

Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, December 15, 2015

Food perils

One rather curious and perhaps disquieting revelation which is incidental but nevertheless important to the reports of the ongoing Food Festival not conforming to the guidelines of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) as disclosed by one of the officials is that of the reports of various bakeries and food production units including hotels, restaurants etc. operating in filthy conditions without the fear or concern for authorities, with a large number of them being run by non-locals. Pictures of such unhygienic manufacturing conditions, as well as irrefutable evidences of these manufacturing units of deliberately fooling the customers by packing the products with post-dated labels is a serious issue which has been increasingly revealed through the efforts of proactive student groups in the state. There had also been previous instances of edible oils being dumped in dilapidated warehouses and repacked. What is baffling the general public is the role of Food Safety personnel employed by the state Government to put a check on these very practices. Although the efforts made by the civil society organizations and students bodies in revealing such harmful and potentially dangerous unhygienic practices is to be lauded, yet going ahead and destroying properties and dispensing street justice should be viewed as an extreme step, something that needs to be reined in. This is exactly where the state Government needs to step in and take hold of the situation, something we still have yet to witness. Timely and prompt action by the authorities authorized and expected to deal with the issue could have definitely prevented these social bodies and organizations from taking the matter into their own hands. The hesitation and indifferent stand apparently taken by the Government on the matter has only emboldened every Tom, Dick and Harry to carry out their own interpretation and system of punishment, turning a case of food safety issue into a vendetta tainted with shades of racism, something the society has abhorred and avoided for so long. It would not be much off the mark to state that the Food Safety Department has been one of the least known units of the Government, mainly because of the way it functions. So far, it's main, and perhaps, the only function has been more of damage control exercises where exposures by the media and other concerned organizations is taken over, not with the intention to prevent further aberrations, but to take the heat off the public glare. This very attitude needs to change to one which is proactive and alert to the dangers. The heads of the department as well as the heads of state need to instill a sense of pride and importance to the employees to encourage them to be proactive about their duties. Incentives and rewards are a very enticing way of bolstering their morale. Whatever the state Government does to smoothen its machinery, it should be result-oriented. The impatient public will not hesitate to take the law in its own hand if the Government fails to take the hint and spruce up its act. Damage control exercises should give way to damage prevention measures. The alternative can only create more chaos, mayhem and lawlessness.

13 militants killed in Pakistan

PTI Karachi, Dec. 15: At least 13 suspected militants have been killed during a raid by security forces in Pakistan's troubled southwestern Balochistan province. The incident occurred when security forces launched a search operation was launched in the Awaran district on Sunday night. "13 suspected militants were killed after exchange of fire with security forces, a huge cache of weapons was recovered from their custody. Their bodies have been moved to a local hospital," a local administration official said. The militants had opened fire on the security forces who retaliated and

several militants were also injured but escaped with the help of their fleeing accomplices, the official said. The search operation was carried out after militants attacked a convoy of security forces in the Tankour area of Awaran on Sunday night. The official said the battle with the militants had continued throughout the day on Monday. Balochistan has been hit by violence by ethnic Baloch seeking greater control over resources and al-Qaida linked militants. Under the National Action Plan, the groups are being targeted through a systematic action by the security forces.

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Job is one of the most important things in our life. If we think and act something differently we can create a lot of job from tourism like in Thailand. The mantra is simple-Serve tourists and make money! This is what Thais do, so why not possible in Manipur? Tourism creates lots of jobs and huge income in Thailand. Lately people seem a bit aware of it in Manipur too. Government started organizing Sangai tourism festival every year. Good idea, but it is not enough for prime time and income generation in the state. How many tourists are attracted by the festival? Truly speaking it is failed. Why?

There are many reasons of failure in tourism sector in Manipur. There is lack of long term policy. There is short vision planning regarding to any construction. The festival might spend lots of money for temporary set up, pavilions and it will be gone when the festival is over. Why don't we build those pavilions and constructions to stand permanently? And we can use them the following years as we wish if we construct them at suitable locations around the state. That will be our standing and long lasting property. We need to change our thinking and attitude so that we can create jobs and make money just like in Thailand. We (writers of this article) have been living in Thailand, Singapore, Cambodia, and Laos for the past 15 years and we see reasons why people are so much in love traveling in these countries. Thailand attracts lots of tourists every year -international

Tourism and Job Creation

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and local tourists. Travelers enjoy so much in Thailand regarding to foods, drinks, safety, easily accessible services, warm welcome, friendly people, nicely talk, free movement without any threat or fear from local people whoseover. In 2012, any tourist who came to Thailand contributed to Thai economy by spending roughly about Rs 10,000 per day per tourist. And their average length of stay in Thailand was around 10 days. So, by simple math calculation it shows that average expenditure for each tourist is roughly Rs100,000 (1lakh) per head. There are millions who contributed such big money in a short time. Local people are aware of it and they see tourists as their income, and they care outsiders. So local people as well as government authority come forward together, they take care tourists very well and they know tourists are their income provider. They do not intimidate outsiders. They speak softly and nicely. They know exactly what they are doing. Thais are very smart. Serve people, make money. That's it. Easy! We can achieve this to some extent if our government and local people come forward together. Today, there are more tourists than the year 2012 and more money is spent per head. They build resorts in cities, in towns, and in far villages. They convert rivers, ponds, and lakes as floating market which is famous and very typical Thai style. They make artificial water body, they manage it as floating market by setting up shops, food court, boating facility, selling local produce/products. It is recreational

centre. Cleanliness and hygiene is one of their keys to success. This is how they do business. Different jobs are created from tourism sector. We need lessons from them, we need to send planners, observation team to see how it works, how they manage it. Jobs created from tourism sectors are related to **hotel, restaurant, cook, street food vendor, transportation-taxi, bus service, tour guide, market/shopping, selling local products, money exchange service, courier service, museum, entertainment and cultural exhibition** etc. Exposure to outsiders is the beginning to open the door of business and demand for local produce and products will be increased. Here are some of the reasons we fall in our tourism sector.

1. Feeling of Safety. Safety is no.1 concerned for failing tourism in Manipur. There is bomb blast, shooting, killing almost as daily basis. Who will take risk for their lives in this situation as holiday maker? Without providing proper safety, no one will come. Tourists like to enjoy and have fun during their short stay. We need to stop act of violence in order to generate income. Are we freely driving from one place to another, day and night? No. We are too much fractional in structures in the society, and too much fractional in thinking. We are also too much communal. Crossing your village boundary, you cannot enjoy the

freedom without fear. This problem is zero in Thailand. Thai People mind their business, and they know their business well. We also need it.

2. Security. Police personnel, private security, and guides are doing their best to protect and to promote tourism in Thailand. We need this in Manipur too. There is less public confidence on this context in our Manipuri society. We need to change the behavior of security personnel. Even carrying some money in the pocket is life threatening in Manipur. We need friendly, approachable security personnel that people can contact them any time without fear. Authorities need more work to train their workforce, more work to convince people, give sense of safety to people to attract tourists.

3. Road and Transportation. We have really very poor infrastructure of roads and transportation. Our national highway cannot catch up the standard of Thailand's local road or farm road. Please put money on road construction, and we would like to request the contractors to take less in their pocket. It is open secret. It is time to stop game of percentage reservation for every construction. Tourists will not enjoy on our muddy and dirty roads. We need excellent road and transportation for happy tourism. (To be contd.....)

National & International News

Justice Narasimha Reddy to head committee on OROP

New Delhi, Dec 15: Sidestepping the demand by ex-servicemen for a five-member judicial commission with representatives from military fraternity, the government on Monday appointed Justice L. Narasimha Reddy, former Chief Justice of Patna High Court to head the one-man judicial committee, which will look into the implementation of One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme. The committee is as per the points of the notification issued by the government on November 7 for implementing OROP. A statement issued by the Defence Ministry states that the terms of reference for the committee shall be "to examine and make recommendations on references received from the government..." These include: measures for the removal of anomalies that may arise in the implementation of the OROP as notified by the government on

07 November 2015, measures for the removal of anomalies that may arise out of inter-services issues of the three forces due to its implementation, implications on service matters and any other matter referred by the Central Government on implementation of the OROP or related issues. The committee, based in Delhi, will submit its recommendations within six months of the date of its constitution, however, it can give interim reports to the government on matters related to its terms of reference. The committee was swiftly rejected by the veterans agitating over the issue. "We reject the notification as it is one of the seven anomalies pointed out by us to the government after issue of notification on OROP on November 7 and repeatedly thereafter," said Col. Anil Kaul (ret), media advisor to United Front of Ex-Servicemen Movement (UFESM).

Col. Kaul said that with this appointment the government has shut the door on their face for mediation in the form of Union Minister V.K. Singh. "The way forward is to approach the Supreme Court, which would be taken procedurally as per the advice of our counsel Ram Jethmalani very shortly. Notwithstanding the legal option the agitation will be intensified across the country," he added. "We wanted the commission

headed by a retired judge of the Supreme Court and have recommended the name of Justice Lodha but the government appointed a retired High Court Judge. It does not serve the purpose," said Grp. Capt. V.K. Gandhi (ret), General Secretary of UFESM. The statement also notes that in making its recommendations "the committee shall take into account the financial impact of its recommendations."

LS clears Atomic Energy (Amendment) Bill 2015

New Delhi, Dec. 15: The Lok Sabha on Monday passed by voice vote the Atomic Energy (Amendment) Bill 2015, which seeks to amend the existing legislation to overcome difficulties in setting up of new nuclear projects and enhancement of nuclear power generation. It allows the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) to have joint ventures with other Public Sector Undertakings for establishing nuclear power plants. The bill also intends to enable the Government to issue licence to such joint-venture companies to set up nuclear power plants, take measures for safe operation and safe disposal of fissile material. It

also provides for cancellation of licence in case the licensee ceases to be a government company. Replying to a debate, Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh said: "The country's nuclear programme is dedicated to peaceful purpose, and the government has set a target of generating thirteen thousand mega watts by 2020 through nuclear energy." Allaying apprehension about disposing of the fissile materials, the minister said the radioactive materials are disposed of in a scientific manner, adding that both units of the Kudankulam project will be functional by next year.

Five Indians nationals killed in Nepal brick kiln blast

PTI Kathmandu, Dec. 15: At least five Indians are among seven people killed when a 105-foot high chimney at a brick factory collapsed in eastern Nepal following an explosion. The incident took place Monday at New Jaya Nepal Brick Factory in Nepal's Itahari city, police said. Five Indian nationals killed in the incident were from West Bengal and Bihar. Of the 25 injured, condition of four is said to be critical. They are receiving treatment at BP Koirala Institute of Health Sciences in Dharan, Kathmandu Post reported. Around one million raw bricks were being baked when the explosion took place as smoke could not pass out of the 105-foot

chimney, resulting in its collapse. Tikaram Chaudhary, a local resident, said that the upper part of the chimney was destroyed by the April 25 earthquake and it was repaired recently. He said the incident could have occurred as wood and plastics kept in chimney holes during repair had remained there. The kiln owner had distributed sweets to celebrate the reopening of the kiln on Monday. "We heard a loud noise as we were having sweets. There was a stampede," said Jalil Hussain, adding: "The workers sustained injuries in the stampede." Over 850 brick kilns operate in Nepal, employing thousands of labourers from across the country as well as from neighbouring India.

Woman set ablaze for dowry

PTI Bagnhat (UP), Dec 15: A 28-year-old woman was allegedly set on fire by her in-laws over dowry demands in Baraut area in the district, police said today. Navi Jain (28) was set afire last night allegedly by her in-laws. She died on the spot, they said. An FIR has been registered based

on a complaint from victim's father Mukesh Jain, who alleged that his daughter was killed for dowry. Police have arrested victim's husband Piyush and her father-in-law in this connection. A search is on to nab victim's mother-in-law, who is absconding.