The much awaited Digitizing India Awards 2016 started off on a musical note this year at the Taj Palace Hotel in New Delhi with a performance by Dr Prakash Sontakke and Gerard Maccadro, the multi-talented duo who make up the ‘Kulwari Blues’, which brought on an atmosphere of grandeur to the event.

IT and Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad flagged off the Digital India journey in April and had emphasized on three key points—creating a digital environment, focusing on digital delivery and working towards digital empowerment. These indeed were the key themes in the event, as Chief Guest and Minister of Urban Development Venkaiah Naidu and Guest of Honour and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh N Chandrababu Naidu, graced the digitally-studded Darbar Hall in person and over satellite, respectively. The categories were a tight set, which comprised a total of 10 awards up for grabs, excluding the special categories this year.

The panel discussion was a powerful take on Digitizing India in all sectors of the country and was moderated by Shereen Bhan from CNBC TV 18 on the topic. What digital India truly means on the ground, comprising veterans, including Dinesh Malik, President of Cisco India and SAARC; R Chandresh, President of Nasscom; Hari Prasad Vemuru, E-governance Council, Andhra Pradesh; Aishwarya Mishra, Director of MyGov.in and Veena Batra, Regional Managing Partner, North and Government Leader, PwC.

“Business, Banking, buses, clouds, Education, Manufacturing, E-governance; if you don’t digitize all of these, you will fail,” said Dinesh Malik. R Chandresh, from Nasscom emphasized on “the idea of existing and exponential”, which would make storefronts on the ground simpler making a remarkable difference in the digital journey.

Statements made by Hari Prasad Vemuru and Aishwarya Mishra on citizen partnerships in making Digital India affordable to the rural sector was echoed by Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, N Chandrababu Naidu. Youth, Businesses, Companies are going to be awarded. Real-life examples are showcasing businesses in our country.

The awards ceremony started off beginning with the special category awards,  Smart Campus in the Education Sector prize went to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation. Digital Innovation in E-commerce was taken by the CEO of Avenues, Vishwas Patel, Wipro (Astro project) picked up the Digital Innovation in Citizen Services (E-governance); Keltrel Tech Solutions bagged the Digital Innovation in Senior Citizen—Telecommunications, while Digital Innovation in Service Provider—Industry went to Persistent Systems.

Uthen had a big year as the company picked up the Digital Innovation in E-commerce and Startups. HDFC Bank was awarded with the innovation in the Financial to realize that the world is looking at India, our country. Half the professionals in Silicon Valley are Indians. We need the same here,” he said.

The Digitizing India award ceremony this year definitely took it up a notch, turning out to be entertaining and resourceful at the same time. The focus on people participation and strategies to bridge the gap between the two domains of the country had the desired effect, creating a solid impression on the audience.
Pradesh's Chandrababu Naidu in his address to Vijayawada's citizens said that the state of Andhra Pradesh took the first step towards Digital India and had succeeded in connecting almost 95% of the state's citizens. In his opinion, digital technology was the future and the state was at the forefront.

The Special Achievement Award was won by Indian Railways, who was also cited for his contributions in the field of railway systems. The award was received by the Railways Minister.

The Digital Transformation of State government was also highlighted in the address. The State government had adopted digital technologies to improve efficiency and reduce corruption.

Chandrababu Naidu's keynote address was an engaging and entertaining speech that resonated with the audience. He emphasized the importance of digital technology in the new era of information and communication. He emphasized the need for the state government to continue to invest in digital technologies to improve services and infrastructure.