

# Shopping Centre News

DEVELOPING RETAIL SPACES IN INDIA

#77



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# Future of the Shopping Centre Industry Depends on Solidarity

Humans are social animals, and a very important part of socializing in a country like India where open spaces are scarce are shopping centres. Unfortunately, with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, this social lifeline of the country has come to a screeching halt. For the past five weeks, shopping centres have become deserted, forced to shut in the wake of a nationwide lockdown to control the spread of the Novel Coronavirus pandemic.

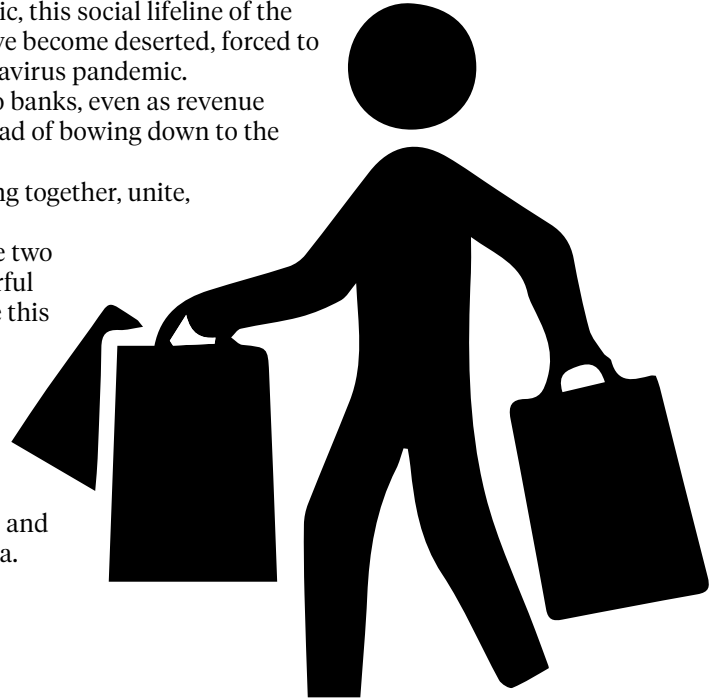
To add to the woes of shopping centres – which include pressure of repayments to banks, even as revenue streams dry up – no relief seems to be coming from the government. However, instead of bowing down to the pressure, mall developers are rallying in the face of this black swan event.

Mall developers, retailers, restaurant owners and entertainment players are rallying together, unite, determined to make it through the pandemic unscathed.

We at Shopping Centre News Bureau firmly believe that malls and retailers are the two pillars of a vibrant, essential eco-system for modern retail in India – the most powerful measure of any country's economic health and they must stand unified to overcome this crisis.

This special digital edition of Shopping Centre News brings you analysis, reports, webinars on the impact, challenges, recommendations and opinions of industry experts which will help you take the right steps to help your business stay solvent in the fight against the COVID-19 crisis.

As always, I hope you find the issue informative and beneficial. Do log on to our website, [www.indiaretailing.com](http://www.indiaretailing.com) to read articles, features and updates on COVID-19 and other developments on the global shopping mall industry with an emphasis on India.



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## Shopping Centre Developers Waive off Rents to Support Retailers, Restaurants & FECs

Despite the fact that the shopping centre industry in the red due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis and the lockdown, developers are showing empathy to the brands associated with them...

By Shopping Centre Bureau

## New Leasing of Retail Spaces May Take Hit in Short-Term Due to Lockdown

India's commercial real estate, which has been performing well for the last few years despite a slowdown in the property market, is likely to be impacted due to nationwide lockdown as market experts see short-term effect on demand-supply of office and retail spaces, besides pressure on rentals values.

According to a PTI report, Corporates and retailers, both global and domestic, are expected to delay their decisions on fresh leasing of commercial spaces by at least a quarter. The commercial real estate market is already witnessing re-negotiations of existing rentals and rent waivers from landlords as businesses have been affected due to the ongoing nationwide lockdown to check the spread of coronavirus disease, according to property consultants and developers.

"The impact of COVID-19 in India is likely to be short-lived providing the virus remains relatively contained," Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO – India, South East Asia, Middle East & Africa, CBRE was quoted by PTI as saying. "Office leasing demand as of now has been unaffected due to a sustained appetite amongst US and EU based corporates for India as an outsourcing destination. The evolving global situation could only potentially result in delayed decision-making in the short term," he told PTI.

Office space leasing was at an all-time high during 2019 at around 50-60 million sq ft in seven major cities.





# LOANS OF OVER ₹25,000 CRORES & MILLIONS JOBS AT STAKE AS HUNDREDS OF SHOPPING CENTRES FACE CLOSURE

The industry, which had written to the government seeking financial help, is now struck with several banks writing to mall owners directing them to deposit rental payments for the month of April in Escrow accounts against lease rental discounting facility availed by the industry players...

By Shopping Centre News Bureau...

**T**he Indian Shopping Centre Industry is reeling under the pressure of repayments to banks, even as revenue streams dry up and no relief seems to be coming from the government amid the coronavirus pandemic that has forced malls across the country to shut down for non-essential items. Since

Food, Grocery, pharmacies and restaurants were allowed to operate for takeaways and deliveries for some part of the day, shopping centres housing such stores had to remain functional but at very high cost with additional overheads towards screening, sanitization and maintaining social distancing norms.

The industry, which had written to the government seeking financial help, is now struck with several banks writing to mall owners directing them to deposit rental payments for the month of April in Escrow accounts against lease rental discounting facility availed by the industry players. It is pertinent to note that of the 650-odd

organised shopping centres across the country, more than 550 are single owned by standalone developers. In addition, there would be some 1000 malls of less than 100,000 sq ft also in Tier II, III cities that face similar fate. Till only a month back these malls were the only social spaces of these city dwellers and the hotspots for visiting guests.

# WATER KINGDOM, ASIA'S LARGEST THEME WATER PARK, TURNS 22

*With 10 million-plus visitors and still counting, this water park has been ruling the hearts of Mumbaikars for the last 22 years...*

– By Shopping Centre News Bureau

Come May and India's first – and Asia's largest theme water park – Water Kingdom, will turn 22 years old. Launched in 1998, the water park till date attracts thousands of people every year from across the country, always living up to guest expectations. Located on the coastal village of Gorai in the northwest region of Mumbai, the park is enveloped in a scenic setting that offers wholesome thrill and entertainment throughout the year.

## Splash Rides

For people of all age groups, the 'Water Kingdom' is the ultimate entertainment zone. Spanning 22 acres, it offers 33 mind-blowing attractions including

- The Lagoon
- Brat Zone
- Adventures of Amazonia,
- Goofer's Lagoon
- Misphisly Hill

One of the main attractions here is India's Largest Aqua Play Pool - The Lagoon. Spread over 30,000 sq. ft., it is a perfect family play port with 10 different play elements. Another enticing feature is Wetlantic, the largest wave pool in the world. It is as big as the Olympic swimming pool, where great dance numbers and 6-feet-high waves together give one a magnifying experience.

Aquadrome is also a unique feature at the Water Kingdom, where a dance zone of 7000 sq. ft. is set with numerous water sprinklers. Misphisly Hill has 12 terrifying high-adrenaline rides which add to people's fun through 'Juicy Jammer', 'Turbo Terminator', 'Black Demon' and 'Lemon Drops'.

The 'Drifting River' here is a loop of gently flowing water that promises tons of excitement with slow currents, where people can relax while they float. And finally, the 'Adventure Amazonia', a water ride that gives you a breathtaking experience.

## Architecture

Water Kingdom is inspired by the 'Lost in the Jungle' theme and is conceptualised by the EsselWorld family. One can experience that through every element of the park right from



the entry point to every ride and slide.

Designed by a renowned French architect, the Water Kingdom is one of the most spectacular water parks in the country. It is a never-seen-before attractions set amidst unique architecture with international standard amenities and hygiene, catapults it into a different league. Apart from the slides, rides and fun activities, the park also has several restaurants that promise lip-smacking delectable delights.

## Rainwater Harvesting and Filtration Plants

The Water Kingdom is part of the 64-acre island of fun that also houses EsselWorld, EsselWorld Bird Park and EsselWorld Tic Tac Tot. The island also has 5 different rainwater harvesting reservoirs for storing lakhs and lakhs litres of water. This water is used daily



by the Park for all rides and slides. Further, the park has filtration plants that filter 90 lakh litres of water and recycle it every 90 minutes.

## Events & Celebrations

The Water Kingdom hosts some of the most energetic and thrilling events of the country. Every year in May, the park celebrates its anniversary (for a month) where India's Top DJs are invited to perform at the Wavepool stage every weekend. Some of the best grooving music is played that gives guests an exciting experience. Moreover, the water park is also host to India's biggest Holi party, celebrates Eid, and is also the only water park that is open to guests for BigNite, the New Year's Eve celebration that goes on until the wee hours.

# LULU MALL KOCHI PARTIALLY OPEN DURING LOCKDOWN, HELPS SHOPPERS IN ORGANISED MANNER

LuLu Mall, Kochi has remained open for hypermarkets, pharmacies, and essentials from 7 am to 5 pm every day during the lockdown. Along with this restaurant takeaway and delivery services are also open till 8 pm in the night...

By Sandeep Kumar



**E**ven as the entire shopping mall and retail industry is struggling to deal with the COVID-19 crisis, LuLu Mall Kochi is helping out shoppers of Kerala in a very organised manner as per the government norms and security measure.

As per a Kerala Government's directive on April 2, 2020, "Central and State Governments have enforced (so many) regulations in the form of 'Lockdown' to contain the spread of COVID-19. As per existing instructions shops selling essential items, including take away counters of hotels are allowed to function only 7 am to 5 pm daily."

The state order further reads: "Now government is pleased to allow the online/at door delivery of food items, including cooked food from take away counters of hotels, up to 8 pm in relaxation of the existing general order. Shops selling essential items including bakeries and counter supply from take away counters of hotels shall stop by 5 pm itself. These shops can operate online delivery till 8 pm. Online suppliers shall stop their operations before 9 pm every day."

Keeping in mind the directive, LuLu Mall, Kochi has remained open for hypermarkets, pharmacies, and essentials from 7 am to 5 pm every day during the lockdown. Along with this restaurant takeaway and delivery services are also open till 8 pm in the night.

In an exclusive interaction, **Shibu Philips, Business Head, LuLu Mall** explains how his shopping centre is handling the situation in a very constructive and organised manner to aid shoppers, while maintaining social distancing and proper hygiene.

***Amidst rigorous lockdown and social distancing orders, tell us how you have managed to keep the mall partially operational?***

We are still in Lockdown, but as per the government norms, we were allowed to open essential service stores on a daily basis. LuLu Kochi remained open for hypermarkets, pharmacies, and essentials from 7 am to 5 pm every day during the lockdown. Along with this restaurant takeaway and delivery services are also open till 8 pm in the night. The hypermarket along with

# SHOPPING CENTRES REINVENT THEMSELVES IN COVID TIMES: **PREPARE SOPs TO RE-OPEN PREMISES**

The Shopping Centre Association of India is of the firm opinion that amid this black swan event that we are faced with, the best bet for the Indian Government is to re-open shopping malls, since they are professionally run and can control factors like hygiene and social distancing better than local markets, neighbourhood shops and kirana stores...

By Shopping Centre News Bureau

**I**n a late night order on Friday, April 24, 2020, the government had allowed opening of shops as part of the easing down of lockdown restrictions announced on April 15 with neighbourhood shops and others being to re-open allowed within the city. Shops were allowed outside the city limits – except those in malls – with 50 percent workforce while wearing of masks has been made compulsory.

The Ministry of Home Affairs on Saturday issued a clarification saying that only standalone shops have been allowed to open as per the directive and that the order does not apply to COVID-19 containment zones, or liquor stores. The ministry also stated that sales by e-commerce companies will continue to be restricted to essential goods only.

***No shops have been allowed to open in multi-brand or single brand malls, the order had further said.***

Shopping centres, which are already reeling under the effects of the coronavirus pandemic – including the pressure of repayments to banks, even as revenue streams dry up – were extremely disappointed seeing that no relief seems to be coming from the government.

The Indian Shopping Centre Industry is now struck with several banks writing to mall owners directing them to deposit payments for the month of April in Escrow accounts against lease rental discounting facility availed by the industry players.

Shopping Centre Association of India (SCAI) believes that this is just the beginning and other banks are likely to follow suit which will put the shopping centre industry in great financial distress, impact more than 50 percent malls across the country and lead to loss of lakhs of jobs.

SCAI is of the firm opinion that in this unprecedented situation, the best bet for the government should be to re-open malls, since they are professionally run and can control factors like hygiene and social distancing better than local markets, neighbourhood shops and kirana stores.

### **3-Phase Strategy for Re-Opening of Shopping Centres**

Continuing its own efforts to help the sector tide over this period and find workable solutions for the industry, SCAI has created comprehensive Use Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the reopening of Malls in the country.

The SOPs were prepared by SCAI after several consultations with the captains of the Industry as well as adopted global best practices to ensure that the spread Covid-19 is contained. SCAI is also keen to work



The Shopping Centres Association of India (SCAI), organised its first virtual roundtable – ‘Future of Shopping Centres’. The inaugural session was the first in the webinar series called ‘SCAI Mondays’. The webinar was hosted by **Amitabh Taneja, Chairman, SCAI** and moderated by **Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock**. The session witnessed a live conversation between four of India’s leading shopping centre industry veterans:

- **Atul Ruia, Chairman, Phoenix Mills**
- **Abhishek Bansal, Executive Director, Pacific Group**
- **R Jaishankar, CMD, Brigade Group**
- **Rahul Saraf, MD, Forum Projects.**



## THE FUTURE OF SHOPPING CENTRES POST COVID-19

In a virtual roundtable conducted by SCAI, Shopping mall developers discuss about the impact of COVID 19 on the industry and what would be the road to recovery when lockdown gets over...

By Shopping Centre News Bureau...

These industry captains dissected how the Indian Shopping Centre Industry is reeling under the pressure of a lockdown, bank loans, dried up revenue streams and no relief from the government amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

### Shopping Centres v/s Neighbourhood Stores

In a late night order on Friday, April 24, 2020, the government of India had allowed opening of shops as part of the easing down of lockdown restrictions announced on April 15 with neighbourhood

shops and others being to re-open allowed within the city. Shops were allowed outside the city limits – except those in malls – with 50 per cent workforce while wearing of masks has been made compulsory.

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Talking about this development, **Atul Ruia, Chairman, Phoenix Mills**, said, “In China, shopping centres have opened recently and 70-80 percent shoppers are back in the mall and in IKEA stores in Germany around 63 percent customers are back. It is expected that within three months of reopening, normalisation is expected to be back in the malls. So, the biggest question is how to reopen safely.”

In Dubai too, reopening of malls was a top priority on the government agenda.

“Organised retail largely operates out of shopping malls. A lot of nationalised players are present in this industry. Fundamentally, the government can, through a single instruction – i.e. follow strict sanitization and social distancing norms – give a diktat to a billion square feet which is the Indian shopping centre industry. We will follow them precisely, including following other precautions for example: every staff member and customer must a mask, every cinema should have only 50 percent occupancy, restaurants should have partitions and distances between tables, guidelines on air-conditioning, parking and entryways and exits in malls,” Ruia said.

He added that these kind of restrictions were not easy to impose in neighbourhood shops and therefore it was extremely logical for the government to promote re-opening of malls in the country.



# RETAIL ESTATE: THE POST PANDEMIC ROAD TO RECOVERY

Growel's 101 ran a customer survey campaign with its Loyalty Program members as an engagement initiative and also to understand customer expectations on re-opening of the mall...

By Sachin Dhanawade, Chief Operating Officer,  
Retail & Real Estate, Grauer & Weil (India) Limited

**A**s the COVID-19 outbreak grips the nation, the Indian retail real estate market, in particular, has been hit hard, with consumption sentiment weakening and regional tourism experiencing a shutdown. This in turn is expected to have an adverse impact on economy.

In order to rejuvenate the retail sector, the Government will have to take backseat on fiscal prudence & take bold steps to ensure that this sector does not stunt.



**Here's my understanding of the impact and the fastest road to revival:**

## Impact on Retail Real Estate

Retail real estate owners will be staring at a challenge of retaining present tenants and leasing out new spaces. There is also a possibility that existing tenants due to limited or no income in the past months may look at resizing or venture into alternate businesses for survival. In this case it is imperative that we work closely with such tenants and ensure business continuity post lockdown.

For most mall owners if rents go down their loans towards the banks will be under strain. With the current position of retail real estate, it will be difficult for them to generate the necessary revenue. Hence it is critical that the tenants as well as the mall owners look at the current situation from both ends and plan their discussions appropriately.

Malls under construction are expected to face a delay of a few months due to the stoppage of construction during the lockdown. It is also quite likely that developers may take a call to scrap malls that are in the initial stages of construction and think for alternate business to get the desired returns. In

my opinion, healthcare would be a good alternate as it is now the need of the hour.

While various representing bodies have filed petitions with the Government of India, representing their respective industries, it will be interesting to wait and see the kind of support that is extended to bring back businesses to normalcy at the soonest possible.

While there is absolutely no certainty on anything at the moment, it is advisable to go with the flow for now, have quarterly forecast and for the remaining quarters of the year, appropriate changes can be done to the business model depending on how the situation pans out over the course of the next 3-4 months.

## Digitization to the Rescue

Due to the contagious nature of the pandemic and the necessity



# SHOPPING MALLS POST COVID-19: FROM RECOVERY TO REVIVAL

Industry leaders talked about how to keep the retail industry safe, healthy and insulated and with a true partnership approach – be reasonable with partners, collaborate across the supply chain, and involve business models to face tough times ahead...

By Shopping Centre News Bureau

The Retailers Association of India (RAI) hosted a Webinar titled 'Malls in a Post COVID-19 Scenario: From Recovery to Revival', as a part of its ongoing 'Coping with COVID-19' series. The panel comprised thought leaders from the shopping mall and retail industries including:

- **Alok Tandon**, Chief Executive Officer, Inox Leisure Ltd
- **Ashwin Puri**, Co-Founder & CEO, Lake Shore India;
- **Dalip Sehgal**, CEO, Nexus Malls;
- **Riyaz Amlani**, CEO & MD, Impresario Handmade Restaurants
- **Vishak Kumar**, CEO, Madura Fashion & Lifestyle (MF&L), Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail Ltd. (ABFRL).

The panel was moderated by Anuj Kejriwal, MD & CEO, ANAROCK Retail Advisors Pvt. Ltd.

Anuj Kejriwal introduced the topic of discussion by explaining the current situation saying, "We are here to talk about how we keep our retail industry safe, healthy and insulated and we



*what steps can we take to put in place those safety standards? What is the cost implication of these changes?*

**Vishak Kumar, CEO, Madura Fashion & Lifestyle and ABFRL:**

We need to look at this situation in time frames. There is a time frame when we reopen and then the entire industry will have to over-manage the transition. Consumers are looking forward

will try and do that with a true partnership approach. Hence, it is important that we are reasonable with our partners, collaborate across the supply chain, and involve our business models to face the time ahead."

#### **Excerpts from the question-answer session:**

**What are the best practices other countries are following and what are the learnings that we could bring to India from there in this current situation?**

**Dalip Sehgal, CEO, Nexus Malls:** Most industries will see major changes and shifts in SOPs. Outlook towards business, shifts in customer patterns, categories, cost efficiency are the few

major things that will make an impact. We as an industry need to look after each other and be reasonable with our partners for costs for survival in phase I and II. The following 4S formula will be a solution to many challenges:

- **Safety:** Safety and security of consumers and employees must be paramount.
- **Secure:** Need to work regain trust and confidence of consumers.
- **Supply & Merchandising:** Need to focus on supply and sufficient merchandising stock for customers.
- **Source:** Need to focus on 'Live inventory'.

**Is there going to be an evolution in the way retail spaces are designed and**

to a contactless shopping experience. Brands are also focusing on their e-commerce business which will have an impact on offline business, hence new norm will come in business which focuses on cost efficiency and retailers will seek help from mall operators, landlord etc. The industry will also have to accept and find solutions to the new norms related to social distancing and other safety measures.

**How will the new distance policy/situation have an impact on F&B?**

**Riyaz Amlani, CEO & MD, Impresario Handmade Restaurants:** The interesting thing is that most restaurants actually work on 30-40 percent occupancy. There will be a

# ABU DHABI AND DUBAI PREPARE TO REOPEN MALLS WITH NEW RULES

While shopping centres will be allowed to operate for 10 hours, consumer visiting hours will be capped at three. During the first phase of reopening, entertainment centres, cinemas as well as prayer rooms and public seating will remain closed

By Charu Lamba



**A**bu Dhabi and Dubai have announced preparations to reopen malls and shopping centers, issuing guidelines for business owners and shoppers. However, Dubai Economy has asked businesses to be on 'standby' for official announcements on the date of reopening and timings.

Dubai Economy has emphasised that as part of gradual reopening of retail businesses, shopping centres and high street locations will have to maintain 30 percent occupancy in common and gross leasable areas, while 75 percent of mall parking will remain closed. F&B outlets will have to reduce seating arrangements to 30 percent and maintain a six-foot distance between tables. Similarly, stores will have to indicate the maximum number of people allowed inside, maintaining a distance of four feet.

Social distancing of two feet will have to be maintained.

While shopping centres will be allowed to operate for 10 hours, consumer visiting hours will be capped at three. During the first phase of reopening, entertainment centres, cinemas as well as prayer rooms and public seating will remain closed.

## **Guidelines for reopening by Dubai Economy include –**

- 24 hour mall Sanitisation
- Mandatory temperature screening and checks for everyone entering the mall
- Elderly above 60 years old and children between the ages of 3-12 years are not permitted to enter
- Opening of all mall entry points
- Provision of masks and hand sanitisers
- Mandatory isolation rooms
- Sanitisation for each item after

- each trial
- Food court and F&B outlets distancing compliance
- Promote smart payments as preferred method
- Prohibit sales and promotional activities

Dubai Economy also said that mall management is "encouraged" to make retailers pay rental for the lease areas based on a pro-rata charge for the number of hours the store stays open instead of a full day rental. If retailers have to renew their lease, there should be no increase on rent after renewal, it added.

## **Guidelines and Precautionary Measures issued by The Department of Economic Development of Abu Dhabi:-**

- Working hours will be from 12:00 pm – 09:00 pm

- Restrictions of commercial activities and services apply to gyms, cinemas, entertainment venues
- Mall capacity shall not exceed 30 percent and no entry for seniors above 60 years old
- F&B outlets will operate at 30 percent seating capacity, maximum 4 people per table with minimum 2.5 m distance between tables

## **Mall Measures:-**

- Masks and gloves are mandatory for all visitors
- Limit parking capacity to 50 percent by marking parking spots and 3 people permitted per car
- Deny entry to anyone recording above 38C
- Regular sanitization throughout the mall including all touchpoints and escalators
- Encourage cashless payment methods
- Lifts will be restricted to people of determination with 2 people capacity
- All touch screens must be disabled
- Paramedics to be available throughout mall trading hours

## **Tenant Measures:-**

- Mandatory use of masks and gloves for staff
- Testing of all staff for COVID-19 before mall re-opening
- Daily and regular store sanitization
- Encourage cashless transactions
- No refunds or exchanges permitted
- Sanitization of trolleys before and after every use
- Restriction of product testing such as make up, shoe trials, perfumes and total closure of trial rooms
- Daily restaurant sanitization including tables and seats after every use
- Only disposable utensils with take away packaging
- Availability of sanitizers at every counter
- Salons limited to hair and nail services only by appointment with no waiting areas and implementing social distancing measures ●



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