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The three-day 21st edition of Bengaluru Tech Summit was held from November 29 at the Bengaluru Palace. Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy, Revenue minister R.V. Deshpande, Minister for Large & Medium Scale Industries, IT, BT, Science and Technology K.J. George, Social Welfare Minister Priyank Kharge, Biocon chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, ambassador of France Alexander Ziegler and Queensland Trade and Investment Strategy Minister Kate Jones shared the dais during the inauguration. The event was a celebration of unique eco-system of the state. Government, industry, academia and research and development institutions partnered and created a unique eco-system which gave birth to several startups and innovative ideas. Karnataka has been consistently ranked high in foreign direct investments and employability. The IT, BT and related sectors have provided direct employment to over a million people and indirect employment to 3 million people in Bengaluru alone. The number of engineering and R&D centres of Multi-National Companies in India has increased from 943 in 2016 to 976 in 2017 as per a study conducted by the consulting firm, Zinnov. The CM said the government would set up a Centre of Excellence for the design of tech products in Bengaluru. Additionally, to help backward regions such as Hyderabad-Karnataka, the Elevate programme has been taken to the region and ten startups have been selected who will be funded Rs 1.11 crore this year," Kumaraswamy said in his address.

Top-ranked Karnataka doubles down on skill development



We are setting up skill academies on a wheel-and-spoke model, whose hub will be in Kengeri in Bengaluru: Skill Development and Labour Secretary Amlan Aditya Biswas.

Excellence at Government Tool Room and Training Centre (GTRTC) at four locations - Bengaluru, Mysuru, Dandeli and Kalaburagi. Similarly, training centres are being set up in Hospet, Yadgir, Lingsugur and Humnabad with the help of the Hyderabad-Karnataka Regional Development Board and Dassault Systemes. Plus, 22 new Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) have been sanctioned across the state. This will help the state reach its target of training 2 lakh persons by end of March this fiscal. "So far, we have trained over 70,000 already," Biswas pointed out.

On the employment front, the government organizes job fairs in 14 districts of which three are already over. Job fairs in Koppal, Vijayapura, Mangaluru, Karwar and others are lined up.

"Karnataka has been ranked among India's top three states for highest employment generation. We want to take this forward," Biswas said.

Interestingly, the government is all set to partner with the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce to roll out community diploma programme, a first-of-its-kind initiative. "Those without any formal schooling or skill training can enter this diploma programme laterally," Biswas said. "Community diplomas are common in the US and Canada. Our tie up with the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce is primarily to get the knowhow, understand the curricula and the manner in which they do it."

The community diploma programme will be aimed at traditional artisans, including skills that are family-based and are passed down generations. "Such artisans, who may not have any formal or scientific training, can go to their nearest ITI on evenings or weekends, pick up the latest trends in their trade," Biswas said. "We will also have a 20% weightage on the kind of feedback the person gets from his customers."

Also, importantly, the State government has recently set up the International Migration Centre - Karnataka (IMC-K), which caters to skilled workers who wish to go overseas. The centre has a target of reaching out to 1,000 persons this year, which forms part of a bigger plan to equip 20,000 people over the next five years with the necessary help to be recruited abroad. "We are also looking at a provident fund of sorts. For instance, someone going abroad will have deposit a certain amount. If something happens to the person, this amount will be given to his or her family as support," Biswas said.

With so much in the offing, Karnataka's skill development outlay is likely to go up from the existing Rs 75 crore.

The Department of Skill Development, Entrepreneurship and Livelihood was established in 2016, and since then Karnataka has been doubling down on this front. The initiatives have only intensified, with the State poised to achieve many firsts.

To begin with, the HD Kumaraswamy administration is scouting for land for a first-of-its-kind university for skill development that is proposed to come up in the Ramanagara district. In fact, the Karnataka Knowledge Commission has also recommended setting up a skill university to address

the acute shortage of skilled workforce. But Karnataka has its sight set on things that go beyond a university.

"We are setting up skill academies on a wheel-and-spoke model, whose hub will be in Kengeri in Bengaluru," Skill Development and Labour Secretary Amlan Aditya Biswas said.

The government has already identified land in 16 districts for the skill academies.

"These academies will be modelled on the lines of the Vidyapeeth that started during the erstwhile Mysuru kingdom. We will provide soft skills along with specialized hard skills like carpentry, electronics, textiles in different districts. All of them will be connected to the hub," he explained.

This year, Karnataka is setting up Centres of