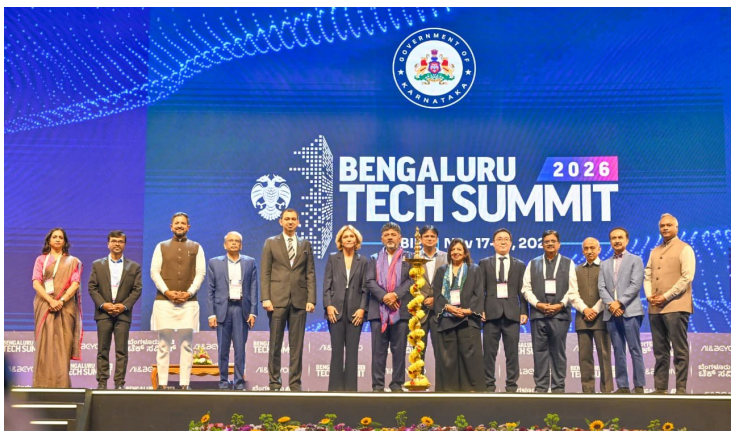
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Karnataka announces AI skilling programme for 63,200 students and professionals at BTS 2026

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Google, Salesforce, Pega Systems, Sarvam AI and Gnani.ai propose industry partnerships; state also unveils robotics, semiconductor and deeptech initiatives



Karnataka has announced a major industry-led artificial intelligence (AI) skilling initiative targeting 63,200 engineering and diploma students and professionals, as the state steps up efforts to build a future-ready technology workforce. Five technology companies – Google, Salesforce, Pega Systems, Sarvam AI and Gnani.ai – have proposed specialised training programmes under the initiative.

The announcement was made during the inauguration of the 29th Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS) 2026, where the Karnataka government also showcased a series of initiatives aimed at strengthening its capabilities in artificial intelligence, robotics, semiconductor research and deeptech.

The proposed training programmes will cover emerging technology areas, including generative AI, agentic AI, AI agent development, Voice AI, enterprise platforms, cloud computing, data analytics and Responsible AI.

With an emphasis on practical learning, the programmes will combine structured training, hands-on exercises, industry tools, capstone projects and certification pathways. The initiative aims to bridge the gap between academic learning and industry requirements while expanding the availability of skilled technology professionals.

Six initiatives to strengthen Karnataka's technology ecosystem

The inaugural programme showcased six innovation initiatives spanning AI, robotics, semiconductor research, healthcare technology and deeptech.

The Karnataka AI Hub, established at IIIT-Bangalore, marks an initial step towards the proposed AI University. It will focus on AI skilling, research, innovation, entrepreneurship and capacity building, with the objective of developing a globally employable workforce.

BRAINZ (Bengaluru Robotics & AI Innovation Zone), being developed by the Karnataka government in collaboration with ARTPARK at IISc, is envisioned as a nine-acre hub for robotics, artificial intelligence and deeptech. Bringing together research institutions, industry and startups, the initiative aims to accelerate indigenous technology development and real-world applications, with an ambition to catalyse investments of Rs 1,000 crore over five years.

Semiconductor research receives major infrastructure push

Karnataka also highlighted two initiatives aimed at strengthening India's semiconductor research and development capabilities.

The proposed 2D Innovation Hub will support IISc in developing a national-level 200-mm (8-inch) semiconductor R&D fabrication and pilot-line facility. The planned infrastructure includes an approximately 100,000 sq. ft. technology building, a 15,000 sq. ft. cleanroom and 80–90 process, metrology and testing tools.

INFIfab, being developed with the Centre for Nano Science and Engineering (CeNSE) at IISc, will focus on semiconductor innovation, advanced manufacturing and technology translation. The proposed facility will span approximately 96,284 sq. ft., including a 20,000 sq. ft. cleanroom, and support semiconductor fabrication, advanced packaging, MEMS, photonics, quantum technologies and neuromorphic computing.

Deeptech startups receive scaling support

The sixth initiative, Innoverse, will support deeptech startups with proven technologies as they move from product-market fit towards global industry leadership.

With a focus on autonomous systems and technologies spanning underwater applications to space, the initiative aims to help startups scale their solutions and strengthen their global competitiveness.

Together, the initiatives reflect Karnataka's focus on building research infrastructure, nurturing indigenous innovation, strengthening technology translation and creating pathways for emerging technologies to reach the market.

Karnataka positions itself for the next wave of innovation

Inaugurating the summit, Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar said Karnataka was seeking to move beyond its established position as a technology services hub and strengthen its capabilities in advanced research, semiconductor manufacturing, AI-led innovation and next-generation industries.

He highlighted that Karnataka contributes approximately $173 billion through software and services exports, accounts for 26.7 per cent of India's FDI equity inflows in the first half of FY2025-26 and attracted more than $1 billion in investments through over 30 new Global Capability Centres in 2025.

Bengaluru has attracted $4.4 billion in technology funding, while Karnataka's startup ecosystem has collectively raised approximately $79 billion, according to the figures cited by the Chief Minister.

The inaugural programme also featured addresses by industry leaders from Microsoft, Micron and NXP, and a panel discussion titled 'AI & Beyond: The Emerging India', featuring Karnataka Minister Priyank Kharge, Dr Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, Kris Gopalakrishnan and Prashanth Prakash.

The 29th Bengaluru Tech Summit is being held from November 17 to 19, 2026, at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre under the theme 'AI & Beyond'.