

NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

20,000 new teachers, instructors to further strengthen transformation of Basic Education in UP: CM Yogi

LUCKNOW, MAY 17: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath today said that the state government is moving ahead with the recruitment process for 20,000 new teachers and instructors to further strengthen the transformation journey of the Basic Education Council.

The Chief Minister was addressing the felicitation ceremony and enhanced honorarium cheque distribution programme for 24,717 part-time instructors organized by the Basic Education Department here.

He said, "The government is continuously making efforts to improve the quality of education. In this direction, an Education Commission has been constituted, which is selecting teachers at various levels."

He stated that the requisition for 10,000 new teachers has already been sent, while new instructors will also be appointed in upper primary schools, which will improve the student-teacher ratio.

The Chief Minister said, "In 2011-12, the appointment of part-time instructors under the Basic Education Council began with the objective of providing education to children aged 6 to 14 years under the Right to Free and Compulsory Education Act. At that time, instructors were paid a monthly honorarium of Rs 7,000. At present, 8,469 instructors in art education, 9,645 in health and physical education, and 6,192 in work experience education are serving, taking the total number to 24,296."

He said that from 2011-12 to 2022, there was no increase in their honorarium. During a meeting with the instructors' federation in 2019, he had personally sought a proposal, but a decision could not be taken due to the election notification.

He further said, "In 2022, the government increased the honorarium by Rs 2,000, but even the government itself was not satisfied with that increase."

The Chief Minister said, "The government believes that instructors, Shiksha Mitras, and every employee associated with basic education should receive dignified respect and honorarium. Accepting long-pending demands, the government has



now increased the honorarium of instructors to Rs 17,000 per month. Along with this, they and their families will also receive cashless health insurance coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh. "Insurance

He directed all instructors to immediately register on the portal prepared by the Basic Education Council so that health cards can be distributed at a major ceremony next week.

The Chief Minister said, "Connecting nearly 1.43 lakh Shiksha Mitras, 24,296 instructors, teachers, and non-teaching staff with social and health security is a priority for the government."

He said that anyone continuously contributing towards strengthening the foundation of education in India must be guaranteed social security. The increased honorarium will be transferred directly to bank accounts, and the cashless health facility will also be linked to it.

He said, "In 2019, the government had granted women instructors six months of maternity leave with full honorarium. In 2023, a voluntary school transfer facility was also introduced, under which more than 4,000 instructors got the opportunity to choose schools of their preference."

The Chief Minister further said, "When our government came to power in 2017, the condition of the Basic Education Council was extremely poor. Proposals had even come forward to discontinue the services of instructors in schools with fewer than 100 students, but the government rejected them and launched the 'School Chalo Abhiyan' and 'Operation Kayakalp'. Today, as a result,

96 per cent of basic schools have access to basic facilities and there has been significant improvement in school conditions."

He said the dropout rate, which earlier stood at 17-18 per cent, has now declined to nearly 3 per cent, and the government aims to reduce it to zero.

The Chief Minister said, "Every child is born with some form of talent. Some excel in sports, others in art or science. It is the responsibility of teachers and instructors to identify children's hidden talents and provide them opportunities to grow."

He said children should not be suppressed, but inspired and guided in the right direction.

"Self-discipline, punctuality, cleanliness, and values are important components of the education system," he added.

Appealing to the media, he said, "If children are seen participating in voluntary labour activities, it should not be portrayed negatively."

He added that children should not be made overly delicate; instead, they should be made strong, disciplined, and self-reliant. He suggested that teachers promoting discipline and cleanliness among children should be honoured rather than punished. The Chief Minister informed, "Operation Kayakalp" has been presented by NITI Aayog as a success story before the nation."

"Operation Kayakalp" has been presented by NITI Aayog as a success story before the nation. He stated that this transformation has been made possible through the collective efforts of teachers, Shiksha Mitras, and instructors associated with the Basic Education Council.

He added, "Due to the government's clear intent and

transparent policy, nearly 1.6 crore children are now studying in Basic Education Council schools across the state."

He spoke about the way the government has ensured arrangements for shoes, socks, uniforms, sweaters, and other facilities for children. Funds are being transferred directly into the bank accounts of parents.

He assured that books would also be made available on time. Most importantly, children should remain connected with the school environment and participate not only in studies but also in sports and other activities.

The Chief Minister said, "18 Atal Residential Schools have been established for the children of labourers and destitute families, where 18,000 children can live and study together. These schools have been provided with world-class infrastructure, and the government is bearing the full cost of food and accommodation. On similar lines, two Chief Minister Composite Schools are being developed in every district, offering education from pre-primary to Class 12 along with sports, skill development, and modern facilities."

He said that Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalyas have been upgraded from Class 8 to Class 12 in the first phase. Funds have now been allocated to establish one Kasturba Gandhi school in all 825 development blocks. He added that the success stories of daughters from poor families continue to inspire the government.

Referring to global circumstances, the Chief Minister noted that "Just as tensions between Iran and the United States affect the entire world, similarly, if even one child remains deprived of education, the consequences are borne by the entire society and nation."

He added, "Every child must be connected with education to build a Viksit Bharat and an Aatmanirbhar Bharat."

The Chief Minister pointed that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the country is moving forward, and the ongoing transformation in the education sector is laying a strong foundation for the India of the future.

Leadership Academy of King's College London for helping improve his confidence and public speaking skills. He also gained experience with the University Officers' Training Corps during his time as a student of politics at the London institution.

"My time at King's has played a significant role in shaping my values and commitment to public service and I hope my story might inspire other students to see leadership and local impact as paths worth pursuing," said Kumar.

"I have built experience across policy, education, and research, including roles as a Policy Advisor at the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and a Research Analyst for a national LGBTQ+ charity. I am passionate about youth empowerment and education, which led me to support literacy initiatives through Bookmark Reading Charity."

"I enjoy volunteering, organising inclusive community events, and championing access to public services," he added.

Jairam Ramesh gives privilege notice against Pradhan over 'derogatory' remarks against Par panel

NEW DELHI, May 18: Congress chief whip in the Rajya Sabha Jairam Ramesh on Monday gave a privilege notice against Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan for allegedly lowering the dignity of Parliament with remarks made at a recent press conference.

In his notice to Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan, Ramesh said that during a press conference on May 15 in the aftermath of the NEET-UG exam cancellation, Pradhan made some "derogatory" remarks against a parliamentary committee, which "reveal his contempt for Parliament".

"I have given notice of question of privilege under Rule 187 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States against the Union Minister of Education for having lowered the dignity of Parliament and Parliamentary Committees.

"He has made these outrageous remarks while presiding over the rot in the Education Ministry that is destroying the future of lakhs of youth across the country," Ramesh said in a post on X.

He also shared a copy of the privilege notice sent to Radhakrishnan.

"I, hereby, give notice of question of privilege under Rule 187 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Council of States (Rajya Sabha) against Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Minister of Education, Government of India,



for having lowered the dignity of the Parliament and parliamentary committees.

"On 15th May 2026, in his capacity as the Union Minister for Education, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan addressed an official press conference in New Delhi on the issue of the NEET-UG 2026 paper leak," he said in his notice.

Ramesh said Pradhan was subsequently asked by the representatives of the media as to why his ministry had not implemented the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education in its report on the National Testing Agency (NTA).

"To this question, the Minister responded as follows — 'I will not comment on Parliament Standing Committee red flags. I will speak about the High-Level Committee of Experts (HLCE)/Radhakrishnan Committee. The Par-

liament Standing Committee has members from the opposition. They write things in a certain manner, you also know that. Hence, I won't speak on the standing committee," Ramesh said.

These remarks by the Union education minister are "outrageous", he said.

"They are highly derogatory and seek to malign parliamentarians, parliamentary committees and the Parliament of India. The Parliamentary Committees are an extension of the Parliament of India, and rightly so referred to as mini-Parliament. Hence, the Executive's accountability to the Legislature and its parliamentary committees is a fundamental tenet of India's democratic polity.

"The Minister's impugned comments clearly indicate and reveal his contempt for the Parliament, parliamen-

tary committees, members of the parliamentary committee that are drawn from all political parties and India's constitutional democracy itself," the former Union minister said.

Ramesh said Pradhan has "deliberately lowered the stature and prestige of the institution of the Standing Committee simply because of its bipartisan nature".

"The Minister's comments also tantamount to imputing dishonourable motives to members of parliamentary committees themselves, he said.

Ramesh said it is well established that any derogatory references to parliamentary committees, members of parliamentary committees constitute a "gross contempt" of such parliamentary committees.

"The contempt of the parliamentary committee constitutes contempt of the House, he claimed.

"The above conduct of the Minister of Education constitutes a grave breach of privilege and contempt of the House. In fact, it is a perfect case of such breach of privilege and contempt and a fit case for action by you since the Standing Committee on Education is one of the eight standing committees of the Rajya Sabha.

"I, therefore, request that privilege proceedings be initiated against Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Education, in this matter," Ramesh said in his notice. (PTI)

Researchers develop 'wearable polygraph' to detect, measure stress

NEW DELHI, MAY 18: Researchers have developed a wearable polygraph system designed to sense underlying stress hidden deep within the body.

The lightweight, bandage-like device, described in a paper in the journal Science Advances, gently adheres to the chest, where it simultaneously measures heart activity, breathing patterns, sweat response, blood flow and temperature.

Together, the signals capture a real-time, whole-body view of stress, the researchers, from the US' Northwestern University and Sungkyunkwan University in the Republic of Korea, said.

"Sometimes, the body manifests signs of stress before a person is consciously aware of it. Even if people don't realize how much pressure they are under, stress is quietly affecting their health," lead researcher John A. Rogers, professor of materials science and engineering, biomedical engineering and neurological surgery at Northwestern University, said.

Rogers added that an exposure to prolonged stress can be harmful, especially for pregnant mothers, children and critically ill patients, and ability to measure stress



could empower people to take stress-relieving actions with direct benefits to health.

"Importantly, we aimed to design a device, conceptually like a polygraph system, that operates on the basis of biophysical body responses, without requiring access to chemical biomarkers found in body fluids," Rogers said.

Current approaches to a continuous monitoring of a psychophysiological state involve polygraphy and polysomnography, which the researchers said rely on "cumbersome, wired" sensors that are limited in real-world utility and burden patients, particularly vulnerable populations such as infants.

The device is made from combining tiny sensors into a single, soft device, all of which together continuously track multiple physiological signals, produced as a re-

ponse when the body senses stress.

A built-in motion sensor and miniature microphone capture subtle mechanical and acoustic signals from the heart and lungs, while other sensors detect skin temperature and heat flow associated with near-surface blood circulation, and changes in the skin's electrical conductivity caused by sweat gland activity — a well-known marker of stress, the researchers said.

The device can continuously track multiple physiological signals at once and could help clinicians detect stress and potential discomfort in patients — including infants or elderly who may be unable to communicate, they said. Data is wirelessly transmitted to a smartphone, smart watch or tablet, where machine learning algorithms analyse patterns

associated with stress in real time.

The team added that the device may also help diagnose sleep disorders without cumbersome in-laboratory equipment, monitor mental health over time and even sense early warning signs of medical complications.

The device weighs under eight grams — about the same as eight paperclips — designed to move naturally with the skin, and can operate continuously for more than 24 hours.

The researchers have tested out the device's performance in controlled experiments and real-world environments.

During simulated lie-detector tests, the wearable device accurately captured stress responses triggered by sensitive questions and closely matched measurements from commercial polygraph systems, they said. In cognitive tests, which required understanding speech in noisy environments, the device detected clear increases in stress-related signals in a participant as tasks increased in difficulty — the results aligned with simultaneous, independent measurements of pupil dilation, a common method to determine stress, the team said. (PTI)

23-yr-old elected youngest Indian-origin mayor of British town

LONDON, Å MAY 18: A 23-year-old politician representing a local council in eastern England has created history by becoming the youngest Indian-origin Mayor in the United Kingdom.

Tushar Kumar, a former student of Political Science from King's College London, took charge as the Mayor of Elstree and Borehamwood at a ceremony last week.

The Labour councillor joined the Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council in 2023 and previously served in the role of Deputy Mayor. "An incredible honour to officially become the Mayor of Elstree and Borehamwood last night and, at 23 years old, the youngest ever Indian-origin Mayor in the history of the United Kingdom," said Kumar, in a statement following the ceremony.

"I am truly humbled by the trust placed in me and incredibly grateful for all the support, kindness and encouragement I have received throughout this journey. Thank you to everyone who attended the Mayor Making Ceremony at Fairway Hall



and to all those who have supported me over the years — from residents, community organisations and fellow councillors, to my family and friends who have always believed in me," he said.

He expressed gratitude to his predecessor, outgoing mayor Dan Ozarow, for his service and guidance during his previous tenure as Deputy Mayor and welcomed Councillor Linda Smith as his new Deputy.

"I look forward to working closely together over the coming year serving our community. As Mayor, I want to focus on being present within the community,

supporting local organisations and charities, and inspiring more young people to get involved in public service and community life. It is the privilege of a lifetime to serve the town I love," he added.

As one of the youngest councillors to be elected while still a student in London, Kumar believes that "real change starts at the community level".

"Elstree and Borehamwood Town Council gave me a platform to listen, represent and act — making a difference where it truly matters, close to home," he said.

Kumar credits the Civic

4 crew members eject safely after two Navy jets crash during air show in Idaho

BOISE (US), MAY 18: All four crew members ejected safely after two Navy jets collided and crashed Sunday during an air show at the Mountain Home Air Force Base in western Idaho, officials said.

The collision involved two US Navy EA18-G Growlers from the Electronic Attack Squadron 129 in Whidbey Island, Washington, said Cmdr. Amelia Umayam, spokesperson for Naval Air Forces, US Pacific Fleet.

The aircraft were performing an aerial demonstration when the crash occurred,

Umayam said in a statement. The four crew members from both jets safely ejected and the crash was under investigation, she said.

The crew members were in stable condition, base officials said.

Nobody at the military base was hurt, said Kim Sykes, marketing director with Silver Wings of Idaho, which helped to plan the air show.

"Everyone is safe and I think that's the most important thing," Sykes said.

The base said in a social

media post that it was locked down immediately following the crash. The remainder of the air show was cancelled.

Videos posted online by spectators showed four parachutes opening in the sky as the aircraft plummeted to the ground near the base about 80 kilometres south of Boise.

The EA-18G Growler is a variant of the F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter jet with sophisticated electronic warfare systems.

Shane Ogden said he was filming the two jets as they came close together. A video

he captured shows the two aircraft appear to make contact and then spin in tandem as the crew members eject and their parachutes open.

The planes then fall together, exploding into a fireball upon impact as the crew members drift to the ground nearby.

"I was just filming thinking they were going to split apart and that happened and I filmed the rest," Ogden said in a text message. He said he left soon after the crash because he did not want to get in the way of emergency responders.