

Editorial

Imphal, Thursday, February 4, 2016

Incubating entrepreneurs or insurgents?

Governments across the country and indeed across the world have been facing increasing risks of dissensions and social unrest. The problem is more pronounced in places where there incidences of unemployment are high and the average financial distribution or earning capacity of the society is skewed. Such a social atmosphere also provides favorable conditions for a section of unscrupulous opportunists with connection and resources to bank in on the uncertainties and confusions to their personal benefits, thus giving rise to a vicious cycle of unemployment, poverty and opportunism further fuelled by nepotism and cronyism- the exact condition prevailing at present in our small state, much as most of those in power and authority would have us think otherwise. However bleak the future might look under the prevailing circumstances, the most obvious and pragmatic solution to this threat has to be one which takes away the conditions which gives rise to the undesirable situations. The increasing attention and emphasis being given to the development and support of entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship by the government is perhaps the most important and timely step towards this end. The inauguration of Livelihood Business Incubator (LBI) at Khadi and Village Industries Board campus at Lamphelpat during the recent state visit of Shri Giriraj Singh Minister of State, Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) is a positive development and one which has to be applauded notwithstanding the fact that such an initiative has been long overdue in the state. There is however many a slip between the cup and the lip and the act of inaugurating the incubation centre should be viewed as the most basic and initial step towards making a positive effort at developing various enterprises in Manipur and not an end in itself.

There are various factors which will determine the efficacy and relevancy of the incubation centre, and they need to be discussed and analysed in depth in light of the continuing challenges being faced by the entrepreneurs and dismally high rate of failure of new ventures, especially in the state. Incubation centres provide start-up businesses with a variety of services such as physical space, office equipment, business services, management guidance and an enabling environment to facilitate their development until they are capable of surviving on their own after exit from the incubator. At the macro level, they regenerate public confidence in entrepreneurship and help create an entrepreneurial environment. In short, incubations centres provide finance, synergy, economy and management to entrepreneurs, and the lack of any single factor would render the whole exercise a farce. The most pertinent question at this juncture is: how well equipped is the recently inaugurated Incubation Centre for providing these vital inputs to the entrepreneurs in the state? An answer which will determine the path Manipur will be taking in the immediate future- that of a state incubating entrepreneurs or one incubating insurgents and dissidents.

Drone strike kills 6 al-Qaida suspects in Yemen

AFP Aden, Feb. 4: An air strike believed to have been carried out by a US drone has killed six al-Qaida suspects in south Yemen, a security official said on Thursday. The unmanned warplane targeted an al-Qaida vehicle in Rodhoun area, in Shabwa province, late on Wednesday killing its six passengers, the official said. The United States is the only country known to operate armed drones over Yemen, home to what

it considers to be the jihadist group's most dangerous affiliate — al-Qaida in the Arabian Peninsula. It has kept up strikes on jihadists during months of fighting between pro-government forces and Iran-backed Huthi rebels who control the capital. Islamist militants, including AQAP and the Islamic State group, have gained ground in the south, with AQAP fighters seizing the town of Azzan in Shabwa, earlier this week.

Wanted Sub-Editor

Imphal Times is looking for an experience sub editor with excellent writing skill in English who can read Bengali written script. Working hour is 12 noon till 3 pm. Honorarium is Rs. 3000 p/m. Preference will be given to candidate who had already work in English daily as desk editor. Age no bar, and Imphal Times have no problem with those candidates working in other newspaper at night shift.

WHENEVER YOU SEE CONSTRUCTION AND MINING EQUIPMENTS, JUST THINK OF US

A SOLUTION FOR EVERY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT



Automobile Engineering Works-1
R K WORKSHOP
 New Checkon Road, Purana Rajbari
 Imphal East,
 Manipur - 795 001

ALL KINDS OF SPARE PARTS AVAILABLE
 AFTER SALES SERVICE TO YOUR SATISFACTION
 Authorised dealer **BEML Limited**
 (A Government of India Mini Ratna Company under Ministry of Defence)

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail: imphaltimes@gmail.com. For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O)

When just reporting is not enough

As an expat reporter in Bahrain, Anwar Moideen's stories uncover the lives of poor Indian workers and touch the conscience of local people.

I left Mallapuram in Kerala when I was fourteen and a half to find work in Bahrain. After working as a driver, a supermarket helper and then as a salesman for a few years, I stumbled into photo-journalism and began freelancing. My big break came when I was offered a job in 2008 at *Al Watan*, one of the leading newspapers of Bahrain. I am presently heading the reporting and photography department and am also a regular contributor to *DT News*, an English daily and *4PM News*, a Malayalam evening newspaper.

But in this article I want to explain how, in a place like Bahrain, it is not possible to report a story, take pictures, file the copy and then go home. I had plenty of work, endless human interest stories. Many of my reports were about expatriate Indians working in Bahrain, many from my home state of Kerala, and the immense problems they face, especially poor labourers. Where to begin? They are harassed by the authorities over their papers, paid badly, not paid at all, exploited mercilessly and suffer accidents and injuries (70 per cent of Indians work in the construction industry). The odds are stacked against them. In recent years, a large number have committed suicide.

If you are working as a reporter in your own country, you can walk away from such individual after you have heard their story. But when you are an expatriate yourself and you know that these fellow expatriates have no safety net, no friends, no money, no network of relatives, no contacts, no local NGO to help them — nothing, in short, to fall back on — it is impossible to walk away.

You feel compelled to take an extra step and give them a helping hand, either by pursuing their case with the relevant authorities, accompanying them to hospital or a government office, by forcing employers to treat them better, or by enlisting the support of the local community.

"The journalism I have been practising is one where I get totally involved, where I follow up to see what has happened to somebody and where I have to arouse the concern of the wider community so that help comes in." In this situation, with Indians numbering about 400,000 out of a total population of 1.3 million (the largest expatriate group in Bahrain), the journalism I have been practising for the past 15 years has willfully become a different animal. It is one where I get totally involved, where I follow up to see what has happened to somebody and where I have to arouse the concern of the wider community so that help comes in.

Here are the stories of some of the people who were helped by my photo-journalism. Read them to see the infinite variety of difficulties that can afflict expat Indian workers:

- After a story in *Al Watan*, numerous expat workers were moved from a dilapidated building to a decent one. The greedy owner was warned and fined by the authorities.
- The Ministry of Labour intervened in the case of 500 labourers employed by Asker Chapo Company after they were forced to work on lower wages. The company officials were brought to book.
- A labourer, Mr. Ramulu from Andhra Pradesh, lost his passport when a fire gutted his room. I helped him sort out the issue with local immigration officials and he was able to return home.
- An Indian homemaker, Shabeera, was abandoned by her husband after trapping her in debt. Following my story on her, a few businessmen came forward and extended help to settle her debts.
- An Indian housemaid, Tracyamma,

who was subjected to frequent abuse by her sponsor was rescued and helped to go home.

- Adorced Bahraini mother of four children who was homeless was granted a roof over her head by the authorities following my story.
- Bangladeshi Arif Hossain was hospitalised after being involved in a road mishap and later arrested because he was in violation of the Kingdom's residency laws. Because of his weak physical and emotional condition, I accompanied him on the trip to Bangladesh.
- A sex racket was bringing Asian girls to Bahrain in the guise of domestic workers before forcing them to engage in prostitution. Subsequently, 18 women were rescued by the police.
- Mr Mani faced cruel harassment at his workplace. I was able to solve the issues and contribute to sending him back to Kerala safe and sound.
- An employee at a local store, Mr. Abdullah, was seeking financial help to pay the medical expenses for his nephew, Mr. Cheelil Ishaq who had been diagnosed with a brain tumour and needed urgent surgery.
- Govind Kumar suffered a worksite injury when a five-tonne mechanical engine pressed down on his body

for more than an hour. His sponsor had, in any case, been subjecting him to inhuman treatment. He did not help Kumar with medical treatment for his injuries. Media coverage forced the sponsor to release his papers and arrange a flight for him to India.

- Labourer Tari Ram was badly burnt while cooking a meal for himself. *Al Watan* highlighted his case and many people came forward to help him, including the General Secretary of the Bahrain Federation of Expatriates Association.
- Mallya, an illegal resident, woke up one day unable to move. He had become paralysed as he slept. He was taken to the main official hospital, the Salmaniya Medical Complex, where he stayed for a few months. When doctors saw no improvement in his case, he was left on the streets. Eventually, with the help of generous residents, we were able to give a ticket to Mallya to go home to seek treatment.
- Last year I helped more than 200 illegal workers from India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Kenya, Sudan, Nepal, Philippines, and Indonesia go back home by helping them with tickets and emigration formalities. If I was able to help these individuals, it was thanks to my readers, social workers and

compassionate officials. The stereotype of Gulf employers and residents as being indifferent to Indian expatriates has some basis but my experience has shown me that, when they read these heart-breaking stories, they often respond with compassion, money and practical help. The very fact that they read my stories shows that they are interested in the human side of expatriate life. Moreover, the fact that I have received numerous awards and appreciation certificates for my work also indicates that Bahraini society is alive to the sufferings of Indian labourers. In 2009 alone, I was recognized seven times through awards and certificates. In 2012 I received an Appreciation Certificate from the Bahrain Parliament for my media coverage, the Best Photojournalist award from the Muharrag Hala area for my media support for Bahrain (2011) and I was the first Indian to win the 2010 Photographer Media Person award from the Al Hiddi Council for my media coverage. It is very difficult to evaluate the impact of journalism. There are too many imponderables. In my work, though, I have seen the end result, and it makes me happy. (Courtesy *The Hoot*)

National & International News

JD(U) leader questions PM's assurance on quota

PTI Patna, Feb 3: Senior JD(U) leader Shyam Rajak today questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance that reservations would not be scrapped, saying it reflected "double standards" as RSS was opposed to it. "On one hand RSS is laying stress on review of reservation. On the other hand, you (Modi) are saying that reservation would not be scrapped. Its a double standard," Rajak, a close associate of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, said in a letter to the PM. While RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had pitched for review of the reservation system last year, Modi ruled out scrapping of reservation at a public meeting in Coimbatore yesterday. "You are giving such statements in furtherance of Dalit vote bank politics knowing very well that your government does not have majority in the Rajya Sabha. Hence, you are not in a position to do anything significant on this count," Rajak, a Dalit leader, said in the letter. "You prolonged silence on the statement of RSS chief Mohan

Bhagwat stressing on the need for review of reservation policy for Dalits reflects that your current statement is not from the heart, but merely from the mouth," he said. Rajak said he was not questioning the tears shed by the PM over death of Dalit student Rohith Vemula. He said if the PM is sensitive, he would probe Vemula's death by

someone who is kind towards downtrodden and remove HRD minister Smriti Irani and Labour minister Bandaru Dattatreya. To prove his credential to Dalits, the PM should provide reservation to the community in private sector and implement reservation for SC and ST in promotion immediately, Rajak said.

Naxal killed in encounter with police

PTI Raipur, Feb 4: A Naxal was gunned down today in a fierce encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district, police said. With this, 25 ultras have so far been killed in separate gun-battles in Bastar region this year, they said. The encounter took place between the District Reserve Group (DRG) and ultras in a forested hill of Korli under Mardum police station limits this morning. Inspector General of Police, Bastar Range, SRP Kalluri said. Acting on a tip-off about the movement of rebels, a team of DRG led by sub-inspector P K Shukla had launched an anti-Naxal operation in the interiors of Mardum, around 400 kms

from the state capital Raipur, he said. When they were cordoning-off the forested hill in Korli area, a group of armed cadres opened indiscriminate fire on them following which a gun-battle broke out between the two sides, the IG said. However, after a brief exchange of fire, the Naxals fled into the dense forests, he said. During search, the body of a Maoist, a muzzle loading gun rifle and other items of daily use were recovered from the spot, he said. The identity of the killed Maoist will be ascertained once the security personnel return to their camp as the operation was underway in the region, he added.

GOVERNMENT OF MANIPUR DIRECTORATE OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRIES

NOTICE FOR GI REGISTRATION Imphal, the 29th January, 2016

No. HL-134/C&I(2006)(I): Application in the following format is invited from interested person, agency, organization and society for registration of handloom fabrics under Geographical Indication of Goods (R&P) Act, 1999 (GI Act) as authorized producer(s). The Object of the GI Act is three fold, namely (i) to protect the interest of producers, (ii) to exclude unauthorized persons from misusing geographical indications and to protect consumers from deception and (iii) to promote goods bearing Indian GI in the export market.

1. Name of applicant with full address and contact details.
2. Specification describing the characteristics & quality parameters of the GI (100 words)
3. Description of goods giving its uniqueness and geographical linkage including environmental factors.
4. Method of Production including the process involved, raw materials and tools
5. Uniqueness of the product comparison with other similar products (in 100 words).
6. Proof of Origin, i.e. historical proof in the form of documentary evidence to prove the existence of the GI (gazetteers, published documents, new article advertisement materials to clearly bringing out the historic development).
7. Present scenario of the GI product, i.e. details of marketing and exports, total turnover of the product, and the activities undertaken by the applicant.

Last date for submission of application is 29-02-2016(Monday). Details information and procedure for registration may be had from the District Handlooms & Textiles Offices and Directorate HQ at Lamphelpat and www.dcinmanipur.gov.in.

(B. John Tlanginkhuma)
 Director of Commerce & Industries,
 Manipur