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MALL TALK

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Anjeev Kumar Srivastava
COO, SCAI

When the Rains Arrive, Retail Moves Indoors

As monsoons sweep across India with full intensity, bringing relief from the heat alongside waterlogging, traffic disruptions and unpredictable weather, shopping malls are once again stepping into a role far larger than retail. During the rainy season, indoor destinations naturally become safe havens for consumers looking to escape the chaos outside. And increasingly, malls are learning how to turn this seasonal shift in behaviour into an opportunity for deeper engagement, longer dwell time and stronger spending.

Across the country, shopping centres are rolling out monsoon-themed food festivals, fashion showcases, entertainment-led experiences and aggressive End of Season Sale (EOSS) campaigns designed to attract consumers seeking both comfort and value under one roof.

What was once viewed simply as a discount-driven retail period has evolved into a carefully engineered seasonal strategy. Since the pandemic, malls have become far more deliberate about planning their annual promotional calendars, aligning campaigns closely with weather patterns, customer sentiment and lifestyle behaviour. Seasonal retail is no longer reactive. It is programmed months in advance, with mall operators increasingly treating changing consumer moods almost like retail signals.

And few periods activate consumer psychology quite like monsoons.

The rains naturally encourage people to spend more time indoors, particularly families, young consumers and urban shoppers looking for leisure spaces that combine convenience, entertainment and social interaction. Malls are responding by positioning themselves not merely as shopping destinations, but as all-weather experience hubs. The timing also coincides with one of retail's biggest traffic drivers: the End of Season Sale frenzy.

EOSS continues to generate enormous excitement across categories, particularly fashion, footwear and lifestyle retail. Consumers now actively wait for this period to make discretionary purchases, compare deals and refresh wardrobes ahead of the festive cycle. For brands and retailers, it has become one of the most important windows to drive both inventory movement and store traffic simultaneously.

To amplify engagement further, malls are increasingly layering retail with experience-led programming.

Live music performances, culinary pop-ups, fashion showcases, kids' workshops and interactive installations are becoming common across shopping centres during the monsoon period. Loyalty programmes, exclusive rewards and limited-time offers are also being used to encourage repeat visits and longer stays.

The larger shift is clear: malls are no longer competing only on retail assortment. They are competing on atmosphere, comfort and emotional relevance.

In many ways, the monsoon season perfectly reflects how Indian retail itself is evolving. Consumers are no longer simply looking for transactions. They are looking for spaces where shopping, entertainment, dining and social experiences merge seamlessly together.

And when the rain begins pouring outside, the mall becomes more than a commercial destination.

It becomes the city's temporary living room.

Anjeev Kumar



LUXURY'S LOYALTY CRISIS

Luxury brands are facing a growing loyalty problem as consumers become increasingly restless, according to a new report by Accenture. While categories such as fine jewellery and wellness continue to show resilience, the sector's global active buyer base has shrunk sharply from 400 million consumers in 2022 to nearly 340 million in 2025, despite steady global GDP growth of 3 per cent.

The shift is especially visible in India, now one of the most important growth markets for global luxury houses.

According to Accenture's "Luxe Eternal: The Customer Edit" report, 73 per cent of Indian luxury consumers have

switched their preferred brands within the last five years, signalling a deeper disconnect between brands and buyers.

The findings point toward growing fatigue with traditional aspiration-led luxury marketing.

- **66 per cent of Indian respondents believe luxury brands have become more profit-driven than aspirational.**

- **50 per cent feel brand expressions have become less distinctive and inspiring.**

At the same time, consumer expectations are becoming more layered. Heritage and craftsmanship still matter, but shoppers are increasingly looking for hyper-personalisation, seamless digital experiences and emotionally engaging communities.

Around 83 per cent of Indian luxury consumers cited staff expertise as a key factor influencing brand engagement, while 80 per cent prioritised meticulous attention to detail.

However, digital fluency is becoming equally critical. Nearly 68 per cent of Indian shoppers now value resale experiences supported by digital



product passports, while 62 per cent expect AI-driven technology to assist with purchase decisions and personalisation.

The report also highlights what it calls an "exclusivity gap" between how luxury brands perceive themselves and how younger consumers experience them.

In India, 80 per cent of respondents said belonging to an exclusive community or inner circle shapes their relationship with a brand, while 77 per cent value private events, dedicated hospitality spaces and in-store lounges.

To navigate this contraction, Accenture argues that luxury brands must rethink not only customer engagement but also their operational backbone, investing heavily in AI, data systems and connected value chains to maintain consistency and relevance across increasingly fragmented consumer journeys.

As the global luxury buyer pool continues to narrow, the industry's biggest challenge may no longer be preserving desirability, but building long-term emotional resonance.

THE HUMAN EDGE: WHY EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE WILL DEFINE THE FUTURE OF BUSINESS



In an era where artificial intelligence, automation, and digital transformation are reshaping industries at an unprecedented pace, one might assume that technical skills and technological prowess alone will determine business success. Yet, paradoxically, as work becomes more digital, success is becoming more human. Emotional Intelligence (EI)—once considered a “soft skill”—is rapidly emerging as a core competency that will define leadership, teamwork, innovation, and customer loyalty in the years ahead.

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to recognize, understand, and manage one’s own emotions while also being attuned to the emotions of others. It encompasses self-awareness, empathy, adaptability, and interpersonal effectiveness. In the past, these traits were often secondary to hard skills like financial acumen, operational efficiency, or technical expertise. Today, however, they are becoming central to how organizations function & compete.

Leadership in the Age of Empathy

The role of leadership is undergoing a fundamental transformation. Traditional command-and-control models are giving way to more collaborative, inclusive, and purpose-driven approaches.

Employees today seek more than just direction—they want understanding, inspiration, and a sense of belonging.

Leaders with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to navigate this shift. They communicate with clarity and empathy, build trust within teams, and create psychologically safe environments

where individuals feel valued and heard. Such leaders are not only able to manage change more effectively but also inspire resilience during uncertainty.

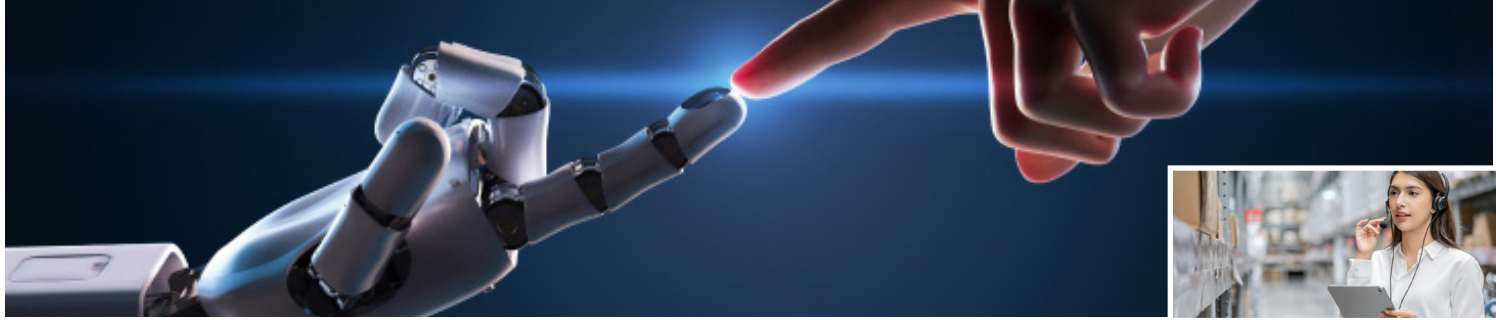
In a world marked by constant disruption—be it technological shifts, economic volatility, or global crises—leaders who can connect on a human level will stand out. Emotional Intelligence enables them to read the room, respond thoughtfully rather than react impulsively, and align teams toward shared goals with authenticity.

Teamwork Beyond Transactions

Modern workplaces are increasingly diverse, cross-functional, and often geographically dispersed. Remote and hybrid work models have redefined how teams interact, making emotional cues harder to read and relationships more complex to nurture.

In such environments, Emotional Intelligence becomes the glue that holds teams together. It fosters better communication, reduces conflict, and enhances collaboration. Team members who are emotionally intelligent are more likely to listen actively, appreciate different perspectives, and resolve disagreements constructively.

Moreover, EI encourages a culture of respect and inclusivity. When individuals feel understood and supported, they are more engaged, productive, and committed to organizational success. In contrast, a lack of emotional awareness can lead to misunderstandings, disengagement, and high turnover.



Driving Innovation Through Human Connection

Innovation is often perceived as a purely intellectual process driven by creativity and technical expertise. However, at its core, innovation is deeply human. It requires curiosity, openness to new ideas, and the courage to challenge the status quo—all of which are influenced by emotional factors.

Emotionally intelligent organizations create environments where people feel safe to experiment, fail, and learn. They encourage open dialogue, value diverse viewpoints, and nurture a sense of psychological safety. This, in turn, fuels creativity and drives breakthrough thinking.

Furthermore, EI plays a critical role in understanding customer needs—often before customers themselves can articulate them. By empathizing with users, businesses can design products, services, and experiences that resonate on a deeper level, creating meaningful and lasting impact.

Customer Loyalty in the Experience Economy

Today's consumers are not just buying products or services—they are seeking experiences. They want to feel understood, valued, and connected to the brands they engage with. This shift toward the experience economy places Emotional Intelligence at the heart of customer engagement strategies.

Businesses that cultivate EI are better positioned to build authentic relationships with their customers. They listen actively, respond with empathy, and personalize interactions in ways that go beyond transactional exchanges. Whether it's a retail associate who anticipates a customer's needs or a digital interface that feels intuitive and human-centric, emotionally intelligent experiences leave a lasting impression.

In contrast, organizations that rely solely on efficiency and automation risk appearing impersonal and disconnected.

While technology can enhance convenience, it cannot replace the emotional resonance that drives loyalty and advocacy.

The Balance of Digital and Human

The future of business is not about choosing between technology and humanity—it is about integrating the two seamlessly. Digital tools can streamline operations, provide data-driven insights, and scale capabilities. However, it is Emotional Intelligence that ensures these tools are used in ways that enhance human experiences rather than diminish them.

Organizations that strike this balance will stand out. They will leverage technology to empower their people, not replace them. They will use data to inform decisions, but rely on empathy to guide them. They will create environments where efficiency meets authenticity, and innovation is grounded in human understanding.

Building an Emotionally Intelligent Organization

Cultivating Emotional Intelligence is not a one-time initiative—it is an ongoing cultural commitment. It begins with leadership but must permeate every level of the organization. Training programs, coaching, and feedback mechanisms can help individuals develop EI competencies. Equally important is embedding these values into organizational practices, from hiring and performance evaluations to customer engagement strategies.

As businesses look to the future, one thing is clear: Emotional Intelligence is no longer optional. It is a defining requirement for success in a world where human connection is the ultimate differentiator.

In the end, the most successful organizations will not be those that simply adapt to technological change, but those that remain deeply attuned to the human experience. Because while the tools of business may evolve, the essence of success will always lie in understanding people.

THE 8 MALLS LAUNCHED IN 2025–26 SIGNAL THE NEXT PHASE OF INDIA'S ORGANISED RETAIL EVOLUTION - By R S Roy



The Eight Retail Destinations Defining the New Era

The report analyses the following developments:

- Unity One Elegante
- Inorbit Mall Visakhapatnam
- Inorbit Mall Hubballi
- Lakeshore Y Junction Mall
- Avenue Mall
- Sky City Mall
- DLF Midtown Plaza
- Felix Plaza

India's organised retail industry is entering a defining new chapter.

For nearly two decades, the story of Indian retail real estate was largely driven by the emergence of modern shopping centres in metropolitan cities. Malls were primarily viewed as shopping destinations places where consumers came to purchase products, access brands and spend leisure time.

That paradigm is rapidly changing

Today's leading retail destinations are evolving into integrated consumption ecosystems where shopping, dining, entertainment, wellness, community engagement and digital discovery increasingly coexist within a single environment. The most successful malls are no longer competing merely on location, footfalls or rental values. They are competing on experience, relevance, curation and the ability to become an indispensable part of consumers' lifestyles.

This structural shift is captured in IMAGES Group Research's latest study, India's New Retail Landmarks: The Malls That Defined 2025–26 – Decoding India's New Retail Ecosystems: Format Strategies, Category Shifts, Brand Expansion & Future Opportunities.

The report examines eight of India's most significant new-generation retail developments that collectively represent nearly 7 million sq. ft. of Grade-A retail infrastructure and house more than 1,500 brands and stores.

More importantly, these projects offer a glimpse into the future direction of organised retail in India.

Together, these developments demonstrate how India's mall industry is becoming increasingly diverse in format, geography and consumer proposition.

Rather than replicating a standard mall template, developers are creating highly differentiated destinations designed around the specific characteristics of their catchments—whether those are affluent suburban communities, emerging urban corridors, integrated townships, transit-oriented districts or fast-growing Tier-2 cities.

The result is a new generation of retail destinations that are simultaneously local in relevance and global in aspiration.

Beyond the Mall versus High Street Debate

One of the most important insights emerging from recent retail real estate research is that the traditional "mall versus high street" debate is becoming increasingly irrelevant.

The more meaningful distinction today is between Grade-A and non-Grade-A retail destinations.

Consumers are no longer choosing between formats; they are choosing between experiences. Retail destinations that offer curated brand mixes, superior infrastructure, experiential engagement, strong food and entertainment options, digital integration and community relevance are thriving irrespective of format. Those that fail to evolve are finding it increasingly difficult to remain competitive.

The eight developments featured in the study represent the next stage of this evolution.

They are not merely retail projects; they are carefully curated ecosystems designed to maximise consumer engagement and dwell time while simultaneously delivering stronger economics for brands and retailers.

India's New Mall Ecosystems

One of the key findings of the report is that India's new generation of malls is now emerging across far more diverse urban and consumption environments, extending well beyond the traditional metro city cores that once dominated organised retail expansion. New retail ecosystems are increasingly taking shape across transit-led corridors, integrated township developments, suburban growth clusters, community-centric neighbourhood catchments and rapidly evolving Tier-2 markets. This reflects a broader shift in the way developers are approaching organised retail infrastructure – moving away from standardised mall formats towards highly localised and strategically curated ecosystems aligned with evolving demographics, mobility patterns and consumption behaviour.

The report highlights how these next-generation retail destinations are being consciously designed to integrate a wide spectrum of retail and lifestyle offerings within a single environment. Premium global brands now coexist alongside leading Indian retailers, digitally native concepts, regional labels, value retail formats and a growing range of experiential consumption categories.

Rather than functioning merely as shopping venues, these malls are increasingly positioning themselves as comprehensive lifestyle and community ecosystems that cater to multiple consumer missions simultaneously – from shopping and dining to entertainment, social interaction and leisure.



Experience-Led Retail Takes Centre Stage

Another major trend highlighted in the report is the growing centrality of experience-led consumption within organised retail. While fashion and lifestyle categories continue to remain important traffic drivers, mall growth is now increasingly being shaped by the rising demand for immersive and engagement-driven experiences. Developers are allocating significantly larger spaces towards experiential dining concepts, family entertainment centres, gaming infrastructure, beauty and wellness offerings, café culture, omnichannel discovery zones and community engagement spaces that encourage consumers to spend longer periods within retail environments.

The report notes that consumers today increasingly view malls not only as places to shop, but also as destinations where they can socialise, unwind, discover new brands and participate in shared experiences. This evolution is also contributing to the growing prominence of Indian-origin brands across beauty, jewellery, fashion, youth retail and foodservice categories. Many of these brands are emerging as powerful growth engines within organised mall environments, competing confidently alongside global players through stronger storytelling, sharper consumer engagement and highly experience-driven retail formats.

Fashion and Lifestyle Continue to Anchor Retail Economics

Despite the rapid rise of experiential categories across organised retail, fashion and lifestyle continue to remain the single largest contributors to mall economics and consumer engagement. The report reveals that fashion and lifestyle categories account for approximately 45–50 percent of the overall retail mix across the eight developments studied, reaffirming their continuing dominance within India's organised retail landscape.

These categories span a broad spectrum of consumption segments including fast fashion, youth retail, ethnic and occasion wear, beauty and personal care, footwear, accessories, sportswear and athleisure, kidswear and contemporary home and lifestyle concepts. Together, they continue to form the foundational layer around which mall merchandising and leasing strategies are being built.

The findings underline an important reality within organised retail today: while consumers may increasingly visit malls for experiences such as dining, entertainment and social engagement, fashion remains central to footfalls, leasing dynamics, brand expansion and overall mall profitability. Fashion and lifestyle continue to function as the primary traffic anchors around which complementary experiential categories are integrated. The report further highlights that the future mall is not replacing retail with entertainment. Instead, it is evolving into a more balanced ecosystem where fashion, dining, leisure and community engagement work together to create stronger consumer relevance, longer dwell times and more immersive retail experiences.

The Rise of Experience-Led Fashion Retail

Fashion itself is undergoing transformation.

The report notes that stores are increasingly being designed as immersive destinations rather than simple transactional environments.

Across categories, brands are investing heavily in:

- Interactive product discovery
- Personalisation
- Technology-enabled engagement
- Storytelling-led merchandising
- Community events
- Café integration
- Social-media-friendly environments

This trend is no longer limited to luxury brands or international labels.

Indian brands are increasingly matching global standards in store design, visual merchandising and consumer engagement.

Retail stores are becoming media platforms, experience centres and community spaces—all at the same time.

Indian Brands Are Growing Stronger

One of the most significant findings emerging from the report is the rising strength and growing dominance of Indian-origin brands across organised retail environments. Domestic retailers are no longer competing solely on accessibility, pricing or scale; they are increasingly competing on design, innovation, consumer engagement and overall brand experience. Across categories such as fashion, beauty, jewellery, youth retail and lifestyle, Indian brands are demonstrating a level of confidence and premiumisation that is allowing them to

stand shoulder-to-shoulder with global players within leading mall ecosystems.

The report highlights that many of India's new-generation malls are witnessing a strong participation of homegrown brands that are redefining consumer expectations through sharper storytelling, contemporary design language, omnichannel integration and highly immersive retail environments. At DLF Midtown Plaza, for instance, nearly 92 percent of the brand mix comprises Indian retailers, underlining the growing maturity and aspirational positioning of domestic brands within premium retail environments.

The findings further suggest that Indian brands are increasingly being perceived not merely as affordable alternatives to international labels, but as aspirational brands in their own right. From visual merchandising and store design to product innovation and customer engagement, Indian retailers are rapidly elevating their capabilities to global standards. This transformation is particularly visible among digitally native and Gen Z-focused brands that are bringing freshness, experimentation and community-driven engagement into organised retail spaces.

New Malls Are Becoming Launchpads for Brand Expansion

Another defining trend highlighted in the report is the growing role of new-generation malls as platforms for brand discovery and expansion. Rather than relying exclusively on established anchor retailers, mall developers are increasingly integrating emerging D2C brands, international first entries, contemporary Indian concepts and new-to-city labels to create differentiated and discovery-led retail environments.

This strategy is helping malls position themselves not only as shopping destinations, but also as marketplaces where consumers can encounter new brands, formats and experiences.

Developers are consciously curating tenant mixes that combine established names with fresh concepts in order to sustain consumer interest, increase repeat visitation and create stronger experiential differentiation.

The report notes that Inorbit Mall, Visakhapatnam alone witnessed more than 65 new-to-market brand entries at the time of launch, highlighting the growing appetite for organised retail and aspirational consumption within emerging markets. The remaining developments featured in the study have similarly attracted a substantial

number of The remaining developments featured in the study have similarly attracted a substantial number of first-time entries across fashion, beauty, foodservice and lifestyle categories.

Collectively, these trends indicate that India's newest malls are increasingly functioning as strategic launchpads for retail expansion – enabling brands to enter new geographies, test emerging markets and engage with evolving consumer segments within highly curated retail ecosystems.

Industry Leaders on the Future of Retail Destinations



Rajneesh Mahajan, Chief Executive Officer, Inorbit Malls (India)

According to Rajneesh Mahajan, emerging markets are becoming increasingly important growth drivers for organised retail.

“This year, we strategically expanded into emerging cities like Visakhapatnam and Hubballi, recognising the strong sense of aspiration among consumers in these markets. The response has been extremely encouraging, reaffirming our belief that emerging markets are not just ready, but eager for high-quality, immersive retail environments.”

Pushpa Bector, Senior Executive Director & Business Head, DLF Retail

For Pushpa Bector, the future lies in neighbourhood-centred destinations that blend retail with social engagement.

“Today’s consumers are looking for spaces where they can do more than just shop; they want to dine, unwind and spend meaningful time with family and friends.”

Reflecting this approach, DLF is expanding beyond traditional mall formats through its emerging Plaza concept, including DLF Summit Plaza in Gurugram and the upcoming DLF Promenade Goa.



Tanu Prasad, CEO Malls, Oberoi Realty

Meanwhile, Tanu Prasad believes suburban markets are evolving into independent retail destinations.

“Suburban retail today is about accessibility, aspiration, experience,

and building destinations that people actively choose to engage with.” Oberoi Realty’s upcoming retail developments in Thane and Worli further illustrate how premium mixed-use ecosystems are shaping the future of urban retail.

Similarly, Felix Plaza’s leadership highlights how emerging urban corridors are moving beyond transactional retail towards destination-led experiences that combine global brands, community engagement and family entertainment within integrated environments.

A Blueprint for the Next Decade

Taken together, the eight developments featured in the report provide an important blueprint for India’s next wave of retail expansion.

They demonstrate that the future of organised retail will be characterised by:

- Stronger integration of retail and entertainment
- Experience-led consumption ecosystems
- Increased participation of Indian brands
- Growth beyond metropolitan centres
- Curated tenant mixes
- Community-focused engagement
- Omnichannel discovery journeys
- Higher levels of premiumisation

Most importantly, they illustrate that malls are no longer simply real estate assets.

They are becoming platforms where commerce, culture, leisure and community intersect.

As India’s consumption economy continues to expand, these retail destinations offer a compelling preview of how consumers will shop, socialise and spend their time in the years ahead.

The malls that defined 2025–26 are therefore much more than successful projects. They are signals of the next phase of India’s organised retail evolution one in which the future belongs not merely to places that sell products, but to destinations that create experiences, build communities and remain deeply relevant to the lives of consumers.



R S Roy, Retail Intelligence, Images Group

With over four decades of association with the Indian retail industry including 25+ years at the IMAGES Group–R. S. Roy has played a key role in the formation of the Shopping Centres Association of India.

He currently serves as Executive Director of the Trusted Board, leading the vision of the Trusted Mark Certification Scheme for retailers and shopping centres. A prolific industry chronicler, Roy has authored over 5,000 articles and reports documenting the evolution of Indian retail in India and globally.



PERSONALITY OF THE MONTH



MR. MANGESH PARULEKAR
PROMOTER, M. P. ASSOCIATES

Coming from a humble background, Mangesh Parulekar began his entrepreneurial journey in 1978 with a single truck that he personally drove across the country for goods transportation. Over time, he expanded into the luxury tourist taxi business and later diversified into real estate in 1991, developing nearly 23 residential and commercial projects in Panvel.

A firm believer in giving back to society, he established the Sir V.A. Parulekar Charitable Eye Hospital in 2000 by donating an entire floor of his building for underprivileged patients across Maharashtra. In 2003, he entered retail with World of Titan and Titan Eye+ stores in Panvel and Belapur.

In 2014, through MP Group, he launched Orion Mall Panvel, Raigad's first modern shopping mall. The mall today features leading brands including Shoppers Stop, Starbucks, McDonald's and PVR INOX, generating over 1,300 jobs while becoming a major shopping and entertainment hub for the region.

As President of Kudaldeshkar Aadhya Gaud Brahmin – Panvel, Mangesh actively supports social causes through blood donation drives, ration distribution, orphanage support, and free educational and cultural initiatives. In collaboration with the Nehru Science Centre, Orion Mall also hosted a free public science exhibition in 2025.

Mangesh has received several honours, including the Saraswat Ratna Award 2024, Icons of Navi Mumbai by The Economic Times, Sindhuratna Award, and the Excellence in Business Award 2019 for his contributions to business, employment generation, and community service.

Today, he is actively mentoring the next generation of leadership within the family business. His son, Manan Parulekar, has now joined MP Group and is

working alongside him in expanding the group's presence across retail, real estate, and commercial developments, while carrying forward the entrepreneurial values and legacy built over decades. His daughter, Mananki Parulekar, is also pursuing her entrepreneurial journey through Claravest, a fractional real estate investment platform focused on making premium real estate investments more accessible to investors.

At 66, Mangesh continues to explore opportunities in sustainable and green energy businesses while remaining deeply committed to community development, employment generation, and building institutions that positively impact society.

As Orion Mall completes 10 years, how would you reflect on its journey from inception to becoming one of India's landmark malls, and what have been the defining milestones along the way?



The journey of Orion Mall Panvel has been deeply emotional and transformational for me. Fourteen years ago, when I first envisioned building a modern shopping mall in Panvel, the region was still considered the outskirts of Mumbai. At that time, Panvel lacked organized retail infrastructure, and most residents travelled to Navi Mumbai for shopping, entertainment, and lifestyle experiences. Coming from a background in residential development, my decision to create a large-format mall in Panvel was seen by many as highly ambitious and even risky. There was skepticism not only from the business community but also from local residents who questioned whether Panvel was ready for such a development.

However, I strongly believed in the long-term potential of Panvel and the future growth of the region. That belief, along with the strong desire to create a landmark project for the city, became the foundation of Orion Mall.

Interestingly, Orion Mall commenced operations on 27th April 2016, and just a few months later, on 1st October 2016, Panvel was officially upgraded from a Municipal Council to a Municipal Corporation. In many ways, it feels like Orion and Panvel have

grown together over the last decade – both evolving, expanding, and transforming simultaneously. Over the years, the mall did not just succeed commercially – it changed consumer behavior in the region. Orion Mall became the first true lifestyle and entertainment destination for Panvel and surrounding catchments. It created a new culture of shopping, dining, family outings, and community engagement locally, reducing the need for people to travel outside the city for quality retail experiences.

Another important milestone in our journey is that Orion's growth story is now moving beyond Maharashtra. During our 10th anniversary celebrations, we announced our plans to expand into new markets outside the state, marking the beginning of the next phase of our retail journey.

Today, Orion Mall is not only recognized as a successful retail destination but also as a landmark that contributed significantly to Panvel's urban and lifestyle transformation.

What have been some of the biggest challenges faced during these 10 years, and how has Orion Mall adapted and innovated to overcome them?

The very first challenge was convincing people that a destination mall could succeed in Panvel. A decade ago, organized retail penetration in the Panvel region was almost non-existent, and even quality entertainment infrastructure was limited. Panvel largely had only single-screen theatres, and there was no proper multiplex experience available locally. Many believed customers would continue travelling to Navi Mumbai or Mumbai for shopping and entertainment.

Building customer confidence and changing market perception required patience, consistency, and a long-term vision. We had to create not just a mall, but an entirely new lifestyle ecosystem for the city.

In the early years, we also faced very basic operational challenges that reflected how new the organized retail experience was for the region. Many visitors were using escalators and travelators for the first time, and initially there were several minor mishaps and moments of hesitation. Our staff and security teams were specially trained to assist customers and help them become comfortable with these modern retail facilities. Looking back today, it reflects how Orion Mall has grown together with the city and its people.

Another important challenge during the initial years was retail churn. In the first two to three years, certain brands that entered the mall were not

aligned with the local market profile and customer preferences. Some brands exited while newer and more suitable brands entered. That phase helped us better understand the aspirations and spending patterns of the Panvel customer, eventually leading to a much stronger and more market-relevant tenant mix.

Another major challenge came during the pandemic, when the retail industry globally faced unprecedented disruption. During that period, we focused on customer safety, operational adaptability, retailer support, and rebuilding consumer confidence.

Over the years, customer expectations have also evolved rapidly. Today's consumers seek experiences rather than just transactions. To stay ahead, we continuously upgraded our tenant mix, strengthened our entertainment and F&B offerings, increased customer engagement initiatives, and invested in infrastructure enhancements to improve ambience and comfort. With major developments such as the upcoming international airport and rapid urban growth in the region, customer expectations will continue to evolve – and Orion Mall Panvel is committed to constantly creating experiences that meet those changing aspirations.

Recently, we undertook a complete enhancement of the mall façade to give the property a more contemporary and premium identity. We also transformed the food court experience by introducing an open-ceiling concept and upgraded lighting design to create a brighter and more modern ambience. These upgrades ensure that even after 10 years, Orion Mall continues to feel fresh, relevant, and aligned with evolving customer expectations. The biggest lesson from the past 10 years has been that retail success belongs to those who continuously adapt to changing consumer behavior and evolve with the city and its people.

Today, malls are no longer just shopping destinations. How do you define the modern mall experience?

The modern mall is a social and lifestyle destination rather than merely a retail space. Customers today come to malls not only to shop but to spend time with family and friends, dine, celebrate occasions, attend events, watch movies, and create experiences.

In many ways, malls today have become the modern-day community hubs of urban India. They combine retail, entertainment, food, leisure, and social interaction under one roof.

For cities like Panvel, malls also play a larger role in shaping lifestyle aspirations and urban culture. Orion Mall helped introduce a more organized and experience-driven retail culture to the region, and that transformation continues even today.

The modern customer today values experiences, ambience, emotional connection, convenience, and social engagement equally. That is why malls are increasingly evolving from pure retail destinations into complete lifestyle ecosystems.

What role do entertainment, F&B, community engagement, and events play in increasing footfalls and customer loyalty?

These elements are now at the heart of successful mall ecosystems. Shopping alone is no longer enough to drive repeat visits. Customers seek experiences that are social, emotional, and memorable.

Entertainment and F&B have become major footfall generators because they encourage longer dwell times and repeat family visits. Events and community-driven activities create emotional engagement and make customers feel connected to the destination.

At Orion Mall, festivals, family events, entertainment activities, and community celebrations have always played a significant role in building loyalty. Over the years, the mall has become a venue where people celebrate milestones, spend weekends, and create memories with their families.

That emotional connection is what ultimately builds long-term customer loyalty.

What are some innovations Orion Mall has introduced to enhance customer engagement?

At Orion Mall, innovation has always been driven by understanding customer behavior, cultural relevance, and evolving customer expectations.

Over the years, we have focused on experiential campaigns, festive activations, digital engagement initiatives, family-oriented events, youth-focused entertainment, and stronger customer interaction programs. A key part of customer engagement is consistently bringing customers to the mall and keeping the property actively connected with the community. For this, we have continuously invested in newspaper campaigns, outdoor hoardings, Google and Meta-led digital marketing, along with multiple "Shop & Win" contests and festival-led promotional activities throughout the year.

One of the key strengths of Orion Mall has been its ability to remain deeply connected with the local community.

Beyond retail and entertainment, we strongly believe that malls today must also contribute socially to the cities they operate in. Over the years, Orion Mall has actively supported and sponsored several local organizations, CSR initiatives, social causes, educational activities, and community programs in association with organizations such as Rotary Club, Lions Club, and other local social service bodies. These initiatives have helped us build a strong emotional bond and long-term trust with the local customer base.

Another important strength has been creating large-scale thematic experiences that emotionally connect with customers while celebrating Indian culture and heritage.

A memorable initiative was the recreation of INS Vikrant within the mall atrium as a specially designed experiential installation. The display received tremendous appreciation from customers, visitors, and the Government of Maharashtra. The installation was later showcased at Mantralaya for a few weeks and was subsequently taken forward by the then Cultural Minister for permanent display at a botanical garden in Chandrapur district. For us, this was a proud moment because it demonstrated how malls can contribute beyond commerce and become platforms for cultural engagement and public appreciation.

Similarly, during the recent Diwali season, Orion Mall recreated the historic Sindhudurg Fort as part of its festive décor experience. Sindhudurg Fort has been recognized by UNESCO among the selected heritage sites of historical significance. The recreation received tremendous appreciation from customers and visitors for celebrating Maharashtra's rich cultural identity and architectural heritage in a modern retail environment.

What makes these initiatives even more special is that most of these concepts and executions are driven internally by the Orion Mall team itself. While we do collaborate with agencies for specific support, the core creative direction, conceptualization, planning, and a significant part of the execution comes from our in-house team. This level of involvement and ownership is quite unique in the mall industry today, where many experiential activations are typically fully outsourced. At Orion Mall, we strongly believe in teamwork, hands-on involvement, and creating experiences that genuinely reflect the personality and culture of the mall. As consumer expectations evolve, we believe innovation in retail must continue balancing technology, infrastructure, experiences, culture, emotional engagement, and community connection.

How are malls evolving to become more inclusive and family-oriented destinations?

Today's malls are designed to serve multiple generations together. Families no longer visit malls only for shopping — they visit for complete day-long experiences. Modern malls are becoming more inclusive through better accessibility, safer environments, children's activities, entertainment zones, wellness experiences, senior citizen-friendly facilities, and community-driven programming.

At Orion Mall, families have always been at the center of our planning philosophy. The objective is to create an environment where every visitor — whether a child, teenager, working professional, or senior citizen — feels comfortable, engaged, and connected.

What trends are you observing among Gen Z and younger consumers?

Gen Z consumers are highly experience-driven and digitally connected. They value authenticity, social interaction, entertainment, and personalization far more than traditional shopping formats.

For younger audiences, malls are spaces for socializing, dining, gaming, entertainment, and content creation. They expect malls to remain visually dynamic, interactive, and constantly refreshed.

This generation is also more conscious about sustainability, inclusivity, and brand values. As a result, malls must evolve continuously to stay relevant to younger consumers while also maintaining broader family appeal. At the same time, as a team, we are already thinking beyond Gen Z and trying to understand how Generation Alpha will shape the future of retail and shopping experiences. The next generation is growing up in a highly digital, fast-moving, and experience-first world. Their expectations from malls will be very different more immersive, technology driven, interactive, and personalized.

In fact, we have already started taking this shift very seriously. Over the last eight months, Orion Mall has witnessed more than a 100% jump in its digital footprint and social media following across platforms. A lot of our recent initiatives, customer engagement activities, and experiential concepts are being designed keeping younger audiences and future consumer behavior in mind. I believe successful malls of the future will be those that start preparing today for how the next generation wants to connect, engage, and experience retail.

Sustainability has become a major focus globally. How is Orion Mall integrating sustainable practices into operations?

Sustainability is becoming an essential part of responsible mall operations. At Orion Mall, we continuously focus on improving operational efficiency, optimizing energy usage, and implementing environmentally responsible practices wherever possible.

Our approach includes energy management initiatives, efficient resource utilization, waste management processes, and increasing awareness regarding sustainable operations among stakeholders.

As urbanization accelerates, malls have an important responsibility not only as commercial centers but also as long-term community assets contributing to responsible development.

How do you see the future of malls in India evolving over the next decade, particularly with the rise of mixed-use developments integrating retail, hospitality, office, and residential spaces?

The future of malls in India will be strongly linked to integrated urban development. Mixed-use ecosystems combining retail, hospitality, office spaces, entertainment, and residential developments will become increasingly important.

Consumers today seek convenience, connectivity, and complete lifestyle ecosystems rather than standalone retail destinations. This trend is especially relevant for rapidly developing growth corridors like Panvel. With major infrastructure developments transforming the region, including enhanced connectivity and urban expansion, Panvel is poised to become one of the most important growth markets in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. In many ways, Orion Mall's early success validated the long-term potential of this market well before the broader transformation became visible.

I also believe the next phase of retail growth in India will come from strong regional developers expanding into emerging high-potential cities. As a group, we are excited about entering new markets outside Maharashtra, which reflects our confidence in the long-term growth potential of organized retail in India.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities are emerging as major consumption hubs. How significant are these markets for the future growth of malls in India?

Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets represent the next major growth engine for Indian retail. Rising incomes, infrastructure growth, digital exposure, and evolving lifestyle aspirations are driving strong demand for organized retail experiences in these markets.

Consumers in emerging cities are highly aspirational and increasingly expect the same quality of retail, entertainment, and lifestyle experiences available in metros.

The success of Orion Mall itself reflects how strong retail potential can emerge in markets that were once considered peripheral or underdeveloped. This transformation story is likely to repeat across many growing Indian cities over the next decade.

What are the biggest differences between consumers in metro cities and those in Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns?

Metro consumers are generally more exposure-driven, convenience-oriented, and globally influenced. They often prioritize speed, premium experiences, and variety.

Consumers in Tier 2 and Tier 3 markets, while equally aspirational, tend to place greater importance on family experiences, festive shopping, and emotional connections with destinations.

However, with the rise of digital media and social platforms, the aspiration gap between metro and emerging market consumers is reducing rapidly. Today, consumers across India are increasingly aligned in terms of lifestyle expectations and brand awareness.

What advice would you give to young professionals entering retail real estate and mall management?

Retail real estate is an exciting and constantly evolving industry that combines business strategy, operations, customer psychology, and relationship management.

My advice to young professionals would be to stay adaptable, customer-focused, and operationally grounded. Success in mall management requires understanding people as much as understanding business.

At a personal level, one of the biggest reasons behind Orion Mall's successful journey has been teamwork. I strongly believe in listening to my team, understanding their perspectives, and valuing their experience because they are the people working on the ground every single day.

In many organizations, people are treated simply as employees.

At Orion Mall, we consider them part of the Orion family. Many members of our team have been associated with us for 25 years, 15 years, 10 years, 8 years, and even longer. That level of loyalty, trust, and emotional connection cannot be built overnight.

I believe long-term success in retail real estate comes not only from infrastructure or business strategy, but also from building strong teams, empowering people, and growing together as an organization. On behalf of myself and my business partners, that has always been one of the core values behind Orion Mall's journey.

Most importantly, patience and long-term vision are extremely important in retail real estate. The success of Orion Mall itself is an example of how belief in a vision, consistency, and teamwork over time can create transformational outcomes.

How do you envision Orion Mall over the next 10 years?

Over the next decade, I envision Orion Mall continuing to strengthen its position as the preferred lifestyle and community destination of the region.

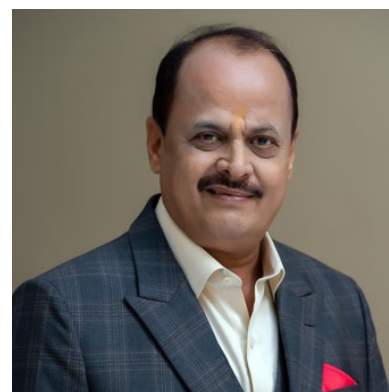
As Panvel rapidly transforms through major infrastructure developments and urban growth, the mall's catchment and potential will continue expanding significantly. Our focus will remain on continuously upgrading experiences, strengthening entertainment and F&B offerings, enhancing customer engagement, and building deeper emotional connections with the community.

We also believe that malls must continuously reinvent themselves to stay relevant. Going forward, we are also actively exploring expansion opportunities – both within the existing ecosystem and in new markets outside Maharashtra. We see this as the beginning of a larger long-term growth journey for the brand.

At the same time, we are also evaluating expansion possibilities within Orion Mall Panvel itself to further strengthen the overall retail and lifestyle experience for our customers.

The vision is not only to grow commercially but to continue being a landmark that reflects the growth story of Panvel itself.

If you had to define the next decade of Indian malls in one sentence, what would it be?



Answer:

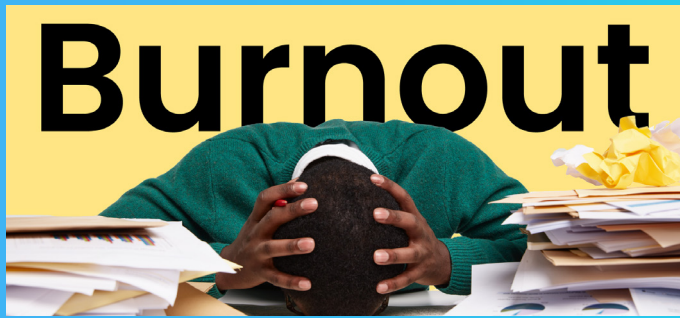
"The next decade of Indian malls will belong to destinations that create experiences, build communities, and evolve alongside the aspirations of a rapidly changing India."



BURNOUT IS BREAKING LEADERSHIP.

EXECUTIVE HEALTH IS BECOMING THE NEW PERFORMANCE STRATEGY

In the high-stakes world of leadership, burnout is no longer an exception. It has quietly become part of the job description. Endless meetings. Constant decision-making. Back-to-back travel. The pressure to deliver growth quarter after quarter.



For years, the corporate world glorified exhaustion as proof of ambition. Long hours were worn like status symbols. Sleep deprivation became shorthand for commitment. Hustle was leadership theatre.

That narrative is now beginning to crack.

A growing number of executives are rethinking what peak performance actually means, and the answer is increasingly pointing toward something far less glamorous but far more sustainable: health. According to the World Health Organization, burnout is now recognised as an occupational phenomenon caused by chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. For senior leaders, the consequences go far beyond fatigue. Burnout impacts judgment, creativity, emotional resilience, concentration and decision-making, precisely the qualities leadership depends on most. And the cost of ignoring it is no longer invisible.

The Hidden Cost of Constant Performance

For decades, executive health was treated as a personal issue rather than a business concern.



Leaders were expected to “push through,” compartmentalise stress and keep operating regardless of exhaustion.

But chronic stress changes the way leaders think and behave.

Decision fatigue shortens attention spans. Reactive thinking replaces strategic clarity. Creativity narrows. Emotional regulation weakens. Over time, the impact extends beyond the individual and begins shaping organisational culture itself, affecting morale, communication and long-term business direction.

The modern executive is no longer only managing a business. They are managing uncertainty, volatility, workforce expectations, digital acceleration and constant visibility all at once. The pressure is relentless and increasingly, unsustainable.

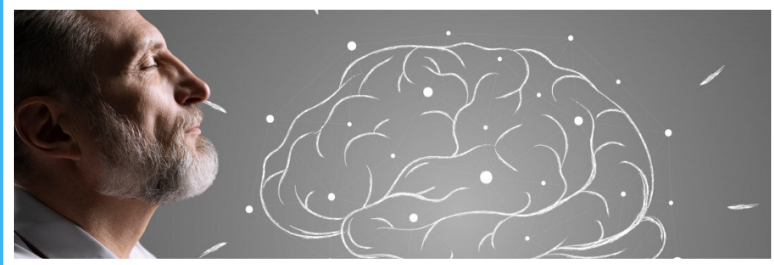
High-profile leaders have begun speaking more openly about this reality. Arianna Huffington famously collapsed from exhaustion years ago, an incident that later became central to her advocacy around sleep, recovery and workplace well-being. Her story resonated because it reflected something much larger: a generation of leaders quietly realising that burnout is not a performance strategy.

Peak Performance Is Being Redefined

The definition of executive performance itself is beginning to evolve. Peak performance today is no longer about operating at maximum intensity every hour of the day.

It is increasingly about sustaining clarity, focus, resilience and energy over long periods of time without collapsing under the weight of it.

That shift is pushing health from the sidelines into the centre of leadership conversations. Executives like Satya Nadella have repeatedly spoken about empathy, mindfulness and emotional



intelligence as essential leadership qualities, traits deeply connected to mental and physical well-being.

The underlying idea is simple: leaders perform better when their minds are clear and their bodies are functioning well.

This is also changing how organisations think about wellness itself. Health is no longer being framed only as an HR initiative or employee perk. It is increasingly being viewed as a business performance lever.

From Reactive Health to Preventive Health

Traditionally, executive wellness interventions happened only after a crisis point, severe stress, burn-out, health scares or emotional exhaustion.

Today, there is a visible shift toward prevention.

More leaders are building structured routines around fitness, sleep, nutrition and stress management before problems escalate. Small habits that once felt secondary are now being treated as essential operating systems: breaks between meetings, hydration, walking routines, digital boundaries and recovery time.

Fitness Is Becoming a Leadership Tool

One of the clearest shifts is the growing relationship between physical fitness and leadership performance.

Exercise is no longer viewed simply as a personal lifestyle choice. It is increasingly being linked to cognitive sharpness, emotional stability and productivity.

Leaders like Tim Cook are known for maintaining disciplined workout routines, often beginning their days with exercise before work begins.

The logic behind this is backed by growing research. Regular movement improves memory, concentration, mood regulation and resilience against stress.

Importantly, the new executive wellness culture is not necessarily about extreme fitness culture or spending hours inside a gym. Consistency matters more than intensity. A 20-minute workout, yoga session or brisk walk done regularly can significantly improve energy and mental clarity.

For many executives, fitness is no longer aesthetic. It is operational.

The Mental and Emotional Side of Leadership

Physical health alone, however, is not enough.

Leadership today carries a unique emotional burden. Constant visibility, high expectations and the pressure to continuously perform can create anxiety, emotional exhaustion and isolation.

As a result, mindfulness practices such as meditation, breathing exercises and reflective routines are increasingly becoming part of executive life. These practices help improve concentration, emotional regulation and self-awareness, all essential traits in modern leadership.

Equally important is the role of personal support systems.

Leadership can often become isolating, particularly at senior levels where vulnerability is rarely encouraged. Strong networks of family, mentors and trusted peers play a critical role in maintaining emotional balance.

The strongest leaders are not necessarily the ones carrying everything alone. Increasingly, they are

the ones who know how to recover, reset and ask for support when needed.

Sleep Is Emerging as a Competitive Advantage

Few aspects of executive health have been as historically ignored as sleep.

For years, reduced sleep was almost romanticised in corporate culture. Four-hour nights became associated with ambition and drive.

Research now tells a very different story.

Sleep deprivation directly affects decision-making, cognitive performance, memory retention and emotional regulation. In leadership roles where every decision carries weight, the impact can be enormous.

Advocates like Arianna Huffington have pushed hard to reposition sleep not as downtime, but as a business strategy. Better-rested leaders think more clearly, respond more calmly and sustain performance more effectively over time.

In many ways, sleep has become the most underrated productivity tool in leadership.

The Rise of Data-Driven Wellness

Technology is also reshaping how executives approach health.

Wearables, recovery trackers and wellness apps now allow leaders to monitor stress levels, sleep quality, activity and recovery patterns in real time.

The rise of health data is creating greater self-awareness around lifestyle habits and long-term performance sustainability.

But the broader goal is not obsession with metrics. It is behavioural awareness.

Because increasingly, the future of executive performance may depend less on endurance and more on energy management.

A New Leadership Mindset

Ultimately, the shift from burnout to peak performance is not simply about adding workouts or wellness routines into busy calendars.

It is a deeper mindset shift.

It requires leaders to stop treating health as secondary to success and start recognising it as foundational to it.

That means setting boundaries. Protecting recovery time. Saying no when necessary. Understanding that sustainability creates stronger performance than constant exhaustion ever could.

The future of leadership will not belong only to the smartest or most experienced people in the room. It will increasingly belong to those capable of sustaining clarity, resilience and emotional stability in a world that rarely slows down.

Because the most effective leaders are no longer the ones who can absorb the most stress.

They are the ones who know how to manage their energy best.





INFINITY GROUP SPOTLIGHTS 'DIVINITY MALL VRINDAVAN' AND THE EVOLVING NORTHEAST CONSUMER AT RAI NORTH EAST SUMMIT 2026



The mandate for the future of retail is clear: shopping spaces must transcend mere transactions to deliver immersive, culturally resonant experiences. Leading this paradigm shift is Infinity Group, a frontrunner in sustainable and thematic real estate development. The group recently reaffirmed its strategic commitment to the North and North Eastern Indian markets through an impactful showcase at the Retailers Association of India (RAI) North East Summit 2026.

From conceptualising the landmark "Divinity Mall" in Vrindavan to developing exclusive hilltop residential destinations in Guwahati, Infinity Group is actively redefining the convergence of lifestyle, spirituality, and commerce. At the RAI Summit, their thought leadership took center stage, offering developers and retailers a fresh perspective on the evolving aspirations of regional consumers.

Decoding the Northeast Consumer: Aspiration and Identity

A major highlight of the summit was a panel discussion moderated by Aninda Das, Vice President – Marketing at Infinity Group. Titled "The Northeast Consumer on Their Own Terms – Aspiration, Identity, and What They're Actually Buying," the session provided critical insights for retail developers looking to curate tenant mixes and marketing strategies in the region. The panel featured industry

stalwarts from Manik Chand Nand Kishore Jewelers, Chandan Retail Pvt. Ltd., and Manju Silk Centre. The consensus? The Northeast is far from a single, homogeneous market. It is driven by a highly aware and sophisticated consumer base that rejects generic, national marketing approaches.

The discussion underscored how consumers maintain a powerful sense of cultural individuality while embracing global trends like K-Beauty and premium streetwear. Moving beyond entry-level purchases, there is a surging appetite for premium technology, fashion, and advanced skincare. For shopping centre professionals, the takeaway is vital: success requires investing in hyper-local representation and solving last-mile D2C logistics. *"The Northeast is not a monolithic market; it is a region built on multiple unique identities. Understanding what consumers are 'actually buying' demands a transition from transactional retail models to identity-driven experiences. At Infinity, we apply this same philosophy of contextual retail across our developments."*

Aninda Das, Vice President – Marketing, Infinity Group

In a standout presentation titled "The Great Indian Retailer Story," Mr. Das shifted focus to an entirely different, yet equally lucrative, retail frontier: spiritual tourism. Through an engaging storytelling format inspired by Lord Krishna and the spiritual heritage



of Vrindavan, he introduced SCAI members and industry peers to India's first 'One-Stop Divinity Mall.'

The market fundamentals are staggering. Home to over 5,500 temples, Vrindavan is rapidly emerging as a global spiritual epicenter. The sacred city currently commands a daily footfall of up to 3 lakh — a number projected to multiply exponentially, fueled by a massive approx ₹30,000 Crore infrastructure investment from the Government of India. This sweeping initiative, which includes the development of the new temple corridor, is transforming Vrindavan from a traditional pilgrimage town into a highly organized, premium retail market.

Strategically located on the Main Chattikara–Vrindavan Road to capture this unprecedented growth, Infinity Group's Krishna Bhumi Arcade represents a monumental opportunity for organized retail. Mr. Das announced that the arcade is now actively welcoming retailers and heritage brands dealing exclusively in Spiritual and Devotional products. The tenant mix is being thoughtfully curated across core devotional categories: Shringar (deity ornaments), Vastra (sacred garments), Granth (spiritual literature), Smriti (Paintings, Arts - Crafts), and Prasad (Sweets).

"Our presence at the RAI Summit 2026 reflects our long-term vision for the North East. We aim to create exclusive retail opportunities for heritage brands from the region within our North India market in Vrindavan, while inviting the vibrant retail community of the Northeast to become part of our transformative spiritual retail journey. Our association with RAI further strengthens our mission of building smart, sustainable, and culturally connected spaces for businesses and homeowners alike." — **Pulak Chamaria, Director, Infinity Group**

Shaping the Next Chapter of Indian Retail Real Estate

Infinity Group serves as a benchmark for integrating experiential commerce with cultural

relevance. Recognizing that modern consumers seek meaningful community engagement, the Group's curated retail environments blend contemporary amenities with deep-rooted regional identities.

Krishna Bhumi Arcade Vrindavan : One Stop Destination for Devotional Commerce (Bhaktimay Vyapar)

For centuries, the dusty, sacred lanes of Vrindavan hummed with a unique kind of commerce—where the exchange of sandalwood, vibrant silks, dairy, textiles and fabrics felt less like a transaction and more like an offering. Today, that lost legacy of devotional commerce awakens anew at the Krishna Bhumi Arcade, Vrindavan.

Rising majestically within a sprawling 110-acre Krishna Bhumi Township, India's first religious and cultural organized retail mall

Krishna Bhumi Arcade will not be merely a shopping destination; rather a spiritual market reimagined for the modern pilgrim. Handcrafted deities, sacred texts, and authentic Braj handicrafts line the meticulously curated boutiques, bridging the gap between ancient devotion and contemporary convenience. In addition will be food court to savor pure, sattvic delicacies.

The Krishna Bhumi Arcade will stand as a vibrant tribute to Vrindavan's glorious past redefining the pilgrimage experience, proving that commerce, when infused with devotion, becomes a seamless extension of faith.

About Infinity Group : Infinity Group is a leading real estate developer renowned for its landmark projects across Kolkata's Salt Lake Sector V and beyond. With a diversified portfolio spanning IT parks, premium residential developments, and innovative retail concepts, Infinity Group leads with a steadfast commitment to green development and community-focused design.



RETAIL LEADERS DECODE INDIA'S NEXT GROWTH WAVE ACROSS TECHNOLOGY, CONSUMER BEHAVIOUR AND EXPERIENTIAL COMMERCE



India's retail industry came together at the seventh edition of the Phygital Retail Convention (PRC) 2026, held on 13 and 14 May at the Jio World Convention Centre under the theme 'The Great Indian Bazaar: A Global Growth Engine'.

Organised by IMAGES Group, the two-day convention hosted over 3,000 attendees, 1,000+ brands and retailers, and more than 300 industry leaders across 30+ conference sessions focused on retail technology, experiential commerce, shopping centres, AI, omnichannel retail and evolving consumer behaviour.

Retail Growth Shifts From Transactions to Experiences

A recurring theme across discussions on Day 1 was the transformation of retail from a transaction-led industry into an experience-driven ecosystem.

Industry leaders highlighted that consumers today are increasingly seeking convenience, community, aspiration and immersive engagement rather than simply purchasing products. Shopping centres, cafes and physical stores are evolving into lifestyle destinations designed around discovery and emotional connection.

"Consumers today are not just buying coffee or products. They are looking for comfort, community, aesthetics and the overall ecosystem within a store," said Rajat Agrawal, CEO, Barista.

Luxury retail also emerged as a major growth area at the convention. Mallikarjuna Reddy Yarabolu, Managing Director, De Beers India, said India has firmly established itself as a luxury market, driven by rising affluent consumers and stronger domestic availability of premium brands.

Community-Led Retail and Tier-II Growth Gain Momentum

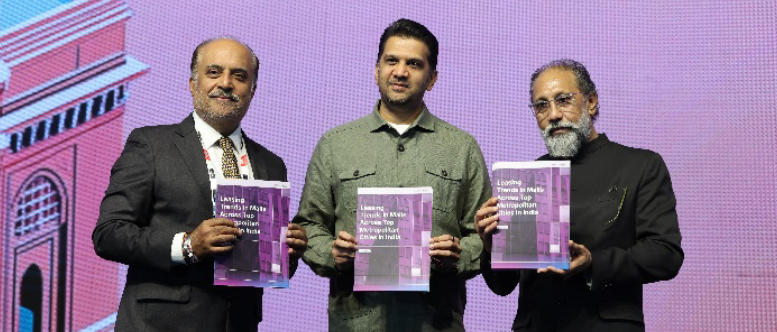
Another key discussion track during Day 1 focused on how malls and physical retail spaces are evolving into community-driven lifestyle ecosystems rather than purely transactional shopping destinations.

Speaking about the future of malls, Rajneesh Mahajan, CEO, Inorbit Malls, noted that successful malls are no longer defined only by infrastructure but by the overall consumer experience, engagement and atmosphere they create.

The potential of Tier II and Tier III markets also emerged as a major theme during discussions. Abhishek Bansal, Managing Director, Pacific Group, said aspiration and accessibility are increasingly driving consumption growth beyond metros, adding that there is significant demand in smaller cities when the right retail mix is introduced.

On the role of experience-led retail, Shibu Philips, Director – Shopping Malls, Lulu Group India, said malls now need to create compelling experiences that encourage consumers to step out of their homes, as convenience-led consumption is increasingly being addressed by online platforms and quick commerce.





The day also witnessed the launch of the report *Leasing Trends in Premium Malls in Major Indian Metros*, jointly published by IMAGES Group and ANAROCK.

Authenticity & Omnichannel Engagement Redefine Retail Growth

Customer engagement, authenticity and omnichannel convenience remained central to discussions throughout Day 2 of PRC 2026.

Speaking about the growing influence of digital discovery, Nazim Virji, Director, Regal Shoes, said, “Consumers aspire to emulate what they see online, whether it is fashion, footwear or skincare. But despite digital discovery, customers still want to come to malls and stores for the joy of trial, social interaction and the pampering experience.

Speaking on the evolving landscape, Sandeep Varaganti, CEO, JioMart, said quick commerce continues to emerge as one of the fastest-growing retail segments in India, though operational efficiency will remain critical for sustainable growth.

Meanwhile, Padmakumar Pal, Co-founder, ZILO, highlighted how quick commerce and blended shopping experiences are reshaping expectations around convenience and engagement. “Customers today are buying into experiences rather than just transactions. Convenience, aspiration and excitement are becoming critical across every price point,” he said.

Gen Z and Aspirational Consumption Reshape Brand Building

Conversations during Day 2 of the convention also focused on how Gen Z consumers are redefining loyalty, discovery and engagement.

Industry leaders observed that younger consumers now expect brands to reflect aspiration, authenticity and emotional relevance rather than relying solely on discounts or traditional advertising.

Speaking about evolving consumer-brand relationships, Ankur Damani, Commercial Director & Country Head – India & Sri Lanka, Triumph, said, “Consumers today look at what a brand stands for, whether it reflects aspiration, inclusivity and emotional connection. The customer journey is no longer just transactional, it is experience-led.”



Highlighting the growing importance of creator-led discovery, Harsh Somaiya, Co-Founder, The Bear House, said, “Today it is more about influencers, relatability and how users talk about products. Consumers want to see how the product fits into their own lives.”

Meanwhile, Amit Sarada, Managing Director, Soulflower, noted that Gen Z consumers strongly value transparency and authenticity, quickly disengaging from brands that fail to align with their stated values.

Executives also pointed out that aspiration today cuts across value and premium segments alike, especially as consumption rises rapidly across Tier II and Tier III markets.

The day also marked the launch of *The Golden Era – India’s Jewellery Retail Landscape 2026* report, unveiled by Nikhil Bhatia, Managing Director, Capital Markets & Lands, CBRE India.

IMAGES Retail Awards 2026

The convention also hosted the IMAGES Retail Awards 2026, recognising retailers, brands and technology innovators across categories including customer engagement, experiential retail, AI-powered marketing, retail design and business expansion.

Among the key winners, Domino's won the award for IMAGES Most Admired Retailer of the Year: Overall Topline Growth, while The Bear House was recognised for IMAGES Most Admired Retailer of the Year: Retail Design/Experience and Market Expansion.

Other notable winners included Pepe Jeans London for IMAGES Most Admired Retailer of the Year: CRM / Loyalty Programme and IMAGES Most Admired Marketing Campaign of the Year: Digital / Social Media for its Social Discovery campaign, Max Fashion for IMAGES Most Admired Retailer of the Year: Retail Concept, and Mohanlal Sons for IMAGES Most Admired Retailer of the Year: Visual Merchandising. Little Caesars Pizza won IMAGES Most Admired Retail Launch of the Year: Brand Debut, while The Body Shop and Sri Ram & Son were recognised under IMAGES Most Admired Retail Launch of the Year: Concept Store.

In the technology segment, Kentrix AI was recognised for consumer intelligence through geospatial analytics, while Kumba.AI and SOCH won for AI-powered marketing automation. TagID and Style Union were also honoured for supply chain innovation under the Retail TechNXT Awards category

THE 5TH EDITION OF THE RETAILERS' REWARD & RECOGNITION EVENT HOSTED BY VEGAS MALL (DWARKA, NEW DELHI)



The 5th Edition of Retailers' Reward & Recognition at Vegas is an annual celebration dedicated to strengthening relationships with retail partners and recognising outstanding brand performance. The evening will be attended by Directors of Vegas – Kanwal Kumar, Suresh Anand, Anmol Anand, Sambhav Chhadha – along with Harsh Vardhan Bansal, Co-Founder & Director, Unity One & Vegas. Retailers will be felicitated across multiple achievement categories, including the prestigious 100+ CR, 75+ CR, and 50+ CR Clubs, celebrating brands that have achieved exceptional consumption milestones and contributed significantly to the mall's retail success.

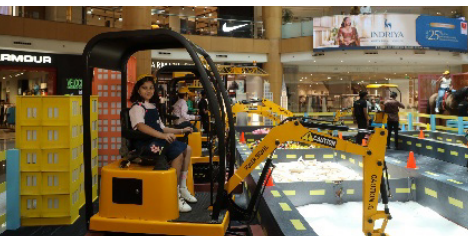


BRICKS & FARMS IS AN INTERACTIVE SUMMER PLAY ZONE AT VEGAS MALL

Bricks & Farms is a kids' summer activation at the Central Atrium of Vegas, spread across a massive 2,700+ sq. ft. area. Designed to give children an engaging and adventure-filled experience, the setup is divided into two interactive zones—Construction & Farming.

The Construction zone includes activities with JCBs, cranes, excavator games, digging areas, and sandbox play, while the Farming zone features horse riding, cow milking, tractor rides, pony interactions, and vegetable hunt activities.

Created as a high-engagement summer experience, Bricks & Farms offers kids a fun space to play, explore, and enjoy their summers in a unique and interactive way.



ROBO BASH 2026

Tapadia city centre Mall proudly presents "ROBO BASH 2026" – Vidarbha's most exciting robotic gaming and tech entertainment experience, running from 24th April to 14th June at the Central Atrium, Tapadia city centre Mall.

Designed for all age groups, Robo Bash brings together technology, entertainment, gaming, and innovation under one roof. The event features thrilling robotic attractions and interactive games including Robo Soccer, Robo War Arena, Robo Maze, Arcade Car Track, and many more exciting experiences for kids, families, students, and gaming enthusiasts. Visitors will also get the unique experience of interacting with advanced Humanoid Robots and intelligent Robo Dogs, adding a futuristic and engaging element to the event.

The objective of Robo Bash is to offer visitors a unique and futuristic entertainment zone while creating a vibrant family destination during the summer season. The event has already become one of the biggest attractions in the city, drawing visitors from Amravati and nearby regions.

Apart from robotic games and activities, the event also includes live engagement sessions, interactive challenges, exciting prizes, weekend crowd engagement activities, and social media activations to enhance the customer experience. Special demonstrations by Humanoid Robots and Robo Dogs will further entertain and amaze visitors with their advanced movements, interactions, and smart technology. With its high-energy setup and immersive gaming atmosphere, Robo Bash delivers a perfect blend of fun, technology, and innovation.

Tapadia city centre Mall continues to introduce new-age experiential events to provide customers with memorable experiences beyond shopping. Robo Bash is another step towards making Tapadia city centre Mall a leading entertainment and lifestyle destination in Vidarbha.

Visitors are invited to experience the future of gaming and robotics only at Tapadia city centre Mall from 24th April to 14th June and enjoy a summer filled with action, excitement, and entertainment.

TCC ROBOBASH
24th April Onwards

Tapadia City Centre

Robo Soccer
Robo War Arena
Robo Maze
RC Car Track

WEEKEND FUN
Weekend aa gaya... ab plan bhi level up karo
Experience it. Don't just watch it.

Tapadia City Centre Mall

TCC ROBOBASH
24th April - 14th June

Tapadia City Centre

HEARD THE BUZZ?
It's time to go
ROBO.
Vidarbha's first robotic gaming experience

Robo Soccer
Robo Maze
RC Car Track
Robo War Arena

1 Call the gang 2 Battle at RoboBash 3 Post the victory story

Now at TCC

TCC ROBOBASH
24th April - 14th June

Tapadia City Centre

52 DAYS OF FUN!

Robotic Gaming Experience

Robo War Arena | Robo Maze | RC Car Track | Robo Soccer

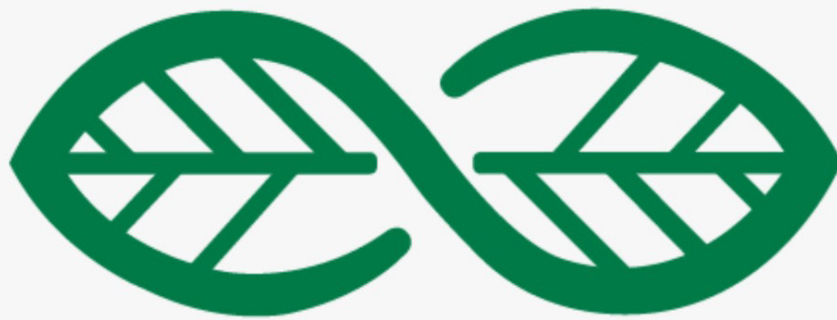
TCC banega Tech Playground!



WARM WELCOME

SCAI WELCOMES INFINITY GROUP AS A VALUED MEMBER OF ITS GROWING NETWORK

With a distinguished 26-year legacy of service to the Nation, Infinity Group has established a robust presence across Eastern India, encompassing premier commercial, residential, and retail developments in Kolkata, Guwahati, and Vrindavan. Building upon its expansive retail success in Kolkata, the group is now pioneering India's first dedicated Religious and Cultural Mall Krishna Bhumi Arcade in the sacred city of Vrindavan.



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