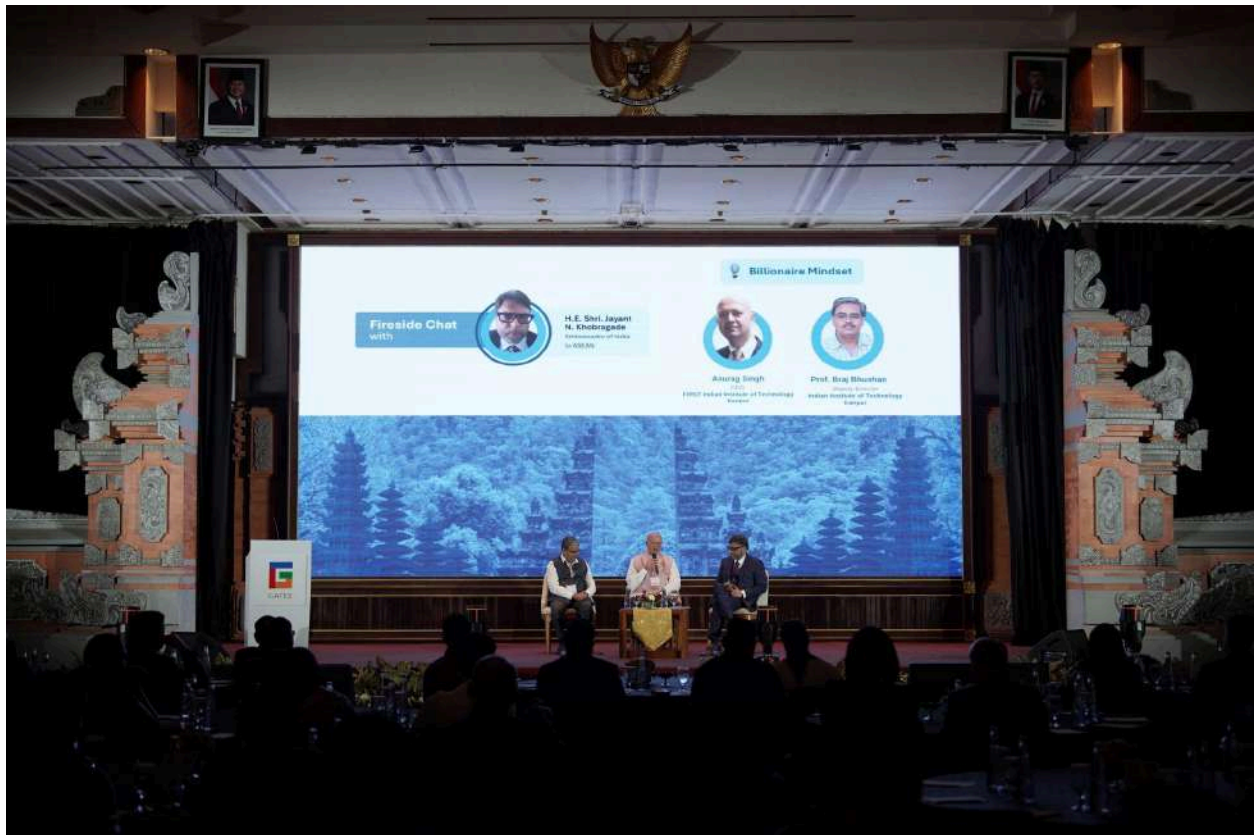


ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025 Concludes in Bali: A Visionary Blueprint for Regional Innovation and Inclusive Growth



Bali, Indonesia, July 5, 2025 — The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025 concluded this week in Bali, marking a milestone moment for science, technology, and innovation cooperation across one of the world’s most strategically important regions. Held from July 3–5 at the Discovery Kartika Plaza Hotel, the event was presented by GATES in collaboration with the Department of Science & Technology, Government of India; the ASEAN Secretariat; BRIN (Indonesia’s National Research and Innovation Agency); and the Startup Incubation and Innovation Centre (SIIC) of IIT Kanpur.

Gathering more than 320 distinguished participants — from policymakers and entrepreneurs to technology channels, academics, and investors — the program served as a testament to the region’s collective resolve to build a stronger, more resilient, and inclusive innovation ecosystem. Over 70 startups and vendors demonstrated pioneering ideas, underscoring ASEAN and India’s ascent as a vibrant hub for scalable, sustainable technology-driven ventures.

Over three intensive days, participants engaged in high-level plenary sessions, interactive panels, targeted workshops, bilateral meetings, startup pitch showcases, and two significant intergovernmental meetings, creating an ecosystem of trust and opportunity.

Leadership Perspectives: Setting the Tone

Opening remarks by Sachin Gopalan, Chairman of Asian Economic Insights, framed the forum as a vital instrument to unlock ASEAN's untapped potential.



Sachin Gopalan, Chairman of Asian Economic Insights

“ASEAN is home to 700 million people but contributes only 3% of global GDP. It deserves to be closer to 10%,” he stated. “By working together with India, we have the opportunity to reach global benchmarks.”



Jayant N. Khobragade, India's Ambassador to ASEAN

Jayant N. Khobragade, India's Ambassador to ASEAN, reinforced this message by spotlighting India's dramatic journey from 350 startups in 2014 to over 180,000 in 2024, including 118 unicorns.

"India and ASEAN are not only diplomatic partners, but civilizational and historical partners," he noted, adding, "The ScaleHub is a chance to nurture relationships with depth — a courtship, not just a spark."



Dr. Praveenkumar Somasundram, Head of International Cooperation Division and National Supercomputing Mission of DST India

Dr. Praveenkumar Somasundram, Head of International Cooperation Division and National Supercomputing Mission of DST India, drew attention to India's investment in critical missions like the National Quantum Mission and National Cyber-Physical Mission, and invited ASEAN partners to co-create transformative technologies.



Dr. Kanchana Wanichkorn, Director of the ASEAN Secretariat's Sectoral Development Division

Dr. Kanchana Wanichkorn, Director of the ASEAN Secretariat's Sectoral Development Division, highlighted the strategic launch of the "Start-Up ASEAN" platform, uniting more than 5,000 startups across the region to catalyze innovation, entrepreneurship, and inclusive job creation.



Dr. Boediastoeti Ontowirjo, Deputy of BRIN and Chair of COSTI Indonesia

Dr. Boediastoeti Ontowirjo, Deputy of BRIN and Chair of COSTI Indonesia, described the forum as

“a landmark initiative, born from a spirit of regional partnership, designed to drive prosperity through collaborative innovation,”

and emphasized BRIN’s commitment to co-funding, infrastructure support, and open science platforms to enable a more equitable technology ecosystem.



Sandeep Chakravorty, India's Ambassador to Indonesia

Ambassador Sandeep Chakravorty, India's Ambassador to Indonesia, also shared his optimism on ASEAN–India collaboration, highlighting the vital role of startups and creative industries in driving regional resilience.

“Our startups today are the greatest job creators, the greatest innovators, and the greatest sources of hope,” he remarked. “By building bridges like ScaleHub, we are shaping a future where technology is an engine of inclusive and sustainable growth.”

Keynote Spotlights



Japnit Singh, COO of Yamada Consulting & Spire

Japnit Singh, COO of Yamada Consulting & Spire, opened Day 1 with a keynote on the evolving cybersecurity landscape, warning that

“the dark side of the digital boom cannot be ignored — but it is also an opportunity. As cyber threats grow, so do the prospects for ASEAN–India startups to deliver secure, resilient solutions.”

Spotlight Panel: Tech for Sustainable Growth



Panel discussion titled “Tech for Sustainable Growth” at the The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025

One of the most anticipated moments of Day 1 was the thought-provoking panel discussion titled “Tech for Sustainable Growth”, which brought together some of the region’s most respected business and sustainability leaders. Moderated by Sanjeev Gupta, Chief Operating Officer of GATES, the session focused on how environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles are no longer optional add-ons, but are now core components of long-term business success and investor confidence.

The conversation began with Michelle Huang, Founder of GA ESG Solutions, who opened the discussion with a warning rooted in experience.



Michele Huang, Founder and Director of GA ESG Solutions

“If sustainability feels expensive, try a climate disaster.”

Her statement resonated immediately with the room, reminding participants that the cost of inaction could far exceed the investment in responsible innovation.

Juan Chua, CEO of Nexus Technologies Philippines, followed by sharing how the regional demand for ESG-aligned solutions has evolved rapidly — particularly from corporate clients.



Juan G. Chua, CEO of Nexus Technologies Inc

Juan Chua added,

“Clients now ask: what is your sustainability protocol? It’s a core metric now. ESG is not a buzzword anymore — it’s a competitive requirement.”

Speaking from the technology infrastructure perspective, Shiva Kumar Y, Senior Director, Distribution Sales APJ and Greater China of Cisco Systems stressed the accelerating shift toward green digital ecosystems.



Shiva Kumar Y, Senior Director, Distribution Sales APJ and Greater China of Cisco Systems

“Technology doesn’t just enable ESG — it accelerates it. Green networks, efficient data centers, and secure digital platforms are now sustainability infrastructure.”

Shri Kumar Alok from IIT Kanpur and former Chief Secretary of Tripura, provided a public policy lens to the conversation. He emphasized the importance of integrating sustainability into the DNA of government frameworks.



Shri Kumar Alok, IIT Kanpur

“Policy must ensure sustainability is not optional. We must embed it into economic planning and industrial regulation so it becomes the default design.”

Representing the startup and founder community, Arifa Tan, CEO and Founder of IStar Technology, spoke passionately about how ESG is ultimately about trust and leadership.



Arifa Tan, CEO Istar Technology

“ESG is not branding,” she declared. “It is your trust. It is your product. It is your people. It must be at the center of how you build and lead.”

Rounding out the session, Celine Schulze, Managing Partner of 10Power9, brought the investor perspective, pointing out how venture capital and institutional funds are now actively screening for ESG alignment.



Celine Schulze, Managing Partner of 10Power9

“Impact investing is no longer a niche,” she said. “It’s what serious capital is looking for. If you’re not aligned, you’re invisible to the future.”

The panel sparked significant engagement from the audience, including questions around implementation in SMEs, regulatory readiness, and startup founder awareness. It became clear that for ASEAN and Indian innovators alike, ESG is not a trend — it is a strategic foundation for resilience, market trust, and growth in an increasingly values-driven global economy.

Fireside Chat: Decoding the Billionaire Mindset



Fireside chat session at the The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025

On Day 2, participants were inspired by a fireside chat featuring H.E. Ambassador Jayant N. Khobragade, Mr. Anurag Singh (CEO, FIRST IIT Kanpur), and Prof. Braj Bhushan (Deputy Director, IIT Kanpur), exploring the “Billionaire Mindset.” Prof. Bhushan explained,



Prof. Braj Bhushan, Deputy Director of IIT Kanpur

“Neuropsychology shows us how the brain bridges what we expect with what we experience. COVID triggered more creativity than control.”



Anurag Singh, CEO of FIRST IIT Kanpur

Anurag Singh added,

“Purpose beats valuation. Founders who chase meaning build legacies.”

Decentralised AI: The Next Evolution



Panel discussion titled “Decentralised AI: AI at the Edge, Power at the Core” at The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025

On Day 2, the forum shifted toward one of the most urgent frontiers in technology: artificial intelligence. The panel “Decentralised AI: AI at the Edge, Power at the Core,” moderated by Ben Tan, Senior Executive Partner at Gartner, drew a packed room of technologists, policymakers, and innovators seeking to understand how AI could be reimagined to serve Southeast Asia and India on their own terms.

Opening the session, Dr. Zurina Mokhtar from the ASEAN Secretariat challenged the region to go beyond simply adopting global AI frameworks.



Dr. Zurina Moktar, Assistant Director/Head of Science and Technology Division ASEAN

“If we only translate Western systems into local languages, we’re already late,” she stated. “ASEAN must build AI natively — in our own languages, for our own cultures, with our own priorities.”

Her call was echoed by Daniel Schroeder, Head of Digital Transformation at GIZ Indonesia, who addressed the critical infrastructural blind spots that often define regional AI access.



Daniel Schroeder, Head of Digital Transformation GIZ Indonesia

“Most AI infrastructure today is designed for cities,” he said. “It’s built for high bandwidth and urban density. But the real test — and opportunity — is in the villages, in the remote communities. That’s where decentralisation becomes not just efficient, but essential.”

Sailesh Prasad, General Manager at Exim Bank, brought a financial perspective to the conversation, noting how decentralised AI could reduce barriers to credit access, logistics, and entrepreneurship in underserved areas.



Sailesh Prasad, General Manager of Exim Bank

“Distributed intelligence can unlock local economies,” he explained. “It can decentralise access to data-driven decision-making — not just for banks or cities, but for farmers, teachers, and small businesses.”

Bringing an academic and systems view, Prof. Deepu Philip from IIT Kanpur discussed how edge computing and federated learning models were not only technically feasible but crucial for a region as vast and varied as ASEAN.



Prof. Deepu Philip of IIT Kanpur

“Edge AI is not a niche,” he argued. “It’s the future. If we keep pushing data to centralized clouds, we lose speed, sovereignty, and context. AI must happen where the user is.”

Closing the panel with a fintech lens, Cyrus Daruwala, Adviser of ASEAN Fintech Forum underscored the need for ethical, inclusive architecture.



Cyrus Daruwala, Adviser of ASEAN Fintech Forum

“We have a moral obligation to build AI that empowers, not excludes. The infrastructure, governance, and language of AI must be local, not imposed.”

Throughout the session, the panelists agreed that decentralised AI could be a regional equaliser — not just a technical evolution, but a political and economic opportunity. From edge devices in rural clinics to real-time data analytics for disaster response, the discussion illuminated how scalable, local-first AI could define ASEAN–India’s digital decade.

Intergovernmental Cooperation: Milestone Dialogues



The 9th Governing Council Meeting of the ASEAN–India Science & Technology Development Fund (GC-AISTDF-9) at The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025

A vital feature of the event was the concurrent hosting of the 15th ASEAN–India Working Group on Science, Technology, and Innovation (AIWGSTI-15) and the 9th Governing Council Meeting of the ASEAN–India Science & Technology Development Fund (GC-AISTDF-9). These high-level meetings brought together senior officials and technical experts to advance joint R&D initiatives, define co-investment priorities, and strengthen frameworks for knowledge transfer and capacity building. Discussions ranged from digital transformation and green innovation to frameworks for intellectual property rights and gender-inclusive entrepreneurship, cementing the region’s commitment to shared prosperity and resilience.



The 15th ASEAN–India Working Group on Science, Technology, and Innovation (AIWGSTI-15) at The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025

Practical Workshops and Roundtables: From Ideas to Action

Beyond the plenaries, ScaleHub 2025 placed strong emphasis on actionable knowledge transfer through hands-on workshops and expert roundtables.

Workshop with Samir Dixit: *IP as a Catalyst for Startup Scalability*



Workshop session with Samir Dixit of Acorn Consulting at The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025

Led by Samir Dixit, Managing Director of Acorn Consulting, the session explored how strategic intellectual property (IP) management enhances competitiveness and attracts investment.

“IP is more than legal protection — it’s leverage. A well-managed patent portfolio speaks louder than any pitch deck,” Samir shared.

The workshop provided startup founders with tools to build defensible assets, avoid IP pitfalls, and create long-term value through technology ownership.

Bridging Science and Industry: Roundtable on Transforming Research into Innovation



Madhav Narayan, IIT Madras Global Research Foundation

Among the most intellectually engaging sessions of the forum was the high-level roundtable led by Madhav Narayan, representative of the IIT Madras Global Research Foundation. Titled “*Transforming Fundamental Research into Industrial Innovation*,” the session focused on one of the most persistent gaps in the innovation pipeline: how to turn academic breakthroughs into scalable commercial solutions.

Drawing on his cross-sector experience, Madhav delivered a powerful message:

“The region is not lacking in ideas. What we lack is the mechanism to convert deep science into inclusive enterprise. It’s not just a transfer of knowledge — it’s a transformation of culture.”

He stressed the need for closer collaboration between researchers, entrepreneurs, and policymakers — not only to move technologies from labs to markets, but to embed impact-driven thinking from the earliest stages of research.

Throughout the session, Madhav challenged participants to rethink traditional silos in academia and called for more open, translatable models of scientific inquiry. He emphasized the importance of regional networks that could support proof-of-concept testing, early-stage incubation, and public–private co-funding.

The roundtable concluded with actionable proposals, including cross-border innovation fellowships, industry-academia match platforms, and greater inclusion of local research institutes in regional R&D funding frameworks.

In both tone and content, the session exemplified what ScaleHub aspires to be: not just a stage for innovation, but a bridge that connects insight to impact.

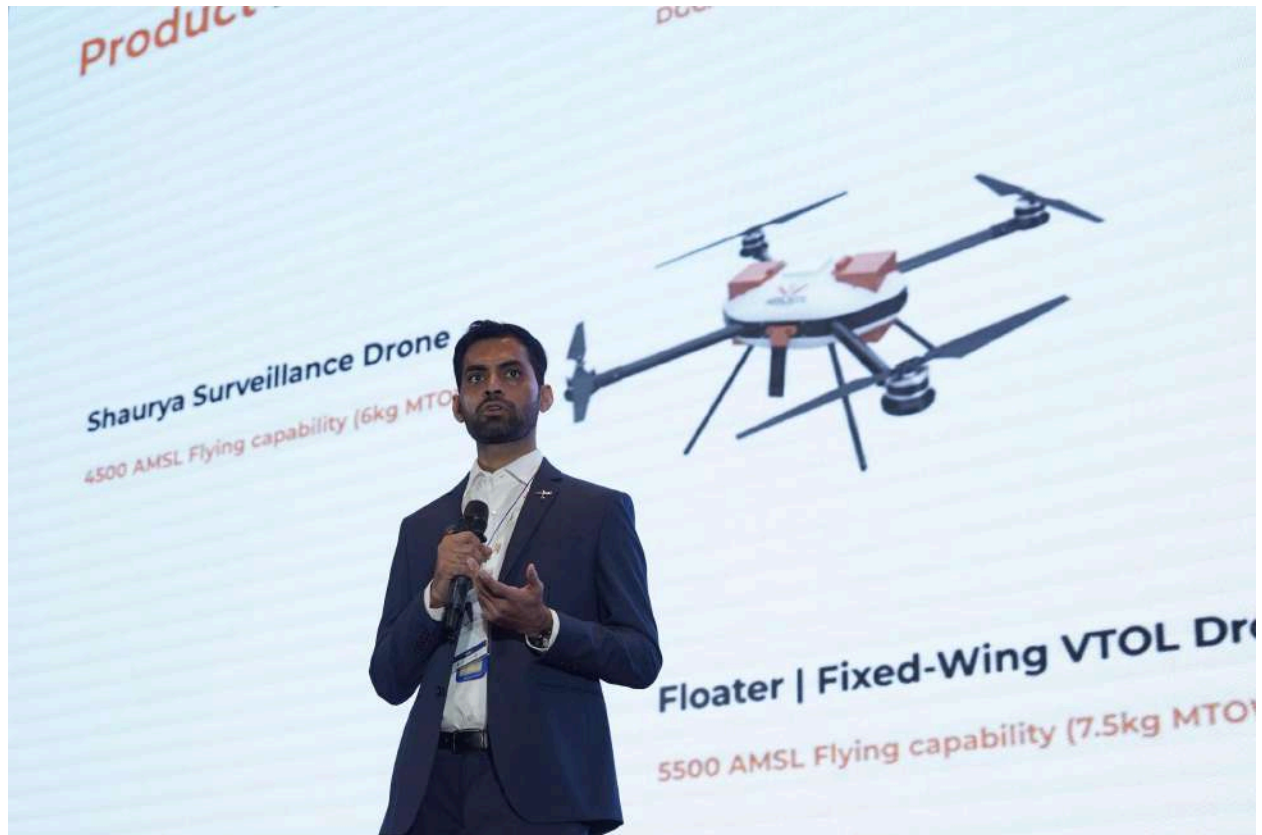
Smart Pitch Session: Catalyzing Scale-Up Opportunities



Smart Pitch session at The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025 led by Ryan Mackay, Director of GATES

A highlight of ScaleHub 2025 was the Smart Pitch Session, where promising growth-stage startups delivered rapid-fire 60-second pitches to a diverse audience of investors, policymakers,

and innovation leaders. Participants presented an impressive array of solutions, spanning climate-tech, inclusive finance, digital health, and frontier AI.



Smart Pitch session at The ASEAN-India ScaleHub 2025

This dynamic session energized the audience and offered founders direct opportunities for funding, mentorship, and future partnerships. It reflected ScaleHub's mission to empower startups to scale faster, smarter, and with the resources they need to transform their ideas into impactful, market-ready ventures.



Smart Pitch session at The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025

Networking, Pitches, and Celebrations



Throughout the three days, participants engaged in one-on-one business meetings, informal roundtables, and targeted networking, paving the way for follow-up opportunities and stronger collaborations. The event culminated with a gala dinner and awards ceremony, celebrating the region's most promising innovators and honoring their commitment to reshaping the ASEAN-India innovation landscape.



Golf Tournament: Forging Ties Beyond the Conference Room



The final day of ScaleHub 2025 extended beyond formal sessions to create space for meaningful relationships and relaxed dialogue. The ICT Channel Leaders Golf Meet brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and startup champions in an outdoor networking environment. This friendly tournament fostered trust, strengthened alliances, and opened new avenues for future joint projects — proving that innovation partnerships can thrive both on and off the fairway. The tournament featured a pro-am format and supported 10 talented professional women golfers who participated in the game..



Parallel to the golf meet, participants continued one-on-one discussions to solidify commitments and develop actionable project plans. As the program closed and participants departed Bali, there was a powerful sense of renewed energy to keep the ScaleHub momentum alive and drive inclusive innovation forward.

Closing Reflections: GATES, Growth, and A Shared Vision for the Future



Ashish Kapahi, Executive Director of GATES

Bringing the event to a close with personal warmth and regional conviction, Ashish Kapahi, Executive Director of GATES, shared a heartfelt reflection on the journey of ASEAN–India ScaleHub, his gratitude to partners, and the evolution of innovation culture in the region.

He began by thanking key supporters of the program, notably Ambassador Jayant N. Khobragade, calling him “a catalyst of this program,” and extended special appreciation to Dr. Praveen Arora of India’s Department of Science and Technology, who participated despite a demanding schedule.

Ashish, known for his personal anecdotes and light-hearted energy, also offered a humorous reflection on his own tradition:

“I’ve been doing this for the last eight years. Every year I come here, I get a new batik. Now I have a collection of eight or nine — and each one is better than the last. So every time, I’m torn between wearing the one I brought or buying a new one.”

He seamlessly transitioned from humor to insight, likening the evolution of ScaleHub to the process of building a habit:

“There’s a saying that when you do something the first time, it’s new. The second time, it’s routine. But the third time — it becomes a habit. And GATES has become a habit for many of our partners across ASEAN.”

Ashish concluded by reaffirming the collective spirit that makes ScaleHub possible, reminding the audience that behind the sessions, statistics, and strategies lies a growing regional community — one that knows, every July, it’s time to come together in Bali and build something bigger than any one of us.

“We now have 30,000 partners across our ecosystem. And they know — we’re in Bali in July. And they know how to get here.”



Dr. Boediastoeti Ontowirjo, Deputy of BRIN and Chair of COSTI Indonesia

Delivering the forum's official closing address, Dr. Boediastoeti Ontowirjo, Deputy of BRIN and Chair of ASEAN COSTI Indonesia, reaffirmed the deeper purpose of the ASEAN–India ScaleHub: to catalyze innovation that serves society.

“Innovation is our bridge between science and society,” she declared. “Let this be the starting point for deeper partnerships, scalable solutions, and a mission to ensure that technology truly serves all our people.”

She praised the spirit of open collaboration throughout the event — from the intergovernmental meetings and startup showcases to the technical roundtables and business matchmaking — and highlighted the importance of turning dialogue into delivery.

Dr. Boediastoeti closed with a call for sustained momentum:

“The relationships we build here must not end here. They must continue — in policy, in partnership, and in purpose. Let us go forward together, guided by shared values and united by the belief that innovation, when inclusive, is unstoppable.”

The ASEAN–India ScaleHub 2025, strengthened by the leadership of BRIN, the ASEAN Secretariat, GATES, DST India, and SIIC IIT Kanpur, has reaffirmed a powerful regional alliance for inclusive, future-ready growth. Its legacy will continue through the ScaleHub network and future innovation initiatives across the ASEAN–India corridor.

By blending high-level government engagement, practical workshops, startup showcases, and a vibrant entrepreneurial spirit, the event demonstrated that ASEAN and India are not merely participants in global innovation but architects of a new regional order built on sustainability, inclusivity, and shared prosperity.