

ARUNACHAL FRONT

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Balance modernity, tradition: Governor



RONO HILLS, Sep 07: "While we modernize, let us not be uprooted from our traditions," said Governor JJ Singh after inaugurating the two-day seminar on 'Arunachal Pradesh: Issues of Modernity and Tradition' at Rajiv Gandhi University here today.

The seminar is being organized by the RGU's Arunachal Institute of Tribal Studies (AITS) in collaboration with Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Institute of Asian studies (MAKAIAS), Kolkata.

In his inaugural speech, Singh said traditions and cultures are people's identity, and that innovation is required in every society to adapt the future generations to traditional knowledge and its richness. "We have to blend modernity and tradition."

The pace of progress should be controlled, so that the society can absorb the changes, he said, echoing Jawaharlal Nehru's views. "The indigenous should develop along the lines of their own genius and we should avoid imposing anything on them. It should not be overwhelmed by outsiders. We should try to encourage in every way their own traditional arts and culture."

"If people neglect or despise traditions, or allow them to be undermined, they will lose their freedom very quickly and easily.

But at the same time, we must realize that change is the only constant thing in life. Therefore, it is my firm belief that we must welcome change while keeping our traditions intact," he said.

Chairing the inaugural function, former RGU VC Prof AC Bhagabati called for redefining the adoption of western culture "but at the same time keeping the traditions." Referring to the Maoris of New Zealand and the people New Guinea, Prof Bhagabati said tradition and modernity are not opposing entities.

In his keynote address, VC in-charge Prof Tamo Mibang said, "Tradition and modernity are two different names of two sides of the coin." He highlighted the background and socio economic development of Arunachal Pradesh with modernity, and said "the presence of the past is the tradition." Prof Mibang also touched on culture and the importance of indigenous language.

Former foreign secretary Krishnan Srinivasan in his speech highlighted the external policy matters with focus on Arunachal Pradesh's past traditions with neighbouring countries and its impact in the progress of the state. He also touched on immigration, Stillwell Road, refugee issue and tourism, and said progress or modernity should not harm

Contd. P.3

Balance ...

From P.1...local authority and way of life of indigenous populace.

“The future of the North East is to a considerable extent governed by the neighbouring countries. The challenge is about how to relate that future with the interest that India wants to show with cross border contacts to the eastern neighbours and the need to reiterate the identity of the NE within that of India,” he said, adding, “Confidence building with the neighbours is important, but that has to be complemented with first building confidence about the Indian state with the people of the North East.”

MAKAIAS convenor Dr Rakhee Bhattacharjee informed that this is the fifth seminar in the MAKAIAS’ long-term Northeast India Research Programme since 2006, after completion of such programmes at Aizawl, Shillong, Sikkim and Guwahati. This is an attempt to bring together all concerned in a single forum to search for ways and means to translate the dream of development in Northeast India into a concrete reality, she said.

Earlier, in his welcome address, seminar coordinator Dr SK Chaudhuri expressed hope that the seminar would be a meaningful journey. MAKAIAS Fellow Sanjay Pulipaka also spoke.

Apart from the inaugural and valedictory functions, the seminar will feature three academic sessions, including presentations on ‘development and cultural changes’, ‘tourism development in NE India’ and ‘problems of technological modernization and industrialization in Arunachal Pradesh’.

The inaugural function was attended by scholars, eminent professors, academicians, students of tribal studies and people interested in the important subject. (PRO to governor)