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, Siscon 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 give birth to new ideas. The global presence of 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 entrepreneurs and the number 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 back the 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

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

To begin with, the HD Kumaraswamy administration has been 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.

The HD Karnataka 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 sights set on things that go beyond a university. The government has also set up skill academies on a wheel-and-spoke model, whose hub will be in Kengeri in Bengaluru.  Skill Development and Labour Secretary Amrith 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 Vocational Training Center that started during the initial days of the government. My department intends to have specialized hard skills like carpentry, electronics and textiles in different districts. All of them will be connected to the hub,” he explained.

This year, Karnataka is setting up Centres of Excellence at Government Food Science and Training Centre (GFTC) at four locations - Bengaluru, Mysuru, Davangere, and Kalaburagi. Similarly, training centres are being set up in Hospet, Yadagiri, Lingarajapur and Hampankatta with the help of the Hyderabad Development Board and Dassault Systems.  More than 20 Industrial Training Institutes (ITI) have been sanctioned across the state. This will help the state meet its target of training 2 lakh persons by end of March this fiscal; “so far, we have trained over 70,000 already,” Biswas said.

On the employment front, the government organized job fairs in 14 districts of which there are already over 1.3 lakh jobs. The department is also conducting regular job fairs in Koppal, Vijayapura, Mangaluru, Karwar and other places are lined up. Karnataka has been ranked among India’s top three states for the highest employment generation.

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

Interestingly, the government is all set to partner with IITs, IIMs and leading Institutes of Higher Education 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 government of Karnataka has recently launched a new programme that will aim to upskill traditional artisans, including skills that are family-based and are passed down generations. “Such artisans, who may not have any formal or scientific training, continue to cultivate their near art forms on evenings or weekends, pick up the latest trends in their trade,” Biswas said. “We will also have 25% weightage on the kind of feedback the person gets from his customers.”

Also, importantly, the government is currently working on setting up a skill institute (IMSI), which caters to skilled workers who wish to improve on their existing skills. The institute has a target reach out to 1,000 persons this year, which forms part of a bigger plan to upskill 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, the fund will kick in,” Biswas said.

With so much in the offering, Karnataka’s skill development outfit is likely to go up from the existing Rs 73 crore.