

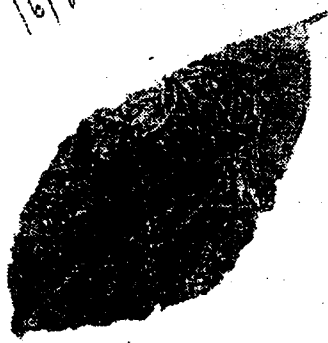
## Arunachal to get country's first folk medicine institute

ITANAGAR, June 1: The first folk medicine institute in the country will be established at Arunachal Pradesh under the nomenclature of the North East Regional Institute of Folk Medicine (NERIFM).

Official sources said here today that the institute, to be established at Pasighat, the district headquarters of East Siang district, with an estimated cost of 32.88 crore, would be developed as an autonomous institute under the department of AYUSH, as approved by the Union Cabinet on February 14.

President Pratibha Patil is likely to lay the foundation stone of the institute later this year.

About 40 acres of land at a prime location has been earmarked, which was handed

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over to a committee constituted by the Centre for construction of this ambitious institute, which would be vital for utilising the State's vast herbal and medicinal plant resources, sources disclosed.

The hilly State of Arunachal Pradesh, with over 81 per cent forest cover, is the home of various rare medici-

nal plants and herbs, most of which were yet to be utilised.

Describing it as recognition of the traditional healing system practices of the tribal people since time immemorial, state Health and Family Welfare Minister C C Singpho reiterated the Centre's decision that the NERIFM will facilitate systematic and comprehensive documentation, presentation and validation of the folk medicine traditions of the north-eastern region.

"The Central institute would go a long way in popularising the traditional healing system of the Arunachalees and make the best possible use of the medicinal plants and herbs grown aplenty throughout the State," Singpho added. (UNI)