

# NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

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## Investment in education offers greatest return for society: Morten Meldal

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INVESTING in education delivers the highest return for any society aiming for progress, said Nobel laureate in Chemistry, professor Morten P Meldal. He was addressing participants during an online lecture at the third RGCB Research Conference, organised by BRIC – Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB), held in Munnar on Saturday.

Prof Meldal emphasised that nations such as Vietnam, Poland, Finland, and Denmark have achieved significant economic and developmental strides within a decade or two through sustained focus on educational development.

Stressing the importance of cultivating a love for learning from early childhood, Meldal advocated for making education an enjoyable experience.

“Learning should spark curiosity. Educators could begin with engaging five-minute videos for first graders that explore how things work in our environment. These can gradually evolve in complexity and length

with each grade level,” he suggested. He also underlined the role of education in raising awareness about global challenges. “As academicians, it is our responsibility to inform more people about pressing issues – be it the consequences of wars, climate change, pollution, or the equitable distribution of resources and wealth. This is the only way to prepare the next generation to make informed political choices and prioritise peace and sustainability.”

Highlighting the importance of autonomy in achieving excellence, Meldal said, “Excellence is built on freedom, not force. It is not an individual pursuit, but a collective endeavour.” The session, moderated by RGCB director Chandrabhas Narayana, was the highlight of the August

28-31 conference. Meldal, a Danish chemist, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2022 for his pioneering work in click chemistry – a method that enables the efficient and straightforward construction of complex molecules through simple, high-yield reactions.

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**Prof Morten P Meldal, Nobel laureate**

