

OUT-OF-BOX HYDERABAD

CITY'S STARTUP TUNES

TODAY IS NATIONAL STARTUP DAY — A DAY TO CELEBRATE CREATIVITY AND INNOVATIONS ACROSS INDUSTRIES. FIVE HYDERABADI STARTUP FOUNDERS GIVE **NITIKA KRISHNA** THE CITY'S STARTUP PICTURE

STARTUP — around a decade ago, this word was still relatively new lingo in Hyderabad. But today, everywhere we look, startups are sprouting and blooming, producing great innovations for not just this city but the whole country and beyond. To a startup founder, his or her startup is a precious little plant, to be cared for and nourished through rain and shine. But what do Hyderabad startup founders think about the startup soil in the city?



KAJAL RAJBHAR,
 founder of Spantrik



WHEN people ask me why I founded Spantrik, I tell them this — I want to be part of a future where space is not just the domain of astronauts and engineers but of everyone. Spantrik is incubated at T-Hub and we are focusing on Leapfrogger, which is designed to test vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) capabilities, paving the way for the development of India's first reusable rocket. The aerospace journey is hardware-intensive, requiring significant resources and funding. Venture capitalists are typically hesitant to invest in early-stage aerospace startups because commercial products are far from being realised and the R&D phase involves high risk and prolonged timelines. But T-Hub has offered great incubation support, and T-Works is also helping startups create prototypes, even with limited budgets. For a woman in the aerospace field, it can often feel like navigating through turbulent skies. But my message to every young girl out there is this — if I can do it, so can you.

SATISH REDDY,
 CEO of Xbattery and Pascalsec



Xbattery is incubated at T-Hub and does prototyping at T-Works. We are building a cutting-edge battery management system called BharatBMS for energy storage devices and EVs. With BharatBMS, we will produce printed circuit boards locally instead of importing from China. Pascalsec builds SaaS tools for data governance, data security, and business productivity. The first is a hardware company and the second is a software company — getting funding for software is easier than for hardware, which requires raw materials, testing equipment, and more. But a common challenge is attracting good talent and matching the salaries offered by big corporates. However, Hyderabad's startup ecosystem is much better than what it used to be; T-Hub has created awareness campaigns and the government is strongly invested in helping startups boom. It is my vision of sustainability that drives me — I believe technology has the power to save the planet. I encourage more Hyderabadis to pursue their dreams!



AJAY REDDY KOBIREDDYGARI,
 founder of Alspire Labs



Alspire Labs uses foundation layer AI models like Gemini and OpenAI to build application layer AI products. Our aspiration is to make search simple and smart for users by leveraging generative and agentic AI systems. We are focusing on the education, D2C, SaaS, healthcare, and governance sectors. We recently released our first model, SARA V1, to replace boring chatbots; there has been great feedback and adoption. But a common challenge for AI startups is that while they build products of value for users, they are often unable to monetise their innovations. Such startups need more industry partnerships and government support, apart from advisors who can help them navigate the ecosystem better. AI startups just need that little push...let's make Hyderabad the AI capital of India!



SUNIL MADDIKATLA,
 founder and CEO, EYVA

INCUBATED in T-Hub, EYVA is the world's first health AI gadget that understands a user's metabolic and cardiovascular health in detail, with the capability of non-invasive blood glucose monitoring. Startups here are all about doing business the Hyderabad way — they are focused on profitability and sustainable growth. The city's amazing infrastructure and talented workforce allow startups to operate with a touch of luxury while still keeping costs low. But there are gaps in medtech that we need to address. Firstly, startups and innovations here deserve better recognition. Secondly, regulatory hurdles often slow things down. Imagine if Hyderabad, with its growing medtech hub, had a dedicated Centre of Excellence for healthcare regulation. This is where the Telangana government could play a game-changing role. Together, we can position Hyderabad as a global leader in healthtech and wellness.



HETENDRA SINGH,
 founder of Segritech

SEGRITECH, founded by Sri Kusu Devalla, Vijay Pratap Singh, and me, is a hardware AI company building solutions for post-harvest automation. We were initially incubated at CIE, IIIT-H, and then received T-Hub's support. We recently launched Segritech Version One — the world's first compact and movable smart sorting machine for fruits and vegetables. This machine grades and sorts fruits and vegetables based on colour, size, shape, and skin defects — at two tonnes per hour! Hyderabad has a mature hardware ecosystem but the biggest challenge is the gap between farmers and the tech community. While farmers aren't aware about technologies, agritech startups don't do their research, often wanting to solve multiple problems all at once. If you want to be in agritech, don't rush in to make money but rather empathise with farmers. My dream is to make Indian agriculture as prosperous as can be.

Author Sriprakash Nadadur Sridharan talks to *CE* about his new book *Building Blocks*, a handbook on leadership

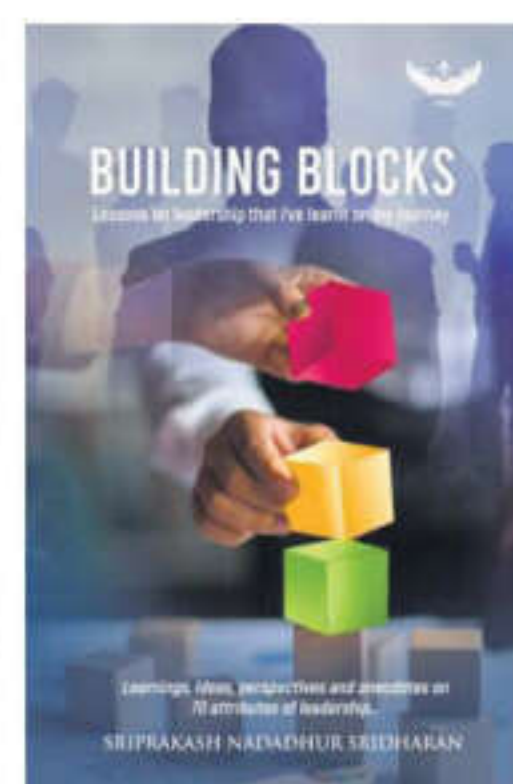


READ to LEAD

ANUBHAB ROY

BOOKS on leadership, entrepreneurial insight or betterment of any other aspect of personhood now housed in the 'self-help' category, enjoy a sort of unhindered proliferation especially in the Indian market. Their reach seems to border on omnipresence, and their sales are evident from the pomp with which they adorn the main desks of any bookstore. Sriprakash Nadadur Sridharan's *Building Blocks* (Garuda Prakashan; ₹499) is one of the latest additions to this burgeoning pile, trying to impress upon the reader that 'all of us can be leaders'.

Like many who try their hand at making inroads into this genre, Sridharan has been a tried and tested entrepreneur. The founder of Prajna Consulting, a boutique consulting firm, he has over two decades of experience in business development, consulting, and marketing. In his own words, he lists two instances of significance that prompted him to write a book, after years of experience outside anything remotely related to writing, much less publishing. "There are two instances that deeply impacted me,"



Sridharan states, continuing, "My interaction with S Srinivasan, former head of leasing, Sundaram Finance — he spent quality time with us (me and couple others) during our summer internship and taught us on varied subjects. What he made me realise was, 'A candle loses nothing by lighting another candle, it only spreads the light.' It made me dump my insecurity especially with respect to sharing knowledge." Moving on to the second, he mentions, "Another one was the John C Maxwell leadership

workshop that I attended when I was a management trainee at a leading conglomerate. I was thrilled to attend the workshop as he was one of my favourite leadership gurus. It focused on some of the basics like active listening, active learning, communication, etc. Later in life, I realised that they taught me a few powerful lessons that changed my life forever."

Building Blocks acts as a condensation of Sridharan's formula, whose experience as a leadership columnist has served him well. This condensation pools into a mellow mist of '70 attributes of leadership', or what he calls 'A to Z' of leadership. The titular 'blocks' refer to these attributes, and build up to enact the fullness of a leader.

The attributes, he believes, are not exclusive to those who assume positions of objective esteem; leaders, he stresses, are everywhere and inherently all of us. Bringing the notion of leadership right down to the median individual, it seems, is key to achieving an orientation that sees the fulfilment of such potential.

As he attests, the nature of this is purely anecdotal — "I started believing that there are leadership lessons in every incident that we come across in our lives. I started observing things around me and my near and dear ones which were not only interesting but taught me lessons for life. I started penning them down in my notepad. Though I wanted to share my learnings with the society at large, it would have remained in my diary forever, thanks to my mom for getting me out of my comfort zone and seeding the thought of getting it out as a book. I slowly started converting my writings/scribbles to simple stories that are relatable and which could drive home powerful leadership lessons."

Sennheiser unveils Republic Day offers

Sennheiser is offering exciting deals on its premium product range during the Republic Day Sale 2025. Make the most of up to 24 months of no-cost EMI and additional discounts with select bank cards on Sennheiser's top-rated products, including the Profile Streaming Set (with Boom Arm) USB Microphone for Podcasting, HD 490 Pro Open-Back Studio Headphones, EWDP-ME 2 Digital Wireless Microphone System, MOMENTUM 4 (Copper) headphones, ACCENTUM Plus Headphones, and MOMENTUM True Wireless 4, all available at discounts of up to 50%.



HYDERABAD DIGEST

PURE EV expands footprint in Telangana

PURE EV, one of India's leading electric two-wheeler manufacturers, announced the opening of another showroom in Madhira, Khammam, Telangana. The strategically located showroom and service spans an area of 2,000 sqft, providing an excellent space for customers to experience the brand's advanced technology delivering best-in-class products.



Avanthi PG College hosts freshers party

Seniors of MBA and MCA courses of Avanthi PG College hosted the 'Aarambh 2k25' freshers party at Taj Mahal Hotel, Narayanguda, to welcome the new students. The event was attended by dignitaries, staff members and students.

DARSHITA JAIN



IN a city that thrives on innovation and culture, Artgram Café in Hyderabad has managed to carve out a unique space for itself to become a haven where art, fun, and relaxation come together in the most delightful way. With its newly opened tufting and slime studio, this place has quickly become the city's favourite destination for anyone looking to explore their creative and fun side.

For those unfamiliar, tufting is a fascinating textile craft that involves using a tufting gun to weave yarn into a canvas, creating stunning designs for rugs, wall hangings, and more. It's a hands-on process that might seem intricate at first, but the therapeutic rhythm of it is what keeps visitors coming back. Hema Somisetty, co-founder of Artgram Café, says, "I had to carefully design the space to accommodate the tufting ma-

Crafting memories

chines, provide a comfortable working environment for visitors, and source the right materials — ranging from high-quality yarns to the frames and tools needed."

On the other side of the café, the slime studio is a hot favourite, particularly among families. Yes, slime — the stretchy, colourful, and delightfully squishy stuff we all secretly enjoyed as kids — has taken the centre stage here. People can customise their own slime by choosing colours, textures, scents, and even adding charms or glitter.

And it's not just for children. The studio has proven to be a hit among adults too. "I started slime studio because I've always been passionate



about creativity and the hands-on process of making something unique. The rise of slime as a fun, sensory trend really



caught my attention, and I saw an opportunity to create high-quality, customisable slimes that bring joy and relaxation to others. I love experimenting with different textures, colours, and scents, and wanted to share that experience with people who appreciate the creativity and stress-relief that slime can offer," Hema shares.

Her co-sister and co-founder, Shwetha Somisetty, reflects on the effort it took to make this vision a reality. "For the slime zone, the challenge was ensuring the slimes were high-quality, safe, and non-toxic. I also

needed to create an organised, clean space where people could comfortably play with slime without worrying about the mess," the co-founder expresses.

Artgram isn't just about tufting and slime — it's an entire creative ecosystem. The DIY art zone offers people even more ways to explore their artistic side, and the cosy café serves as the perfect spot to recharge with coffee or a snack after a hands-on session.

The response from visitors has been overwhelmingly positive. Families, couples, and groups of friends are flocking to Artgram, excited to try their hand at something new. "The ability to customise their own slime with different textures, colours, and scents is a huge hit, especially with younger visitors and families. They appreciate the sensory experience and the opportunity to be creative in a fun, relaxed environment," Shwetha explains.

Artgram Café is more than just a place to grab coffee — it's an experience. Whether you're weaving yarn into a

tufted masterpiece, mixing glitter into a perfect batch of slime, or simply enjoying the vibrant energy of the space, Artgram invites you to rediscover the joy of creating. And in a world that moves so fast, that's exactly what we all need.



Shwetha Somisetty & Hema Somisetty