

# PM to scientists: make a break with the past

## Manmohan favours greater role for private sector in science and technology

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**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Wednesday called for greater participation of the private sector in science and technology and suggested creation of research and development facilities that were owned publicly, but run by the private sector.

"If we are to give a meaning to our search for new frontiers in Indian science, then a much larger participation of the private sector is essential. We have to leverage the private sector's strengths by creating high impact collaboration ... Let there be publicly-owned and privately-operated world-class R&D facilities," he said.

Dr. Singh was speaking at a function organised by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for giving away its prestigious Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar prize for 2009 and 2010.

### Top-end research facilities

Interacting with journalists, Minister of State for Science and Technology Prithviraj Chavan said the Centre wanted to create top-end research facilities that would be funded and owned by the government and run by the private sector to ensure that they were



*Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presents the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award 2009 & 2010 to (from right) Dr. Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay of the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata; Dr. Mitali Mukerji of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology; Dr. Charusita Chakravarty of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi; and Dr. Shubha Tole of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai, in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PHOTO: SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY*

taken advantage of by a larger section of researchers.

The facilities would be on the lines of The Centre for Genomic Application (TCGA) set up here by the CSIR's Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology and the New York-based The Chatterjee Group.

Noting that the facility, which extended services for the life sciences sector, was being run round-the-clock by The Chatterjee Group, the Minister said publicly-owned and privately-operated meant that the private sector, which would be the

service provider, would ensure that the equipment was up all the time and that it was a services-driven company. There would also be a marketing component involved.

### "No contract research"

Mr. Chavan emphasised that the initiative did not mean venturing into contract research but only making available facilities for research wherein the user pays a fee for use of state-of-the-art equipment.

"We are trying to find out which are those facilities that are very expensive for

the private sector to invest in but which we need for our research to be at global level," he said.

In his address, Dr. Singh called upon the scientific community to "make a break with the past" and create new systems, structures and methods for pursuing science that would harness individual excellence to create socially productive outputs.

"This is a major challenge before the government, but more particularly before the scientific community. We need to think boldly about how to go forward," he said.

Dr. Singh also urged young scientists to "take on the responsibility of thinking about the future of Indian science and to take up the mantle of leadership."

The coveted Bhatnagar prize was given to 20 scientists — 11 for 2009 and nine for 2010.

The awardees for 2010 include G.K. Ananthasuresh of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc.), Bangalore; Swapan K. Pati and Umesh Vasudeo Waghmare of the Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bangalore; Shubha Tole and

Kalobaran Maiti of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai,

The other recipients are Mitali Mukerji of the Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, New Delhi; Sanjeev Galande of the National Centre for Cell Science [NCCS], Pune (presently at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research, Pune); Sanghamitra Bandyopadhyay of the Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata, and Sandeep Verma of IIT-Kanpur.

The awardees for 2009 include N. Jayaraman, S.K. Sathesh, Giridhar Madras and J.R. Haritsa of the IISc.; Amitabh Joshi of JNCASR; Abishek Dhar of the Raman Research Institute; Venappally Suresh of the University of Hyderabad; and S.G. Honavar of the L.V. Prasad Eye Institute, Hyderabad. The other awardees are: Charusita Chakravarty of IIT-Delhi; Bhaskar Saha of NCCS; and Rajesh Gopakumar of the Harish Chandra Research Institute, Allahabad.

Dr. Singh also presented the CSIR's award for S&T Innovations for Rural Development for 2009 to the Indian Oil Corporation's Research and Development Centre at Faridabad for its 'Servo Agro Spray Oil' for pest control in crops.