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Over 200 CIOs and industry leaders came together to chart Al's journey from pilot to production, while sports and Bollywood icons offered fresh perspectives on how the technology is reshaping their worlds. pg. 06





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Thanks to you, the CIO&Leader Annual Conference was truly unforgettable!

THE 26TH CIO&Leader Annual Conference was our most significant and impactful event yet—bringing together nearly 450 delegates, including 230 CIOs and Future CIOs, 35 partners, more than 30 keynote speakers, six non-tech speakers, and over 70 one-on-one meetings.

Organized from July 31 to August 3, 2025, at The Ritz-Carlton, Pune, the four-day conference (with the first day as a zero day) began with celebratory sessions before transitioning into a rich agenda.

The highlight was the opening AV, where delegates appeared as AI avatars, setting the stage for an unforgettable experience. None of this would have been possible without your support. Thank you for sharing your knowledge and actively participating in shaping the conversations around AI.

The discussions made one thing clear: taking AI from pilot to production is as much about people and processes as it is about technology. CIOs are grappling with fragmented and poor–quality data, legacy system integration, and a shortage of skilled talent. In addition, evolving regulations, ethical concerns, and security risks are some of the other significant challenges. Even when pilots succeed, scaling AI across the enterprise often encounters cultural resistance, leadership skepticism, and the challenge of proving ROI.

Yet this is precisely where CIOs play a critical role—navigating these roadblocks and leading their enterprises to turn AI's promise into measurable business impact. The candid exchanges and collective learning at this year's conference reinforced the strength of IT Leaders in driving that transformation.

This special issue captures the highlights of the conference and is designed to serve as a lasting record of all that took place. In forthcoming editions, we will also feature detailed insights shared by you during the conference in the form of articles and thought-leadership pieces.

I look forward to continuing our conversations on how to make AI more effective and build trust. ■



"Your knowledge sharing made the 26th Annual CIO&Leader Conference a recordbreaking success on enterprise Al adoption."

Jatinder Singh Editor jatinder.singh@9dot9.in

content August 2025



COVER STORY

06-60

26th Annual CIO&Leader Conference

Over 200 CIOs and industry leaders came together to chart AI's journey from pilot to production, while sports and Bollywood icons offered fresh perspectives on how the technology is reshaping their worlds.





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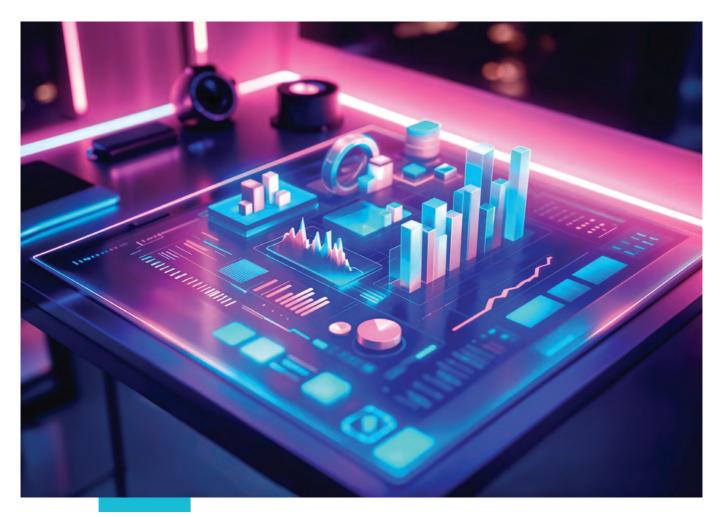
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Editor: Vikas Gupta



survey



Al Adoption Soars in India, Yet Only 15.8% of Enterprises Call Themselves Mature

The 2025 State of Enterprise Technology Survey, unveiled by CIO&Leader, paints a clear picture of enterprise AI.

By **CIO&Leader** | editor@cioandleader.com

THE STATE of Enterprise Technology Survey 2025, conducted by CIO&Leader among over 350 CIOs and senior technology leaders, reveals that AI has moved from experiment to enterprise imperative. However, the report warns of a persistent execution gap: only 15.8% of Indian enterprises have operationalized AI at a truly strategic scale—with governance, measurable outcomes, and organization—wide alignment.

Al Now a Boardroom Priority

The annual survey highlights AI's shift from a "nice-to-have" innovation to a board-mandated growth lever.

- 93% of enterprises will increase AI and analytics investment in 2025—with more than half projecting significant budget hikes.
- 100% of respondents say AI's primary value lies in better decision-making, cementing its role as a "cognitive enabler" rather than a pure automation tool.
- 98.4% prioritize cost optimization and operational agility, underscoring AI's dual role in delivering immediate returns and long-term adaptability.

"Investment intent is crystal clear—Indian enterprises want AI embedded into the fabric of decision-making," said Jatinder Singh, Executive Editor and Research Lead, CIO&Leader. "The challenge is ensuring that these investments mature into governed, measurable programs rather than isolated experiments."

Unstructured Data Takes Center Stage

The findings also reveal the data reality fueling AI adoption:

- 74.2% report high growth in text-based data, driven by chat, email, and AI-generated content.
- 70.5% see surging image/PDF data, while 47.6% report growth in video and audio content.

This signals a future where unstructured, multi-format data will dominate enterprise AI strategies.

Generative AI and Automation on the Rise

Generative AI deployments have grown 5X

since 2023, transforming creative processes from marketing content to software code. By the end of 2025, 30% of IT services will be fully automated by AI—triple current levels.

These advances, however, are fueling a 165% surge in data center energy consumption, prompting enterprises to explore green computing initiatives.

Barriers Shift From Technology to Trust

While early AI adoption hurdles were largely technical, today's challenges are more strategic and human:

- 91.7% cite data security and privacy risks as the top barrier.
- 90% face data quality challenges.
- 88.3% struggle with selecting the right technologies.
- 83.6% highlight regulatory and ethical risks. "The AI conversation is no longer just about models and algorithms—it's about governance, explainability, and organizational readiness," said R. Giridhar, Head of Research, 9.9 Group.

The Build vs. Buy Paradox

Enterprises are increasingly favoring internal AI development—85% prefer it over packaged tools for control and customization. Yet, only 23% trust their own teams to lead AI innovation, exposing a confidence gap that fuels vendor churn: 78% plan to switch or add vendors in 2025.

Recommendations for 2025

The report outlines a four-point action plan for CIOs and business leaders:

- Build AI literacy across functions to align stakeholders.
- Strengthen governance and security to address privacy and ethical risks.
- Prioritize explainable, integrated AI over opaque black-box solutions.
- Move from pilots to enterprise-scale AI with measurable business outcomes.

About the Survey

The State of Enterprise Technology Survey 2025 by CIO&Leader captures insights from over 350 CIOs and senior technology leaders across Indian enterprises (annual turnover of over ₹5,000 crore). It provides a comprehensive view of AI adoption trends, challenges, and investment priorities for the year ahead. ■



26th Annual Conference

CIO&LEADER

Al: From Pilot to Production
1st-3rd August, 2025 • Ritz Carlton, Pune



Over 200 CIOs and industry leaders came together to chart Al's journey from pilot to production, while sports and Bollywood icons offered fresh perspectives on how the technology is reshaping their worlds.

By CIO&Leader | editor@cioandleader.com



INTRODUCTION

The 26th Annual CIO&Leader Conference, held at the Ritz Carlton, Pune, once again brought together India's top technology leaders to explore how enterprises can scale artificial intelligence from pilots to production.

The conference convened some of India's most prominent technologists, who channeled their expertise, insights, and innovative ideas to discuss and recommend cutting-edge AI-driven strategies for advancing business growth. With over 100 CIOs and 100 future CIOs in attendance, the event underscored its increasing significance and prestige.

Throughout the conference, participants engaged in over 60 sessions, featuring diverse formats such as keynote addresses, panel discussions, fireside chats, workshops, case studies, and interactive formats like Speed Dating, Ideas Café, and CIO Shots.

The three-day event saw keynote sessions by Renowned Tech Advisors & Consultants like Partha Iyengar, Former Country Manager, Gartner; Advisor & Thought Leader and Anup Purohit, Former Global CIO, Wipro.

At the 26th Annual CIO&Leader Conference, celebrated personalities added inspiration and cultural depth to the technology-driven agenda. Anil Kumble, legendary cricketer and former India Captain & Coach, shared leadership lessons from the cricket field, while Dr. Nitish Bharadwaj, Actor and Public Figure, spoke on "Leadership in the Age of Dharma." Annu Kapoor, Actor, Singer, Director, and TV Presenter, explored the role of AI in artistic creativity, bringing a fresh perspective from the world of cinema. Cultural vibrancy was further enriched with soulful performances by

Chaitanya Devadhe and Mohan Radhakrishnan, blending tradition, creativity, and celebration.

These interactive elements were integral to the CIO Prestige Program, an industry-first initiative for rewarding and recognizing CIOs. Throughout the conference, participants earned CIO Prestige Points by engaging in various activities and exploring the event's offerings. CIO Prestige Program App, developed by CIO&Leader, allowed CIOs to track their points in real-time and see how they ranked among their peers in the competition for exciting prizes, including the grand prize Maruti Suzuki Fronx.

This year's focus was not just on showcasing AI's potential but on delivering practical strategies, leadership models, and governance frameworks to operationalize it across enterprises. The event also celebrated the NEXT100 Awards, recognizing future CIOs, and honored industry veterans through the prestigious CIO Samman. Cultural evenings, performances, and networking mixers complemented the agenda, creating an engaging blend of knowledgesharing and community-building.

DAY 1: SETTING THE STAGE

Day Overview

The first day focused on framing the enterprise AI narrative—combining survey insights, leadership talks, and early discussions on scaling AI. It provided CIOs with both research-backed knowledge and practical approaches to AI adoption.

Welcome & Survey

- Welcome Address Vikas Gupta, CEO & Editorial Director, B2B Tech, 9.9 Group.
- State of Enterprise Technology
 Survey 2025 Jatinder Singh,

Editor, CIO&Leader, presented findings on AI maturity, governance gaps, and enterprise challenges.

Interactive Networking

- **Speed Dating** Conducted by Vikas Gupta, featured partners such as AMD, Genesys, Google Cloud, SAP, ServiceNow, UiPath, and others.
- **Ideas Café** Moderated by Vikas Gupta, enabled brainstorming with leaders from AMD, Freshworks, Sify, Symphony AI, Barracuda, and others.

DAY 1 ROUNDTABLES

Harnessing AI for Business Growth: Opportunities and Challenges

- Moderator: R. Giridhar, Group Editor, 9.9 Group
- Speakers (AMD India): Ajay Koul, Country Head – BFSI Segment & Regional Head – Enterprise Division.
- Vasuki Kadaba Srinath, Country Manager – Enterprise Business & Regional Head., Vidit Shankar Gaur, Regional Head., Dr. Sudhakar Yerneni, Senior Technologist, AMD.
- This session explored sectoral opportunities for AI adoption and the challenges CIOs must overcome to convert pilots into measurable business impact.

Architecting Advantage: The CIO's Playbook for a Sovereign, Scalable AI Future

- Moderator: Anup Purohit, Former CIO, Wipro
- Speakers (Neysa): Xavier Kurian, Chief Revenue Officer., Apurva Mehta, Head – Sales.
- The roundtable provided insights into building sovereign, scalable, and compliant AI ecosystems critical for Indian enterprises.

Simplify AI: Architecting the Foundation for Your AI Core

- Moderator: Ashwani Mishra, Consulting Editor, CIO&Leader
- Speaker: Sify Technologies Representative.
- Focused on simplifying IT and data landscapes to make enterprises AI-ready with sustainable architecture.

SpeedCloud Supreme: Your Private Cloud Alternative

- Moderator: Jatinder Singh, Editor, CIO&Leader
- Speaker: Sanjay Aneja, National Sales Head, NxtGen Cloud Technologies.
- Discussed how private cloud strategies can provide enterprises with agility, security, and scalability as they expand AI adoption.

Source-to-Pay: Evolution to Strategic Differentiator

- Moderator: Sachin Mhashilkar, Executive Director – B2B Tech, 9.9 Group
- Speakers: Maulik Bawani, Head – Solution Consulting, ServiceNow., Siddharth Jain, Senior Technical Architect, Infobeans.
- Examined how procurement can shift from being an operational process to a strategic enabler for enterprises.

Hybrid Cloud vs On-Premise: Making the Right Infrastructure & Data Center for Enterprise Al

- Moderator: Mayurakshi Ray, Consulting Editor, CIO&Leader
- Speaker: Kirtikar Ojha, CMO & Head – Business Development & Government Sales, L&T Cloudfiniti.
- Addressed how CIOs can weigh hybrid cloud and on-premise deployments to best support AI infrastructure.

Keynote Sessions

- Enterprise AI From Pilot to Production, Kushe Bahl, Partner & Leader Digital and AI Practice, McKinsey & Company, Bahl laid out strategic frameworks for CIOs to move beyond proofs of concept and embed AI into core enterprise operations.
- AI A Management Cookbook, Partha Iyengar, Consultant, Former Gartner Fellow & Country Manager Research (India), Iyengar presented a structured "cookbook" of management approaches for CIOs to orchestrate AI adoption responsibly.
- AI: From Pilot to Production, AS Rajgopal, Managing Director & CEO, NxtGen Cloud Technologies, Rajgopal showcased how cloud-first architectures can accelerate AI maturity and enterprise-scale deployments.
- **Keynote Address,** Babasaheb N. Kalyani, Chairman, Kalyani Group, Kalyani emphasized India's opportunity to build sovereign, sustainable, and globally competitive AI ecosystems.
- Simplify AI: Your Foundation for AI Core, Aman Mehra, Head Strategy & Transformation, Sify Technologies, Mehra highlighted simplification as the first step to ensure AI foundations are scalable and enterprise-ready.
- The Autonomy Mandate: Why Your Agentspace Can't Wait, Ajitesh Kumar, Senior Cloud Architect, Google Cloud, Kumar explained how agentic AI will redefine enterprise autonomy and speed of execution.
- Uncomplicate IT: Don't Let Complexity Hold You Back, Vish Mehta, Staff Product Manager, Freshworks, Mehta urged CIOs to

- streamline systems and simplify IT infrastructure to enable smoother AI rollouts.
- From Chaos to Clarity:
 Simplifying the AI Journey
 using SAS Viya, Niket Vyas,
 APAC Regional Lead Data & AI
 Solutions, SAS, Vyas illustrated
 how enterprises can unify data
 silos and achieve clarity in AI
 transformation.
- CIO Priorities for 2025: Autonomous, Resilient, and Secure, Anagha Mujumdar, Regional Sales Director, SentinelOne, Mujumdar spotlighted how AI-led security must underpin CIO strategies for resilient enterprises.
- Agentic AI & Automation:
 Exploring the Art of the
 Possible in the Cognitive
 Enterprise, Rohit Sood, Data &
 AI Pre-Sales Engineering Leader,
 IBM Technology India & South
 Asia, Sood shared insights into
 how automation and agentic AI
 can create cognitive enterprises
 of the future.

Fireside Chat

With Anil Kumble & AS Rajgopal – Cricket legend Anil Kumble and AS Rajgopal, CEO, NxtGen, discussed resilience and adaptability as leadership traits.

Panel Discussion

This discussion explored how CIOs can simplify complex IT and data architectures to lay a robust foundation for AI adoption, balancing scalability with cost and governance.

- Panel 1: Simplify AI –
 Architecting the Foundation for
 Your AI Core
- Moderator: Jatinder Singh, Editor, CIO&Leader
- Panelists: Susheel Navanale, CIO, Britannia Industries Ltd.; Ravi Kumar, Chief Digital & Information Officer,

Cover Story

Exide Industries.; Saurabh Gupta, Group Chief Digital & Information Officer, Gujarat Fluorochemicals Ltd.; Atish Vilas Bhanushali, SVP - IT & Head - Cloud CoE & DevOps, HDFC Bank.; Anand Agarwal, Group CTO, Times Group.; KRC Murty, Senior President & Head - IMG (Business & Digital Technology Solutions), Yes Bank.; Dr. Sandip Pradhan, CIO & VP, Century Plyboards (India).; Aman Mehra, Head -Strategy & Transformation, Sify Technologies.

This discussion explored how CIOs can simplify complex IT and data architectures to lay a robust foundation for AI adoption, balancing scalability with cost and governance.

DAY 1 EVENING ROUNDTABLES (WINE & CHEESE / CIO SHOTS)

Real-World AI in Pharma

Speaker: Chitti Babu, CIO, Aurobindo Pharma., Shared practical applications of AI in pharma R&D, supply chain, and compliance.

Al Opportunities & Use Cases in Automotive Industry

- Speaker: Vinod Bhat, CDO, Tata AutoComp Systems., Outlined AI's role in transforming manufacturing, customer experience, and automotive supply chains.
- Agentic AI & Future of Enterprises and Its Social Impact Moderator: Jatinder Singh, Editor, CIO&Leader Speakers (SAP): Sanjay Chaudhary, Head – Enterprise Marketing., Pankaj Jadhav, Senior Director & Head – SAP Procurement (FnS) Customer Advisory., Discussed the social, ethical,



and business implications of adopting agentic AI.

Future-Proofing Enterprises: Intersection of Data, AI and Cyber Resilience

- Moderator: Mayurakshi Ray, Consulting Editor, CIO&Leader
- Speaker: Abhijit Ray, Senior Manager – Solutions Engineering, NetApp.
- Explored how CIOs can integrate resilience and security into datadriven AI strategies.

Navigating Al's Triple Dilemma: Adoption, Governance, Return

- Moderator: Jatinder Singh, Editor, CIO&Leader
- Speaker: Neelakantan
 Venkataraman, VP & Global Head
 Cloud & Edge Business, Tata
 Communications.
- Examined the balancing act CIOs face between adopting AI quickly, governing it responsibly, and demonstrating ROI.

Integrating AV Applications to Enhance Workplace Productivity

- Moderator: Sachin Mhashilkar, Executive Director — B2B Tech, 9.9 Group
- Speakers: Farhan Walele, Area Sales Director – West, Crestron., Rajan Shankar Macharekar, Regional Sales Manager, Sigma AVIT Technology Solutions.
- Showcased how AV solutions can be used to boost enterprise collaboration and workplace efficiency.

CIO Shots & Networking Mixer

- Facilitator: Vikas Gupta, CEO & Editorial Director, B2B Tech, 9.9 Group
- Host: Parag Khurana, Country Manager – India & SAARC, Barracuda Networks.
- A light yet impactful networking round where CIOs shared candid views and connected in an informal format.



DAY 2: EXPLORING AI'S POTENTIAL

Day Overview

Day 2 pivoted to infrastructure, operating models, and applied AI strategies, while celebrating the next generation of leaders at the NEXT100 Awards Nite.

Day 2 Keynotes

- Enterprise AI Leadership
 - Prateek Pal, Chairman's Office

 Data and AI Initiatives, Tata
 Group, Pal spoke about AI as a
 boardroom priority and its role in
 shaping enterprise leadership.
- Building a Culture of Open Innovation through Startups
 Dr. Tapan Sahoo, Executive
 Director & Head Digital
 Enterprise, Maruti Suzuki,
 Sahoo explained how enterprises
 can partner with startups to
 accelerate AI-driven digital
 transformation.
- From Iron to Insight: The CIO's Blueprint for AI-Ready

Sustainable DC Infrastructure

Dr. AS Prasad, VP – Product Management & Engineering, Vertiv Energy, Prasad focused on designing data centers optimized for AI workloads while ensuring sustainability.

- Empowering Seamless
 Collaboration in the AI-Driven
 Enterprise Vinod Tekchandaney,
 Founder & Managing Director,
 Unicom Infotel Pvt. Ltd and
 Manu Sharma, Regional Director
 India & SAARC, Neat, Together,
 they demonstrated how
 AI-powered tools are redefining
 workplace collaboration.
- Generating Value Through AI,
 Sachin Sanghi, Principal Architect
 Manufacturing & Automotive,
 Google Cloud, Sanghi presented
 case studies of how enterprises
 can unlock tangible ROI from AI investments.
- AI-Powered Future... Is Here, Bhuwan Lodha, CEO – AI Division, Mahindra & Mahindra, Lodha highlighted real-world applications showing how AI has already become an integral business driver.
- Don't Let Identity Be the Weak Link in Cyber Recovery, Antony Basera, Sales Director India & SAARC, Rubrik, Basera explained why identity and access management is critical to ensuring cyber resilience in AI-driven enterprises.
- The Compute Imperative: Fuelling the Next Wave of Growth, Xavier Kurian, Chief Revenue Officer, Neysa, Kurian outlined why compute capacity and optimization will be central to scaling enterprise AI.
- Limitless with AI A New
 Way to Work is Here, Saurabh
 Saxena, Regional Vice President
 Sales, India, OpenText, Saxena
 discussed how AI is transforming
 work, redefining productivity
 and employee experience.

- From Infrastructure to
 Intelligence: Leading with
 Vision in the Age of Cloud & AI,
 AS Rajgopal, CEO, NxtGen, and
 Abhishyant AS, Head Product
 Management, NxtGen, The duo
 highlighted how enterprises
 can transition from traditional
 infrastructure to intelligent
 systems.
- Put AI to Work for Your Enterprise, Sidharth Swami, Advisory Solution Consultant, ServiceNow, Swami showed how enterprises can operationalize AI for measurable business outcomes.
- How Integrating AV
 Applications Can Enhance
 Workplace Productivity, Farhan
 Walele, Area Sales Director —
 West, Crestron & Rajan Shankar
 Macharekar, Regional Sales
 Manager, Sigma AVIT, They
 demonstrated practical ways
 of enhancing productivity by
 leveraging AV applications.
- AI Agents with Knowledge Graph: Moving Beyond Summarization to Automation, Neeraj Matiyani, Head — Sales, DevRev, Matiyani explored how knowledge graphs empower AI agents to go beyond copilots into automation.

Panel Discussions

- Panel 2: Building an Enterprise Data Strategy for AI
- Moderated by R. Giridhar, Group Editor, 9.9 Group.
- Panelists: Avinash Tiwari (CIO, Pidilite), Ramesh Narayanaswamy (Group CTO, Aditya Birla Capital), Gopi Thangavel (Group CIO, L&T), Praveen Shrikhande (CIDO, Aditya Birla Fashion), Dr. Tapan Sahoo (Maruti Suzuki), Amit Shukla (CIO, Crystal Crop), Sachin Sanghi (Google Cloud).
- Panel 3: Infrastructure Planning for AI at Scale

- Moderated by Jatinder Singh.
- Panelists: Rajeev Mittal (CIO, Endurance Technologies), Apurva Dalal (VP Digital Transformation, Adani Airports), Milind Khamkar (CIO, SuperMax), Linson Paul (CTO, Muthoot Microfinance), Sanjay Nandavadekar (Head IT, Inventia), Avinash Naik (CIO, Bajaj Allianz GI), Ashish Kshetry (VP IT, Asian Paints), Nikhil Bhushan (CTO, Tata Starbucks), Ravikumar Ayilavarapu (Delta Electronics India).
- Panel 4: AI Operating Models & Transformation Playbooks
- Moderated by Deepak Agarwal.
- Panelists: Ashok Jade (Group CIO, Kirloskar Brothers), Om Prakash Seth (CIO, DBI Bank), Ashish Thakur (CIO, Cummins).

Workshops & Case Studies

- Scaling AI in Manufacturing Debashish Roy, CDTO, CEAT.
- **The IT-OT-AI Triad** Parna Ghosh, President & Group CIO, UNO Minda.
- Agentic AI in Action Anand Das, Chief Digital & AI Officer, TVS Motor.
- **The CDO Playbook** Amol Deshpande, CDO, RPG.
- Case Studies Abhijit
 Chakravarty (Kotak Mahindra Bank) & Ajit Awasare (Godrej Infotech).

Fireside Chat

The AI Journey with AMD –
 Ajay Koul, Country Head BFSI
 & Regional Head – Enterprise,
 AMD.

NEXT100 Awards Night

- Inauguration by Shri Ashish Shelar, Minister for IT & Cultural Affairs, Maharashtra.
- Keynotes by AS Rajgopal (NxtGen), Sidharth Swami (ServiceNow), Farhan Walele (Crestron), Neeraj Matiyani (DevRev).

 Awards for 100 future CIOs, followed by dinner, cocktails, and a cultural evening with Chaitanya Devadhe.

Day 2 Conclusion

The second day delivered strategic frameworks, applied insights, and recognition of the next generation of CIOs, reinforcing AI's centrality to enterprise growth.

DAY 3: REFLECTING & FORWARD-THINKING

Day Overview

Day 3 emphasized leadership foresight and recognition honoring senior CIOs, summarizing learnings, and exploring future pathways for AI at scale. The final day emphasized foresight, recognition, and actionable pathways. It honored visionary leaders, equipped CIOs with forward-looking playbooks, and celebrated contributions to India's digital transformation.

Keynotes & Insights

- Enterprise-Wide AI Intelligence
 Mukesh Jain, EVP & CTO,
 Capgemini.
- CIO Playbook for AI Success Vinod Khode, Group CIO, Varroc.
- Future Tech Infrastructure Shwetank Verma, Sagility.
- Innovation in Residential Design
 Sandeep Vasudevan, LivSpace.
- Additional insights by Abhijit Moharir (Kalyani Group), Linson Joseph (Bud Ecosystem), Sujoy Brahmachari (Rosemerta Technologies), Sujit Janardanan (Neysa).

CIO Samman 2025

The CIO&Leader Samman 2025 was the emotional highlight of the final day, honoring senior technology leaders for their lifetime contributions to enterprise IT and digital transformation in India

Each year, the Samman recognizes stalwarts who have shaped the country's technology landscape through their vision, leadership, and innovation.

CIO&Leader Samman 2025 Recipients

- 1. Viraj Deshpande, RIL
- 2. Jayant Gupta, HPCL
- 3. Sajeev Maheshwari, DMRCL
- 4. Rajeev Mittal, Endurance Technologies
- 5. Praveen Shrikhande, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail

Jury Panel for CIO&Leader Samman 2025

- Vijay Sethi,
- Prashun Dutta
- Deepak Agarwal
- Aparna Kumar

As in past years, the jury comprised respected veterans of the CIO community who undertook a rigorous multi-stage evaluation to identify the most deserving honorees.

Closing Recognition

- Prestige Points Prizes recognized CIO engagement.
- Lunch and farewells brought the curtains down.

Day 3 Conclusion

The final day celebrated both visionary leadership and rising talent, closing the conference on a high note of reflection, recognition, and forward-looking strategies.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

The 26th Annual CIO&Leader Conference seamlessly wove together strategic foresight, applied technology insights, recognition programs, and cultural experiences. With a clear focus on AI: From Pilot to Production, it equipped India's CIOs to scale AI responsibly, making the conference a definitive platform for enterprise technology leadership.



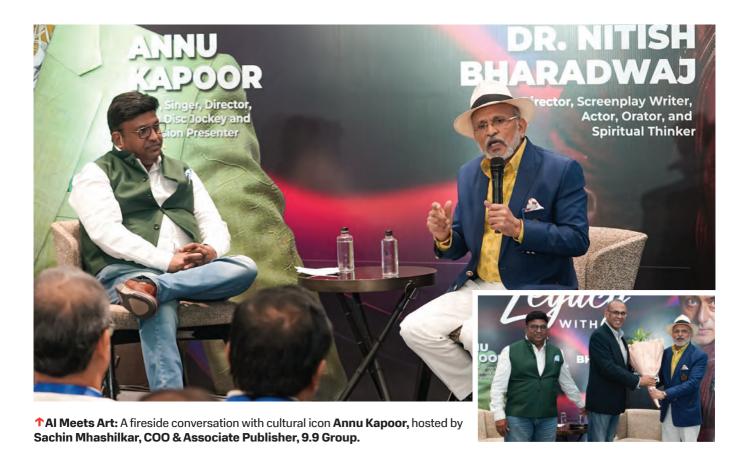






↑Networking and relaxation mark the start of CIO&Leader 2025, ahead of an inspiring evening program















↑Day Zero Highlights: People after a warm welcome had dinner with networking opportunity



DAY 1: FRIDAY, 1ST AUGUST, 2025 AS THE DAY UNFOLDED...













Cover Story



Welcome note by Vikas Gupta, CEO & Editorial Director, B2B Tech, 9.9 Group



↑ State of Enterprise Technology Survey 2025 Findings – Presented by Jatinder Singh, Editor, CIO&Leader











↑Speed Dating: CIOs during the interactive Speed Dating, a get-to-know-you conversation session, with their peers













↑Ideas Cafe: Sparking meaningful dialogue and deeper engagement between participants



↑New perspectives: Keynote session Enterprise AI — From Pilot to Production by Kushe Bahl, Partner & Leader - Digital and Al Practice, McKinsey & Company













↑Quiz activity to engage CIOs by Vikas Gupta & Jagdish Bhainsora











↑ Delegates engage in networking during the lunch break.



↑AI - A Management Cookbook: In his keynote address, Partha Iyengar, Consultant, Ex-Gartner Fellow & Country Manager Research (India) explained how to create an effective strategy for deploying AI in the enterprise.



↑Partner Keynote: The Al journey with AMD by Ajay Kaul, Country Head, BFSI segment & Regional Head Enterprise Division at AMD



↑Partner Keynote: Al: From Pilot to Production by AS Rajgopal, Managing Director & CEO, NxtGen Cloud Technologies



↑ Keynote Talk by Babasaheb N Kalyani, Chairman, Kalyani Group on Technology's Evolution and Defence as a Driver of National Growth.



↑Partner Keynote: Simplify Al: Your Foundation for Al Core by Aman Mehra, Head - Strategy and Transformation, Sify Technologies



↑Partner Keynote: The Autonomy Mandate Why Your Agentspace Can't Wait by Ajitesh Kumar, Senior Cloud Architect, Google Cloud



↑Partner Keynote: Uncomplicate IT. Don't Let Complexity Hold You Back by Vish Mehta, Staff Product Manager, Freshworks





↑Partner Keynote: From Chaos to Clarity: Simplifying the Al Journey using SAS Viya by Niket Vyas, APAC Regional Lead – Data & Al Solutions, SAS



↑Partner Keynote: CIO Priorities for 2025: Autonomous, Resilient, and Secure by Anagha Mujumdar, Regional Sales Director, SentinelOne



↑Partner Keynote: Agentic AI & Automation: Exploring the Art of the Possible in the Cognitive Enterprise by Rohit Sood, Data & AI Pre-Sales Engineering Leader, IBM Technology - India & South Asia



↑CIO Shots: Deploying GenAl - Early Wins, Long Term Vision by Anand Das, Chief Digital & Al Officer (Engineering), TVS Motor Company



↑CIO Shots: Agentic AI in Action: Use Cases Across Consulting, Finance & Compliance by Harnath Babu, CIO, KPMG India



↑CIO Shots: AI Opportunities & Use Cases in Automotive Industry by Vinod Bhat, CDO, Tata AutoComp Systems



↑CIO Shots: Real World AI in Pharma by Chitti Babu, CIO, Aurobindo Pharma



↑Wine & Cheese: Integrating AV Applications to Enhance Workplace Productivity.

Moderator: **Sachin Mhashilkar**, COO & Associate Publisher Speakers: **Farhan Walele**, Area Sales Director - West Region, Crestron & **Rajan Shankar Macharekar** - Regional Sales Manager, Sigma AVIT Technology Solutions



↑Wine & Cheese: Networking Mixer
Facilitator: Vikas Gupta, CEO & Editorial Director, B2B Tech, 9.9 Group
Host: Parag Khurana, Barracuda Networks







Social Impact

Moderator: Jatinder SIngh, Editor, CIO&Leader Speaker: Sanjay Chaudhary, Head - Enterprise Marketing, SAP & Pankaj Jadhav, Senior Director - Head SAP Procurement (FnS) Customer Advisory, SAP



↑Wine & Cheese: Harnessing AI for Business Growth: **Opportunities and Challenges**

Moderator: R Giridhar, Group Editor, 9.9 Group Speakers: Ajay Koul, Country Head - BFSI segment & Regional Head - Enterprise Division, AMD India; Vasuki Kadaba Srinath, Country Manager - Enterprise Business & Regional Head, AMD India; Vidit Shankar Gaur, Regional Head, AMD India and Dr Sudhakar Yerneni, FAE Team Lead, AMD India

AMD PRESENTS















↑Maharashtra comes alive: A night of folk dance and festive spirit at CIO&Leader 2025











↑Nostalgia in the air: Mohan Radha Krishnan's soulful tribute to Kishore Kumar





DAY 2: SATURDAY 2ND AUGUST, 2025 POWER-PACKED SESSIONS







↑ Morning swings and connections: Delegates enjoy a round of golf before the day's sessions



Welcome By R Giridhar, Group Editor, 9.9 Group



Building a Culture of Open Innovations through Startups - Maruti Suzuki Digital Enterprise by Dr Tapan Sahoo, Head - Digital Enterprise, Maruti Suzuki



↑Panel Discussion 1: Simplify Al--Architecting the Foundation for Your Al Core Moderator: Jatinder Singh, Editor, CIO&Leader Panelists: Susheel Navanale, Chief Information Officer, Britannia Industries Limited; Ravi Kumar, Chief Digital & Information Officer, Exide Industries; Saurabh Gupta, Group Chief Digital & Information officer, Gujarat Fluorochemicals Limited; Atish Vilas Bhanushali, Senior Vice President - IT & Head - Cloud COE & DevOps, HDFC Bank; Anand Agarwal, Group CTO, Times Group; KRC Murty, Senior President & Head - IMG (Business & Digital Technology Solutions), Yes Bank; Dr Sandip Pradhan, Chief Information Officer & Vice President, Century Plyboards (India) and Aman Mehra, Head - Strategy and Transformation, Sify Technologies



- ↑From Iron to Insight: The CIO's Blueprint for AI-Ready Sustainable DC Infrastructure by Dr. AS Prasad, VP
- Product Management & Engineering, Vertiv Energy



↑Empowering Seamless Collaboration in the Al-Driven Enterprise by Vinod Tekchandaney, Founder & Managing Director Unicom Infotel Pvt. Ltd and Manu Sharma, Regional Director - India & SAARC, Neat



↑Generating Value Through AI by Sachin Sanghi, Principal Architect - Manufacturing & Automotive, Google Cloud



↑Panel Discussion 2: Building an Enterprise Data Strategy for Al Moderator: R Giridhar, Group Editor, 9.9 Group Panelists: Avinash Tiwari, CIO, Pidilite Industries; Ramesh Narayanaswamy, Group CTO, Aditya Birla Capital; Gopi Thangavel, Group CIO, L&T; Praveen Shrikhande, CIDO, Aditya Birla Fashion & Retail; Dr. Tapan Sahoo, Executive Director & Head - Digital, Maruti Suzuki; Amit Shukla, VP & CIO, Crystal Crop Protection and Sachin Sanghi, Principal Architect Manufacturing & Automotive, Google Cloud



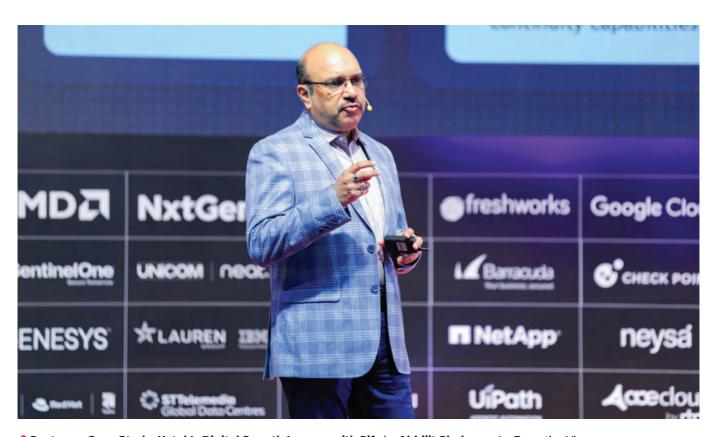
↑Keynote: Al Powered Future.. Is Here by Bhuwan Lodha, CEO - Al Division, Mahindra & Mahindra



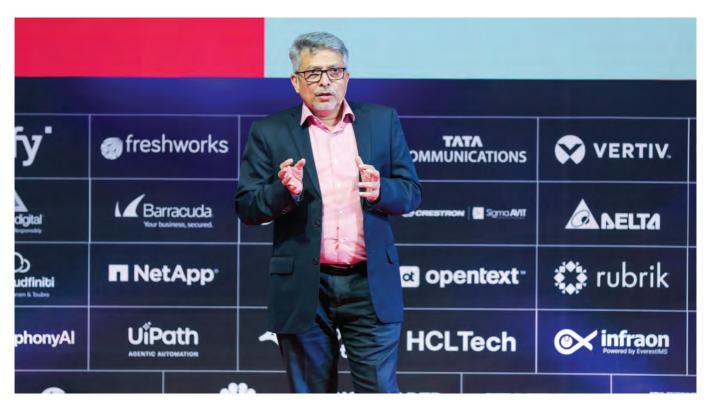
↑Don't Let Identity be the Weak Link in Cyber Recovery by Mitesh Jain, Senior Sales Engineer, Rubrik



↑Limitless with AI - A New Way to Work is Here by Saurabh Saxena, Regional Vice President Sales - India, OpenText



↑Customer Case Study: Kotak's Digital Growth Journey with Sify by Abhijit Chakravarty, Executive Vice President - Networks & Cyber Security, Kotak Mahindra Bank



↑ Customer Case Study: Built to Act: Showcasing Agentic AI in Action by Ajit Awasare, AVP & Head - Operations, Godrej Infotech



↑ Roundtable: GPU and Specialized Hardware: Planning for Enterprise AI Data Center at Scale Moderator: Mayurakshi Ray, Consulting Editor, CIO&Leader Speaker: Seema Ambastha, CEO, L&T Datacenter & Cloud Services









↑CIO Shots: Building a Resilient Digital Supply Chain through Infrastructure, Data and People by Rajnesh Garg, Chief Information Officer & Senior VP, All Cargo



↑CIO Shots: The IT-OT-Al Triad: Building an Intelligent Manufacturing Backbone by Parna Ghosh, President and Group CIO, UNO Minda



↑CIO Shots: Agentic AI and its Applications by Gaurav Duggal, SVP-AI&IT, Jio Platforms



↑CIO Shots: The CDO Playbook: Data, Trust & Strategy in the Age of AI by Amol Deshpande, CDO, RPG



↑CIO Shots: Presenting an AI Strategy to the Board by Vinod Sivaramakrishnan, Group CDIO, Essar Group



↑CIO Shots: Scaling AI in Diverse Environments: Lessons & Best Practices by Kripyaduti Sarkar, Group CIO, AmbujaNeotia Group



↑The event was seamlessly anchored by **Swati Kumar,** whose professional presence set the right tone.



↑CIO Shots: From Shop Floor to Smart Floor: Scaling Al Across the Manufacturing Value Chain by Debashish Roy, Chief Digital Transformation Officer, CEAT



↑CIO Shots: All at Scale: Making Digital Intelligence Core to Industrial Operations by Violet Jemimah Haris, Chief Digital & Information Officer, Sterlite Copper



↑ Track 1: Panel Discussion 3: Infrastructure Planning for Enterprise AI at Scale Moderator: Jatinder Singh Panelists: Rajeev Mittal, Group Chief Information Officer, Endurance Technologies; Apurva Dalal, Vice President & Head - Digital Transformation, Adani Airport Holdings; Milind Khamkar, Group Chief Information Officer, SuperMax; Linson Paul, Chief Technology Officer, Muthoot Microfinance; Sanjay Nandavadekar, Head - IT, Inventia; Avinash Naik, Chief Information Officer, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company; Ashish Kshetry, Vice President - IT, Asian Paints; Nikhil Bhushan, Chief Technology Officer, Tata Starbucks and Ravikumar Ayilavarapu, Head - Data Center/BFSI/IT, Delta DCSBU, Delta Electronics India



↑Track 2: Case Study Workshop Speaker: Thomas Vengal, AVP & Head of Product Management, Tata Communications Workshop Faciliatator: R Giridhar, Group Editor, 9.9 Group



↑Track 3: Security in Action - Transforming Security Through Al Innovation by Sagar Pardeshi, Regional Architect - Office of the CTO, CheckPoint Software Technologies



↑ Fireside Chat: The Al Journey with AMD by Ajay Koul, Country Head - BFSI & Regional Head - Enterprise Division, AMD India



↑ Keynote: The Evolving role of CIOs and CTOs: From Enablers to Strategic Architects by Anand Srinivasan, Co-Founder & CIO, Akasa Air



↑ Keynote: An Approach to Agentic Platform Development by Ramesh Narayanaswamy, CTO, Aditya Birla Finance



↑ Keynote: Building the Foundations for AI at Scale by Manish Malik, Executive Director - IS, IOCL



↑ Keynote: CIO as Chief Trust Officer for AI by Vijay Sethi, Chairman & Chief Mentor, Mentorkart



↑ Wine & Cheese: Building a Customer Experience Vision for 2030 Moderator: R Giridhar, Group Editor, 9.9 Group Speakers: Shivkumar Matha, Account Director - BPO, Genesys Cloud Services & Saurabh Lakhanpal, Account Director, Genesys Cloud Services



↑ Wine & Cheese: Al Infrastructure DNA: What Must Change to Scale Enterprise Al? Moderator: Jatinder Singh, Editor, CIO & Leader Speaker: Dr. AS Prasad, VP - Product Management & Engineering, Vertiv Energy



↑ Wine & Cheese: SpeedCloud Supreme: Your Private Cloud Alternative Moderator: Ashwani Mishra Speaker: AS Rajgopal, Managing Director & CEO, NxtGen Cloud Technologies



↑Next 100 Awards Night: Honouring the 2025 Class of Future ClOs



↑ NEXT100 2023 Awardees being honored here





↑ Partner Keynote: From Infrastructure to Intelligence: Leading with Vision in the Age of Cloud & AI by AS Rajgopal, CEO & Abhishyant AS, Head - Product Management Group, NxtGen Cloud Technologies



↑ Partner Keynote: Put AI to Work for Your Enterprise by Sidharth Swami, Advisory Solution Consultant ServiceNow



↑ Partner keynote: How Integrating AV applications Can Enhance Workplace Productivity by Farhan Walele, Area Sales Director - West Region, Crestron & Rajan Shankar Macharekar- Regional Sales Manager, Sigma AVIT Technology Solutions



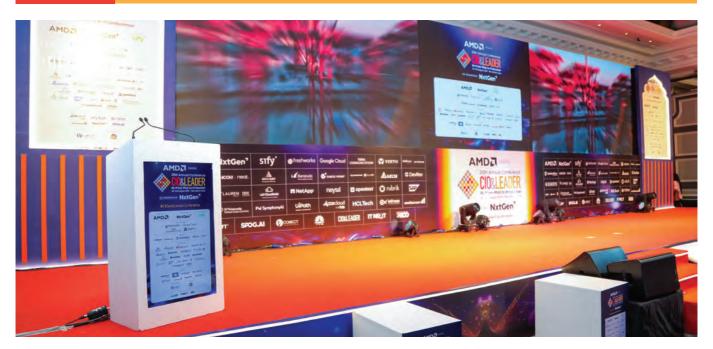
↑ Partner Keynote: Al Agents with Knowledge Graph: Moving Beyond Summarization to Automation by Neeraj Matiyani, Head - Sales, DevRev



↑CIOs Unwind at the Performance Night, Celebrating with Energy and Fun with Chaitanya, Indian Idol Season 15 Finalist followed by Cocktails and Dinner



DAY 3: SUNDAY, 3RD AUGUST, 2025 END ON A HIGH NOTE



↑Stage is set for the third and final day of the conference



Welcome to Day 3 by Jatinder SIngh, Editor, CIO&Leader



↑CIO SHOTS & AMD Workshop: Empowering Business through Digital Transformation - Real Life Case studies (L-R) Siddhartha Karkare, Director - HPC Business Development, AMD; Sujoy Brahmachari, CIO & CISO, Rosmerta Technologies; Vinod Khode, Senior VP & Group CIO, Varroc Engineering; Abhijit Moharir, Group CIO, Kalyani Group; Sandeep K Vasudevan, Assistant Director - IT, Liv Space; Shwetank Verma, Global Head Technology Infrastructure & Information Security, Sagility; Linson Joseph, Chief Strategy Officer, Bud Ecosystem and Dr Sudhakar Yerneni, Manager, AMD



↑ Celebrating CIO excellence: The distinguished Samman Jury – Deepak Agarwal, former Executive Director, Indian Oil Corporation; Prashun Dutta, former CIO, Tata Power; and Vijay Sethi, former CIO & CHRO, Hero MotoCorp—take the stage.



↑7th of CIO Samman Recipients 2025: Viraj Deshpande, Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer - Petrochemicals RIL; Jayant Gupta, Executive Director - Information Systems, HPCL; Sajeev Maheshwari, Executive Director - S&T/Project, DMRC; Rajeev Mittal, Group Chief Information Officer, Endurance Technologies and Praveen Shrikhande, Chief Digital & Information Officer, Aditya Birla Fashion and Retail



↑CIO Prestige Points Silver coin winners



↑CIO Prestige Points Gold coin winners



↑Prestige Points champion Vivek Zakarde, Head – Data Strategy & Al Privacy Officer, IndiaFirst Life, takes home the Maruti Suzuki Fronx





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Neynote address by David J. Gee
Board Risk Advisor,
Chairman, Leadership
Collective Australia.



Cook-a-thon with Sashi Cheliah (Winner Master Chef Australia, season 10)



Fireside chat with eminent cricketer, Sanjay Manjrekar



Entertainment evening with Dr. Sanket Bhosale & Sugandha Mishra







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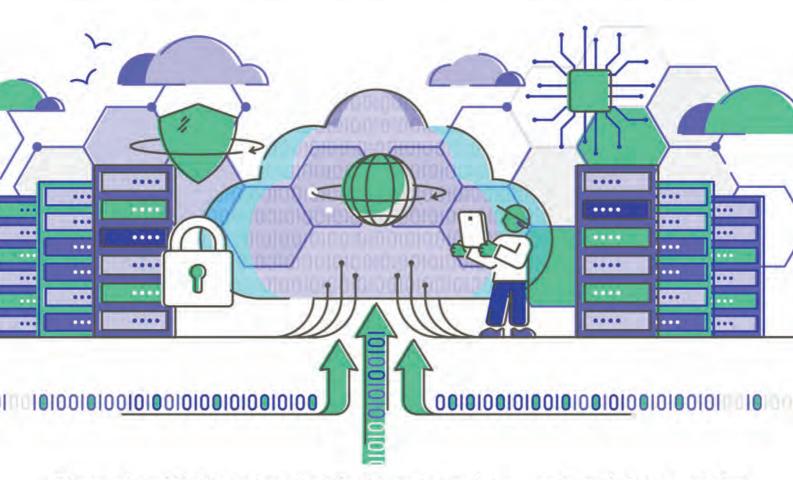


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