

Roopak Goswami

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PM to launch NE agri institute

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, today approved the setting up of an Indian agricultural research institute in Assam.

The Prime Minister will inaugurate the Indian Agricultural Research Institute at Gogamukh in Dhemaji district in Assam on May 26. This will be the first of its kind in the Northeast. Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) is the country's premier national institute for agricultural research, education and extension.

Official sources said the Department of Agriculture Research and Education (Dare) proposed the establishment of IARI-Assam on 587 acres of land provided by the Assam government.

Union agriculture and farmers welfare minister Radha Mohan Singh said in a statement that IARI-Assam would be a post-graduate institute of higher learning in agricultural education and it will have all the hallmark identities of IARI-New Delhi, including all sectors of agriculture like field crops, horticulture crops, agro-forestry, animal husbandry, fisheries, poultry, piggery, silk rearing and honey production, among others.

He said the institute would be wholly funded by the Centre and a proposal for 98 staff positions has been approved.

He said after coming to power, the Prime Minister had announced that for growth of the agriculture sector in the Northeast, an IARI would be established in Assam.

"Six months ago, the state government provided land for the project. Now, with the cabinet's approval, the route is clear, " he said.

The institute will be similar to IARI-New Delhi and integrated multi-disciplinary research would be undertaken in Schools of Crop Sciences, Natural Resource Management and Animal Sciences and Fisheries.

Singh said IARI-Assam would work on the agrarian challenges and complexities of the region in tandem with all existing central and state government research and development institutions and private sector enterprises. "It would undertake research, education, extension programs in its mission towards developing quality human resource, generation of farmer-friendly technologies to enhance productivity, quality and profitability, promote agro-based industries and generate employment for holistic and sustainable development of the agriculture sector in the Northeast.

Sources said the institute was initially planned to be set up at Baihata Chariali in Kamrup district, but the present government decided on Gogamukh.

The budget outlay has been initially kept at Rs 150 crore for three years (2017-20).

This apart, the Northeast has an Indian Council for Agriculture Research Complex for North Eastern Hill Region, which was established in 1975 under the aegis of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). The headquarters of the institute is located in Meghalaya (Barapani), while its regional centres are located at Basar (Arunachal Pradesh), Imphal (Manipur), Kolasib (Mizoram), Jharnapani (Nagaland), Lembucherra (Tripura) and Gangtok (Sikkim).