

Turning rainy days into a nightmare

Bengaluru's rapid urbanisation and population growth have strained its drainage infrastructure, leading to frequent urban flooding.



TOP STOREY
Kausar Firdausi

Bengaluru, one of India's fastest-growing cities, has recorded an average economic growth of 8.5% over the past decade, driven by booming tech and banking sectors. However, rapid urbanisation has strained its infrastructure, especially the drainage system. An IISc study reveals the city's built-up area expanded from 8% in 1973 to 93% by 2023, drastically reducing natural water absorption zones.

The city's outdated drainage network is ill-equipped to handle both the rising population and

increasingly intense rainfall. On 18th May 2025, Bengaluru received 100–135 mm of rain in a single day, overwhelming its systems. Low-lying areas such as Kengeri's Kote Layout, Yelahanka, Koramangala's ST Bed Layout, and Mahadevapura's Sai Layout are repeatedly hit by floods, resulting in annual property damage and disruption.

"By embracing sustainable planning and green infrastructure, we can turn challenges like urban flooding into opportunities."

SARVESHAA SB
CMD, Bhadra Group

Shilpashree Venkatesh, assistant vice president – research, Knight Frank India cites the lack of accurate and comprehensive mapping as a major hurdle in improving Bengaluru's drainage system. "The existing system limits municipal authorities' ability to assess and plan infrastructure upgrades," she puts in, adding that real estate projects are often approved within drainage buffer zones, further restricting water flow and worsening flooding.

According to Knight Frank's 2023 report on urban flooding in Bengaluru, the city has 842 km of primary and secondary drains but needs an additional 658 km. Bridging this gap will require innovative stormwater infrastructure solutions. "Revamping the existing network — through

impact go hand in hand. Inclusion is core to our culture, not just a CSR activity. Our #WeCare initiative drives dignity, acceptance, and empowerment across hiring and service practices.

Sustainability is action-driven — from eliminating single-use plastic to adopting energy-efficient systems, rainwater harvesting, and zero food waste policies.

We're equally committed to supporting marginalised communities through equitable hiring and meaningful employment, ensuring every team member feels valued.

Q With rising competition in Indian and international hospitality, how do you differentiate The LaLiT's offerings while continuing to grow market share?

We differentiate through emotional connection, cultural authenticity, and inclusive experiences rooted in Indian heritage. Our strategy rests on three pillars: a product that celebrates individuality and local

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ANGAD BEDI
CMD, Sumadhura Group

desilting, dredging, and unclogging — is also crucial. The total cost for expansion and repair is estimated at ₹2,800 crore," informs Venkatesh.

Arvind Nandan, MD, research & consulting, Savills India emphasises a strategy combining nature-based solutions, major infrastructure upgrades, and smart flood management systems using AI and IoT for predictive risk management. Key steps include restoring water bodies, widening drains, encouraging rainwater harvesting and permeable surfaces, and enforcing stricter zoning laws.

To Ashish Sharma, city head – Bengaluru, Anarock Group stresses the need for scientific urban planning and stricter regulations. He also highlights the urgent need to overhaul the city's solid waste management system.

Thanks to real estate players

who are not just constructing buildings but also fostering resilient communities. "By embracing sustainable planning and green infrastructure, we can turn challenges like urban flooding into opportunities, creating lasting value and setting new benchmarks for urban living," says Sarveshaa SB, CMD, Bhadra Group.

Shreya Anand, director, Vedaanta Senior Living shares, "We preserve existing trees and green cover to enhance biodiversity, aid water absorption, and regulate temperature. Integrating natural landscapes into planning supports groundwater recharge and helps prevent flooding."

Angad Bedi, CMD, Sumadhura Group, asserts that smart flood-warning sensors can act as the first line of defence during floods. Above all, he stresses the need for a bold urban plan and strong collaboration among civic bodies.

Anantharam Vayalur, co-founder, Manasum Senior Living, urges swift implementation of the stalled 'Beyond Bengaluru' policy. "Encouraging projects in other districts with strong links to Bengaluru can ease the city's unsustainable population growth," he concludes.

ON THE SPOT

Hospitality, the LaLiT Way

In an exclusive interview, VIVEK SHUKLA, CEO, The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, talks about their inclusive growth, sustainable expansion, and experience-led innovation in the Indian luxury hotel sector. Edited excerpts...



Q What have been the most significant growth levers for the group in the past five years – real estate expansion, F&B innovation, wellness tourism, or brand-led experiences?

Over the past five years, our growth has been driven by experience-led innovation, strong brand building, and a guest-first approach.

F&B has been a key differentiator, with signature concepts like Baluchi, OKO, and vegan menus at La Petite Café redefining our culinary identity.

Wellness tourism gained momentum post-pandemic, led

by Spiceology India – The Spa and mindful living offerings. Trends like drivecations and staycations also expanded our reach.

What sets us apart is our focus on personalisation, purpose, and inclusion. From curated stays to Kitty Su's LGBTQIA+ safe space, we embody hospitality with heart.

Q How are you balancing commercial growth with The LaLiT's strong focus on inclusion, sustainability, and social responsibility?

For us, commercial growth and social

heritage, a people-first approach driven by inclusive hiring and continuous training, and a service philosophy rooted in empathy and excellence, where every guest is treated like family.

Q How do you evaluate new locations for expansion or redevelopment? Is there a specific growth blueprint you follow for new properties?

Our expansion approach is opportunity-driven and experience-led. We assess new locations not just for commercial potential, but for their alignment with our brand values and ability to offer culturally rooted, emotionally resonant experiences.

For example, our upcoming Ahmedabad property, set along the Sabarmati River, blends scenic charm with cultural depth — allowing us to craft a destination that reflects both Gujarat's heritage and The LaLiT's signature warmth.

We aim to create landmarks that inspire, endure, and redefine

luxury with purpose.

Q Looking ahead, what's your vision for The LaLiT Suri Hospitality Group in the next five years?

Our vision is to strengthen our presence in key Indian markets while adapting to the evolving needs of Indian and global travellers. We're focusing on an asset-light model through management contracts in tier 2 and tier 3 cities, expanding into mid-scale and budget segments. This allows us to scale sustainably and bring The LaLiT experience to a wider, more diverse audience.

As an IGLTA member, we're committed to positioning India as a safe, inclusive destination for all travellers.

We're also investing in the future through The Lalit Suri Hospitality School, developing talent equipped with not just skills, but the empathy, sustainability, and inclusivity that define our brand.

(As told to Kausar Firdausi)



Realtors' Forum

Maharashtra's new housing policy is a step in the right direction, particularly its renewed emphasis on affordable housing. Experts speak...



DR. NIRANJANA HIRANANDANI
Chairman, NAREDCO

"Its focus on underutilised land, rental housing incentives, and vertical development will help meet rising demand in urban and peri-urban areas."



AJAY ASHAR
CMD, Ashar Group

"The commitment to build 35 lakh affordable homes by 2030 and invest ₹70,000 crore sends a strong signal about the state's intent to address the housing gap."



ROHAN KHATAU
Director, CCI Projects

"It resolves Mumbai's urgent housing shortage, turns undeveloped land into progressive housing and supports allied businesses that create more jobs."



SAMYAK JAIN
Director, Siddha Group

"The emphasis on slum redevelopment and housing for EWS, LIG, and MIG categories aligns well with the aspirations of millions."



AARTI HARBHA-JANKA
Co-founder, CHRO & MD Primus Partners

"The policy introduces industrial worker housing which will be a gamechanger. This shall enable safe housing for labours in the proximity of workplace."