

# TiECON MYSURU — Day 1

15 Key Highlights

Friday, 17 April 2026

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## PITCH FEST MILESTONE

Day 1 of TiECON Mysuru 2026 marked a historic first for TiE Mysuru: a large-scale pitch fest where startups, rigorously selected from ~50 applicants via ecircle.org, collectively sought ₹85 Cr — with 16 of 18 presenting companies capturing investor interest. This demonstrated Mysuru's rapidly maturing startup pipeline and set an energetic tone for the entire conference.

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## CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP AS A GROWTH ENGINE

Multiple Day 1 sessions converged on a powerful thesis: India's cultural heritage is not a constraint but a commercial opportunity. Ventures like Tamala (artisan empowerment), World of Mysore Park (experiential retail), Itch Next (cultural trend intelligence), and Roll the Dice (traditional board games) collectively proved that bridging tradition with modern markets creates both economic value and cultural preservation.

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## AI & TECHNOLOGY AS HERITAGE GUARDIANS

The 'AI & the Artist's Soul' panel reframed the technology-culture debate: AI, AR, and VR are preservation tools, not threats. Charana Labs creates digital export vehicles for Indian culture through immersive VR journeys; Kosha AI authenticates handlooms using photonics-based fibre-sense technology to combat counterfeiting; and Who We Are reconstructs ancient heritage sites at their historical zenith for digital-native audiences.

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## AGRI-FOOD TECH & THE TiE-CFTRI NEXUS

A central focus of Day 1 was Mysuru's agri-food tech potential, anchored by CFTRI's incubation capabilities. TiE Mysuru's core mission is to build a sector-agnostic platform that identifies and elevates local companies — with special emphasis on agri and food tech startups, setting the stage for the landmark TiE-CFTRI MoU formalised on Day 2.

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#### **CREATIVITY & NEUROSCIENCE FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

Musician and cognitive neuroscientist Anil Srinivasan delivered a keynote redefining what it means to be a new-age entrepreneur. His 'Creative Intelligence' framework — combining artistic, collaborative, and cognitive creativity — argued that engaging with the arts enhances pattern recognition and deep listening, the very skills needed to outpace AI. Entrepreneurs must embrace process over shortcuts, constraints as catalysts, and humility as leadership.

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#### **CULTURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP: COMMERCIALISING TRADITION**

Gobrama Productions (Rupa Dharaswami) presented a blueprint for professionalising Indian movement arts — shifting from patron-driven, donation-dependent models to investment and market-driven ecosystems. Through IP creation, talent management, strategic capital investment, and event execution, Gobrama is building a self-sustaining sector that can bring Bharatanatyam and other forms to global audiences with ROI-based financing.

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#### **HERITECH: A NEW STARTUP CATEGORY**

Day 1 crystallised 'heritech' as an emerging startup category — ventures at the intersection of heritage and technology. Founders called for greater ecosystem support: dedicated R&D; funding, stronger distribution channels for immersive cultural experiences, and incubation programmes for heritech startups. Storytelling was unanimously identified as the core commercial skill in this space.

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#### **WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS: DIGITAL MARKETING AS COMPETITIVE MOAT**

The female entrepreneur showcase revealed a consistent pattern across sectors (biotech, fashion, F&B;, logistics, wellness): businesses with strong product-market fit but underdeveloped digital infrastructure. Key gaps included absence of email nurture flows, no lead magnets, and zero automation — representing 30-50% of potential revenue left uncaptured. Digital capability-building for women-led SMEs emerged as a critical ecosystem need.

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#### **WORLD OF MYSORE PARK: LOCAL SWEETNESS, GLOBAL AMBITION**

World of Mysore Park transformed a regional delicacy into an 8,000 sq ft immersive experience centre, significantly boosting local employment and visitor numbers. With plans for global expansion and new experiential products, it exemplifies how Mysuru's indigenous cultural assets — not just its tech sector — can be engines of international growth and brand differentiation.

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#### **INVESTOR ROUNDTABLE: MYSURU'S INDUSTRIAL FUTURE**

Post-pitch, a curated investor roundtable with industry stalwarts including Pavan Ranga and Sudhana explored strategies for advancing Mysuru's industries, attracting investment, and forging collaborations for broader socio-economic impact. This structured dialogue between investors and founders reinforced TiE Mysuru's core mission: to build a scalable, dynamic innovation ecosystem rooted in the city.

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**ITCH NEXT: INDIA-FOR-INDIA CULTURAL INTELLIGENCE**

Itch Next, India's first cultural trend intelligence company, combines AI with human expertise to track overt and subtle cultural influences on Indian consumer behaviour. By providing an 'India for India' lens — rather than importing Western frameworks — it enables businesses to predict market trends and drive culturally resonant design, product, and innovation decisions.

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**TAMALA: ARTISAN EMPOWERMENT THROUGH INNOVATION**

Tamala demonstrated how traditional craft can become a viable livelihood for the next generation by innovating revenue models. Corporate workshops and patented designs — like the Terracotta mobile amplifier — provided artisans with significantly better income and societal respect, proving that economic empowerment is the most powerful tool for cultural preservation.

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**TRADITIONAL ARTS NEED COMMERCIAL SYSTEMS**

The lecture-demo session on 'Taking Traditional Art to a Global Audience' identified the core gap in India's movement arts sector: world-class artistic depth without structured commercial systems. The result is under-monetised talent and underserved audiences. The solution lies in professionalism, IP ownership, and cultivating a culture where audiences willingly pay for art — shifting from charity to commerce without losing cultural soul.

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**PROCESS OVER SPEED: THE ENTREPRENEURIAL DISCIPLINE**

Anil Srinivasan's keynote offered a counterintuitive prescription for the startup era: slow down. The modern tendency to bypass developmental stages in pursuit of quick solutions leads to brittle businesses. Drawn from performing arts, the lessons — practice under pressure, thrive within constraints, take strategic pauses, and lead with humility — are equally applicable to building companies that last.

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**ROLL THE DICE: LIVING CULTURES, NOT MUSEUM PIECES**

Roll the Dice is reviving traditional Indian board games — not as artefacts, but as living cultures — through thoughtfully designed, eco-friendly physical products and planned digital adaptations. By fostering intergenerational bonding and making ancient games accessible to modern families, it exemplifies the Day 1 theme: India's richest entrepreneurial opportunities lie at the intersection of heritage and contemporary relevance.