

Pradhan calls for higher private sector investment in research, innovation

New Delhi, 7 June : Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday batted for an equal contribution by the private sector and government in research and innovation, noting that about 70 per cent of research investment in India currently comes from the government. Inaugurating the IIT Madras Technology Summit 2026 here, he said while the government has significantly increased funding for research and development, industry contribution needs to rise.

"At present, around 70% of research investment comes from the Government, reflecting strong public commitment. However, the long-term direction must move towards a more balanced 50:50 partnership between the public sector and industry to accelerate innovation and scale impact," the minister said.

The summit was attended by Union Minister of State for Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (Independent charge) Jayant

Chaudhary, and senior officials. Inaugurating the summit themed "From IITM. For Bharat. Building Together", Pradhan said India's innovation ecosystem is at a "crucial turning point". "Research should not remain confined to academic theses but it must translate into real-world products and solutions. India's talent pool is already leading globally in many ways, but the time has come to reform and modernise the entire innovation process," he said. However, a key question remains as to why are we not innovating enough within our own country.

"Science and technology must move to the forefront of national development, with a human-centric approach that brings tangible benefits to society," he said. "India has immense potential to lead globally, especially through its premier institutions like the IITs. Significant investments such as a proposed Rs 1 lakh crore fund for research and development, are being directed toward the private sector and startups. "Many suc-

cessful start ups and unicorns have already emerged from IIT campuses, highlighting the strength of this ecosystem. Despite this, there is a gap. Much of the technology developed by Indian talent abroad is being purchased back by Indian industries from foreign markets," the minister said.

"This indicates a need to build and invest in our own products domestically. With a strong internal market, India has the advantage of being both producer and consumer," he added. The minister noted that India has emerged as a global hub for start ups, with their number rising from a few hundred to over 2.5 lakh in recent years, and the country improving its position in the Global Innovation Index from 85th to 38th. "A few years back, we had only a few hundred start ups in our country. Now, we have crossed more than two and a half lakh start ups. There is a new culture in the world, and India is improving its position in the innovation index from 85th to 38th," he said.

The minister reiterated the goal of making India a developed nation by 2047, and said the Global South will depend on the Indian model. Praising IIT Madras for its initiatives, he said institutions must remain accountable to society and communicate their contributions in research and innovation.

"Building Bharat is not limited to India's boundaries. It means creating sustainable solutions for the world, especially for the poor and the Global South," he said. IIT Madras Director Prof V Kamakoti said the summit is a call to action for industry, corporate firms and academia, including institutions like IIT Madras, to come together to build Bharat's future. "Today, IIT Madras is at the forefront of research and innovation through our Institute of Eminence (IoE), Centres of Excellence (CoE) and other centres driving high-impact research with significant patents, funding, publications, and start ups."

Prof. Ashwin Mahalingam, Dean (Alumni and Corporate

Relations), IIT Madras, said, "IIT Madras' strong growth in research and innovation is driven by our clear undeterred focus in translating it into real-world solutions for societal impact. The success of our IoE Centres of Excellence stands testament to the fact that real impact happens when research and development reaches the last mile. Our industry partners understand that collaboration with IIT Madras means building together for a Viksit Bharat, and this collaborative ecosystem nurtured through these partnerships is what makes us leaders in this space," he added.

The inaugural session also saw the launch of the book "Inventing a Better Tomorrow: 25 Years of IIT Madras Impact", documenting the institute's contributions to research, innovation, and nation-building. At the summit, IIT Madras also announced Bodhan AI, a Centre of Excellence for AI in Education, incubated as a Section 8 company and supported by the Ministry of Education.

HC frees 50 stranded seafarers; raps vessel owners for treating crew worse than pets



Mumbai, 7 June : The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the release of 50 seafarers stranded on three ships arrested off the Mumbai coast, slamming vessel owners for treating crew members worse than "pet animals" by providing minimal food and water for months. "Life comes only once. We don't believe in rebirth," the court observed while accusing the ship owners of being "least interested in human lives" and prioritising their commercial activities over the health of the crew. The seafarers, in their plea in HC, claimed that they were stranded with a minimum supply of food and water on the vessels, which were practically abandoned by the owners, following arrest for illegal fuel oil and bitumen transfers mid-sea, about 11 nautical miles from the city.

As many as 50 seafarers were stranded onboard MT Asphalt Star, MT Stellar Ruby and MT Al Jafzia, and seven of them moved the high court with a habeas corpus (produce the person) petition. The court on Monday ordered the Yellow Gate police to produce all 50 seafarers before it on Tuesday. All seafarers were produced before a bench of Justices Ravindra Ghuge and Hiten Venegaonkar, and they informed that none of them wished to return to their vessels as they were living on the vessels with minimal food and water and were given just 300 ml of water each day.

The court pulled up the vessel owners, accusing them of being the least interested in human lives and only being concerned about their vessels and commercial activities.

"How can you (owners) give the crew members only 300 ml of water every day? Even pet animals in our homes get more water each day. We will not allow human lives to be treated in such a manner. Life comes only once. We don't believe in rebirth," the court held. Ordering the release of all 50 seafarers, the bench stated that

it would take care of human lives, while the vessel owners can take care of their arrested ships. "We are not concerned with your ship and vessels. That is not the scope of this habeas corpus petition. The owners' conduct is such that they don't value human lives. They only care about their commercial activities," it said. The court noted that with a minimum food and water supply, the health of the seafarers would take a hit, which cannot be permitted. It directed the Yellow Gate police to complete all formalities for the 50 seafarers and release them.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices Joymalya Bagchi and Vipul M Pancholi had taken note of the fact that the earlier pleas of the accused were heard by another bench headed by Justice Nath and referred the matter. In his petition, James assailed a provision of the India-UAE extradition treaty. He also challenged a trial court order of August 7, 2025 by which his application under Section 436A of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) for his release from jail was rejected. It was argued before the high court that an extradited person can be prosecuted only for the offences for which extradition took place, and not for connected offences.

James, in its petition, also submitted that he completed seven years in jail on December 4, 2025 and has, therefore, already undergone the maximum sentence possible for the offences for which he was extradited, rendering his continued detention in India illegal. The high court, in his order, stated that it was not permissible for James to re-agitate issues pertaining to the treaty which, at least on a prima facie basis, have already been considered by the Supreme Court. It nonetheless considered provisions of the treaty and ruled that James was extradited for facing trial for offences which directly arises from the factual background in the present case, and therefore, his prosecution fell within the scope of the treaty.

Fadnavis orders drafting of strict law to restrict parole for sex offenders

Mumbai, 7 June : Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday ordered the drafting of a stringent law to bar parole for persons accused of sexual offences, citing that nearly 90 per cent of such crimes had been committed by repeat offenders out on temporary release.

Fadnavis, during a cabinet meeting during the day, noted that a similar law was enacted during his previous tenure as chief minister in 2014-2019, but it was struck down by the courts after being in force for three years, sources said. "About 80 to 90 per cent of the accused in such (sexual offence) cases are those arrested earlier for similar crimes and released on parole, during which they end up committing offences again," sources said, quoting Fadnavis. Stressing the need for stricter measures to curb repeat crimes, the Chief Minister has said that a law barring parole for persons accused of sexual offences should be brought back.

The Chief Minister's directives have come amid the recent case of a 65-year-old man with a criminal record, who allegedly sexually assaulted and murdered a four-year-old girl in a village in Bhor tehsil of Pune district. Fadnavis noted that the accused in the rape and murder case had committed similar offences twice earlier, and highlighted the urgency of preventing repeat offenders from misusing parole. According to sources, he directed officials from the law and judiciary department to prepare the necessary legal provisions and submit a proposal at the earliest.

UP constable arrested for rape, forced abortion in Varanasi

Varanasi, 5 May : A constable assigned to provide security to Uttar Pradesh minister Om Prakash Rajbhar has been arrested for allegedly raping a woman under the pretext of marriage and forcing her to undergo abortions, officials said on Tuesday. The accused, Prashant Rai, a resident of Mirzapur, was arrested on Monday following a complaint filed by the victim.

The police officials confirmed that Rai is a constable posted in Ghazipur district. Sarnath station house officer (SHO) Pankaj Kumar Tripathi said the survivor, a resident of the Sarnath police station area, alleged that Rai had been sexually exploiting her for the past four years. According to the complaint, the constable lived in a rented room in the Benipur locality of Sarnath, where he entered into a relationship with the woman four years ago after promising to marry her.

"The victim stated that she began living with the accused two years ago. During this period, she became pregnant twice, and both times Rai allegedly forced her to undergo abortions," SHO Tripathi said. The matter came to light after the woman discovered that Rai had clandestinely married another woman in April this year, despite his long-standing commitment to her. For the past two years, he had been deployed in the escort detail of Rajbhar. Further legal proceedings are underway, the SHO added.

India should chart own path in treatment of rare diseases: ICMR chief

New Delhi, 7 June : An India-specific model focusing on resource optimisation, indigenous innovation and preventive strategies is needed to strengthen rare disease care in the country rather than relying solely on Western frameworks, ICMR chief Dr Rajiv Bahl said on Tuesday. He also batted for a context-driven approach to tackling rare diseases. Addressing the two-day national conference on rare diseases organised by the Union Health Ministry here, the director general of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said India must chart its own path in diagnosis, treatment and prevention rather than relying solely on Western frameworks.

He noted that while developed countries have greater resources, India can leverage its strengths through population-based approaches, preventive strategies, and the effective use of digital technologies, including social media and emerging tools such as artificial intelligence, to expand outreach and improve early detection. Highlighting the progress over the past three decades, Bahl said, "in the 1990s, identifying a patient with a suspected rare disease often led to a sense of helplessness, as diagnosis was extremely

difficult and treatment options were virtually unavailable."

"Today, while even financial support of Rs 50 lakh per patient may seem insufficient given the high cost of therapies, it represents remarkable progress that the country is now able to meaningfully support children affected by rare diseases," he said. He emphasised that this evolution reflects a broader shift in healthcare priorities, where attention is not only given to common diseases but also to those affected by rare, often genetic condition and termed the government's rare disease programme as "a source of hope for thousands of children." Stressing the need to optimise available resources, Dr Bahl said with a defined financial support framework, careful planning of diagnostics and treatment pathways is essential.

He highlighted the value of family-based approaches, including parental genetic analysis and antenatal diagnosis, as cost-effective strategies for prevention and early intervention. Highlighting ongoing efforts, he said the ICMR is actively working to expand the range of tools available for managing rare diseases, including promoting the indigenisation of therapies and encouraging domestic production of af-

fordable alternatives to high-cost drugs in collaboration with industry partners and supported by clinical evaluation through Centres of Excellence. He also spoke about the use of repurposed drug which are "medications that may not fully cure but can significantly improve outcomes and quality of life", adding that six such drugs have been identified and clinical efforts are being initiated for their use in rare diseases.

On advancements in frontier technologies, Bahl said efforts in gene therapy are being pursued in collaboration with institutions such as the Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and CSIR, noting that "India is making steady progress in this area and is closer than ever to realising such advanced therapies," citing developments like CAR-T cell therapy. He voiced confidence that continued collaboration, innovation, and commitment from all stakeholders will significantly improve the landscape of rare disease care in India and bring tangible benefits to patients and their families.

Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava said the core objective of the conference was to understand the challenges faced by stakeholders, encourage

People of Gorakhpur suffered from 'mafia', 'macchar' before 2017: Yogi

Gorakhpur, 7 June : Attacking the Samajwadi Party, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday said before 2017, people suffered from 'mafia' and 'macchar' (mosquitoes) due to a lack of security.

"What was Gorakhpur's image before 2017? There was a lack of security. People were troubled by the mafia and mosquitoes. People were afraid even to hear the name of Gorakhpur, and no one came to invest. The youth here depended on their identity, forced to wander the country for jobs and hide their identities," Adityanath said. While addressing a gathering after inaugurating a two-lane bridge built over a water body in the Taramandal area of Gorakhpur, the Chief Minister said: "Today, they don't have to wander or hide their identities. In Gorakhpur alone, more than 50,000 youths have found jobs through industries in the Gorakhpur Industrial Development Authority (GIDA)."

The Gorakhpur Development Authority (GDA) constructed the 112-metre-long bridge for Rs



14.33 crore, connecting two parts of the Taramandal locality previously separated by the water body. Adityanath also highlighted the city's improved connectivity, AIIMS, the revived fertiliser plant and sugar mill, tourism projects around Ramgarh Tal, educational institutions and other infrastructure developments. Referring to the Taramandal area, the CM said people once hesitated to settle there due to flooding and a lack of facilities. "Today, it has emerged as one of the city's most developed and expensive residential areas,"

he said, adding that the bridge would further strengthen internal connectivity. The Chief Minister also directed officials to develop the water body, like Ramgarh Tal, including boating and recreational facilities for families and children.

MP Ravi Kishan praised the Chief Minister's leadership and said Gorakhpur has become a model of planned urban development. During the inspection, Adityanath also interacted with labourers involved in the bridge construction and posed for photographs with them.

CIC recommends DoPT include sub-caste data in UPSC results to broaden reach of affirmative action

New Delhi, 7 June : The Central Information Commission has recommended to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) to include sub-caste details in the final lists of the civil services exam to better assess how reservation policy benefits are distributed across caste groups.

The recommendation came while disposing of a second appeal filed by an RTI applicant seeking caste-wise details of candidates selected to the Indian Administrative Service through the 1995 examination conducted by the Union Public Service Commission. During the hearing, the DoPT submitted that service allocation data is maintained only at the level of broad social categories such as SC,

ST and OBC, and not at the sub-caste level. They also said that records dating back to 1995 were not traceable. The DoPT official added that the list of candidates allocated to services (along with their category) on the basis of CSE-2017 onwards is available on the department's portal. The commission noted that while such detailed data was not available on record, there was a "plausible scope" for including sub-caste information in future disclosures.

The commission also said that lists of candidates, along with their categories, are already available in the public domain for recent exams. However, it underlined that adding sub-caste details alongside aggregated cate-

gories could help ensure that the benefits of reservation policies reach a wider and more diverse range of communities. "In light of the above, the Commission recommends DoPT that the sub-caste details along with the aggregated caste categories (such as SC, ST, OBC, etc.) may be included in the final list of selected candidates of CSE to ensure transparency with an objective that the benefits of reservation policies and affirmative action reach a broader and more diverse range of communities within larger caste categories," its order said. The CIC found no deficiency in the response provided by the authorities under the RTI Act in the present case and disposed of the appeal.

UP CM asks para-teachers to adopt constructive approach, drop 'trade union-style' methods

Gorakhpur, 7 June : Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday asked 'shiksha mitras' (para-teachers) to adopt a positive and constructive approach, emphasising dialogue over confrontation, and shed "trade union-style" methods while pressing their demands. Addressing a felicitation ceremony organised in their honour in Gorakhpur, Adityanath said that while their concerns were genuine, the approach needed to be constructive. "For years, you had demands, but instead of allowing them to progress naturally, they were often pursued through confrontation. We must move towards resolution through dialogue," he said while addressing the 'Shiksha Mitra Samman Samaroh'.

The event was held to mark the increase in honorarium, from Rs 10,000 to Rs 18,000 per month, of all 1.43 lakh para-teachers working in the primary schools run by the Basic Education Department in the state. Adityanath criticised previous governments for what he termed as "irregular and unlawful" attempts to grant para-teachers the status of assistant teachers without proper procedures. "Earlier regimes violated norms and tried to accord recognition without framing the necessary rules. Such arbitrary actions led to the Supreme Court ordering termination of their services," he said.

Referring to the crisis that followed, he added, "We faced a serious challenge — nearly 1.5 lakh families were at risk of losing their livelihood. Many had served for 18-19 years. At that stage in life, where would they go?" The CM said his government decided against terminating their services and instead raised their honorarium significantly. "In 2017, we increased the honorarium from Rs 3,500 to Rs 10,000. Our intention has always been to periodically improve it further," he said, alleging that some intermediaries had exploited para-teachers in the past. Emphasising the role of teachers in nation-building, Adityanath said a positive mindset was crucial.

"A teacher associated with education must have a positive outlook. If

not, it can cause irreparable damage to society. The future of children entrusted to you by parents depends on your attitude," he said. He cautioned against adopting trade union-style methods, saying such approaches could harm society. "Our nature cannot be that of trade unions. We must work with a constructive spirit. The responsibility of shaping the future of children lies with you," he added. "We must stay away from the trade union mentality. It will harm society, as it has caused significant harm in the past. What people say there is that 'our demands must be met, no matter what the compulsion,' meaning that demands must be met at the expense of the country," he said.

"This cannot happen. The country comes first, then we exist. We exist because our country exists. If we cultivate a good generation, good people will be born in every field," he added. He also highlighted improvements in the state's education system, particularly in infrastructure and student welfare. "There was a time when girls could not attend school due to a lack of drinking water, toilets, or security. Today, we are ensuring facilities for all," Adityanath said. He noted that around 1.6 crore children are being provided uniforms, school bags, books, shoes, socks and sweaters, benefits that were not consistently available before 2017.

"Every child has the right to education. It is the responsibility of parents, teachers and society to ensure that this right is fulfilled," he said. Adityanath warned that school dropouts posed a serious challenge. "When a child leaves school, it is not just a personal loss but a national loss. It weakens society and creates long-term challenges," he said. Praising the success of the 'School Chalo Abhiyan', he said more than 20 lakh children had enrolled in the first phase. "This is a significant number. There are countries in the world with populations smaller than this. We must further increase this number in the next phase starting in July," he added.