

MANAGE India

CONFERENCE SPECIAL 2019



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ADAPT. TRANSFORM. ACCELERATE.
MADE POSSIBLE BY A PROJECT MANAGER

PROJECT MANAGEMENT NATIONAL CONFERENCE, INDIA 2019

HOSTED BY
PMI Pearl City
Chapter

In this Issue



**PMI India
Communications**
Priya Awasare

Project Editor
Panchalee Thakur

Contributors
Koushik Srinivasan
Juhi Chaudhary

**Project
Management
Institute.**

**PMI Organization Centre
Pvt. Ltd.,**
#114 WeWork, 20th Floor,
Oberoi Commerz II
International Business
Park,
Oberoi Garden City,
Off Western Express
Highway, Goregaon East,
Mumbai - 400063
E-mail pmi.india@pmi.org
www.pmi.org.in

SPENTA
DIGITAL MEDIA
PVT LTD

Design, Spenta Multimedia Pvt Ltd
Peninsula Spenta, Mathuradas Mill
Compound, Senapati Bapat Marg,
Lower Parel, Mumbai - 400 013.
Tel: (022) 2481 1010
Fax: (022) 2481 1021.



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Dear PMI Member,

PMI Pearl City Chapter (PMIPCC) successfully hosted the 11th edition of the PMI India Project Management National Conference (PMNC19) and PMI 50th anniversary celebrations on 20 and 21 October. It marked the end of an exciting journey that started a year ago after we took over the baton of hosting the national conference from PMI North India Chapter.

The PMNC19 organizing committee, along with PMI India staff, PMIPCC board members, and advisors, started by framing the theme and subthemes, format, and components.

Throughout the planning phase, we maintained a laser focus on maximizing the delegate experience with knowledge sharing sessions, engaging discussions, and inspiring talks which highlighted success factors and provided a glimpse into future skill requirements.

The chapter's prior experience of hosting national conferences, the vision of the leadership team, the passion and commitment of the volunteers, and the insights of the other PMI India chapter leaders and our regional mentor guided us through this phase.

The result was an exciting new format of PMNC19 that received an overwhelming response from delegates and attracted thought leaders, industry captains, and practitioners from across domains as speakers.

The honorable Vice President of India, Shri. M Venkaiah Naidu, delivered a highly engaging keynote and inspired delegates to contribute to nation-building.

The contributions of chapter volunteers made PMNC19 a memorable conference.

We send our best wishes to Lt. Col (retd.) Sri Harsha and PMI Bangalore Chapter for PMNC20. See you all in the Garden City next year.

Regards,

Komal Mathur
Conference Director - PMNC19

Dear Members,

The Project Management National Conference 2019 was a practitioners' conference with a nationalistic agenda. While the theme, *Adapt. Transform. Accelerate. Made Possible by a Project Manager*, focused on project management professionals, the conference tracks and the speakers were aligned in a way that provided delegates a national level stage.

Themes like the "Startup Dive-in" was a first for a national conference. The idea was to encourage professionals with project ideas to consider entrepreneurial ventures. The second theme, digital transformation, focused not on technology but on how project managers can leverage digital technologies across sectors. No PMI conference is complete without discussions around the backbone of the nation, which is infrastructure building. We had some of the most visible, successful, and challenging infrastructure projects showcased at the conference.

We had some outstanding speakers, who talked about their work as chief architects and project directors of some of the world's greatest and most challenging projects. Our TED Talks segment brought new ideas and inspiration for delegates.

Above all, the address by the Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, inspired us all. We will always remember his address and the message that he delivered to our members.

We have received highly positive feedback from our delegates. Our sincere gratitude goes to PMI headquarters, PMI India, PMI India chapters, and all the volunteers who made the conference happen.

Stay connected. There is a lot to come in 2020.

Regards,

Sriram Santhana Gopalan
Conference Chair



A Celebration of Project Management

Inspiring talks, lessons on project excellence, cultural presentations, and entertainment mark Project Management National Conference 2019

Panchalee Thakur

The project management community came together for the 11th Project Management National Conference (PMNC19) to listen to experts from diverse fields on their experiences of running projects at a time of digital disruption. The annual conference in Hyderabad on 20 and 21 September also provided an occasion to commemorate PMI's 50th anniversary, which is being celebrated through the year across the globe.

To go with the celebratory mood, the professional development forum took on a new flavor this time, with cultural segments that showcased local artistic talent, a rock concert, and a party in which delegates took a break from the learning and let their hair down.

The learning opportunities were rich and diverse as leaders from the government, large corporations, PMI, and the startup community delved into the conference theme – *Adapt. Transform. Accelerate. Made possible by a project manager.*

A highlight of the conference was a keynote address by Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu on day two. He outlined some of the large programs launched by the Government of India and the project management challenges and lessons to draw from those. "The prime minister of the country is a project manager, who is overseeing the project of transforming India," he said.

A number of other distinguished speakers addressed the two-day conference. They were Randall Black, chair, 2019 PMI Board of Directors; Manish Bhatia, chief technology officer, Amazon Pay; Nalla Venkateshwarlu, engineer-in-chief, Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, Government of Telangana; Meher Afroz, general manager, Microsoft India; General (retd.) Ved Prakash Malik, former chief of army staff, Indian Army; Sudhanshu Mani, former project director, Train 18, Integral Coach Factory, Indian Railways; Dr. V. R. Lalithambika, distinguished scientist, Indian Space Research Organisation; Srikanth Mopidevi, executive director and head of consumer banking and big data analytics, DBS Asia Hub; Dr. Archana Sharma, principal scientist, CERN (European Organisation for Nuclear Research), Geneva; and Satyarup Siddhanta, mountaineer and motivational speaker.

PMI India presented the annual Best Project of the Year awards. Larsen and Toubro won the award in the large projects category for the Statue of Unity in Gujarat. The Public Works Department, Dehradun, won in the medium category for the Uttarakhand Emergency Assistance Project (Road and Bridge). RITES Ltd., Robert Bosch Engineering and Business Solutions Private Limited, and Powergrid Corporation of India Limited, bagged the awards in small, micro, and contribution to the community categories, respectively.



Kuchipudi dancers performing at the inaugural ceremony

Mr. Naidu released the Braille edition of a book on project management. The book is the work of a team of volunteers from the PMI Pearl City Chapter, and was led by a visually impaired project manager. The other release was a series of white papers on the role of project management at a time of digital disruption. The series has been authored by a team of PMI India's Excellence Enablers' Forum.

The first day of the conference had a special track on startups which featured a guest speaker, a panel discussion of experts from the startup ecosystem, and pitch presentations by five startups. The other three tracks were digital transformation, infrastructure, and leadership.

A new addition this time was the inclusion of TED Talks. Five speakers delivered inspiring talks on topics such as women empowerment, reforestation, and social activism.

Over 800 delegates from across the country attended the conference, which was the outcome of hundreds of hours of meticulous planning and execution. It was yet another occasion to showcase the volunteering spirit in the PMI community. PMI honored around 20 volunteers from PMI Pearl City Chapter who organized the conference and 12 longstanding members of the chapter. PMI Pearl City Chapter has passed on the baton to PMI Bangalore India Chapter for PMNC 2020.



Commit yourself to your career, give back to society

M. VENKAIAH NAIDU
Vice President of India

As the Government of India launches ambitious programs and projects to accelerate India's development, the focus is often on the end result. Project management challenges and lessons behind these initiatives are rarely the topic of discussion. So when the vice president of India focused his keynote on the planning and execution of some of the country's largest projects, there was a lot for project managers to learn about.

Mr. Naidu commended PMI and PMI Pearl City Chapter for organizing the mega conference and selecting a conference theme that is closely linked to the government's mission to "reform, perform, and transform."

Calling Prime Minister Narendra Modi the project manager leading the project to transform India, he said, "Project managers are extremely important for a nation's progress – whether it's to plan and execute projects well, be change leaders, or inspire people from different locations, cultures, ethnicities to work together for the common good."

Addressing the project managers in the audience, he said that given the growth projections for India, it is a great place and time for project managers to grow their career. "My message to you is two-fold: acquire the right skills and keep yourself constantly attuned to the demands of the future. Secondly, PMI's Global Celebration of Service is a great opportunity for project managers to give back to society. So go ahead and commit yourself to a cause that you believe in," he said.

(from left) Joseph Cahill presenting a memento to Venkaiah Naidu in the presence of Randal Black

On NITI Aayog's task force on project and program management in which PMI is a knowledge partner, he said he believed this was the right time for such a step. "Our country has embarked on a development agenda that is bold, ambitious, and often at a pace and scale that has not been seen anywhere else in the world," he added.

Mr. Naidu spoke about some of the large programs that he had launched as the minister of rural development and later as the minister of housing and urban affairs, such as the Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana to connect rural India with better road infrastructure, Swachh Bharat, and Smart Cities.

He touched upon challenges faced and lessons learned in some of these large programs, such as the struggle to change people's perceptions for the success of Swachh Bharat, strong leadership to make Smart Cities a reality, championship at the topmost level for recordbreaking success of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, and innovative thinking to overcome the problem of land acquisition to speed up highway construction.

Throughout his address, the vice president continued to draw guffaws from the audience with his trademark style of creating acronyms and using rhyming words to drive home the message.

The Value of Project Management

RANDALL BLACK

Chair, 2019 PMI Board of Directors



With PMI celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, some nostalgia and sentimentality are in order. So when Randall Black took the stage for his keynote on the second day of the national conference, he took delegates through the milestones that have defined PMI over these years.

Reflecting on the origins of PMI, he spoke about how a handful of visionaries led by Jim Snyder led to the formation and growth of a professional development organization devoted to project managers. He also briefly touched upon India's evolution as a center of project excellence – from the building of the Bhakra Nangal dam in the border of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh to the series of successful space research programs launched by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). A number of Indian organizations – the Aditya Birla Group, GMR Group, Larsen and Toubro, and Infosys – are now part of PMI's Global Executive Council, an elite body that is helping to direct and guide the future of the project management profession.

On PMI's relevance in the present, Mr. Black spoke with pride about the Global Celebration of Service, a pledge that PMI has taken to devote 100,000 hours of community service. He called out PMI India chapters that have richly contributed toward this pledge by taking up community work that ties in well with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG).

"In the future, when technology disruptions are going to continue to change the paradigm of business, project management will be closely tied to the future of work. Today we live in a project economy where job descriptions are becoming more fluid and 90 percent of the role could be in the category of 'all other assigned tasks.' Project managers need to have the skills to manage a portfolio of projects and understand the role of technology in projects," he said.

He urged practitioners to develop their Project Management Technology Quotient and increase their relevance in projects. "Earlier, project managers took on insignificant operations-related roles. But today, there are chief projects officers and executive directors of projects. This shows the strategic value that projects can bring to an organization," Mr. Black said.

Leadership at the Battlefield

GENERAL (RETD.)

V.P. MALIK

Former chief of army staff, Indian Army



As the former head of the world's third largest army and one that is actively engaged in defending the country's border even in peacetime, Gen V.P. Malik is probably one of the most deserving people in the country to impart leadership lessons.

He termed leadership as the art of getting a little more out of people than what the science of management thinks is possible.

Connecting project management to leadership, Gen Malik spoke about leading teams to realize a vision and fulfill a strategy, whether it is in the battlefield or business. "Leadership stands for an organization's vision, and project management is about connecting the vision with execution. Leadership is 35 percent knowledge and 65 percent attitude; project management is 65 percent knowledge and skills, and 35 percent about planning, people management, organizing, and creating synergies. We also need project management to align the project to the core strategy," he said.

Gen Malik, who was the army chief during the Kargil War of 1999, recounted events and stories of heroes who sacrificed their lives to illustrate the importance of leadership, teamwork, motivation, and executing a strategy during a war. "The core strategy given to the army was that India will exercise restraint, though we have been intruded. We were told to not cross the Line of Control (LOC). Now, to carry out this strategy or order, I became the project manager," said Gen. Malik.

India decided to create "strategic imbalance" for Pakistan by maintaining pressure on land, air, and water. This "disruptive strategy" proved critical in halting the Pakistani army. Quoting from the Gita, he said, "Action is superior to knowledge. So never hesitate to act."

He advised project managers to create an environment for the team to do their job, resist 'back-seat driving' and monitor well.

To demonstrate the spirit of those fighting for the country, Gen. Malik played a short clip of the famous video in which Captain Vikram Batra smiled to the TV camera and declared '*Yeh dil maange more*' (this heart desires more) shortly before he was martyred. He also read out a letter written by Major Padmapani Acharya shortly before he was martyred in the Kargil War, in which he tells his father that combat is an honor for a soldier.

Project Managers as Nation Builders

JOSEPH CAHILL
Chief Operating Officer, PMI



Joseph Cahill touched upon the need to nurture project management capabilities at a time of transformative change. As the world gets increasingly projectized, projects managers with the right skills will help organizations successfully steer into the future.

While welcoming the vice president of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu, to the conference, he spoke about some key achievements and initiatives of PMI in India. He highlighted the efforts being undertaken to honor PMI's Celebration of Service pledge, PMI's initiatives toward preparing project talent for the future, and its participation in a government-led task force on project and program management. The taskforce, set up by NITI Aayog, is working on developing a national policy framework for project and program management.

Calling project managers the builders of a nation, Mr. Cahill said, "They are a set of professionals who are both doers and thinkers. They are the bridge between policy and action, between strategy and execution, ensuring that the vision of an organization gets translated into reality."

He lauded the Government of India for achieving success in projects and programs that have been planned and executed at a scale and pace that the world has not seen until now. These are initiatives undertaken for financial inclusion, infrastructure development, health and sanitation, and building digital services.

"India has won world attention for Aadhaar and its space research program. The honorable vice president had overseen some of the biggest infrastructure development programs during his stints as the minister of rural development and the minister of housing and urban affairs in the past," he said, urging Mr. Naidu to throw light on the government's program implementation.

Customer Obsession Pays Off

MANISH BHATIA
Chief technology officer,
Amazon Pay, India



The Amazon shopping portal is probably one of the best examples of continuous transformation to meet changing customer needs. What started as a static page with only two products on offer, books and movies, has grown into 12 sites with 170 million products, catering to over 350 million customers.

The relentless focus on customer service has been the key for its successful expansion. "Inventing on behalf of our customers has served us well. Our philosophy hasn't changed for the last 24 years – of focusing on an awesome customer experience," said Manish Bhatia.

He said price, selection, and convenience are the three pillars that define customer experience. And it does not end with addressing customer experience issues. The team at Amazon is constantly "listening to customers" and "obsessing about the customer" which help them innovate to meet the said and unsaid needs of the customer.

He talked about implementing "wandering ideas" like Seller Flex that has been introduced to sellers in India alone. Sellers would earlier send their products to the Amazon warehouse for shipment to clients. With Seller Flex, sellers can directly upload details about the product on the portal and ship it to the client. This has led to an increase in the number of products available to customers.

Elaborating on the core principles that drive Amazon, he said that it has embraced the attitude and willingness to fail. He said the culture of relentless experimentation, even in the face of failure, has led to many successes and innovations in the company.

Another mantra that stands out in the company is the thought that each day must be like day one. In other words, employees are encouraged to come to work each day with the same level of curiosity and enthusiasm with which they had started their journey in Amazon.

The other oft-repeated credos are: being relentless in achieving the vision, rejecting the 'either/or' thinking (customers do not have to choose between the best price and the best product), and the willingness to be misunderstood (being bold and focused even when the tide is not in your favor).

Understanding Mysteries of the Universe

DR. ARCHANA SHARMA

Principal scientist, CERN, Geneva



When someone's work is about exploring the mysteries of the universe, you can expect their presentation to sound somewhat like science fiction. But then you realize that this is, in fact, the stuff that inspires fiction, scientific exploration at its cutting edge.

Dr. Archana Sharma spoke about her work and life as a scientist and project manager at one of the most renowned scientific institutes in the world that was established soon after World War II. "One of my projects is about understanding the Big Bang, and how matter got created at the start of the universe. Did more matter get produced than anti-matter? These are some questions that we are exploring," she explained.

Her team is conducting research at the Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS), a giant underground detector at CERN's Large Hadron Collider. She is the founder and leader of the CMS Gas Electron Multiplier (GEM) Collaboration, which is producing a series of research studies using sensitive detectors. Under a controlled environment, her team is colliding matter to recreate matter like the way it might have been created during the time of the Big Bang. Simultaneously, cameras are taking photos at the rate of 40 million times a second to capture each nano moment of the collision.

But for her, the journey to reach the top has been difficult. When she joined CERN, she was the only non-European scientist at that time. She felt she needed to work extra hard to match the competency level of her peers. "In such a situation, working like a donkey is a good idea. We Indians are good at that," she said.

After she moved to the role of a project manager, she worked with large teams that needed perfect collaboration. She put down some of her learnings from collaborative projects as: clear definitions and agreement on roles, open communication within teams, recognition and respect, addressing problems as they occur, group goals being placed above personal satisfaction and recognition, and absolute willingness to forgive people for mistakes.

Missions to Outer Space

DR. V.R. LALITHAMBIKA

Distinguished scientist and director, Directorate of Human Space Programme, Indian Space Research Organisation



Space missions are complex but to accomplish them on a shoestring budget and using indigenous technologies can be even more challenging. And this is exactly how the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) scored success in many of its missions. So project managers listened with great interest when Dr. V.R. Lalithambika spoke about the factors behind India's space success.

In a space program, project management skills are put to the test like probably no other. While conventional projects are timebound, space programs have inviolable deadlines. "Suppose you want to go to another planet, you will have to launch on a particular date and time so that you can rendezvous with another planet with minimum fuel and minimum time. If you lose that moment, sometimes it can take a few years to get the next opportunity," she explained.

The launch window can actually be unimaginably tight, of just one hour. Three factors then become most critical – quality, reliability, and seamless teamwork. Sometimes, the last factor means perfect coordination among geographically separated teams.

India's space program is also about optimization to cut costs and conduct research to develop indigenous technologies.

She spoke with pride about ISRO's vision and its work ethos that aligns each person working on a project to the larger goal. Leadership plays a big role in not just fostering the right work culture but also in taking mission critical decisions under extreme pressure situations when the whole world is watching.

A factor that often gets ignored is succession planning, but ISRO has always placed great importance to it. The organization focuses on nurturing third and fourth tier leaders who can take the vision forward. Interestingly, there is also a strong guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship in the organization.

"We work in a gender neutral place. A work environment where nobody considers your gender, and decisions are not influenced by gender, is the best working environment for women. However, it must also be a safe environment for women," she said.

Relief to Parched Lands

NALLA VENKATESHWARLU

Engineer-in-chief, Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project, Telangana



With recurrent droughts taking a toll on farming, the Government of Telangana undertook the challenge of building the world's largest irrigation project in a record time. It aims to irrigate 45 lakh acres of land and provide 30 thousand million cubic feet (TMC) of drinking water to Hyderabad and Secunderabad, and another 10 TMC to villages en route.

"It is a combination of 28 projects. A barrage takes 5-10 years to be completed but we completed three barrages in 24 months. In total, we have 85 gates," said Nalla Venkateshwarlu, amid loud applause. In one instance, they poured 16,722 cubic meters of reinforced cement concrete for 24 hours at a stretch to construct a barrage.

Mr. Venkateshwarlu credited the leadership from Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, and effective project management to the success of the Rs. 80,499 crore project on the river Godavari. Through a network of barrages and canals, the dam will irrigate 60 percent of the state.

Since the land being irrigated is at an altitude higher than the river, the project has employed innovative lift techniques to work against the gravitational force. Several obstructions have been built to reverse the flow of the Godavari and enable efficient drawing of water.

The project faced many challenges through its lifecycle, be it land acquisition, clearances from various departments, or the lack of storage capacity. Yet a dogged pursuit of the end goal and dedication helped the team keep up to the timelines.

Chief minister Rao took a lot of interest in the project, which helped in expediting approval processes. The team often met at the sites to save time and resolve issues quickly.

The project leadership brought in workers from 27 states to meet its requirements. The peak workforce was 58,454 on a single day. Workers and machinery were managed through internet-based systems to improve efficiency. Efforts were also made to provide the workforce with good amenities for their well-being. They got chilled buttermilk and oral rehydration salts twice a day during peak summer. A dedicated medical team, sanitary and filtered water facilities, and day shelters were some of the amenities.

Bold Ambition Meets Commitment

SUDHANSHU MANI

Former project director - Train 18, Integral Coach Factory, Indian Railways



Over the ages train journeys in India have inspired elegant prose and poetry from travellers but rarely does one hear such eloquence from someone working in the dirt and grime of a train factory. But this is precisely what Sudhanshu Mani of the Indian Railways treated the audience to.

His keynote on the project management behind the making of Train 18, or the Vande Bharat Express, was a combination of insights from managing a highly complex and sensitive project to inspiring thoughts from literary greats. Train 18 is a first-of-its-kind, made-in-India, semi-high speed intercity train. Mr. Mani had only 18 months to complete the project.

The Train 18 project was a test of the capabilities of the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai that enjoys a Limca Book of Records entry for manufacturing over 60,000 coaches. In the beginning, Mr. Mani encountered scepticism, derision, and turf wars among different departments for undertaking a mission to manufacture India's first engine-less, computer-operated, self-propelled train set. There were questions about the technical expertise of ICF to manufacture such a train.

In a talk peppered with quotes from William Shakespeare and verses from Urdu poetry, Mr. Mani laid out the factors that led to the success of the project. Organization culture and people practices played a big part in it. "I follow some simple credos such as being generous in giving people the credit due to them and being wisely foolish in setting goals," said Mr. Mani.

Since ICF had only 18 months to deliver the train, he decided to call the project Train 18, which served as a constant reminder to the teams to keep to the tight schedule. A big decision was to not go for any technology transfer and instead make it an entirely indigenous project.

"The Vande Bharat Express was inaugurated on 17 February 2019 and it has been trouble-free ever since," said a proud Mr. Mani to loud applause from the audience.

Customer Engagement in the Digital Age

MEHER AFROZ

General manager, Core Platform Engineering, Microsoft



Meher Afroz, who leads a team at Microsoft for the company's own digital transformation, shared her experience from this journey. The most important takeaway from her session was the need to prioritize customer engagement in any transformation initiative.

Ms. Afroz took the example of online shopping to explain how customers need to be engaged through the entire sales lifecycle, including using historical data, to help customers make decisions. Empowering employees is also crucial in enabling this. For example, provide frontline employees customer data and interaction history so that they can deal with customers in an informed way. The third factor that plays an important part is optimizing operations. Taking the same example forward, she explained how digital transformation will be important in maintaining a realtime view of inventory in order to ascertain and prevent any bottlenecks in the supply chain.

She spoke about how artificial intelligence (AI) has transformed the way businesses operate. Tonnes of data is being fed into AI models that generate key insights into buying patterns and customer profiles. The use of chatbots is changing the whole customer experience. Companies are discovering new ways to enhance the value they bring to customers through the smart application of these technologies. Uber drivers can click a selfie at the start of a journey and through a cognitive API, get themselves verified as indeed the same driver that the client booked, which is an added security feature. Microsoft, in collaboration with the International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics, has used AI to help farmers in Telangana improve crop production. Farmers now have access to data that tells them the best timeframe to sow seeds.

She urged project managers to spend time to know what their customers want. "Sometimes, you mistake a stakeholder with a customer, but remember that your customer is the end user. You need to know how he or she is going to use your product," she added.

Digital Makeover of a Bank

SRIKANTH MOPIDEVI

Executive director and head of consumer banking & big data analytics, DBS Asia Hub



Srikanth Mopidevi presented the transformation story of DBS Bank, a Singapore-based financial institution with presence in India. The bank, that ranked in the bottom 60 in terms of customer satisfaction, is now the only bank in the world with three awards at a time to its name – the best bank in the world, the most innovative bank in the world, and the most digital bank.

Banking is not an activity that excites people; it is about tasks that need to be done. Hence, CEO Piyush Gupta's vision is to make DBS "invisible by 2020," or in other words, make banking easy and effortless.

DBS is using digital technologies to change the way its customers conduct banking transactions. Mr. Gupta has urged his team to get inspiration from organizations known for their stellar customer service, such as Singapore's Changi Airport.

Mr. Mopidevi spoke about the bank leadership's drive to encourage open-mindedness and risk taking within the organization, which could mean looking for out-of-the-box ideas from organizations from other industries.

"Like any other bank in the world, we didn't own any of our technology but outsourced it through our partners. Slowly, we started to bring them in. That's the journey we took," he said. DBS took learnings from Facebook, a company who made massive investments in building its own tech infrastructure.

The management team coined an acronym, GANDALF, that stands for Google, Amazon, Netflix, DBS, Apple, LinkedIn, and Facebook. It shows where DBS wants to be – in the company of the tech giants of the world.

Mr. Mopidevi spoke about five pivots to base an organization's transformation: focus on what the customer wants; be cloud-native; know that the customer journey keeps moving; keep an open mind to learn; and look at employee journeys.

He left the audience with five key learnings: be customer obsessed; be data-driven; take risks and experiment; be agile; and be a learning organization.

Revamping Public Sector Projects

YASH SINGH

Director, major projects advisory, KPMG India



For a country with an economy of US\$ 2.8 trillion and an ambition to reach US\$10 trillion by 2032, India needs to pick up the pace at which it is currently building its infrastructure.

Earlier this year, PMI, in association with KPMG India and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), Government of India, published a report on the state of infrastructure projects in the country and ways to improve project performance. The report, Revamping Project Management, is a follow-up to a similar report in 2012.

Giving an outline of the report, Mr. Singh said the report looks at the project management practices and technology being leveraged by leading infrastructure developers of the country.

“Our study that covered 25 public sector units from nine sectors has shown that project performance in sectors such as power, civil aviation, and shipping is declining, whereas it is improving for sectors such as roads and highways, and oil and gas,” he said.

The report points toward India's poor rating in the global benchmarking of project management maturity. Areas in which Indian companies need to improve maturity are cost, risk, and schedule management. “Some of the areas in which we are doing well are the use of technology, value engineering, and procurement,” he added.

The report lays down the enablers for successful delivery of infrastructure projects under the categories of process and capability building, change in culture and mindsets; and external factors such as faster regulatory approvals and land acquisition.

Chasing Dreams in the Mountains

SATYARUP SIDDHANTA

Mountaineer, and president & founder, ABETO Foundation



From being an asthmatic kid who could not run without an inhaler to holding a record of having climbed the highest peaks of all seven continents, Satyarup Siddhanta's journey is indeed inspiring. He brought the same inspiring energy to the stage when he shared his story of overcoming seemingly impossible hardships to accomplish his dreams.

After being diagnosed with asthma at the age of eight, Mr. Siddhanta quit his favorite sport – football. At 18, a near fatal attack sent him to the hospital. However, such setbacks didn't deter him from following his passion for mountaineering. Besides the seven peaks, he has climbed seven volcano summits and three additional summits. He added the additional summits to his list just to be sure that he had not left out any other potential highest peak.

He advised project managers to be open to new experiences and dream big. “When I first saw Mt. Everest from Base Camp, I made a promise that I will come back. Much later I realized that I had dreamed big because I was unaware of the dangers and costs involved,” he said. But that dream led him to work on a plan to make it happen.

He also recalled many incidents when team work, motivation, and sheer grit helped him overcome challenges while chasing his dream.

“I have got my MBA degree from the mountains. The mountains have taught me about risk analysis and mitigation, financial planning, and the cost of failure. In the mountains, the cost of failure could be your life,” he remarked.

One such lesson was from the Nepal earthquake of 2015 when he was preparing for the final climb to Mt. Everest. The team had to abandon their plans and quickly descend. “I was disappointed since I lost Rs. 18 lakh in that one instant. But later I realized that the money I had forfeited was nothing compared to the gift I got – that I was alive,” he explained. The avalanche that followed the earthquake killed 21 people.

He said there is no shortcut to success; grit is the most important quality to achieve success.

STARTUP CHALLENGES – HOW PROJECT MANAGEMENT CAN HELP

MODERATOR



Sumeet Mathur
Global Head of Engineering,
Enterprise Security Software,
Broadcom Inc.



Prajakt Raut
Entrepreneur and
Entrepreneurship Evangelist

PANELISTS



Heena Raval
Director of Internal Tooling and
Intelligent Automation, Google



Dr. Saji Gopinath
CEO, Kerala Startup Mission

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MODERATOR: Sumeet Mathur (SM), global head of engineering, Broadcom
SPEAKERS: Dr. Saji Gopinath (SG), CEO, Startup Mission, Kerala
 PRAJAKT RAUT (PR), founder, Applyifi
 HEENA RAVAL (HR), director, Google

Prajakt Raut answering a question posed by Sumeet Mathur (extreme left). Also on stage are Heena Raval and Saji Gopinath.

SM: Across the different phases of a startup, what is the role of a project manager?

PR: There are two basic phases in a business – the discovering phase of what will work, and then replicating at scale what you know will work. In the first stage, speed to market and getting the job done is important, and it's not necessary to do it efficiently. Hence, the willingness to adopt project management is rather limited here. At the stage of scaling, there is more willingness to bring in project management.

SM: Data suggests that nine out of 10 startups fail. Two-thirds of the ones that succeed change their business plan. How should project management evolve to cater to this world of certainty?

SG: We can draw a parallel between the way startups operate and agile project management. Applying project management to startups is like managing projects in a highly uncertain environment. In startups, use project management as a learning tool and to develop new frameworks such as Harvard's Diamond Framework for R&D projects that are highly uncertain.

SM: How is execution different between a traditional services project and a project involving a product going into its fifth or sixth release?

HR: Project managers thrive in large organizations with structured processes. However, in intrapreneur projects within an organization,

if the project manager is not ready to unlearn, there will be struggle. The product team wants to move fast, but the processes come in the way. Can we look at the processes to suit the end result, which could be the intended value or validation? Project managers can create value by checking whether the team is on the right track; if they are collecting the right data; or if they need to course correct. They can also create awareness in the leadership team about being prepared for the unexpected.

SM: What skills should a project manager learn or unlearn to be successful in a startup?

HR: You must focus on the value and outcome that you have created in the projects that you have run, and how you can use those insights to create value. Do not focus so much on the processes and the structure.

SG: The project manager's role is not just to deliver a project but be a project leader. That change in mindset is important.

PR: People from large organizations must recognize that a startup is not a smaller version of a large company. Culturally, they are very different. You cannot just tell what needs to be done. You need to sensitize people in the organization about adopting a process-oriented approach.

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Experiences of Building an Airport

PRADEEP PANICKER
Deputy CEO, GMR Group



Pradeep Panicker compared the expansion of the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad to conducting a heart surgery on a fully conscious patient. GMR, which had constructed the airport, is now expanding the terminal to accommodate increased air traffic. The expansion work is taking place around a functioning airport, which means that the GMR team has to take care not to disrupt any service.

GMR has been in the forefront of airport construction and management in the country. The other major airport that the company has constructed is the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi.

Mr. Panicker spoke about the challenges that GMR faced while constructing the Hyderabad airport. One of the biggest challenges was the revision of air traffic projections from the time GMR won the bid to the time the project was nearing completion. The airport today takes in 21 million passengers annually, which is a far cry from the initial projection of nine million. And now, after completion of the expansion, the airport will be able to accommodate 40 million passengers a year. It boasts new features such as e-boarding and express check-in counters, features that may soon be seen in other airports in India as well.

Mantras to Change Work Culture

RAJENDRAN DANDAPANI
Director of engineering, Zoho



With the nature of work changing due to digital technologies, the art of project management and work cultures must change.

Rajendran Dandapani mentioned four key reasons to back his claim: work is becoming increasingly intangible, projects are inherently unplannable, knowledge is increasingly getting dispersed, and work is becoming social.

He took the example of the author of the Harry Potter series, J.K. Rowling, to explain how work is becoming intangible. One cannot measure her output by the number of words she writes in a day, as it may take her years to come up with an idea. Similarly, an employee could be working on a new business idea which may not have a tangible, immediate output.

Projects are becoming more collaborative and social in nature, and hence becoming unplannable. "If you plan less in the early phases, you will postpone some important decisions but you will gather a lot of information along the way which you can feed into the system. That will help you make better decisions," he said.

On knowledge, he said that thanks to the collaborative nature of today's projects, knowledge resides in different team members. Lastly, work is becoming social as ideas are generated through networks of people.

He advised project managers to not plan excessively, plan for slack so there is room for failure and experimentation, and provide ways by which team members can appreciate each other for good work.

Understanding Smart City Projects

KARUNA GOPAL

President, Foundation for Futuristic Cities



At a time when unchecked urbanization is exerting pressure on urban infrastructure and services, smart cities present technology-centric solutions to planners. Delving in on India's Smart Cities mission, Karuna Gopal, a thought leader and advisor on smart cities, calls it a marriage of the science of urban development and the art of leadership.

Having contributed to the design of the 100 smart cities that India plans to build, Ms. Gopal has a ringside view of one of the most ambitious and complex programs that India has undertaken.

She highlighted some of the key project management challenges that smart city initiatives face. Since there is no globally accepted definition of a smart city, there is often a level of confusion regarding what makes a city 'smart'. India has defined smart cities as liveable and inclusive cities that are layered with smart technologies.

Smart city projects struggle to align the goals and aspirations of different stakeholders, such as policy-makers, investors, and citizens. "While planners may be thinking about traffic, power, or healthcare, individuals may be more worried about housing and relocation. Or planners want low cost housing solutions, whereas there are no takers among investors and developers," she said.

On the complexity behind decision-making, she said, "There is a need to understand and explore the correlations between various factors before making a decision. For example, climate change is a critical factor and is linked to sustainable development goals across the world." Some correlations are not so obvious, such as how the rise in temperature is impacting male fertility, and increased violence is changing the fertility map.

"One of the biggest challenges is in striking a balance between various interest groups, such as tech evangelists versus green evangelists, proponents of driverless cars versus those who want to promote 'drive less,' or augmented reality versus ground network," she said, adding that stakeholder management is one of the most critical factors that could make or break a smart city project.

Design Thinking to Solve Problems

PROF. MAMTA GAUTAM

National Institute of Design, Kurukshetra



Prof. Mamta Gautam, a consultant to the Government of India on design thinking who also leads incubation and innovation cells, started the session with two questions. How can design thinking help solve key issues in society? And what is design thinking?

She explained design thinking as an approach that is based on the inquiry on human behaviors, relationships, emotions and interactions and an understanding of the human needs. It seeks to find solutions to the unmet needs, pain points, and aspirations of people.

As Henry Ford famously remarked, if people were given a choice, they would have wanted faster horses. But instead he fulfilled people's unstated need of travelling faster, safer and more comfortably by giving them cars. Similarly, design thinking leads to solutions that have an overlap of three aspects: what is desirable, what is feasible, and what creates values.

Ms. Gautam gave participants a simple exercise to draw a home and their idea of a vacation. A quick survey of the results indicated different approaches and views. The emphasis here was on first ensuring all stakeholders have a common understanding of the problem before solving it. Design thinking is aimed first at ensuring the problem is understood correctly by all, and then solving the root cause and fixing the process, instead of just treating the symptoms.

"Design thinking is a combination of divergent thinking focused on creating choices and convergent thinking creating value," she said.

It is a framework designed to iterate faster, and reduce risks, focusing on failing fast, failing earlier, and reducing the cost of failure. "It requires an enterprise wide mindset change and can be successfully implemented when leadership teams lead the change, create awareness, train people, and integrate it into existing processes to create an environment of value creation," she explained.

KPIs in Digital Transformation

RAMKUMAR ARUMUGAM

Sr. Manager – Projects,
Cognizant



Ramkumar Arumugam argued that traditional Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) cannot be used to evaluate the outcome of a digital transformation initiative.

He outlined a set of metrics that he had devised for a digital transformation project to automate some of the manual transactions at a retail store in the United States. The project was subsequently scaled up to multiple outlets and functions such as HR and finance. To track the outcomes, the team used a set of business and engineering KPIs.

Some of the business KPIs were zero downtime, usability, business process automation, and responsiveness of the web design. For example, a web business must have zero downtime and provide access to data to users at all times.

For engineering KPIs, he stressed the need to factor in agility, commitment vs delivery ratio, and reduced time in the developmental cycle.

“We built over 50 reusable components like ‘login/log out’ and ‘security’ which were used across the board, and helped increase the productivity of developers by over 15 percent,” he said. The digital solution has also led to 65 percent reduction of paper trail in HR.

He urged project managers to first identify the client’s goals, align the project goals to that, and make the KPIs visible to all the stakeholders so that teams can reflect and adapt as required.

Model for Real Estate Projects

TV SESA SAI

Senior director, Project
Management, Savills India



The real estate sector is notorious for construction delays. TV Sesa Sai provided project managers some useful lessons on how to overcome delays during the construction phase.

Drawing from his wide experience, Mr. Sai presented the ‘4M model’ as a simple tool to counter this problem. The four ‘Ms’ are – manpower, method, material, and money. Since these four parameters are the most critical for any construction project, he advised project managers to devise a tool to track them.

He drew an analogy between the model and a car, with each of the four wheels of a car representing one of the 4 ‘Ms.’ “Just like one needs to have all four wheels properly inflated for the car to move at a desired speed, similarly the status of the four ‘Ms’ is crucial for a good pace of construction,” he explained.

He presented a sample dashboard that captured data on the 4 ‘Ms’ and threw up insights on their performance, concern areas, and need for action. He said once a variance is found in the data, they can be sorted into three decision points – pending decisions, open issues, and risks. The 4 ‘Ms’ are plotted on an excel sheet against a work breakdown structure that tells project managers instantly the status of the different parameters. “Sometimes, we feel a project is not moving while it may be on track or vice-versa. So this dashboard gives a bird’s eye view of the project,” he said.

New Approach to Scheduling

KARTIK G.

DGM – Projects, L & T Construction



Kartik G. made a presentation on the use of The Technique for Order of Preference by Similarity to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS) in a rural electrification project in Sambalpur, Odisha. It was a highly complex project, given that it was in a remote location, the threat of the monsoon loomed large, and there was political pressure to electrify the villages quickly.

The schedule of the project, which was being planned from March to December 2018, faced four types of threats – external political factors, availability of workers, customer priorities, and complexity due to the inaccessibility of the location. The team had to work through a wildlife corridor, for which they required special approvals. Huge equipment needed to be transported by animals and people because vehicles could not reach there; and since monsoon floods were common, all of the equipment had to be brought in before the rains started. Sambalpur is also a hotbed for malaria and typhoid, so worker health concerns had to be prioritized as well.

The project team gave weights to each of the criteria that could affect project schedule and uploaded the data on TOPSIS. The system then generated a priority order that helped the team in execution. The Rs. 517 crore project covered nine districts and impacted 25,000 people.

Tool to Predict Material Cost

DEESHA VORA

Co-founder & chief of product, and Sundar Rajan, mentor, SuperWise



A nagging problem in the real estate market is cost unpredictability due to fluctuations in commodity prices. With material cost comprising up to 63 percent of a project, can project managers use predictive tools to control project costs?

Deesha Vora and Sundar Rajan have found an answer in the Price Index Prediction (PIP) Wizard, a free predictive analytics tool that helps manage cost escalation and enables better planning and budgeting.

The tool uses historical pricing data for commodities, such as cement and steel, and applies regression analytics to arrive at customized models for each company, commodity, or region. Other forms of data fed into the algorithm are internal factors such as location, quantity, and credit period; and external factors such as government policy, transport costs, and human resource costs.

“We have used this model to predict the price of steel and cement for the next 12 months. The results so far have been 90-92 percent accurate, resulting in savings of 2-5 percent of the project cost toward material,” said Ms. Vora. The other benefits are better ordering and scheduling of orders to meet project demands and higher productivity, since work does not have to stop for material to arrive, which has, in turn, resulted in about 8 percent savings in human resource costs.

Mr. Rajan also talked about risk mitigation through PIP. Project managers can now opt for just-in-time procurement, and thus minimize risks around procurement and prevent cash flow issues. The accuracy rate of cash flow predictions has been up to 95 percent.

FOUNDERS OF SIX STARTUPS WENT ON STAGE TO PITCH THEIR BUSINESS IDEAS TO A PANEL OF EXPERTS. HERE IS A SUMMARY OF THE INNOVATIVE BUSINESS IDEAS.

AMBEE: The startup wants to make data on air quality easily accessible to consumers, health researchers, developers and others who need that data to make informed decisions. It claims to have the largest and most accurate air quality data in Asia. The company has installed over 100 sensors to capture and relay data in real time. Ambee then layers that data with other data and creates heat maps. Consumers can freely access it through the company's mobile app. The company earns revenue from selling the data to data aggregators, insurance companies, healthcare providers, and others.



URBAN KISAAN: The venture that runs modern farms close to the homes of consumers wants to redefine the term 'fresh food' and provide consumers access to harvest directly from farms. A consumer can walk into a farm and order fruits and vegetables growing there. The company calls itself a holistic, hyper-local farm based on hydroponics, a method of growing plants with mineral nutrient solutions instead of soil. It uses proprietary nutrient formulations to achieve optimal plant growth, optimized designs to enable more crops to grow in less space, indoor lighting techniques, and IoT and data to manage farming conditions efficiently.



ANVAYAA KIN CARE: The venture seeks to meet the needs of a growing elderly population in the country that lives on its own. Launched in Hyderabad, Bengaluru, and Chennai, the company provides all-around care to elderly people who live independently. Services are not limited to medical emergencies, but also small requirements such as fixing a light bulb or accompanying someone for a movie. It takes the help of a tech-enabled platform to match care-givers to the elderly looking for help. It has a network of 2,700 ambulances and 2,000 doctors, and has supported around 850 families.



SHANROHI TECHNOLOGIES: The company provides automotive workshop management solutions. Through its platform, Ramp, it aims to streamline the automotive aftermarket industry across the country from parts acquisition to repair. Vehicle owners, fleet operators, garage owners, and insurance companies now have access to a technology platform that gives them access to complete information about the maintenance of their vehicles. Through this, the company provides validated information and thus seeks to bring in more transparency and trust in the auto aftermarket industry.



TRAVEL SPOC: Though there are a large number of travel agents, there is no common platform to bring their expertise together. Travel Spoc is a one-stop shop where tour operators can showcase their tour packages and travel products. Travellers can then choose which package or product suits them the most. It offers these services through an online portal on which travellers can look for flights, hotels, activities, and travel services to meet different needs.



NANO HEALTH: With the rising prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases, preventive healthcare is becoming increasingly important. Nano Health offers companies wellness, disease management, and acute care solutions for employees. The company analyzes the health information of employees, creates risk profiles, and recommends preventive programs or interventions. It provides dashboards that a company's managers can use to measure factors such as employee productivity levels and medical claims being made.



A new addition at this conference was TED Talks. Five speakers from different fields brought their inspiring stories to the conference of how they broke barriers and are making a difference in the world.



CHETNA SINHA

BANKER, SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR

Chetna Sinha founded Mann Deshi Bank to take care of the financial needs of women entrepreneurs in rural India. The idea took shape after she realized that women from economically weaker sections were being denied even micro savings of as little as Rs 10 by banks. She not only shared her unusual story of leaving Mumbai and marrying a village leader but also extraordinary stories of rural women who have emerged as strong leaders in society and their households by overcoming socio-economic challenges with sheer grit.

"These are incredible women who continue to inspire me, teach me and guide me. They never had an opportunity to go to school. When RBI denied to give license to our bank because women were illiterate, they told the officials, 'So what? We can count', and challenged them to do calculations faster than them without using a calculator," she said.

ASHWEETHA SHETTY

RURAL SOCIAL WORKER

From rolling beedis (locally-made cigarettes) at a tender age to fighting for her right to higher education, Ashweetha Shetty has lived her life defying the identities that society had thrust upon her of being a "poor village girl." Today she has turned into a pied piper for rural youth. She helps first-generation college graduates with life skills and education opportunities through her NGO, Bodhi Tree Foundation.

She received a big round of applause when she narrated her personal story of how despite coming from a poor background and a male-dominated area, she found her self-worth through education. "I believe that we all are born into a reality that we blindly accept until something awakens us and then the world opens up," she said.

SALLY KOHN

WRITER AND ACTIVIST

Sally Kohn has been on a mission to address the pervasive culture of hate by helping people be self-aware and understand the origin of such hatred.

She shared her dark past with the audience – of being a bully in school. She narrated her story of how she changed and became a messenger of

compassion. She spoke about finding common ground with those you hate and make the transition. Ms. Kohn pointed out that hatred takes place at all levels. The talk gave some important lessons for recognizing hatred and healing from within.

SHUBHENDU SHARMA

ECO-ENTREPRENEUR

An automobile engineer by profession, Shubhendu Sharma made a switch to build rich, dense forests instead of cars. Through his venture Afforest, he has planted native forests in more than 35 cities globally.

Mr. Sharma narrated how his encounter with Japanese scientist Dr Akira Miyawaki inspired him to grow a forest of 30,000 trees in his backyard. He explained how through Dr Miyawaki's technique one can grow a multi-level forest in a space of just six cars and at a cost of merely one iPhone. Not just that, these trees grow 10 times faster and within a decade, one can grow a 100-year-old forest.

ROBERT MUGGAH

MEGACITIES EXPERT

Robert Muggah is an expert on megacities, security and new technologies. An author of seven books and hundreds of policy papers and peer-reviewed articles, he co-founded the Igarapé Institute and SecDev Foundation to look at data-driven safety solutions in Latin America and Africa, and cyber security.

He said that cities occupy just 3 percent of global surface area but account for 75 percent of world's energy consumption and 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions. He peppered his talk with interactive maps representing urban fragility and talked about the risks that our cities face. He shared six principles, citing various cities across the world as examples to understand how we can make cities more resilient. "Cities are where the future happens first. They're open, creative, dynamic, democratic, cosmopolitan, sexy," he said. However, he cautioned, "If we get our cities right, we might just survive the 21st century. We get them wrong, and we are done for."



Project of The Year – Large category – Runner up
Project Name: Shree Singaji Thermal Power Project, Stage-II (2X660 MW)
Organization: Larsen & Toubro Limited



Project of The Year – Large category
Project Name: Statue of Unity – Winner
Organization: Larsen & Toubro Limited (B & F Division)



Project of The Year – Medium category - Winner
Project Name: Uttarakhand Emergency Assistance Project (Road and Bridge)
Organization: Public Works Department, Dehradun



Project of The Year – Small category- Runner up
Project Name: Commission DevOps Modernization
Organization: UST Global



Project of The Year – Small category - Winner
Project Name: Passenger Ropeway between Bhawan and Bhairon Temple
 at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine, Katra, J&K
Organization: RITES Ltd.



Project of The Year – Micro category – Runner up
Project Name: Armis Vehicle Inventory Management System
Organization: Sasken Technologies Limited



Project of The Year – Micro category - Winner
Project Name: MG1 CA007PS
Organization: Robert Bosch Engineering and Business Solutions
 Private Limited



Contribution to Community – Runner Up
Project Name: Digital Literacy Program for Self Help Groups in Sundarbans
Organization: Linde Global Support Services Pvt. Ltd.



Contribution to Community - Winner
Project Name: Improving Rural Livelihood through Integrated
 Watershed Management
Organization: Powergrid Corporation of India Limited

We are here to celebrate and we know how. That was the mood at the PMI50 celebrations on the sidelines of PMNC19. PMI members and staff joined conference delegates at the celebration party that went on till late night. Bryden-Parth, a rock group known for their Indo-western renditions, kept party-goers swinging to the latest chart-toppers. The food counters offered a wide range of delicacies to cater to different palates.



Core Committee - Volunteer Track Leads



Name	Track
Sriram S G	Chair
Komal Mathur	Director
Suresh Kavili	Co-Chair
Venkat Reddy C	Co-Director
Bhaskar Reddy G	Speaker Track
Sairam Chamarty	Speaker Track
Madhav Reddy	Speaker Track
Suma Murthy	Speaker Track
Aravind Chembeti	Mobile App
Sita Mahalakshmi	Registrations
Monika Muddamshetty	Master of Ceremony
Srinivas Kopparapu	Master of Ceremony
Pavan Chamarty	Stage Management
Amith Kumar M	Stage Management
Mohit Mathur	Hospitality



We would like to thank Bhaskar Reddy G and Mohit Mathur for their tireless efforts to secure a commitment for a keynote address by the honorable Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu.

PHOTO GALLERY







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