Karnataka Innovation Act Aims to Frame a Regulatory Sandbox Environment to Support R&D of Technologies: Dr. Manjula N, IT Secretary, Karnataka Government

Bengaluru, January 29, 2026: The 20th edition of the India Digital Summit (IDS), the flagship annual conference of the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) was inaugurated today at Leela Bhartiya City, Bengaluru. IDS 2026 is scheduled January 29–30, 2026. The theme of the conference is "India's AI Moment: Leveraging the Intelligent Economy." IDS 2026 is the official pre-summit event of the AI Impact Summit 2026.

Addressing the inaugural session of the conference, Dr. Manjula. N (IAS), Secretary to Government, Department of Electronics, Information Technology, Biotechnology and Science & Technology, Government of Karnataka, said, "We have a Karnataka Innovation Act under which we are trying to frame a regulatory sandbox environment. This will support various technologies which can have a kind of a freer, you know, more less regulated environment where various technologies can be researched on and developed further."

Speaking on the role of Karnataka in AI adoption, she added that Karnataka stands up as a cornerstone of India's AI capability. Karnataka has structural advantages owing to a good mix of AI talent in the state, government sponsored centres of excellence, enviable research institutions and an unparalleled startup ecosystem.

Karnataka's capabilities also reflect the national goals which aim at enabling access to secure data exchanges, scalable computing infrastructure and development of indigenous AI models. "I think Karnataka is working and the investments going on are actually creating on-ground competencies which are needed to erect such a national AI architecture. We have an expanded network of centres of excellence, accelerator program, deep tech skilling pipeline," Dr. Manjula N remarked.

"All this will enable the increase in the capacity and the talent depth which will allow industry, academia and government to participate meaningfully in shaping India's sovereign AI future," she added.

Mr. Srinivasu MN, Chairman, Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMIA) and Co Founder, BillDesk, in his address said, "Today in India, digital technology has started an overlay into the economy. It is the very foundation of the economy, driving the growth of the country, whether it's banking, payments, commerce, mobility, education or healthcare. To my mind, there are two forces that are particularly significant at this moment. One is scale. India's platforms and digital systems today serve hundreds of millions of customers, where even small design choices can have systemic consequences. Reliability therefore becomes as important as innovation, and governance as important as growth. The second factor is AI, which is increasingly embedded in all the systems we use. The challenge is not whether AI will be adopted, but how to ensure it is deployed responsibly, transparently, and in alignment with societal goals."

Speaking about the road ahead, he added, "What we have achieved in the last decade in building population-scale digital infrastructure and ensuring mass adoption of digital payments has been remarkable. We have managed to combine scale with inclusion, and most importantly, combine speed with purpose. The next phase of our journey as a country is about how we move responsibly forward from here."

Dr. Subho Ray President, Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) made the opening remarks.

IDS 2026 is being organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Make in India.

The Title Partner of the IDS 2026 is JioHotstar. The IDS 2026 is co-powered by The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) and Getepay. The conference is being organised in association with Meta. Other prominent partners include PhonePe, PayPal, Times Internet, Jagran News Media, IDA Ireland, Proximus Global, FirstHive, PaySprint, and In-Solutions Global.

For more information on India Digital Summit 2026, please visit https://www.indiadigitalsummit.in/

About IAMAI

The Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) is a not-for-profit industry body with more than 750 members, including Indian and multinational corporations, as well as start-ups. IAMAI has been instrumental in shaping India's digital economy. IAMAI advocates free and fair competition, and progressive and enabling laws for businesses as well as for consumers. The overarching objective of IAMAI is to ensure the progress of the internet and the digital economy. Its major areas of activities are public policy and advocacy, business to business conferences, research, promotion of start-ups and promotion of consumer trust and safety.