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Hyderabad
Urban Trail

EXHIBITION BOOKLET

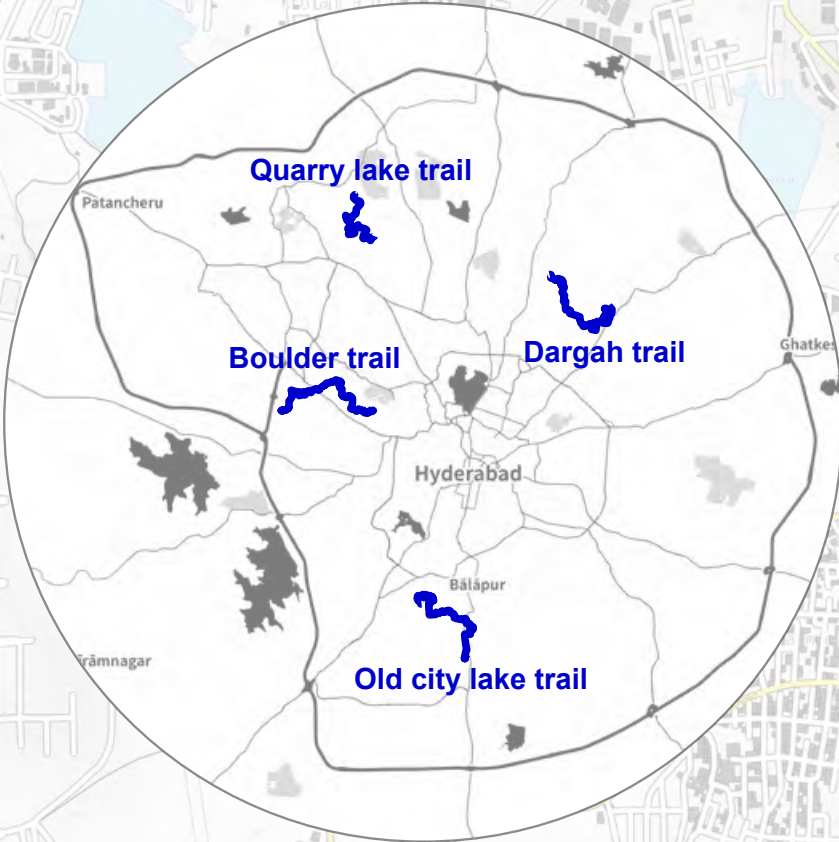
Walks + Workshops + Exhibition / 15-26 November 2021





Hyderabad Urban Trail takes place from November 15-26 2021. It is being executed by Bruit du Frigo, Bordeaux Métropole and the Alliance française of Hyderabad with the support of the French embassy and the government of Telangana. Hyderabad Runners, Hyderabad Urban Labs, Society to Save Rocks, INTACH, Decathlon among others are participating to develop the trail.

Hyderabad Urban Trail : a project imagined by Bruit du frigo
Concept, mapping & photos : Yvan Detraz
Text : Hocine Aliouane-Shaw
Drawings : Arnaud Bilande
www.bruitdufrigo.com



Hyderabad Urban Trail

The idea

Hyderabad Urban Trails is an artistic and participative project about the prefiguration of a future urban and suburban trail in Hyderabad. It was developed in November 2021 by Bruit du frigo, a collective of architects, urban designers and artists from Bordeaux (France). The project questions the practice of walking and the place of pedestrians in Hyderabad by inviting local and visiting walkers to discover the city through the prism of a trail crossing and linking its different parts, creating a contemporary narrative of the city whilst serving as a physical and symbolic link throughout it.

The project is based on the idea that the best way to discover a city is by walking through its landscapes and neighbourhoods and interacting with its inhabitants. It promotes the implementation of a trail connecting different parts of the city whilst shedding a new light on them, in order to generate a network of public spaces with more pedestrian-friendly and collective practices.

The approach

Initially, a set of places in and around the city step was identified and an elementary path was laid out to connect them. The focus was put on lesser-known parts of the city such as abandoned and undeveloped areas, away from the centre and the major heritage sites. The task of prefiguring the trails was carried out at a distance, knowing that each proposed route would be later tested by the implementation of a collective walk. Multiple trails were designed and discussed during online meetings with the local partners (institutions, authorities, non-profits, professionals, inhabitants) leading to the selection of four trails.

The first test walk took place in outskirts of Hyderabad and as anticipated, it encountered a number of physical barriers that the walkers worked to get around with the help of local inhabitants. Alternate paths were immediately mapped and the trail updated. The walkers were able to experience places where geology, hydrography and flora came together to create unique natural settings. The most stunning places appeared to have been preserved because they were hidden or shut off from urbanised areas. Others had become the receptacle for household or industrial waste or were been turned into building sites, their gigantic rocks shattered to give way to new developments. The walkers also came across the remains of

cultural landscapes that beared witness to ancestral agropastoral systems, that were disappearing under the blows of bulldozers that paved the way for urbanisation.

Along the way, the walkers came to consider the encountered barriers and obstacles as prompts to find alternate paths. In the process, the walk revealed its true nature, that of a collective urban drift that enabled the walkers to make unexpected and fortuitous discoveries, thus experiencing and cultivating the art of serendipity.

The main lessons learned

This experience revealed that Hyderabad is a very spectacular city, with an incredible potential for walking. It offers the opportunity to create a metropolitan trail linking all the emblematic places located in its outskirts, from the most known to the most hidden. Created by nature or shaped by man, these places made up from lakes, rocks, neighbourhoods and local communities, hold the traces of their evolution through time, making them constituent elements of Hyderabad’s history and identity.

The process of creating Metropolitan Trail has the potential to provide the space for a constructive dialogue with local communities, professionals and relevant authorities in order to imagine news approaches to city planning which would have at heart, the preservation and enhancement of this unrecognized and yet unvaluable heritage. Finally, the future Hyderabad Metropolitan Trail could join the International Metropolitan Trails Organisation, making Hyderabad the first city in Asia to make this decisive step towards a walk-friendly and therefore an even more attractive metropolis at national and international levels.



QUARRY LAKE TRAIL

Jagathgiri Gutta
> Gajularamaram
17 November 2021 • 10km



----- Planned route
----- Followed route
----- Possible sample of the future Trail ?

500m





QUARRY LAKE TRAIL

**Jagathgiri Gutta
> Gajularamaram**
17 November 2021 • 10km

Travel diary

On a cloudy Wednesday morning at 8:30, a group of around 22 enthusiastic walkers gathered around Jagathgiri Gutta, overseeing an unnamed lake. They were greeted with t-shirts, refreshments and a group photograph to kickstart a 10-kilometre walk.

This was the first of a four-day exploratory walk that began on November 17, as part “Hyderabad Urban Trails”, an artistic, participative and contextual project around the design of an urban and suburban trail in Hyderabad. This trail is envisioned as a way to invite walkers, local residents and visitors to discover the city and at and overall, and ultimately to encourage decision makers to support walking.

Yvan Detraz, an architect and director of Bruit du Frigo, opened a printed life size map to explain the route to be taken by the participants. After a quick headcount, the enthusiasts started making their way through tall bushes and huge boulders to reach the edge of the lake. While relishing the vast landscape of the lake and its surroundings, the group noticed one drawback: a water channel which drains out excess water from the lake downstream was seen spewing froth and foam.

Arnaud Bilande, illustrator and member of Bruit du Frigo, quickly pulled out his book and started drawing a sketch of the landscape. His skills were so precise that the drawing looked like a picture clicked on a camera.

Talking about the frothing drain, Hocine Aliouane-Shaw, an architect, town-planner and member of Bruit du Frigo, said, “This is the effect of urbanisation. The city is growing and is eating up the natural spaces. Through this trail we want both the people and local authorities to realise the importance of nature in the city and identify it as part of the heritage and richness of Hyderabad. We believe that it is possible to form a network of natural open spaces and move around Hyderabad to get people to come close to nature and make recommendations for the city to be more friendly to walkers.”

The participants then started making their way to the next destination which was a walk for over 1km. Enroute, they passed through a colony of Sikh community, where enthusiastic kids joined the trail. It is only through their guidance, that the explorers navigated to reach one of the most endearing sights of the walk-a lake surrounded by Hyderabad’s natural rock formations.

The first view reminded Hyderabadis of the Secret lake or the Durgam Cheruvu as coincidentally this lake too had a similar landscape. The lake was abuzz with activity as washermen and women were carrying on their business amidst all the commotion of the participants and locals. Sanjay Gadhalay, who is the CEO of SGC Enterprises, quickly joined the area kids to ascend one of the rocks atop the lake. “The amazing part of the lake is that

it is hidden and has three parts which are invisible to the naked eye from the bottom. It also looks like a freshwater lake. These kids told me that they always come here to enjoy a swim or play games. We need to encourage and organise games for them to promote the lake,” felt Sanjay.

Anais Meon, an architect who settled in Hyderabad recently, shared how important the trail is to everyone. “I like walking. When I was staying in Hong Kong and Berlin, I simply loved the fact that there was a dedicated zone for people to walk around the city. When China, which has more population than India, can build cities with such walkways, India should step up and show that they too can make their cities walker friendly. I am now looking forward to walking in Old City of Hyderabad as part of the trail.”

After a quick photoshoot and capturing drone shots of the picturesque location. The contingent moved towards the next destination: Pragathi Nagar Lake. The natural rock formations alongside the water body left the participants speechless. “This is pristine. Rocks add a unique beauty to Hyderabad. Also if you look here, it’s so clean. No broken alcohol bottles, no garbage and all that muck,” exclaimed Vinod Reddy, one of the participants who likes to call himself a retired farmer.

By this time, the team had already walked around 5 kms and it was peak noon. The next task of the bunch was to scale a rock formation to reach atop Aditya Hills. While initially it looked difficult, the participants, including a couple of senior citizens, scaled it quite easily. In fact, it was a spectacle to see Balu, technical sports advisor, Decathlon, climb the rocks while holding a cycle on one hand. After a quick survey of the place and an illustration by Arnaud, the team trekked downhill to relish a sumptuous lunch of sandwich, rice, tea and other munchies.

After adequate rest, the team began its final 4 km journey for the day, albeit the most interesting one. The trail waded through an abandoned quarry and participants noticed how the natural rock formations were destroyed by continuous blasting for several years. But Arnaud made an interesting observation. “Even if you say that rocks were destroyed, all I can see is how they have formed a pattern and there’s water beneath the rocks and birds are flying down to take a sip of it. It all depends on what you want to see,” he exclaimed much to the delight of the team. He then took his book and this time, added colour to his illustrations with crayons.

While making the way downhill, Arnaud showed his pictures to children in the area who were so impressed that they decided to take a selfie with him. Just a few metres ahead, the participants made their way to the main road which was the final destination of the walk for the day.

Summing up the entire trek, Samuel Berthet, director, Alliance Francaise, said, «Before we started our trail, there were questions whether people would walk for 10 kms. Now that we have done this, we are looking forward to more such trips.»

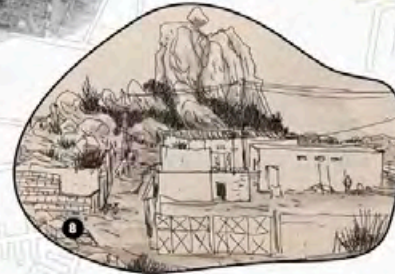
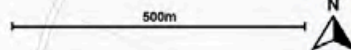
By Krishna Murthy



OLD CITY LAKE TRAIL

Pahad Shareef
> Umda Sagar
18 November 2021 • 12km

----- Planned route
—— Followed route
—— Possible sample of the future Trail ?





OLD CITY LAKE TRAIL

**Pahad Shareef
> Umda Sagar**
18 November 2021 • 12km

Travel diary

The second of the four-day exploratory walk as part of Hyderabad Urban Trail kicked off with the same intensity and fervor as on day one. This time the action shifted to the Old City of Hyderabad where the trail traversed through the less explored terrains between Umda Sagar Lake and the Pahadi Shareef Dargah.

Umda Sagar is one of the four big lakes along with Shamirpet, Mir Alam, and Hussain Sagar located in Hyderabad city. It is a known to attract a lot of migratory birds. The lake has water channels which were built by the Asaf Jahi dynasty to pump water to Charminar, Chowmahalla Palace, Malwala Palace, and Khurshid Jah Devdi and other buildings. The gravitational force helped the water flow to the palaces and also made water fountains operational as it travelled a huge distance.

The team's first task was to get to the lake's viewpoint. The area was mesmerizing as it not just provided a panoramic view of the lake but also gave a glimpse of the endpoint of the day's journey with the sight of the Pahadi Shareef Dargah standing tall at the end of the horizon.

As the aim of the project is to figure out the future urban trail, the team set to figure out the pathway to get to the other end of the lake. As the participants were on their way, they happened to pass by a roadside eatery which was too enticing to ignore. The entire bunch then relished on dosas, bondas (Indian snack) and tea.

Making their way after having their fill, the team made its way to the end of the lake which had a small pathway to get to its opposite end. But just as they walked into the narrow road, two policemen, who were standing guard, stopped them midway. The police explained that entry to the pathway was blocked as many people tried to enter the lake to commit suicide. Also, the area was becoming a hub of anti-social activity. However, when the team explained about the project, they obliged and called the locals to assist us to cross the lake.

After crouching through a few bushes, the sight of the pathway brought cheers to the walkers. It was the edge of a stormwater drain where the width allowed only one person to walk over it. The excited bunch then formed a human chain, walking one behind the other, to reach the other end. Just as the camera crew tried to capture this moment, a mighty gust of wind unfortunately crashed the drone camera into the lake and sank immediately. The crew made a desperate attempt to find the drone with one of the members even diving to search for it, but the lake which had a depth of over 20 feet at that point made things impossible. While the rest of the crew tried alternate methods to pull out the drone, the team took an unscheduled lunch break. After an hour of unsuccessful search for the drone, the dejected members resumed their journey.

In less than a minute, the path on the other side of the lake turned from a beauty spot to an eyesore quickly as the participants were greeted by the sight of a dump yard. At the end of it was the path leading to a slum called the Mustafa Hills. It took a while for the team to cross the 3 km stretch of the slum, passing through many streets and asking help from locals to lead us to the main road. The path itself was difficult to venture as sewage was overflowing on the road at many places.

As soon as the figured their way onto the main road, Yvan Detraz, director and co-founder of Bruit Du Frigo, directed on us going through a boulder trail further ahead. The next one hour was a breathtaking experience, the team traversed through beautiful hillocks before stopping over for a quick refreshment at a stall selling fruits.

The team then made its way to the Pahadi Shareef Dargah and right at the foot of the shrine, enthusiastic children, who just stepped out of school, took note of the life-sized map of the trail and were eager to know about it. In fact, when Arnaud Bilande, illustrator and member of Bruit du Frigo, tried to explain its contents, the kids tried to grab the map from all the sides in excitement. After a bunch of photos with the children, the team made its way to the top of the dargah by scaling 360 steps. It was an enriching experience both devotionally and was soul-satisfying as the team gleefully stared at one building at a distance from atop the hill, which was the starting point of the trail earlier in the day.

Mrs. Anuradha Raju, a retired teacher, who joined the walk on that day, shared, «I never came to Pahadi Shareef before. The team took us through unexplored places. We might have walked 13 kilometers but it didn't seem that far. Umdasagar is so serene and untouched. That we have so many places in Hyderabad, even for a local like me, is an eyeopener.»

In essence, what Mrs. Anuradha experienced is what the Hyderabad Urban Trail aims to achieve: Showcasing new pathways for Hyderabadis to make walking around the city, an artistic and joyful experience.

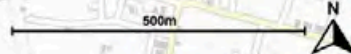
By Krishna Murthy



BOULDER TRAIL

Jubilee Hills
> Khajaguda
20 November 2021 • 15km

----- Planned route
—— Followed route
—— Possible sample of the future Trail ?





BOULDER TRAIL

**Jubilee Hills
> Khajaguda**
20 November 2021 • 15km

Travel diary

Day 3 of the Hyderabad Urban Trails kick-started from a very serene Rock Garden in Banjara Hills. There was a day’s break in between so the team was refreshed and raring to go for the walk. As the participants made their way into the garden, they couldn’t stop admiring the green lung space between the city which was adorned by rocks and a lake. In fact, Yvan Detraz from Bruit du Frigo felt it was the jewel of Banjara and Jubilee Hills.

The team then drifted through to the park to then exit through the slums of Filmnagar. What is quite interesting is that these slums are on top of the hills so the terrain to get to the other end had a lot of ups and downs. The difference between this slum and the rest in the city was that it was regularized by the government. So, there were cement topped roads to walk through the entire circuit. After seeking help from the locals, the team made its way to the Hakimpet Kunta which was the lake at the bottom of the ghetto.

On the main road, the bunch then tracked its way to Jubilee Hills, walking past the Rama Naidu studios. Right next to the studio was a mannequin of Shikari Shambu which illustrator Arnaud got very interested in. He said Shambu resembled a colonial style hunter which elicited a few laughs. The team explained to him how Shambu was one of the memorable characters from a popular comic book in the 1980s and 1990s.

After a small tea break, the group made its way through the BNR Hills when they were joined by architect Srinivas Murthy who is the president of Architecture and Design Foundation. Mr Srinivas is a regular face in architectural and heritage walks across Hyderabad.

While going through the pathway, the squad passed through the new link roads which were constructed by local authorities for easing traffic movement. Some informed team members shared that just about a year ago, that road didn’t exist at all and was in fact a hillock which was drilled down during the pandemic. This news came as a surprise to many walkers and was a bit hard to digest.

After a quick check on the map, the trailers reached the Ficus Garden in Silent Valley Hills. Security personnel were initially apprehensive to allow the team inside the park due to time restrictions, but when the team explained its cause, they allowed all the members to pass through. The garden has a small pathway that leads into the Durgam Cheruvu pathway on its other end. Once inside the lake premises, the team made itself cosy to have a quick lunch amidst the green surroundings.

The weather throughout the day was pleasant making it easier for the team to enjoy the trek. After a sumptuous lunch, the team headed to the end of the walkway of the lake that led to a masjid.

As always, the highlight of every trail was Arnaud’s illustrations and this

time he drew the picturesque lake with the cable bridge in the background. The most memorable of the day came right here when the trailers made its way through a small path next to the masjid. The view there was simply majestic, especially because the team traversed through a relatively unknown and untouched terrain and that too in the heart of the city, The team then climbed onto a boulder to take a few snaps and videos of the surroundings.

“We have been living in this city for so many years and yet we had no clue that such a place existed,” shared a few excited members.

The gang then made its way out of the small path which terminated at the Old Mumbai Highway. After a refreshing chai, the team then headed out to its next destination: Khajaguda lake. But, as it has been a norm for the last two trails, the pathway was the path less travelled. The team traversed through a slum and then made its way through bushes to reach one end of the lake. After soaking in the experience, the team plodded along to the main road and then took the arterial way to the other side of the lake. The view at the other end was satisfying as everyone knew that they had gone through a trail which most of the city dwellers hadn’t been to yet.

While the plan was supposed to end its trail for the day at this location, an excited Balaji from Decathlon promised to take the team members to a “magical” spot. Indeed, he didn’t disappoint as the team walked through to the Khajaguda Hills which stood out for its aerial view of the city overlooking the Puppalaguda Lake. What’s more, some of the team members hopped onto a cliff where Balaji explained the ‘chimney technique’ to climb the rocks. The trek couldn’t have come to an end at a better time as the sun was about to sink into twilight, just as the team captured the view atop the beautiful hill.

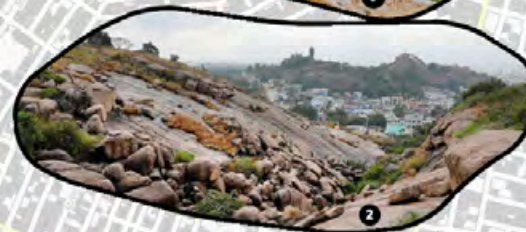
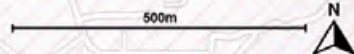
By Krishna Murthy



DARGAH TRAIL

Moula Ali
> Kohe Imam Zamin
21 November 2021 • 15km

----- Planned route
----- Followed route
----- Possible sample of the future Trail ?





DARGAH TRAIL

Moula Ali
> *Kohe Imam Zamin*
21 November 2021 • 15km

Travel diary

The fourth day of the Hyderabad Urban Trials started on a gigantic note as the biggest ever contingent gathered on the final day of the walk at the foothill of Moulali dargah. Close to 25 people had joined the boulder trail even as the weather gods blessed the group with a pleasant day with a mixture of warm sun, lots of clouds and intermittent drizzle.

While acknowledging the crowd, Yvan Detraz, the architect from Bruit du Frigo, briefed the contingent with a lifesize map of the trail through the day. “It’s not easy to work with a large group and so we need to stick together. The aim of this trail is to explore and not take the direct route. Even if we get lost it’s okay because we will figure out a new path,” he said, eliciting smiles across the participants.

The team then headed out to reach the entrance of Moula Ali and were fortunate enough to have architect Srinivas Murthy in the group who had significant knowledge of historical monuments in Hyderabad. Speaking about the structures at the entrance of the Moulali shrine, Srinivas explained, “What you see there is the grave of a lady who was a courtesan here. This place was renovated by the Asaf Jahi dynasty which was originally built by the Qutb Shahi dynasty. For a long time, this dargah was in ruins until it was restored by funds granted by the American Consulate. Let’s now walk through the central arch to get to the dargah.”

On this cue, the bunch ascended its way atop 350 odd steps on the monolithic rock to reach the dargah. After a quick darshan or view of the saint, the members went around the hill to take a photoshoot with a lovely view of the city in the background. The group then ascended to a neighbouring hill which is called Qadam Rasul, on which sacred relics of the Prophet are said to have been stored. This structure too was unique and it offered a view of the north eastern part of the city.

The adjoining hill showcased some unrealistic features of Deccan plateau rocks, where huge boulders were seen stacked one upon the other and surprisingly remained intact for so many years. Locals called it Bhandoli Hill (appearing like jars placed above one another). A view of a beautiful lake beneath the hill immediately enticed Yvan who asked the group to head that way even though it was not part of the original plan. But no one hesitated and everyone followed.

After a maze-like hunt, the bunch reached the lake and took a small break to have snacks. The crew then made its way to the Safilguda lake, also known as the mini Tank Bund. While regular visitors use the pathway adjoining the main road, the team, with the permission of local municipality officials, went through the sideway which led to interior residential colonies in the area. While it was drizzling throughout the journey, it became a bit heavy around this time, prompting the walkers to take a lunch break in front of a makeshift platform beneath a tree.

Once the climate softened, the squad resumed its journey and just a few moments later, reached the Ramakrishnapuram Lake. The waterbody unfortunately was almost completely layered with hyacinth, showcasing how badly it has been maintained. While walking along its boundary, the team spotted children playing cricket. An enthused Balaji and Arnaud joined their game for a few minutes and then resumed the journey.

Walking through the bylanes, the group quickly reached a deadend when they encountered a stone quarry. The beautiful hillock over the years was almost destroyed for using it as construction material. Despite this flaw, the mountain remains a serene getaway amidst the concrete jungles. Going through the terrain, some members found an aloe vera bush and sniped a few leaves for its medicinal purposes.

After a small detour, the team crossed the Ammaguda railway track to reach a hillock which was an ideal spot to unwind for the weary walkers. The location was scenic with the sight of Kohe Imam Dargah on one end and the Mouali dargah hill, the starting point of the day, on the extreme other end.

While Arnaud imprinted an illustration of the dargah, its footsteps, boulders and the surroundings, another team member Mahesh showcased his rock climbing skills eliciting thunderous claps by the audience.

As it became obvious that the journey had come to an end, a poignant set of trailers gathered on a rock formation that resembled an natural amphitheatre to share their emotions and experiences in the entire four-day trek before bidding goodbyes.

It was Yvan who spoke first. “I have worked in many cities in France but Hyderabad seems to have better trails,” he summed up. A wide-smiling Arnaud shared, “Through the journey we got to know many people. We were not working alone but as a group. It was a good experience to walk across neighbourhoods and the people were amazing.” Alice Guillermer, a representative of Bordeaux Metropole, hoped for a greater outcome from the journey. “It was difficult to initiate this project due to the pandemic. We walked for more than 10 kilometres everyday. We hope that we will be able to build better trails with partners involved in the project.”

It was architect and urban designer Hocine Aliouane-Shaw who had the last parting words. “From our young age, we are programmed to think in a rational way. In a trail, you can only make new discoveries by breaking the rationale. Hyderabad is not just Charminar or other palaces. It includes locations like the secret unnamed lake in Kukatpally, the walkway in Umdasagar, the hillock near Durgam Cheruvu which we discovered during the trails. The dream is that in 10 years we will have more such trail connect tours. If we are able to share, we will learn more things. I believe we are in the beginning of something exciting,” he apprised as the participants gathered for one last hurrah before heading to their respective places.

By Krishna Murthy



















