

Make India a major power: President



President of India Smti Pratibha Patil giving away gold medal to one of the awardees on Wednesday.

[Staff REPORTER]
ITANAGAR, Apr 1: Asserting that science and technology holds the key to economic growth and social development of a region, President Pratibha Devisingh Patil today called

upon the technical institutions around the nation to play a pivotal role in making India a major scientific and technological power in the world.

Addressing a galaxy of academicians, dignitaries and stu-

dents at the first convocation of the North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST) near here, the President said, "In this 21st century, science and technology will increasingly influence the

course of human civilization and hold the key to economic growth and social development. Technical institutes of the country, including NERIST, should play a major role in making India a major scientific and technological power in the world."

"Science and technology, research and development (R&D), and innovation must continue to receive high priority," she said after giving away the medals to students who excelled in various degree, diploma and certificate courses during the years 2006 to 2008.

Patil said, "Development and progress become sustainable only when the people receive the benefit of education, which is essential for preparing a population that is not only knowledgeable and skilled, but is also aware of its responsibilities and willing to contribute to the growth of the nation."

Calling for creating skilled

manpower and a knowledge-based society, she said, "Higher education must make our youth employable, including encouraging them to set up their own enterprises."

Giving a slew of advices to young generation to face challenges in life, the President said, "Challenges are a daily occurrence, we should not get intimidated by them but rather learn to surmount them. Self discipline is that one quality which can help tide over many difficulties. So, I would advise that the youth develop a sense of discipline in all aspects of life."

Praising the NERIST, which attained the status of a deemed university in 2005, and the innovative teaching-learning scheme adopted by it through a unique modular pattern in a number of courses in different technical disciplines, she said, "I am happy that NERIST is contributing to our national efforts to create a skilled workforce

and to have a knowledge-based society. The Institute has a greater role, as the skilled manpower produced here, is making a difference even to bridging the technology gap between the states of the North East and the rest of country."

"When we speak about technology we must speak also about innovation, as the two go together. We want that NERIST works on practical use of technology to make geography irrelevant so that in the North East, terrain and geography are not an impediment to faster development. Better connectivity will help in forging backward and forward linkages. It will help in the process of national integration with North Eastern States benefiting from as also contributing to national growth. This region can also be at the vanguard of India's Look East policy to work meaningfully with South Eastern countries," said the President. (Contd. on P-4)

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Patil said the most important telling impact of S&T is when it makes a difference to the lives of common people. Though NERIST is catering to local demands through extension services imparted under the Centre for Appropriate Technology and Rural Development, she stated that efforts should also be made to democratize innovation, by tapping into innovative ideas at the grassroots of society.

"The North Eastern region is known for its vast pool of traditional knowledge in many fields. Efforts should be made to identify this knowledge, document it, conserve it and improve it. Let NERIST take the lead in this activity," she added.