

RETAIL THOUGHTS
Jamie Cormack

OMNICHANNEL
6th Street

MALL WATCH
Dalma Mall

REAL ESTATE
ABC Verdun

CEO TALKS
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At RetailME we have always taken a keen interest in featuring and promoting local businesses. Starting October, we have a dedicated column profiling local businesses from the GCC. Let's support the best ideas to scale up. Are you a local retail startup? Tell us your story: startup@imagesretailme.com



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Dear reader

Of Beirut, Cannes and Dubai

Among the many subjects we tackle in this issue, Beirut's latest new mall ABC Verdun is one of them. ABC Verdun also brings together two prominent Lebanese business families – Bahaa Rafic Hariri (BRH) Group and ABC s.a.l. – set to be the largest commercial project yet, in the heart of Beirut reaffirming their faith in Lebanon, its economy and the spirit of its people. The result is the swanky upmarket mall that brings an uplifted level of experience to the Verdun neighbourhood, creating a bustling destination for shopping, leisure and entertainment and social interaction for Lebanese, expatriates and tourists.

Robert Fadel, chairman and CEO of ABC s.a.l., who spoke at the inauguration, said “the project created over 2,000 job opportunities, giving the city a much-needed boost and serving the community by strengthening its economy. Through the trust and partnership of BRH Group, we are delighted to be playing a key role in securing the future of this country in which we firmly believe. Our work with Sheikh Bahaa El Hariri will provide the youth of Lebanon with opportunities in Lebanon and build their future here.”

We also start a dedicated column in the magazine to profile local, small-to-medium businesses in the GCC. We would be happy to receive stories from start-ups as well as those who think a particular start-up concept deserves to be featured in this section every month. We will also invite some of these concepts to showcase their projects at the ‘Start-up Retail Incubator’ during the Middle Retail Forum (MRF) 2017.

Moving to the upcoming November issue, once again RetailME will have its presence at MAPIC, the leading event that showcases the best of the international retail real estate projects and retail concepts. The RetailME MAPIC edition this year will carry a special report on the foodservice market in the region, and it offers an excellent opportunity for the local and regional players to have some presence in it. MAPIC takes place from November 15-17, 2017 at Palais des Festivals in Cannes, France.

Back in Dubai, we are gearing up to host the sixth edition of the Middle East Retail Forum, and the seventh edition of Images RetailME Awards to be held on November 27 & 28 at the One & Only Royal Mirage. Look forward to seeing you there!

Lawrence Pinto

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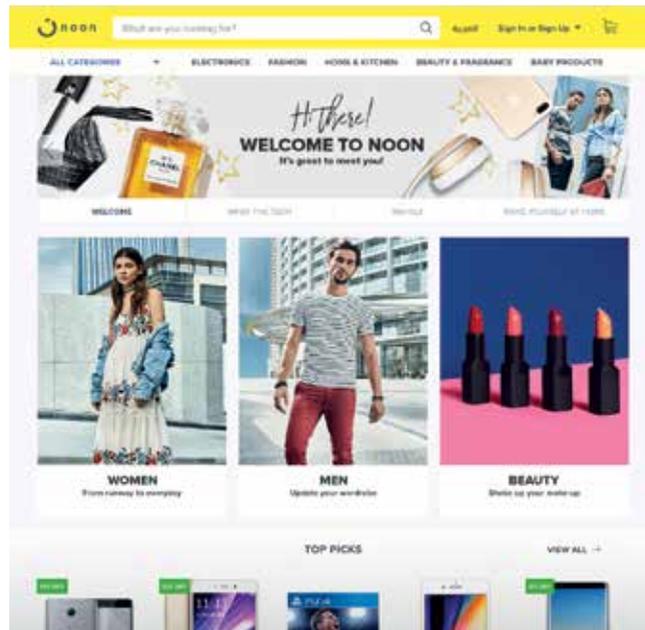
Alshaya partners Noon to focus on e-commerce

Kuwait-based retail franchise operator MH Alshaya Co has acquired a strategic stake in Noon, the region's new e-commerce platform. As a new investor in Noon, Alshaya joins forces with other prominent Gulf investors. Additionally, Alshaya will become a seller on Noon's marketplace platform, listing a portfolio of international brands covering the fashion, health & beauty and home and lifestyle categories.

Alshaya becomes the latest major retailer to list its products on Noon, which serves as the value-added digital platform for retailers to reach a broad and fast-growing base of online customers in the Middle East.

Noon's partnership with regional retailers underscores its unique value proposition. Noon offers its suppliers market intelligence, single brand sourcing, authentic products and fast delivery to customers.

"We see great value in our partnership with Noon, which complements our ex-



isting online channels. We are impressed by Noon's capabilities, and we are excited to partner with the Noon team to present a winning value proposition for the region's online shoppers. We are focused on delivering a multichannel retail experience for our customers and

creating added value for our brand partners. Our partnership with Noon will allow us to expand our customer base, reach new market segments and participate in the next level of growth in regional e-commerce," states Mohammed Alshaya, executive chairman of Alshaya.



Mohammed Alshaya

"It is our privilege to partner with Alshaya and provide our customers access to Alshaya's leading international brands. Noon brings a new business model for e-commerce, developing a strong supply chain that benefits regional businesses. We will work with the region's leading brands and retailers to help them grow their business through Noon," adds Mohamed Alabar, founder of Noon.

Launched recently Noon will offer an extensive range of international brands, covering categories that are popular among all age groups.

Dune London introduces A/W 2017 collections

Dune London looks for inspiration from musicals of West End for its Autumn/Winter 2017 collections.

Men's collections designed with dapper high-shine brogues and embedded with iconic silhouettes, refined and updated for the new season. While the women's collections are lead by pillar box red ankle boots and offer a glimpse of the latest trend, where luxury embroidery and metallic motifs contrast with flatforms and wear-forever sports casuals and kitten heels.

Present at the recent launch of Dune London's latest collections at The Dubai Mall store was Rob Silsbury, marketing and e-commerce director of the brand. Silsbury who joined



the Dune Group in May 2017 has worked at Ralph Lauren. At Dune he will work on strengthening the brand and overseeing the company's digital strategies

to maximise online sales in the newly created role.

Silsbury's appointment came at a very crucial time with the company's continued invest-

ment in marketing and the merger of the e-commerce and marketing teams into one collaborative department as the primary area of focus.

"I am pleased to be here on this occasion of the new seasonal launch. It gives me an opportunity to witness the tremendous efforts our partner Apparel Group has taken in promoting the brand in the region. The possibilities are vast, and while we already have some fantastic innovations in place such as a customer facing single view of inventory across channels, I am confident that we can elevate our brands, develop a best-in-class digital strategy and offer a truly seamless experience for our customers across all channels," says Silsbury.

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28 November 2017

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Navigating the world's fastest growing market

The 2017 edition of the India Retail Forum (IRF), arguably India's largest retail intelligence business event, held on September 19-20 at the Hotel Renaissance in Mumbai, drew over 2,000 delegates from Indian and international retail and allied support, technology and CPG businesses. Govind Shrikhande, customer care associate & MD, Shoppers Stop and chairman of IRF 2017, chaired the forum. The proceedings of the 14th edition of the annual mega-event served as a barometer of 'the great Indian retail story,' whose narrative of the rapid changes sweeping retail and consumer behaviour is leaping the country into the ranks of the world's major retail markets

IRF is truly the only forum which matters in India when it comes to retail leaders sharing game-changing insights, world-class concepts, as the breaking ground for India entry strategy for global players and as the incubation ground for fruitful multi-million-dollar partnership ideas and alliances. This annual event brought together delegates from all nooks and corners of India and the world, 200+ distinguished speakers from across the globe, 100+ exhibitors of next-generation retail innovations and innumerable opportunities to tap into this high potential market," says Shrikhande.

He further affirms, "Over the past two decades incredible transformation in Indian consumer markets has been witnessed by the retail industry. We're the world's fastest-growing major market and populated by demanding, aspirational, globally-connected and 'living-for-the-now' consumers. For brand marketers and retailers, as if that were not enough, there is now the added complexity of digital consumption. I believe that this is the most opportune moment to harness our passion, and innovation, to create an immersive and experiential setting for

our consumers and rekindle the 'romance' in retail. IRF has chronicled and even catalysed ahead-of-the-curve innovations in consumer experiences and fashioning India's consumption story across retail categories."

Referring to the ongoing shifts in consumer behaviour brought on by technology, Amitabh Taneja, chief convener, IRF says, "Customers' growing acceptance of different channels and high expectations for seamless shopping and fulfilment experiences are putting unprecedented pressure on retailers to retain its customers. The once single channel purchase path got scrambled as consumers are distracted by devices in-store, at home and on-the-go. In this always-on, omnichannel digital age, retailers must create the best experience to meet consumers' needs and capture their hearts, minds and ultimately, their wallets."

So, what are the major macro developments that IRF 2017 took stock of over the past year?

This year, IRF – the world's largest democracy of retail – delved deep into

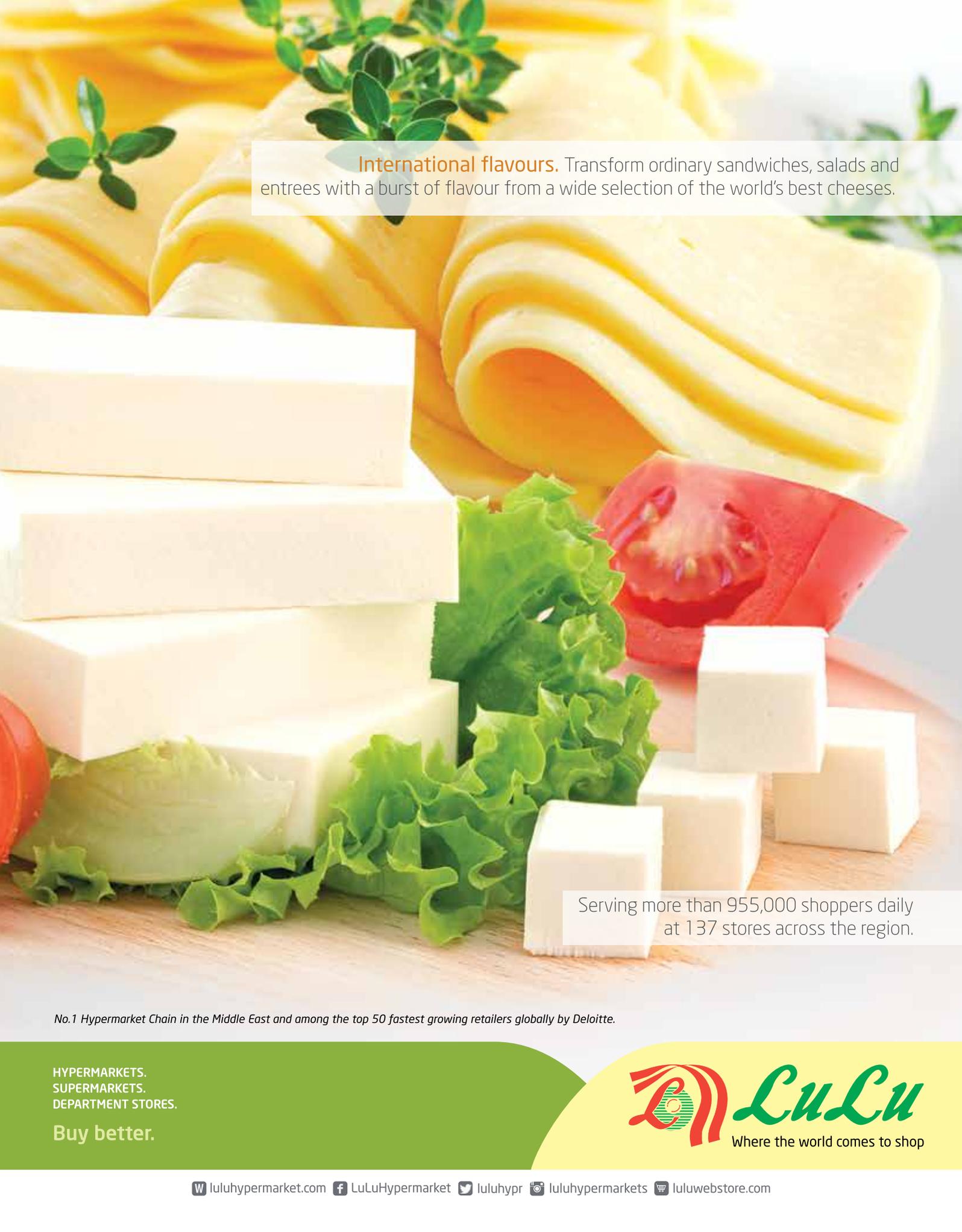


Govind S Shrikhande and Krish Iyer

the explosive surge of multi-channel, multi-format retail in the world's fastest-growing major economy, India, and what it meant for businesses.

At IRF 2017, retail stalwarts debated and discussed India's predominance as a major market with affluent consumption and the robust indicators shaping the promise of the 'Great Indian Retail Story'.

Sessions, which saw some of the retail industry's finest on the dais, were held to discuss how India's high economic growth is improving market sentiments. The strong positioning of the country as an investment hub and stable government from a world perspective along with economic and tax reforms, improving market sentiments, an earning and spending young population, burgeoning e-commerce and digitisation at domestic level, are the main driving factors in the retail market growth.



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