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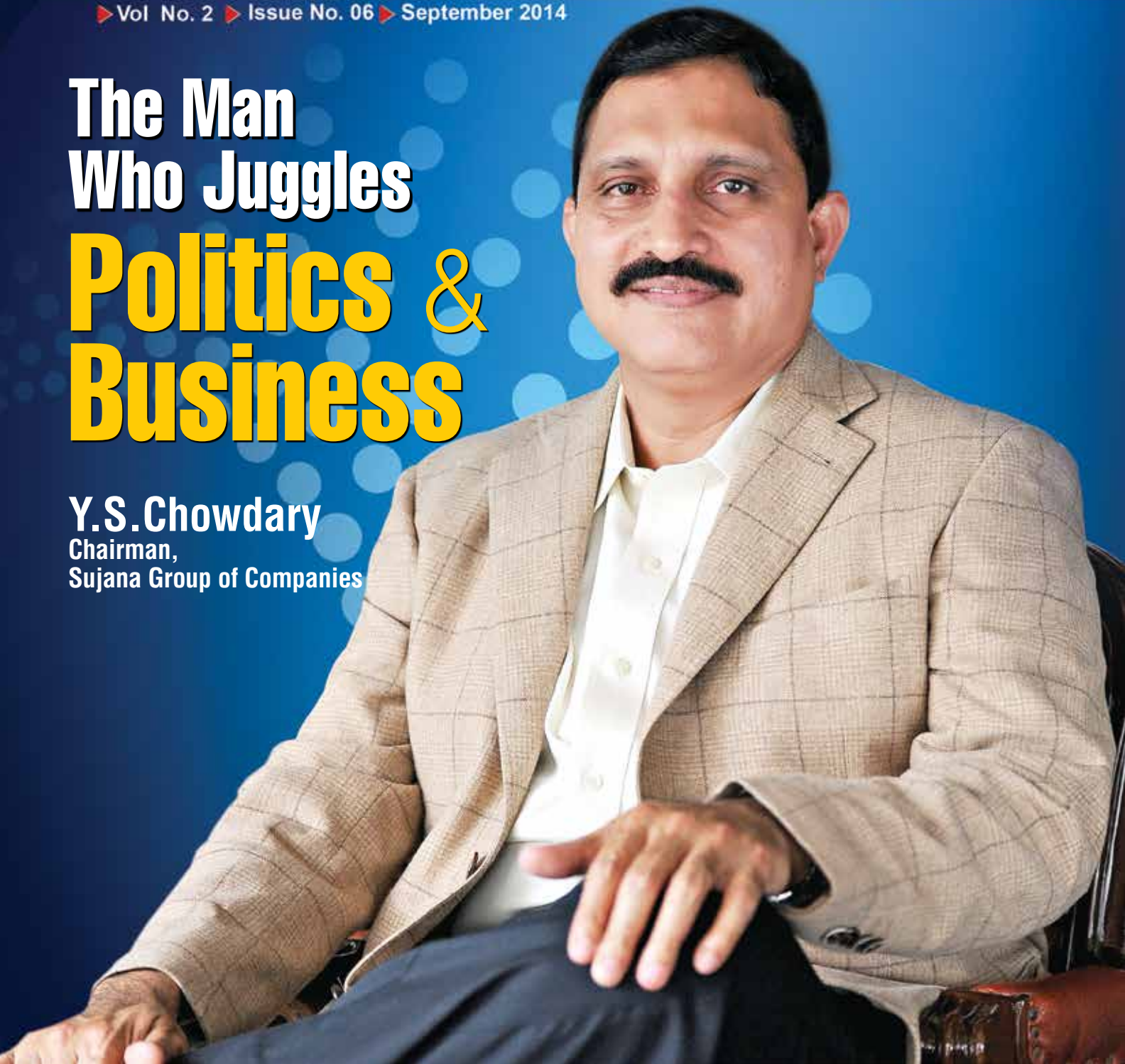
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**The Man
Who Juggles
Politics &
Business**

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Health is Wealth

Many IT giants and some in the manufacturing sector have already started implementing out-of-the-box ideas to make preventive healthcare a part of the lives of their employees, by holding wellness camps and check-ups.

-By A Correspondent



India is facing a double burden of diseases, both non-communicable (NCD) and infectious. Latest statistics suggest that 53 percent of all deaths in 2008 occurred due to any of the lifestyle ailments (NCDs) – heart disease, cancer, diabetes, etc. Of all NCD related deaths 38 percent males and 32.1 percent females died below the age of 60. About 12.6 lakh people died of heart conditions in 2008, 9.9 lakh died of diabetes in 2011 and 5.6 lakh died of cancer in 2010.

Economic impact of NCDs

WHO, along with the Institute of Human Development (IHD, New Delhi) found that in India, 3.2 crore people fell below the poverty line by spending on healthcare out of their own pockets during 1999-2000. More than 70 percent of the total expenditure on healthcare is out of the patient's pocket. In spite of continuous growth in healthcare industry, there is a huge gap in the demand and supply of quality healthcare. The Report of the Working Group on Disease Burden for 12th Five Year Plan states, "Heart diseases, stroke and diabetes are projected to increase cumulatively, and India stands to lose 237 billion dollars during the decade 2005-2015." The ASSOCHAM report on Preventive Healthcare and its impact on Corporate Sector states that, "One

rupee spent on prevention saves Rs. 133 in absenteeism costs and Rs. 6.62 in healthcare costs."

Tax benefit on preventive healthcare

The Government of India has announced, in this year's Union Budget, tax benefits by widening the scope of Section 80D (IT Act). A complete tax waiver will be given on payment made on account of preventive health check-up upto Rs. 5,000 within the overall deduction of Rs. 15,000 available with respect to premium paid towards a health insurance policy for self, spouse and children. A similar deduction is available for investments on policy for parents.

What companies can do

To begin with, the HR team can act as a facilitator of information and organize various HR programs. The importance of prevention and preventive healthcare can hardly be missed, as according to the ASSOCHAM report, it can have a significant effect on absenteeism and its related economic impact on organizations. Certain companies have been acting as the facilitator by either financing the preventive health check-ups or organizing the same through HR initiatives in their respective organizations. The tax benefits available on preventive health check-ups act as an added incentive.

It would be worthwhile to mention that many IT giants and some in the manufacturing sector have already started implementing out-of-the-box ideas to make preventive healthcare a part of the lives of their employees, by holding wellness camps and check-ups, which has had a significant positive economic impact on absenteeism costs and employee retention. Health vouchers, akin to those like food or travel vouchers can be thought of as a simple yet smart solution to make preventive healthcare and prevention a part of everyone's life. **(Indus Health Plus is a pioneer in preventive healthcare facilitating preventive health checkups across 17 states in 60 plus cities across more than 90 centres) ★**