

NERIST bridging tech gap between NE & the nation: President

Arunachal at forefront of LEP

By Pradeep Kumar

NIRJULI, Apr 01: The North Eastern Regional Institute of Science & Technology (NERIST) is bridging the technology gap between the North East states and the rest of the country, said President of India Pratibha Devisingh Patil in her address at the first convocation of the institute here today.

Science and technology will increasingly influence the course of human civilization and hold the key to economic growth and social development, she said. "The technical institutes around the nation, including the NERIST, will play a major role in making India a major scientific and technological power in the world."

Patil pointed out that the onus is on the teachers to arouse and retain the interest of students in science, since the nation would benefit from skilled technical students.

Full of praise for the harmonious coexistence of various tribes in Arunachal Pradesh, the president called 'The Land of the Rising Sun' a state that is moving on the path of development while retaining its distinctive culture, "showing that the traditional moorings of a society can be retained while development takes place."

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh last year while announcing a massive Rs 24,000 crore package here had said, "It is our land of the Rising sun and Arunachal will rise like a star in the east." The president today devoting substantial portion of her address in praise of Arunachal is highly reassuring for the people, particularly in the face of China's repeated claim on this territory.

She lauded the state's status as one of the 18 biodiversity 'hotspots' in the world and credited it to the strong belief among the Arunachalees in the oneness of humankind and nature.

"The respect for nature that is ingrained in the tribal communities here gives me confidence that as Arunachal continues to progress, special care will be taken of the ecological system. The NE, perhaps, can prove to be an example of how development



President delivering the convocation address-DIPR

and wellbeing of the environment need not be antithetical to one another," she said.

Patil urged the NERIST to work on practical uses of technology to make "geography irrelevant", so that the NE region's terrain ceases to be an impediment to faster development.

"This region of the country can be at the vanguard of India's Look East Policy (LEP) to work meaningfully with South Eastern countries," she observed.

On the importance of education for sustained progress, she said education should be "a process that imparts knowledge and values, develops the personality of the individual and opens up new opportunities."

The president exhorted the NERIST to take the lead in identifying the pool of traditional knowledge of the NE, document, conserve and improve it, as well as democratize innovation by tapping into innovative ideas at the grassroots of society.

Calling women important drivers of change, she advised the institute to incubate innovations of practical uses in the daily lives of the region's women through self help groups.

"I would like the graduating batch of NERIST (M Tec, MBA, B Tec, B Sc and diploma holders who were awarded honours

on the occasion) to remember that education never ends for a technologist. Today only one phase of your life is at an end. From tomorrow your new phase of education and knowledge accumulation begins where you should constantly be thinking about the possibilities for the application of technology to make a positive impact on the quality of the life of the people.

"This would be an apt tribute to the confidence which the nation has in the genius of the people of the North-East," she said in her concluding remark.

The way the invited presspersons were treated - as if they were the most potential dangers - was, however, shocking. But there was a consolation as the president quoted Swami Vivekananda, "In a day when you do not come across any problem you can be sure that you are traveling in a wrong path."

The governor, Chief Minister Dorjee Khandu, his cabinet colleagues and high ranking civil and police officers accorded a warm welcome to the president on her arrival here this afternoon on her maiden three day visit to the state.

Patil flew from New Delhi to Lilabari in a Business Boeing Jet (BBJ), patterned on the US president's office-in-the-sky Air Force One, and IAF chopper brought here the presidential entourage including her husband Dr. Devisingh Shekhawat.

Patil is likely to visit Tawang to pay obeisance to Lord Buddha at the Tawang Monastery tomorrow, weather permitting. On her return she would visit the JN state museum and address a women empowerment group at Banquet Hall.

She is also likely to visit Tezu and Kibitho (a forward base along the Chinese border) the next day, where she would address the troops guarding the frontier, before returning to New Delhi, according to official sources.

Challenges are a daily occurrences; we should not get intimidated by them but rather learn to surmount them, she added.

NERIST Society president *Contd. P.3*