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INDIA FOOD FORUM
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Keynote Addresses,
Awards, Product
Launches, and More.

FMCG
Ghodawat Consumer's
Roadmap to Rs.5,000
Crore by 2030.



Red Rose Supermarket

Three Cousins Redefining Value Retail
in Hyderabad

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Editor's Note

➔ India's FMCG sector is entering a phase where fierce competition is reshaping strategy and scale. As consumption steadies and inflation softens, legacy majors are defending share, digital-first challengers are accelerating, and regional players are pushing for national presence. In this context, our December issue features Ghodawat Consumer (*pages 18–24*) as a case study in the strategic reset many mid-sized FMCG firms are undertaking. Its 5X growth ambition, shift from manufacturing-led to innovation- and brand-driven expansion, and push to premiumise staples while scaling lifestyle brands mirror how India's next chapter of FMCG growth may be shaped as much by agile, fast-rising contenders as by established giants.

Our cover story (*pages 26–37*) spotlights Hyderabad-based Red Rose Supermarket, a young disruptor rapidly redefining affordable modern retail. In just two years, it has grown from a family tyre-puncture shop into a Rs.75-crore debut and a Rs.125-crore second year, driven by 25-year-old CEO Zia Rahman and Business Head Sreedhar Tejomurtula.

Today, Red Rose operates five stores across Hyderabad, spanning 80,000 sq. ft. of retail space with a 75,000 sq. ft. flagship set to open. The chain clocks 1.5 lakh monthly bill cuts and averages roughly Rs.1,950 per sq. ft. per day in sales—all while operating on razor-thin margins to remain the city's undisputed price leader.

To round off this issue, we bring you the highlights of India Food Forum 2025. With 3,000+ attendees, 500+ brands, 250+ experts, and 100+ exhibitors, it remains the most comprehensive business platform across India's food value chain.

Turn to *pages 38–61* for a front-row view of the Forum's most compelling moments—incisive panels, powerful keynotes, this year's Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Award winners, breakthrough product showcases, and more. More than a recap, it's a curated snapshot of where India's food industry is heading—and a reminder that the ideas, innovations, and alliances forged here will shape the sector's growth trajectory in the years ahead.



Amitabh Taneja | Editor-in-Chief

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Red Rose Supermarket

Redefining Affordable Modern Retail in Hyderabad



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A Fresh Advantage: Goldiee's Reinvention of Spice Preservation

The rules of food retail in India have changed. Shelf stability, supply-chain resilience, and sensory consistency now dictate buying behaviour far more than brand recall alone. Spices, being among the most delicate and volatile products, sit at the centre of this shift. Goldiee's Fresh Lock responds to this new reality with a packaging intervention aimed squarely at protecting freshness across the entire retail cycle.



In categories like spices, where aroma, purity, and sensory impact define loyalty, the customer focus is on freshness is more pronounced than ever. For a legacy brand like Goldiee, trusted for decades in Indian kitchens, this moment demanded more than incremental improvement. Their answer is Fresh Lock, a packaging breakthrough that recasts how masalas should be preserved in an evolving retail ecosystem.

Fresh Lock isn't a cosmetic redesign. It is a technology-led rethink of the spice pack itself. Moisture, heat, and air exposure have always been the disruptors that strip masalas of their vibrancy. Once aroma escapes or natural oils dissipate, quality drops irreversibly. Fresh Lock's high-barrier, moisture-resistant construction is engineered to shut out these variables entirely, creating a sealed environment that protects the volatility of spices from production to consumption.

For retailers, the value is immediate and measurable. Traditional packaging often fails under real supply-chain conditions—transport heat, storage humidity, and multiple handling points. These inconsistencies lead to product degradation, consumer complaints, and weaker repeat cycles. Fresh Lock changes that trajectory. The technology stabilises the product across every leg of

➔ **By solving a long-standing industry pain point, Goldiee positions itself firmly ahead in the race for quality-focused, experience-driven spice consumption. In a category long challenged by moisture and handling issues, this innovation sets a new benchmark for freshness and reliability**

movement, ensuring that what reaches the shelf is as potent as what left the factory. Retailers benefit from longer shelf stability, fewer returns, and stronger consumer trust.

Inside the kitchen, the change is instantly recognisable. The fragrance that escapes the moment the pack is opened. The clean, unclumped texture. The deeper, natural colour. The flavour consistency that holds across recipes. As home cooks demand purer, more authentic experiences—and as regional cuisines gain renewed attention—Fresh Lock delivers the sensory reliability that today's consumer expects.

What sets this innovation apart is the balance Goldiee strikes between heritage and precision engineering. The brand has always understood the heartbeat of the Indian kitchen, but Fresh Lock signals a readiness to lead the next phase of category evolution. While many players continue with traditional packaging, Goldiee is moving the industry forward

with a solution that solves a longstanding, structural challenge.

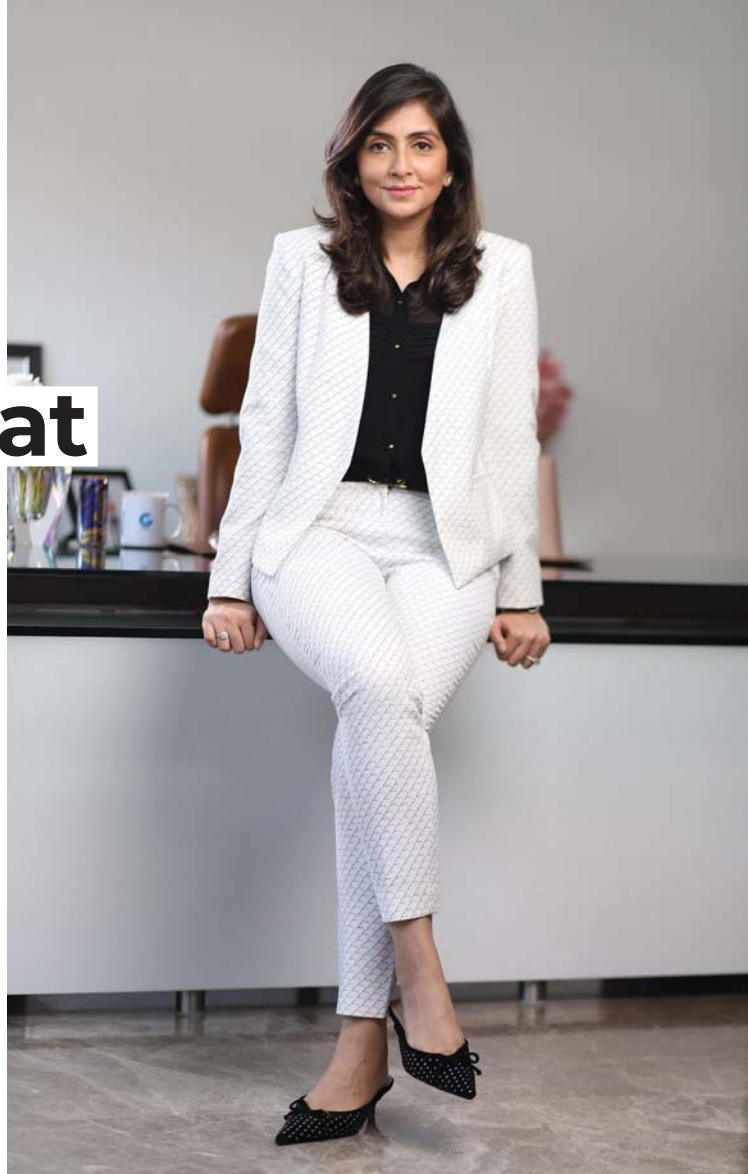
Another layer to this shift is its alignment with today's fast-expanding retail channels. Hypermarkets, convenience formats, and quick-commerce platforms place increased pressure on product stability, given fluctuating temperatures and unpredictable transit cycles. Whether the pack sits on a shelf under bright lighting or travels in a delivery bag across the city, its integrity remains intact, giving retailers and consumers the same level of trust.

As the spice market grows more crowded, differentiation has become rare—and often superficial. Fresh Lock breaks that pattern. It is a practical, tangible innovation that directly enhances product performance. By protecting freshness at every step, Goldiee is setting a new benchmark for quality in a category where expectations are rising faster than ever. ■■

Inside Ghodawat Consumer's Roadmap to Rs.5,000 Crore by 2030

In an FMCG landscape crowded with legacy narratives and hyper-funded disruptors, Ghodawat Consumer has carved out a growth story defined less by noise and more by quiet, deliberate momentum. Under CEO Salloni Ghodawat, the company has embraced a strategic reset—leaning into data, design, and disciplined expansion while staying anchored in the trust it enjoys across millions of households.

By Sanjay Kumar



Ghodawat Consumer Limited (GCL) has no illusions about the scale of its ambition. From a largely regional staples business anchored in edible oil, salt and flour, the company now wants to multiply its topline more than fivefold within the next five years – transforming a Rs.1,200-crore portfolio into a Rs.5,000 crore FMCG powerhouse by 2030.

Led by CEO Salloni Ghodawat, GCL is re-architecting its growth engine: deepening its dominance in staples, building out high-margin brands like Coolberg and To Be Honest (TBH), shifting to an asset-light manufacturing model, doubling down on technology-driven distribution, and using quick commerce and smart acquisitions to take its “house of trust” from South Maharashtra and North Karnataka to the rest of India and over 17 global markets.

It's an audacious ambition, but it does not come from a blank slate. GCL already sits on a 20-year legacy as a hard-core staples player whose journey started with edible oil in 2003, serving the soybean belts around Kolhapur. Over time, the portfolio expanded into flour and salt, and later into rice, pulses, beverages and snacks – creating a solid, if largely regional, FMCG platform.

For years, the brand was tightly woven into the food habits of South Maharashtra and North Karnataka, where “Star oil” is often asked for by name in Tier-2 and Tier-3 markets. “People in the villages and small towns have known us for 20–25 years,” Salloni notes. “They walk into a shop and say ‘give us oil in Star’s name.’ That trust is our biggest strength.”



Red Rose Supermarket

Redefining Affordable Modern Retail in Hyderabad

Barely two years old, Red Rose Supermarket already feels like an institution in Hyderabad's Old City: a 35-year legacy that began with a tyre puncture shop, now racing from a Rs.75-crore debut to Rs.125 crore in year two on the back of 25-year-old CEO Zia Rahman and Business Head Sreedhar Tejomurtula - "apne shahar mein sabse sasta" brought to life through aggressive everyday low prices, deep private labels, mobile supermarkets, shop-in-shop fashion and a tech-driven, 2-lakh sq ft warehouse backbone.

By Sanjay Kumar

**MOHAMMAD MISBAH UR RAHMAN, COO; SYED ZEESHANUDDIN, Director;
MOHAMMAD ZIA UR RAHMAN, CEO**

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- Case studies of omnichannel pivots, brand collaborations with marketplaces, or influencer-led product launches
- Conversations with brand heads and digital transformation officers across FMCG verticals

Special Feature

All the highlights from



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Building Palates for Partnerships: Damodar Mall's Call for a Bigger, Braver Retail India

In a sweeping address that blended consumer insight, cultural wisdom, and global perspective, Damodar Mall laid out a bold vision for India's retail future — one where omnichannel is a value system, innovation begins with Rs 2,000 on WhatsApp, and relevance matters more than channel margins. From Walmart's playbook to a Chembur kirana's ingenuity, Mall called for a bigger, braver, partnership-driven retail India ready to serve the customer wherever she chooses to shop.

By Business Of Food Bureau



When **Damodar Mall**, *CEO – Grocery, Reliance Retail*, took the stage to deliver the Chairman's Address at the India Food Forum, the hall was already brimming with expectation.

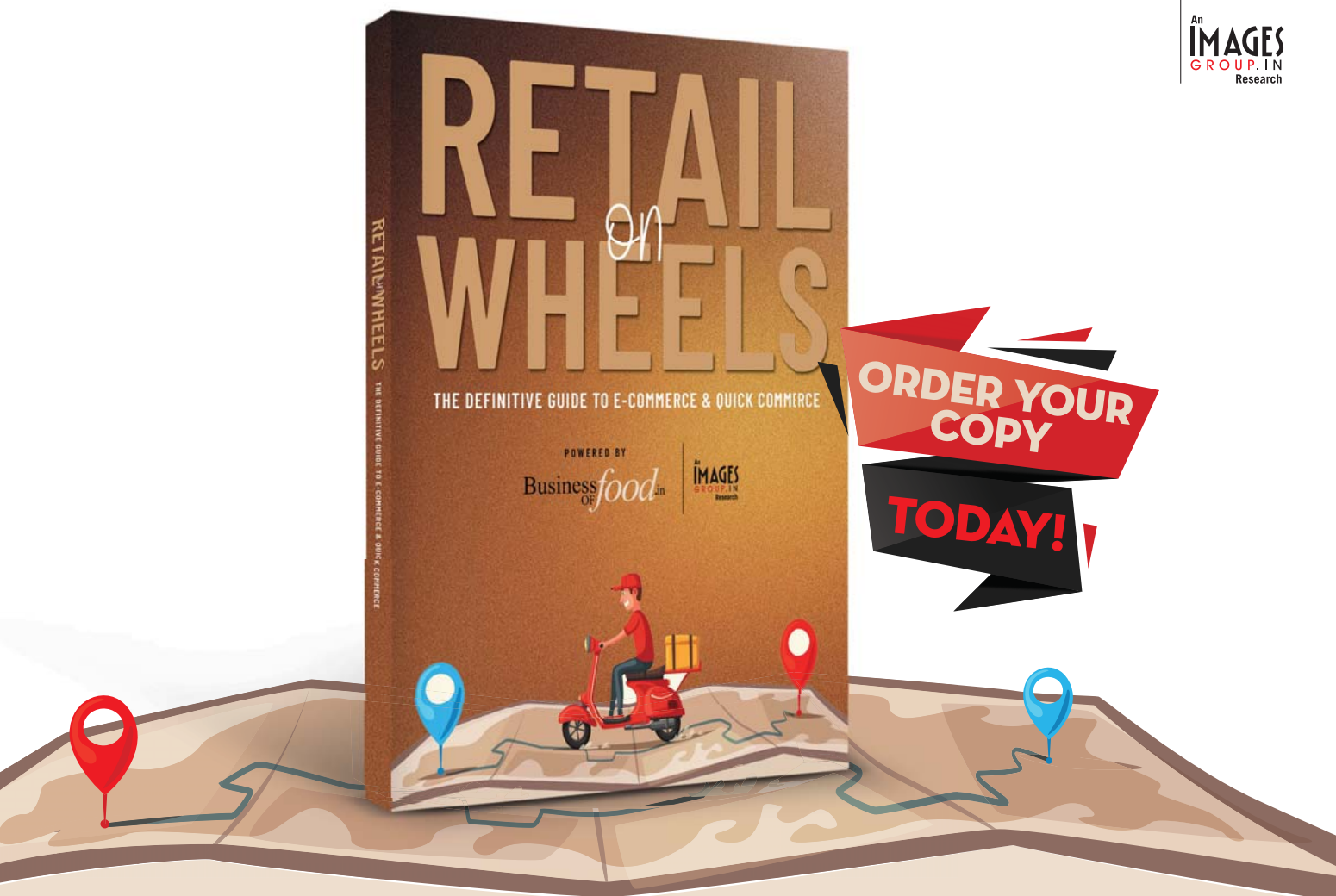
Known for his clarity, original metaphors, and deep cultural intuition, Mall did not disappoint. Under the theme "Building Palates for Partnerships," he delivered a meditation on Indian consumer behaviour, omnichannel realities, and the larger philosophy of retail relevance—a talk that was part sermon, part strategy manual, and wholly Mall.

What followed was not a presentation, but a narrative—one that placed devotion at the centre of demand, blessings at the centre of brand-building, and consumer choice as the supreme force shaping the future of retail.

The Power of Devotion: A Retail Lesson Hidden in Plain Sight

Mall opened with a metaphor that instantly grounded his thesis in everyday Indian culture. "There are brands, there are retailers, all of them in the same room," he began. "And for the next few minutes, I'm going to talk about only one thing. And that one thing is devotion and prayers."

His point was deceptively simple and deeply profound: believers have multiple ways to access God—home altars, local temples, and grand destination shrines. Each fulfils the same purpose, yet people willingly choose the inconvenient options because the



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Swiggy's Playbook for Partnerships, Q-Commerce & Profitable Growth



Rohit Kapoor didn't come to the India Food Forum 2025 to talk about tech buzzwords or delivery gimmicks. He came to redraw the map of India's food economy. In a keynote bursting with cultural insight and market intelligence, the Swiggy Food Marketplace CEO decoded how digital exposure, exploding food curiosity, late-night consumption, and delivery efficiencies will shape the next 100 million orders. Kapoor's message was unmistakable: India's food future is bigger, faster, more diverse—and brands must match the consumer's pace.

By Business Of Food Bureau

At the India Food Forum 2025, **Rohit Kapoor**, CEO – Food Marketplace, Swiggy, delivered a keynote that was anything but predictable. Instead of the standard decks on AI, cloud kitchens, or “biryani vs pizza” consumption trivia, Kapoor took the audience into the engine room of India's fast-evolving food ecosystem—where consumer behaviour, cultural shifts, digital influence, and operational innovation collide to shape the next wave of growth.

“We are called a tech company, but at the heart of it, we are a consumer company,” he said, opening a talk that offered a panoramic view of what India is eating, when it is eating, and why platforms must evolve faster than ever to stay relevant.

Fresh off a learning trip to Shanghai—where food delivery operates at 50x India's scale—Kapoor arrived with a simple reminder: humility is a strategic advantage. “Whenever we start thinking we have become a large company, we want to become a very small company in mindset,” he said. What followed was a sharp decoding of six fundamental shifts shaping India's food and Q-commerce landscape today.

1 India is Digitally Equal—but Financially Unequal: The first—and perhaps most powerful—trend Kapoor highlighted is the collapse of geographical boundaries in how India consumes food content, discovers brands, and forms preferences.

“Even in the last town, the person watching the Instagram reel is watching the same reel as somebody in South Bombay,” he said. Digital exposure is uniform; purchasing power is not. As a result, aspiration is widespread, even if conversion depends on wallet and cultural fit.

This changes how brands scale. A decade ago, national expansion needed expensive city launches, local media, and physical presence. Today, digital content travels to 200 towns without a single hoarding. That fundamentally democratises access—and competition.



Celebrating India's Most Admired Food and Grocery Retailers

India's most prestigious honours in food and grocery retail — the Coca-Cola Golden Spoon Awards 2025 — lit up Day 1 of the India Food Forum at Mumbai's Jio World Convention Centre, celebrating the sector's boldest innovators and market shapers.

Now in its 19th edition, the Awards spotlight retailers who have redefined consumer experience, scaled new frontiers, and powered the evolution of modern Indian retail. The evening brought together the country's most influential brands, leaders, and visionaries for a high-energy celebration of innovation, resilience, and industry-wide excellence.

By Business of Food Bureau





Celebrating Excellence in Retail Partnerships

DS Group continued its tradition of honoring key retail partners with the Catch Spice Icon Awards at the 2025 edition of India Food Forum. The awards highlight DS Group's commitment to strong partnerships and celebrates those who have contributed to Catch's growth, reinforcing its focus on quality, innovation, and leadership in the Indian spice market.



Salt Category Excellence
Reliance Retail

Received by: **Ritesh Sharma**, Head - Brand & Retail and **Ratnaker**, Category Manager-Sugar, Sweeteners & Salt



Spice Category Champion of the Year
Reliance Retail

Received by: **Nitin Khandelwal**, Category Head - Spices and Condiments and **Prathmesh Bhagat**, Category Manager

Presented by:

Sandeep Ghosh, Business Head, DS Group; **Dilip Mohanty**, Executive Vice President, Reliance Retail; **Partho Sharma**, Assistant Vice President; Head - FMCG Food, Reliance Retail

