

OUR BANGALORE

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DANDIYA DANCE DELIGHT
 AT PRESTIGE PARK DRIVE
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Vedas Global Stones Presents **Dandiya NIGHTS**

DATE: 20th & 22nd OCTOBER
 TIME: 5:00 PM ONWARDS

Venue: Prestige Park Drive
 Phase No. of Bangalore - Hosur Road Highway
 Davanahalli, Bangalore, Hosur Road, Karnataka-560019

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 by **BINDU GOPAL RAO**

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Mulberry Shades, the epitome of tranquility in Bangalore's prestigious tribute portfolio resort, nestles gracefully within nature's embrace.

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BEYOND EXTINGUISHERS



Sindu Gopal Rao

Fire mishaps and outbreaks in the F&B industry have seen a recent spike in the country that have unfortunately had some casualties as well. While the Mudpipe Café fire was due to a blast of the LPG cylinders, there have been several other causes that could have been easily curtailed.

To ensure strict adherence to fire safety norms at restaurants, the Supreme Court in 2018 had passed an order to a similar effect. While a Fire Safety license is mandatory to open a new restaurant, there are several stipulations around material usage and design that govern fire safety.

In the context of a restaurant, fire safety is paramount because there are several reasons for a mishap which includes cooking equipment, cooking oils/grease, electrical short-cuts, and gas leaks. Hence, it is imperative to have fire standards in place – as this is not just a compliance issue but a matter of being sensitive and socially aware of the pitfalls of a fire incident.

And this is a thought that is echoed by Mohan Kumar, MD, Jupiter Hospitality that owns House of Commons.

"Fire safety is not just about extinguishers and alarms; it is about a community's collective responsibility. At the House of Commons, our foremost duty is to ensure the safety and well-being of our patrons. We meticulously plan and audit our kitchen operations to eliminate any potential hazards. Our team receives comprehensive training in fire safety and

handling, with frequent refresher sessions to ensure preparedness."

He further adds that the restaurant has a well-defined emergency response plan in place, including evacuation procedures and designated assembly points. "We conduct regular fire drills to ensure that our staff knows how to respond swiftly and efficiently in case of a fire emergency," he adds.

Ensuring kitchen safety

Studies indicate that about 57% of restaurant fires are because of mishandling of cooking equipment. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that there are fire suppression systems in place. Also, portable Class K fire extinguishers are a great addition to the kitchen. After all it is a matter of being socially aware as the restaurant's staff and guests could be at risk if these are not in place.

"As a restaurant we are responsible for the wellbeing of our staff as well as guests. It is essential that all fire-related norms are not only in place, but maintained and upgraded in a regular frequency," says Terence Prasad, General Manager, URU Brewpark.

Safety from fire also means that fire suppression systems are in-

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spected and maintained at regular intervals by using professional services. Something as basic as an automatic fire alarm system, that not just alerts the people but also activates the fire suppression system, is what can make a difference. Wired and wireless smoke detectors, fire sprinkler systems, well-lit corridors are all aspects that can help.

The absence of emergency exits

is a must as highlighted by the recent fire incident in Koramangala, where disturbing visuals of a man leaping from the fourth floor to escape the flames have shocked many.

Having trained staff, especially in emergency rescue, is a must as well; this is an investment a restaurateur will be making for their people – staff and guests. And when it is a matter of safety, it is of utmost importance that a restaurateur goes the whole mile to ensure they do more than what the law mandates.

Flames of collective responsibility

Considering that a fire episode can have a catastrophic effect, it is important that restaurateurs preempt any possibility of the same. This can also be done by having a proper strategy in place to combat potential fires. Avoiding fire-related mishaps is not only a personal responsibility but a collective societal duty to ensure the safety of all.

It requires continuous education, diligent planning, and active community engagement. "Being in the restaurant business, it's our duty to protect our employees, customers, neighbours, and future generations from the devastating consequences of fire-related disasters. This includes advocating for stricter building codes and fire prevention strategies, promoting responsible behaviour in the use of fire, and educating the people about fire safety. Moreover, it urges us to prepare and respond effectively when disaster strikes," opine Kushal Raj and Sagar MH founders, Sector 144.

Speaking about the importance of safety in the hospitality industry, Nilish Carvalho, Co-founder of Kulblicitous, emphasises, "In the hospitality industry, safety is not just a priority; it's paramount. It is our responsibility to ensure the well-being of not only our guests, but all those who always set foot into our establishments."

To prevent any fire-related mishaps it is essential that the approach to safety is meticulous and rigorous.

"This means collaborating with the fire department to establish more stringent rules and regulations, ensuring that owners and managers personally oversee comprehensive fire-safety staff training, organising mock drills, and conducting routine property inspections. This approach will equip teams to ensure that potential fire hazards are identified and rectified promptly. We are in the business of taking care of others and providing them with positive, memorable experiences. Our approach to fire safety is pivotal to reinforce our commitment to the safety and security of our guests and employees," he adds.

Making safety a priority especially in a restaurant context is paramount and this is when restaurateurs can up the ante by being aware and responsible. As Vinay Chandrashekar, Co-Founder, Long Boat Brewing Co., sums up, "Embers of awareness can extinguish the flames of tragedy. Our collective vigilance is the strongest flame against fire-related mishaps. Stay aware, stay safe, and let our city shine brighter with caution and care, our Bangalore, our responsibility."

"The incident occurred due to the negligence of the owner of the cafe as he had stored around 12 commercial cylinders without any fire safety measures. He just had the trade licence to run a food catering business, but was running the hookah bar by erecting a temporary structure. The negligence of BBMP officials was also revealed as they failed to inspect the premises to check whether the conditions of the trade licence were adhered to. Action will be initiated against errant BBMP officials"

DR G PARAMESHWARA, HOME MINISTER