is crucial for employee wellbeing and morale, optimization of environmental impact and improving the mall's financial performance. Thus, the framework ensures safer, healthier workplaces, operations with mitigated risks and long-term business success.



THE COMING TOGETHER OF COMMERCE AND
CULTURE COULDN'T HAVE LOOKED BETTER





REIMAGINING THE MALL



Insights from PPK Malaysia's 2025 Conference



The 2025 flagship conference organized by PPK Malaysia—the Malaysia Shopping Malls Association (PPKM)—explored the rapidly evolving landscape of shopping malls through four key lenses: reimagination, redefinition, reengineering, and rebuilding. In an era of swiftly changing consumer behaviour and disruptive technologies, malls must move beyond traditional retailing to deliver unique, memorable experiences. PPKM's 2025 flagship conference brought together a distinguished lineup of international & local experts to share cutting-edge insights on the latest trends, challenges, and innovations shaping mall development, operations, and management. Presented below are thumbnails of the speakers' presentations, each offering unique insights and expertise from across the region.

Digital Transformation: Merging the Physical and Virtual

In today's fast-moving world, the pace of change is accelerating, driven by technology, shifting consumer expectations, and a growing desire for meaningful connections. In his keynote topic, Global Shopping Centre

Trends and Challenges, **Gary Burrows**, CEO & Founder, ACR Partners opines that the future is already here, it's just unevenly distributed.



The pace of change is increasing, with time as our greatest currency and we are looking at merging the digital and physical into a retail singularity.

Malls need to create emotional architecture at every touch point in order to keep up, and for the next generation of enhanced humanity, shopping malls will become emotional fulfilment centres.

Gary continued on to How to Create a Future Ready Shopping Mall Strategy on the Road to 2030. The speed of change will continue to increase and no mall will be built as a stand-alone development but as an essential component in a mixed development. What the future holds include changes in purchase systems and the use of self-driving vehicles. The mall will also likely become modular, movie theatres may vanish as people use interactive VR to watch movies, and there will be more emphasis on health and wellness. As consumer behaviour embraces technology, malls need to strive to keep up and placemaking methodology will define the mall as the third place - after home and work.

Placemaking: Designing for Engagement and Emotion

The Art of Transforming a Shopping Mall to an Attractive Destination for Shoppers by Lance



Stanbury, Founder & CEO, Mall Consultants Ltd, UK



reminded delegates to go digital and Make Our Malls Great Again. Amongst others, some of these digital elements include integrated smart mall platforms, smart parking solutions,

personalised recommendations, interactive maps, virtual try-ons, AI-powered assistance, beacon technology, enhanced security, smart mall climate control, 3D holograms, tenant comms apps and digital twins.

Malls must do regular experiential research focussed on supporting tenants' sales growth and be more creative with the spaces available. Today, experience itself must be treated as the anchor—a strategic draw that keeps visitors engaged, entertained, and emotionally connected. As quoted from Charles Darwin, 'It is not the strongest that survives; nor the most intelligent. It is the one that is most adaptable to change.'

In his presentation, Creating the Right Strategy to Optimise the Potential for Success in Malls and Placemaking, Lance advocates that placemaking is the right strategy for optimising success. Placemaking is more than design, it is a philosophy and the multi-faceted, strategic approach to planning, designing, and managing public spaces that are liveable, loveable, visitable and investable. Placemaking is not a luxury – it is a precondition to success.

Malls need to embrace experiential retail where there are two keys: Enter-tailing – inspirational retailing that combines shopping with entertainment, turning visits into events; and Retail-tainment which involves the use of ambience, emotion, sound, and activity to stimulate desire and encourage purchases.

Chinese retailers can diversify and enrich tenant mix



Victor Guo, Chairman of Mall China Development Association shared on Resilience and Reinvention, Surviving and Thriving Strategies for China Malls who are in

transition from an incremental development period from 1990-2024 where there were high developments with low renovations, to a value regeneration period from 2024-2030, now undergoing slower growth dominated by renovation.

Victor emphasised that it is important for malls to be consumer-oriented as shoppers' purchase decision model depends much on emotions, resonance, uniqueness, value and needs. The traditional tenant mix model used to comprise of chain anchors and specialty stores supplemented by services but now, this includes personalised stores, themed stores and unique stores.

If a mall is a market place, integrated developments are bigger market places



HC Chan, CEO, Sunway Malls shared with delegates the Sunway journey of Malls as the Economic & Social Hubs of Integrated Townships. His presentation traced the journey of Sunway's

developments, highlighting how malls have transcended their traditional retail function to become dynamic centres of community life, commerce, and connectivity.

Sunway's integrated township blueprint is built on four foundational components mall, hotel, residences, and offices creating a seamless ecosystem for live, work, and play. What sets Sunway apart, however, is the inclusion of three additional,

less common elements: a theme park, a medical institution, and universities. These additions enrich the township's social fabric, offering education, wellness, and leisure within walking distance of daily life.

Chan emphasized that within any integrated development, the mall stands out as the only truly public space—freely accessible to all, regardless of background or purpose. He noted that it is the largest congregation point in the township, serving as a platform for interaction, celebration, and shared experience. This positions the mall not just as a commercial anchor, but as a vital civic and cultural node.

Climate change will have an impact on liquidity



As the Managing Director of 8G Group, Tassos Kotzanastassis shared on Beyond Shopping – Future Proofing Retail Through Lifestyle-drive Mixed Use Hubs. Several key trends include:

open spaces and landscaping as a central concept; healthy gastronomy as an anchor; free access to leisure and entertainment; experiential physical retail combined with online shopping; more public transport; new local urban retail and overall, retail and mixed-use definitively together. The mall of the future is not a place to shop – it is a place to live, learn, work and belong and he believes that the future is about creating a third place after home and work.

In his second presentation, RIP ESG? Is Decarbonisation the Way to Future Proof? Tassos explores on the adoption of ESG (Environmental, Social, Governance) which faces increasing scrutiny, with the focus on tangible outcomes—particularly decarbonisation. This shift calls for greater clarity and action and evolving ESG to include green financing with the decarbonisation road

map to incorporate baselines and targets to be followed by the implementation of energy efficient measures.

The mall of the future is smart, seamless, and human-centred – powered by AI and robotics, but designed for people



Dr Mateo Borghi, Director of Business Management Programmes, Henley Business School, University of Reading, UK delved into Digital Revolution in Mall

Spaces. He advocates

that digital transformation is the 4th Industrial Revolution, resulting in malls evolving from spaces to experiences, no longer just retail but hybrid experience hubs. Many decisions are data-driven which are used for understanding visitor patterns, optimising layouts and support leasing. Technology is an enabler, using tools like robots, augmented reality a digital twins to enhance service, not replace it. The mall of the future is where digital and physical merge to create unforgettable experiences.

He continued with AI and Robotics Application to Shopping Centres which are tools for efficiency and engagement. In malls, AI is used for footfall analytics and prediction, customer personalisation, chatbots and virtual assistants. AI is also used for energy and facility management as well as for training employees. Robotics are used for concierge services, cleaning, delivery, security and surveillance. In the final analysis, AI and robotics both transform malls into smarter, safer and more engaging destinations.

Retail captures hearts across generations

Based in Indonesia, Anthony Sondakh, Secretary General, APPBI brought delegates on a journey through several Malls for Gen Z and More.



As Gen Z emerges as a dominant consumer force, malls must transform into experience-rich, tech-enabled lifestyle destinations, evolving to meet the expectations of digital-savvy,

experience-driven younger generations while still catering to the broader shopper demographics. Gen Z resonate with the following attributes - affordable and stylish; social media driven; convenience and speed and authenticity.

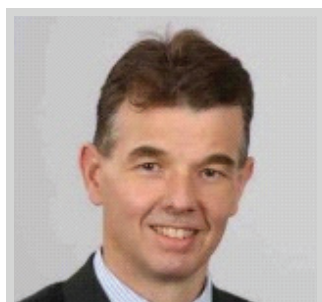
Malls thrive through reinvention, adaptation and enhancement



Hailing from the Philippines, Joy Polloso, Executive Vice President, Shang Properties Inc spoke on Asset Enhancement for Shopping Malls. She shared that there is a booming F&B scene with rising

homegrown brands and despite the emergence of AI and e-commerce, malls are still perceived as a strengthened social hub for Filipinos. Malls are not perpetual but the land and the idea of a commercial hub persists, and with the need to be continuing, they must be reignited to increase their economic value. Mall enhancement programmes will involve reconstruction of interior space with support by investors & key stakeholders. The ultimate goal is to excite the market, increase patronage, mall revenue & profits.

As the new Social Heart of Kuala Lumpur, The Exchange TRX has achieved outstanding results in its first year of operations



The Exchange TRX's General Manager, Trevor Hill explores 'New Pillars in Shopping: Leisure and Entertainment at this mall with an identity as the New Social Heart of Kuala Lumpur. Experiences include the first major green space in the city; world class events; an exclusive retail scene of statement flagship stores; ultra luxurious entertainment at Aurum, the largest entertainment experience in South East Asia; diverse and unique dining precincts and art and culture at Market Lane.

Festivals and Community Engagement in India



Festivals shine brightest when celebrated together," observed Dr. Gopalakrishna Machani, Chairman of the Shopping Centre Association of India (SCAI) and Managing Director of MGB Felicity

Mall, he highlighted the Drawing Power of Festivals at his mall. Festivals unite communities, preserve culture, spread joy, and stimulate the local economy. In shopping centres, festive décor creates a celebratory atmosphere that encourages visitors to shop, dine, and spend time. This not only boosts tenants' sales but also enhances brand visibility and fosters community engagement through contests, performances, and other festive activities, enriching the overall shopping experience. The wide variety of festivals celebrated throughout the year has notably increased footfall compared to non-festive periods. PPKM's 2025 conference made it clear: the mall of the future is more than a shopping space, it is an experience hub, a social arena, and a community anchor. From digital transformation to placemaking, integrated development, ESG adoption, and engaging diverse generations, malls must continually reimagine, redefine, and reinvent themselves to thrive in a dynamic retail landscape



MARKET UNDERSTANDING



How One-Product Retailers Thrive in the Omnichannel Era



The idea of a store built around a single product isn't new. From See's Candies (1921) to Pink's Hot Dogs (1939), one-product retailers have long thrived by keeping it simple: identify a need, offer a specialty, and become the go-to destination. But today, the model requires more than just fulfilling a craving.

In the age of digital commerce, the path to success isn't just about moving units—it's about building connection. The one product model is about telling a story around an individual 'hero' item, but the product is rarely the whole story. The story is about a lifestyle, a philosophy, and a relationship between the brand and consumer.

Social media has been key to that shift. But as ROI on digital ads drops once revenue passes \$10–60 million annually, brands need to evolve. That's where wholesale & physical stores step in as the next growth levers.

Building Beyond the Core

The strongest operators use their hero product as a launchpad for complementary categories:

- Bonobos began with the perfect pair of pants, then expanded into shirts, shoes, and accessories—eventually introducing Guideshop physical stores.
- Aesop started with skin and hair care, then branched into candles, incense, and home fragrances—deepening brand loyalty through lifestyle storytelling.
- Newer players like Dossier (fragrances) are exploring similar trajectories, using stores to let customers test, discover, and connect with products.

The formula is simple: start with one product that resonates, then carefully iterate into adjacent categories that extend the brand's story.

The Physical Store Question

Physical presence offers one product retailers a way to deepen customer relationships but the product category can determine how sustainable that strategy is.

- Mattress brands benefit from showrooms where customers can test products, but low purchase frequency limits repeat visits.
- Candle or soap stores draw footfall with sensory experiences, yet once shoppers know what they like, many reorder online.

Why F&B Brands Are Different

Food-and-beverage brands stand out as resistant to online sales migration. Customers crave the immediacy, freshness, and in person experience of F&B.



Examples include:

- Honey Baked Ham Co. and Nothing Bundt Cakes, long standing one product specialists.
- Milkshake Factory, which successfully pivoted from seasonal to year round business and is now franchising.
- Cookie Plug, a newer entrant scaling quickly across malls.

For landlords, these tenants are attractive because they draw steady repeat traffic though fad-driven categories (like frozen yogurt a decade ago) remain a risk.

Why Landlords Still Bet on One Product Stores

Despite risks of oversaturation, landlords continue to welcome one-product retailers. Their variety, novelty, and differentiation enrich tenant mixes alongside larger anchors like T.J.Maxx or Target.

The Takeaway

One-product retailing today requires:

- Hero products that resonate deeply.
- Storytelling and lifestyle branding that elevate beyond commodity.
- Channel evolution moving into physical stores and wholesale when digital ROI flattens.
- Category awareness understanding purchase frequency and repeat visit potential.
- Partnership with landlords who value novelty in tenant mixes.

For the winners, the model is no longer about just selling a product, it's about creating community, extending lifestyle, & sustaining loyalty across channels.





REDESIGNING RELEVANCE



Integrated Strategy, Maximum Yield: Rethinking F&B Planning Across the Asset Lifecycle



Food and beverage (F&B) is no longer a secondary category in Indian shopping centres—it is increasingly the heartbeat of the asset. Yet too often, developers and managers approach F&B planning in silos: leasing handled independently of design, performance reviewed separately from market research, and tenant issues addressed only once they become critical. This fragmented approach limits performance and misses the opportunity to position F&B as a true driver of asset value. What's needed is integrated strategic planning across the full lifecycle of the centre.

Survey findings highlight the gap. While 75% of respondents review or expand their F&B only during annual asset planning or when problems like declining sales emerge, just 25% consider it proactively during initial development stages. This reactive pattern prevents F&B from being embedded into the centre's DNA from day one. The result is predictable: misaligned tenant mixes, underperforming food precincts, and costly retrofits that could have been avoided with earlier intervention.

The market, meanwhile, is moving fast. Indian consumers are demonstrating appetite for experiential dining, food halls, and entertainment led precincts trends echoed in global benchmarks from the Middle East and Southeast Asia, which were ranked as primary sources of inspiration by survey participants. But translating inspiration into execution requires more than trend spotting; it requires strategic alignment across leasing, design, and operations.

Integrated F&B strategic planning means three things. First, it ensures that tenant mix optimization, leasing structures, and space allocation are not stand-alone exercises, but are coordinated with design intent and customer profiling. Second, it embeds continuous performance auditing and market analysis into the planning process, so strategies evolve with changing demographics, tastes, and competitive pressures. Third, it ensures that every F&B decision is tied directly to the Mall's positioning & financial objectives.



SUZEE BRAIN
Director – Titanium Food

This approach addresses one of the survey's most telling findings: that 67% of respondents wanted expert support in areas as diverse as cuisine mix optimisation, competitor analysis, asset planning, and end-to-end precinct development.

These are not isolated needs they are interdependent, and solving them requires a unified framework rather than piecemeal fixes.



The benefits of integration are tangible. Malls that plan holistically can better balance premium and mass-market offers, match cuisines to trade area demand, and design precincts that naturally capture and hold footfall. They can also negotiate leases that align tenant and landlord success, avoiding the common cycle of unsustainable rents, tenant underperformance, and costly turnover. Most importantly, integration creates resilience ensuring F&B strategies remain adaptable in the face of shifting consumer trends, technological disruption, and economic uncertainty. Failing to adopt this approach carries significant risks. Fragmented planning leaves malls vulnerable to inconsistent customer

experiences, weak tenant performance, and diminished returns.

In a sector where differentiation is increasingly tied to dining and entertainment, these shortcomings can erode competitiveness quickly.

The opportunity, however, is substantial. With professional strategic guidance, Indian shopping malls can transform F&B from a functional amenity into a cornerstone of commercial success. The question is no longer whether to prioritise F&B—but how comprehensively you are planning for it.

Is your Mall's F&B strategy integrated, future-focused, and maximising yield or is it still being managed in silos?





HEALTH AND FITNESS



Healthy Food Habits for Busy Corporate Executives



Maintaining health and peak performance is a challenge for corporate executives juggling long work hours, tight deadlines, and frequent travel. Yet, nutrition plays a critical role in sustaining energy, focus, and overall well-being. By adopting practical food habits, busy professionals can turn healthy eating into a manageable and rewarding part of their daily routine.

Plan and Prepare Ahead

Meal planning is essential to avoid the convenience of unhealthy choices. Dedicate time each week to create a meal schedule and grocery list, and consider batch cooking meals. Pre-portion snacks such as fruits, nuts, or yogurt to ensure quick access during busy days. Preparing vegetables, grains, and proteins in advance guarantees that a nutritious option is always available, reducing reliance on fast food.

Choose Nutritious, Portable Options

For executives constantly on the move, portable, nutrient-dense foods are a lifesaver. Greek yogurt, pre-cut vegetables, lean proteins, whole-grain wraps, and mixed nuts

can be packed in reusable containers for quick meals or snacks between meetings. These options boost energy & concentration while minimizing the temptation of vending machine snacks or processed foods.

Mindful Eating and Smart Snacking

Healthy snacking prevents dips in energy and maintains productivity. Keep easy, nutritious choices like apples, bananas, hummus with carrot sticks, or string cheese on hand. Combine this with mindful eating—taking time to savor each bite and avoiding rushed meals. This improves digestion, enhances satiety, and prevents overeating during stressful work hours.

Build a Balanced Plate

When eating out or at the office cafeteria, prioritize meals with vegetables, lean proteins, and whole grains while minimizing fried and processed foods. A protein- and fiber-rich breakfast, such as oats with fruit, eggs on whole-grain toast, or Greek yogurt, provides sustained energy and reduces mid-morning cravings. For lunch and dinner, aim for a plate divided into half vegetables and fruits, one-quarter lean protein, and one-quarter whole grains. Incorporating healthy fats like nuts, seeds, and olive oil supports heart and brain health.





Hydration and Portion Awareness

Proper hydration enhances alertness and helps distinguish true hunger from fatigue. Keep a water bottle at your desk and sip consistently throughout the day. Be mindful of portion sizes smaller plates or meal-tracking apps can help ensure intake matches actual hunger, not workplace stress or fatigue.

Overcoming Work-Life Challenges

Travel, unpredictable schedules, and social commitments can disrupt healthy habits. Planning ahead, checking menus in advance, and carrying portable snacks can help executives make health conscious choices even while dining out.

Treating health as a professional priority scheduling meal breaks and practicing self-compassion after occasional slips ensures long-term adherence.

Sustainable Healthy Habits

Consistency is key. Intentional, small changes meal prep, nutritious snacks, balanced meals, and mindful eating can significantly enhance productivity, physical health, and overall life satisfaction. For executives, food is more than fuel; it is a strategic tool for sustained energy, sharper thinking, and long-term well-being.

By embracing these habits, even the busiest professionals can achieve a healthy, high performing lifestyle without compromising their demanding work schedules.



Happy

Diwali

**Celebrating the Spirit
of Deepawali!**

**We invite you to
share glimpses of
your mall's festive
décor and
celebrations.**

**Let your creativity
shine and be
featured in the
upcoming
November issue of
MallTalk.**



Please share on sachinnatki@scai.in



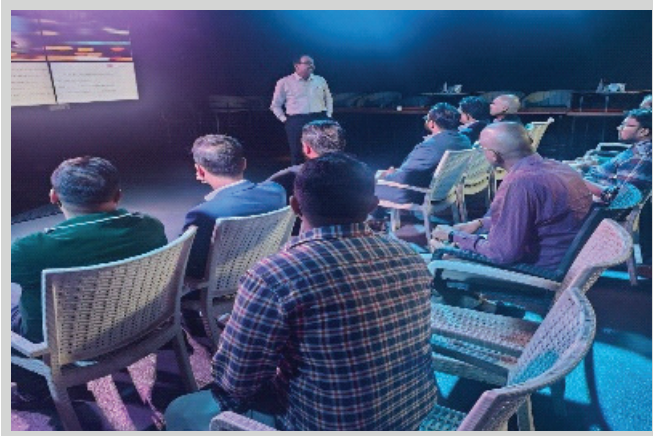
SHOPPING CENTRES
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA



EVENT WATCH



Masterclass on “Unlock Operational Excellence in Retail Asset Management”



SCAI successfully hosted a Masterclass on “Unlock Operational Excellence in Retail Asset Management” on 19th September at Sarath City Capital Mall, Hyderabad. The session was led by Mr. Audhesh Pandey, Head – Commercial Retail & Emerging Business, JLL India, and was attended by mall professionals from leading shopping centres across the region. The interactive masterclass received an enthusiastic response for its actionable insights and practical strategies to enhance operational efficiency and sustainability.



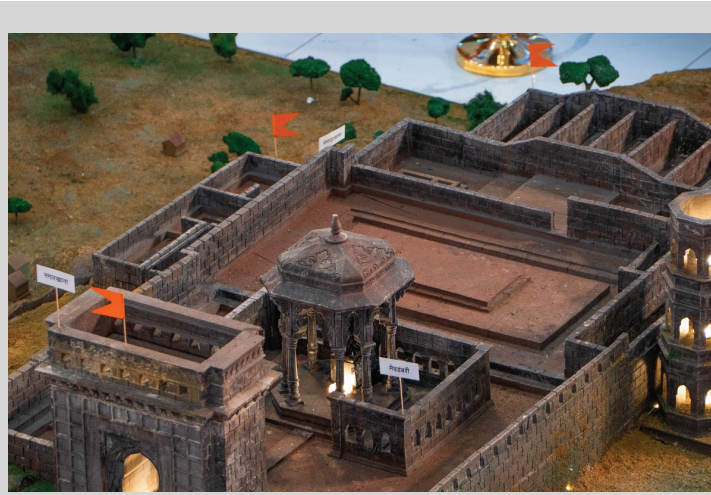
The All Goa Rapid Chess Tournament at Mall-De-Goa



The All Goa Rapid Chess Tournament was successfully held on September 14, 2025, at Mall De Goa organized by Mall De Goa in association with the Goa Chess Association and Bardez Taluka Chess Association. The event witnessed a tremendous response, with enthusiastic participation across the Under-13, Under-11, Under-9, and Under-7 categories. Over the course of eight competitive rounds, young chess talents showcased their skills, determination, and sportsmanship. The tournament was graced by Chief Guest Shri. Sandesh Prabhuchodankar and Guest of Honour Shri. Gautam Kharangate, who commended the participants and organizers for fostering the spirit of chess in Goa.



**Tribute to Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, the crown of Maharashtra
"Raigad" for Diwali at Elpro City Square mall.**



We welcome your feedback at
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Phoenix Palassio, Lucknow Unveils “The Janaki Palace” – A Diwali Celebration of Culture, Craft, Heritage & Luxury



This Diwali, Phoenix Palassio—North India’s largest shopping destination—shimmered in festive brilliance with the unveiling of The Janaki Palace, a breathtaking tribute to Goddess Sita of Mithila. Symbolising grace, resilience, and divinity, the installation captures the true spirit of the festival of lights.

The mall has transformed into a walk-through experience where art, culture, and celebration come alive. Inspired by the grandeur of Mithila’s royal courts, the palace dazzles with domes, arches, and intricate jaali patterns, turning every corner into a frame-worthy moment.

Celebrating India’s craftsmanship, artisans from across the country came together to create this visual masterpiece. Firozabad’s glassmakers lent their luminous touch, lippan artists from Gujarat adorned the space with stunning mirror work, and renowned Mithila painter Remant Kumar Mishra brought the soul of Mithila to life through exquisite Madhubani art.

Actor Neha Sharma unveiled the décor, adding her signature sparkle to the celebration. “With The Janaki Palace, we wanted to go beyond décor—to create a cultural experience that celebrates India’s living traditions,” said Mr. Sanjeev Sareen, Retail Director – Operations (North), The Phoenix Mills Ltd.

To elevate the festive excitement, Phoenix Palassio is offering shoppers a chance to win grand prizes—from a brand-new Hyundai Creta & luxury staycations to an international holiday.

Radiant as a thousand diyas, The Janaki Palace is more than an installation—it’s an invitation to immerse in art, tradition, and the joy of Diwali. Open throughout the festive season, it promises visitors an experience where heritage meets celebration in its most luminous form.

Bathed in golden light and echoing with festive joy, The Janaki Palace is more than a visual spectacle—it’s an invitation to pause, reflect, and reconnect with the beauty of Indian tradition. Open throughout the festive season, it welcomes every visitor to celebrate Diwali not just as a festival, but as a feeling that shines from within.





INDUSTRY NEWS



Viviavan Mall Rebrands As Lake Shore, Thane



Lake Shore, a leading nationwide investor, developer, and operator of large-scale shopping centres, has rebranded Viviana Mall, Thane as Lake Shore Thane. This rebranding marks an important step toward establishing a unified identity across Lake Shore's portfolio of destination retail properties.

Ashwin Puri, MD & CEO of Lake Shore India, said, "Viviana has always been more than a shopping centre – it's a place where the community comes together. As Lake Shore Thane, we will continue to create memorable experiences that inspire, connect, and grow with the city." It will set the benchmark for quality and innovation as we expand nationwide."



Forum Malls to expand in India with 14 new centres, eyes festive rush



Forum Malls, the retail arm of real estate developer Prestige Group, plans to launch 14 new malls across India's top cities by 2029 as it bets on sustained demand.

The firm, which operates three malls currently, is doubling down on metro cities and plans to open the new centres across Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad, CEO Muhammad Ali said.

Shopping malls in big Indian cities have seen steady demand as urban consumers spend more on experiences and branded retail, even as online commerce booms.

Ali said tier-I markets still offer room for growth, unlike tier-II cities where affordability exists but appetite for premium retail is limited.

"Urban markets are where the money is, where people have both the means and the appetite to spend. In tier-II cities, affordability may exist, but the propensity to spend simply doesn't match metros," he said.

Forum is also gearing up to launch India's first athleisure-focused mall by 2027. Covering 800,000 sq. ft, or the size of roughly 10 soccer fields, the complex near Bengaluru's international airport will accommodate global sportswear labels, fitness gear, yoga studios and lifestyle brands.

The expansion plan comes as India approaches its key festive season when shoppers splurge on higher-value items and malls pull in crowds with elaborate decor and special events. Forum clocks about 30%-40% of its annual sales during the October-December festive period.

Indians are expected to splurge this year following sweeping tax cuts on a wide range of consumer products. Ali said he expects footfall and revenue to rise about 15% in October, excluding any boost from the tax reforms.

"We treat the festive season with utmost seriousness, investing significant time, effort and money into it. Our planning for the season begins as early as January and we spend at least 30%-40% of the annual marketing budget during the festive season, he said.

Bengaluru, Forum's home turf and its biggest market, includes malls such as Forum South Bengaluru and Forum Rex Walk.

The city is also a battleground for heavyweights, where rivals such as Phoenix Mill, Orion, and VR Bengaluru add to the jostle for shoppers.

Inorbit Malls to Double Portfolio with New Projects in Hubli, Vizag and Vadodara Expansion

Inorbit Malls plans to double its portfolio to 4.4 million sq.ft over the next 14 months through two new properties in Hubli and Vizag, and an expansion of its Vadodara mall. The company is also developing a mixed-use project with Brookfield in Hyderabad, expected to be operational by 2029, CEO Rajneesh Mahajan said.

The group currently operates four malls—in Malad, Vashi, Cyberabad and Vadodara. “We are adding 1.6 million sq.ft this year, nearly 80% more space, and with Vadodara’s expansion, our portfolio will almost double,” Mahajan said, adding that consumption across its malls continues to grow steadily.

The Hubli project is a 5.5 lakh sq.ft development with space for about 125 tenants. In Vizag, the company is building a 1.1 million sq.ft mall in two phases—Phase 1 (November 2025) with a capex of Rs 600 crore and Phase 2 (Q1 2027) with an additional Rs 150 crore, adding 3 lakh sq.ft and more anchor tenants.

In Vadodara, the existing 4.2 lakh sq.ft mall is being expanded to 6.7 lakh sq.ft at a cost of Rs 200 crore, expected to be completed by December 2026.

Rajneesh Mahajan said entertainment and F&B will be the key growth drivers, with family entertainment centres (FECs) accounting for 12–13% of mall space. Cyberabad, the company’s largest property, contributes about 40% of overall revenues.

“Last year’s slow consumption impacted revenues, but recent weeks have shown strong momentum. We expect high single-digit growth in consumption this year, with rentals catching up,” he added.



Nexus Hyderabad has been named Hyderabad’s Most Favourite Shopping Destination at the Times Business Awards 2025, with the honour presented by Bollywood star Kajal Agarwal.

Miniso opens largest India store in New Delhi Located at Pacific Mall, Tagore Garden, it is Miniso's first flagship outlet in the country





SHOPPING CENTRES
ASSOCIATION OF INDIA

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