

Editorial

Imphal Thursday, October 13, 2016

Terror foresees even before commencement of election; Beware

'Congress' or 'BJP' now is the choice of those aspiring candidates of the upcoming 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly election which is expected to hold in the beginning of 2017.

Not less than three or more aspiring candidates have joined the BJP which had gain massive popularity across the Nation since the party showed a massive victory. The right wing political party is on the rise and in the state of Manipur many self proclaimed social workers with sufficient bank balance had already enrolled themselves to the party hopping to get a party ticket in the upcoming assembly poll.

On the other hand, in its strategy to get more seats in the 11th Assembly session, sitting MLAs were even assured party tickets as it is also a courtesy for any political party to provide party ticket to sitting MLA whether he is a new comer or not.

Leaving aside the new comers MLAs, many hard core workers of the BJP will be frustrated the day when party ticket for election is announced. This is natural, because political parties are only entitled to field only one candidate at one Assembly constituency. The issued is with the congress party too. The four setting MLAs of the Trinamool congress who had recently joined the party cannot be simply left as scapegoat. But some of the hard core congress leaders are surely going to rebel against any decision to provide party ticket by leaving aside the old timer congress candidates.

Well with the days of election approaching, name of the candidates has to be announced. Many a times newspaper reports about agreement within aspirant candidates to support to any candidate whom the BJP offer ticket. But will it be possible? There is a saying that politics is the last resort of scoundrels. And we have already seen that in politics everything is possible. Or who could have ever imagined that a leader of left wing political party will join the extreme right wing party just because he does not light ahead in the upcoming assembly election.

Last election i.e during the 10th Manipur Legislative Assembly election, there was uproar at congress bhavan after a congress man was denied ticket.

This is being recalled because all candidate aspirants chose BJP as their platform in view of its rising popularity. Except for one or two they will use whatever power they have to snatch the party ticket or else they will chose for another option. Some of them will even succeed in drawing the sympathy of his or her supporters even after he contested election leaving the BJP. Manipur is a land where politician or say scoundrel easily gets support for the public. The attitude of voters is different; it is money and muscle power that the Manipuri voters care and not the sincerity and qualification of the candidate.

To prove their strength anything can happen. And we in the Imphal Times is cautioning the BJP leadership to deploy as many security personnel in and around the office premises of BJP Manipur Pradesh as well as the congress Bhavan. Both the political party's authority should also prohibited carrying of weapon either by workers or intending candidates including licence weapons inside the offices of both the political parties.

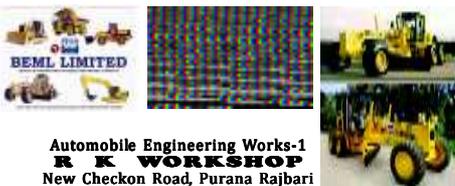
Election there days is not about serving the people, but it is about power and money. And for sure those who comes out for power and money can do anything to prove themselves as worthy politician.

Let's hope leaders of BJP as well as Congress understand the possible outcome after the announcement of these respective candidates.

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Food and Nutrition Security in the light of Climate Change

There is a need to increase food productivity across the world in the face of burgeoning world population and Climate Change

By : Santosh Jain Passi, Akanksha Jain

By 2050, the world population will reach nearly 9.5 billion, which effectively means that we will have to produce 70% more food for over two billion additional mouths. Hence, the food and agriculture systems need to adapt fast to the changing climate and become more resilient, productive and sustainable. This would require judicious use of natural resources and minimised post-harvest losses coupled with improved harvesting, storage, packaging, transportation and marketing practices as well as appropriate infrastructural facilities.

Aptly, theme for this year's World Food Day is "Climate is changing. Food and agriculture must too". Ever since 1979, it is being celebrated on October 16 with the aim to raise public awareness regarding hunger challenges and encourage them for necessary actions to fight hunger. The global goal for achieving 'Zero Hunger' is 2030 which cannot be reached without addressing climate change – food security being highly vulnerable to changing climatic patterns.

Food security refers to an ability to access/utilize sufficient quantities of safe and nutritious food; however, the related challenges are afflicting the urban/rural populations in wealthy/poor nations alike. FAO estimates nearly 194.6 million Indians (15.2%) were undernourished during 2014-16. **Climate change – a catalyst of crisis and food/nutrition insecurity**

By the end of 21st century, global temperature is predicted to rise by nearly 1.4-5.8^oC leading to a substantial reduction in food production. As per ISRO, the Himalayan glaciers already on retreat (shrinkage during the last 15 years: 3.75 km) may disappear by 2035. Ill effects of climate change include growing deserts and escalation in extreme weather events like droughts, cyclones, floods and droughts. Such situations often pose worst effects on the poorest of the poor (many being farmers) and are, thus, a serious threat to our goal – ending hunger by 2030! Hence, concerted action on climate change is crucial for sustainable development. Ironically, agriculture is also considered

amongst the big contributors to climate change. On 2 October 2016, India has ratified the Paris Agreement which aims to combat climate change and limit global temperature rise to well below 2^oC.

To quote, our Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi Ji "The world is today worried about climate change, global warming, natural disasters. Pandit Deen Dayal P a d h a y a y a had understood the need for striking the fine balance between human development and the need to preserve natural resources...to be vigilant about the exploitation of natural resources. Human race has only now realised the disastrous impact of our material development on the nature".

Since a consistent increase in greenhouse gases is the major cause for climate change, it is imperative to ensure the wellbeing of ecosystems by reducing their emissions. In the context of Indian agriculture, key issues of climate change include – vastness of the nation with diverse climatic conditions; varied cropping/farming systems; excessive monsoon dependency; climate-change hampering water availability; small land holdings; lack of coping mechanisms; poor penetration of risk management strategies; extreme rainfall events (droughts/floods – esp. in coastal regions); high incidence of pests/diseases; speedy oxidation of carbon-print affecting soil fertility and extinction of biodiversity. Though, India has been successful in achieving self-sufficiency in grain production, it has not been able to address chronic household food insecurity. It is likely that climate change will exacerbate food insecurity, particularly in areas vulnerable to hunger/under-nutrition.

For our country, where a large chunk of our population is poor and nearly half the children are malnourished, ensuring food security is of utmost importance. While access to food is directly/indirectly affected via collateral effects on household/individual incomes, food utilization gets impaired due to poor access to drinking water and its adverse health effects. India is likely to be

hit harder by global warming – affecting more than 1.2 billion, particularly those residing in flood/cyclone/drought prone areas. Climate change is a significant 'hunger-risk multiplier' which can affect all the dimensions of food/nutrition security – Food availability, accessibility, utilization and stability.

Attaining and sustaining food security is one of the biggest challenges worldwide. Food security plans must emphasise on effective handling of threats, efficient storage/distribution of food along with suitable monitoring/surveillance auditing priority to corrective actions. Adaptive measures such as modified cropping patterns, innovative technologies and water conservation become rather important, particularly in arid/semi-arid areas. Therefore, necessary efforts should be directed towards carbon sequestration and mitigation of green-house gases. In this regard, there is a dire need for awareness generation and efficient involvement of the public at every step.

Some of the governmental initiatives for ensuring food/nutrition security in India include –Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, Soil Health Card/Soil Health Management Schemes,Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Annapurna Scheme, MGNREGA, National Food Security Act, ICDS and MDMS etc. However, all these programmes need effective implementation, and monitoring to bridge the gaps, particularly for the vulnerable groups. It is rather important to protect and judiciously use our precious natural resources, prevent environmental pollution by adopting eco-friendly approaches, safeguard our forests and avoid food wastage at all levels – from farm-to-plate. Apart from laying more stress on plant foods vs. animal foods, wastages can be avoided by purchasing/cooking only the needed amounts coupled with appropriate storage and judicious use of leftover foods.

At the United Nations Sustainable Development Summit-2015, world leaders were served dishes reformulated from 'trash' (vegetable scraps, rejected apples/

pears and off-grade vegetables). This is an exemplary utilization of unwanted/would-be-wasted food – highlighting the crucial issue of global food wastage and its harmful effects; otherwise this food would have ended up in landfills, got rotten and emitted methane – a potent greenhouse gas.

There is an urgent need for investing in "climate smart food system" that is more resilient to the impact of climate change on food security. Millets – the drought resistant crops, require fewer external inputs, can grow under harsh circumstances and are, therefore, called 'crops of the future'. These nutri-cereals have a rather short sowing-to-harvest period (~65 days) and if stored properly, can be kept for two years and beyond. Unlike paddy (contributing immensely to green-house gases from water-drenched rice fields), millets help in mitigating the climate change by reducing atmospheric CO₂, while wheat production (a heat-sensitive crop) is liable to adverse effects. Owing to wide capacity of adaptation, millets can withstand variations in moisture, temperature and soil type including infertile lands. Further, millets contribute to the economic efficiency of farming by providing food and livelihood security to the millions, particularly small/marginal farmers and people in rain fed/remote tribal regions.

Recommendation National Framework of Action (Nov, 2014) recognized the need to address the impact of climate change on food/nutrition security – particularly the quantity, quality and diversity in food production; and recommended policies/programmes to establish and strengthen the food supply institutions for enhancing resilience in crisis-prone areas.

Thus, mitigating climate change is a global issue; appropriate adaptation strategies being the immediate solution to ensure livelihood/food security. India needs to sustain its ecosystem for meeting the food/non-food needs of its ever-growing population. Major thrust of the concerned programmes should be on soil conservation, appropriate/ judicious use of the natural resources including rainwater harvesting. Raising population awareness regarding adversaries of climate change on crop production is one of the prime-most solution for attaining food/nutrition security.

42nd Edition of IHGF-Delhi Fair to open on October 14, 2016

The IHGF-DELHI FAIR AUTUMN 2016 is being held at India Expo Centre & Mart, Greater Noida, Expressway in NCR Delhi, from 14 – 18 October, 2016. Executive Director – EPCH, Mr. Rakesh Kumar has informed that the 42nd edition of India Handicrafts and Gifts Fair will have more than 2,950 exhibitors from all over the Country, exhibiting around 2000 product lines, styles and designs of Home, Lifestyles, Fashion & Textiles products, spread over an area of 1,90,000 sq. metres. He has said that more than 5000 buyers from more than 110 countries, and more than 450 buying agents are participating in the fair, that is being organized by Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH). The fair is unique as the exhibitors constitute Indian participants only and buyers come from all over the globe to source a wide and varied range of products from India to cater to all segment of consumers in their home countries.

Mr. Kumar added that the speciality of this fair is that the products on display are all of good quality and high variety. Buyers can select products for meeting the requirement of high-end, middle-end as well as mass and low-end consumers. Another unique feature of Indian product range is that they are hand-crafted; machines are used only for finishing purposes. India continues to enjoy the distinction of exclusivity in terms of product, design, colours and raw material base. Indian products are eco-friendly as most of the raw material used is natural and not chemically made; moreover, the dyes and colours used are also natural vegetable dyes rather than chemical dyes.

Products on display will include gifts and decoratives, furniture, home furnishing, houseware, fashion jewellery & accessories, lamps and lighting, Christmas and festive décor, carpets and rugs, bathroom accessories, garden decoratives, educational toys and games, handmade paper products, leather bags and cases, candles, incense & potpourri. The products are made from a varied raw material base consisting of wood, metal, cane & bamboo, textiles, natural fibers, wool, silk, jute, coir, stones, bone and horn, terracotta and lacquer, etc.

Editors of international publications pertaining to gifts, houseware and decoratives from Australia and UK will also visit the show to see the range and quality of products on display and carry back stories to be published in subsequent issues.

Apart from overseas buyers, domestic volume retail buyers from many leading retail chains and e-commerce firms have confirmed their participation in IHGF-Delhi Fair Autumn 2016. Representatives of buying houses, buying agents, importers and wholesalers from America and Europe will also be visiting the fair.

One of the highlights of the fair will be setting up of thematic pavilion of products from North Eastern Region. North Eastern Region is one of the richest regions of the country in terms of eco-friendly crafts. Products like bags made out of natural fiber, cane and bamboo, furniture, decoratives, gifts, dry flowers, shawls and hand woven textiles and made-ups are expected to be the attraction to the visitors and the entrepreneurs from this region will be able to secure good business orders. Further, handicrafts of Mega clusters like lace and lace crafts from Narsapur (Andhra Pradesh) and wooden handicrafts from Jodhpur would also be on display at the show.

To upgrade the knowledge of the participating companies, informative seminars at the venue, covering topics such as enhancing exports to US market, cybersecurity, internet as a growth driver. A Round Table

Conference of eminent speakers from retail and e-commerce on 360^o marketing – home and beyond will also be held during the show. IHGF-DELHI FAIR has already acquired the reputation of being a one-stop sourcing platform amongst the overseas buying community and a very effective marketing medium amongst the Indian exporting community. Over a period of 22 years, since its inception in 1994, the fair has made significant contribution to the Handicrafts exports from India. It has not only enabled Indian exporters in large numbers to participate in the show and secure orders but has also enabled more and more foreign buyers to source their requirement from India at one place, at one time and under one roof. The most important role played by the IHGF has been the increase in the foreign exchange earnings, according to Shri Rakesh Kumar, ED – EPCH.

The Handicrafts exports during the year 2015-16 was Rs. 21457.91 crores with an overall increase of 6.85% over the previous year. During the first six months of current financial year i.e. 2016-17, exports to the tune of Rs. 13005.35 crore has been achieved, and it is hoped that target fixed for the year 2016-17 will be surpassed.