

Editorial

Imphal, Friday, September 2, 2016

Resisting Partisanship

In these present times when the increasing reach and dependence on information technology for even the most mundane task is gradually effecting a radical change in the outlook and thinking of the progressive societies the world over, with information and knowledge on any subject matter can be had at the touch of a button, a contrasting and rather unfortunate scenario is unfolding in our corner of the world. Even while the virtual world has shrunk to such an extent that anyone can receive and relay information on someone or something as it happens, anywhere in the world, leading to an unexpected broadening of one's views and opinions of other people, places, religions, beliefs and customs, a potent partisan force is sweeping across the region, threatening to implode and undone any and every development and progress grudgingly achieved so far. The world as we know it is ever evolving and changing, and it is upto us to adapt and make the best of it. But just as everything that is continually changing, there emerges a breed of hardliners who are insisting on carrying on with the traditional way of life, and even thinking. While the concept of preservation of culture and tradition for posterity, and more importantly, for the preservation of one's own identity and those of the community is without doubt, a vital part of our responsibilities to the future generation, yet the insistence on keeping up and following the traditional way of thinking, to restraint ourselves to the set dogmas and beliefs of a bygone era is nothing short of denying ourselves the freedom to grow spiritually and intellectually, to think and use our rationality and to pursue our dreams. It is basically denying ourselves the freedom to life as we see fit, so long as our beliefs and practices does not infringe on that of others. Change is inevitable, and the sooner we accept and embrace it, the better will we be prepared to face the future, uncertain and unpredictable as it will be. Resisting change and attempting to cling on to the old ways of thinking would prove futile and even regressive. Our way of life changes with the changing times. What was once a necessity, like the caste system which was vital for preservation of communities and races, becoming more rigid to keep the increasing intruders and invaders from mingling and diluting a particular race, has now become a major roadblock in the effort to integrate the nation, which is intrinsic to its progress. The time to walk the line without questioning the rationale behind the diktat is well and truly past. It is time to develop and encourage a scientific temperament which questions and provides a reason for the things we do. Tolerance and understanding other's point of view, while, at the same time, retaining the liberty to follow and practice one's beliefs and principles will pave the way for a more inclusive society bounded by trust and understanding. How one lead one's life should not be a subject of discussion, it should rather be an accepted personal judgement that needs to be respected. There are more important and pertinent things to occupy our minds and collective concerns in these volatile times. Progress is not made by adjusting the changes to suit our needs and beliefs but through accepting facts and adjusting ourselves to the best we possibly can to these changes.

NAME CHANGE

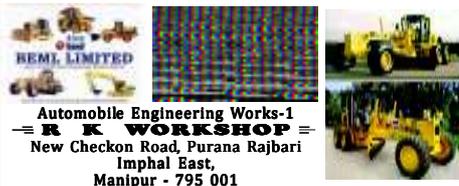
I, on behalf of my minor daughter LAXMI DEVI (old name) and new name is WANGKHEIMAYUM LAXMI DEVI as per Court Affidavit of Oath Commissioner dated 30th/August/2016 at Imphal West, Manipur for today my daughter would be known as WANGKHEIMAYUM LAXMI DEVI.

Sd/-

Wangkheimayum Amarjit Singh
on behalf of minor daughter Whangkheimayum
Laxmi Devi
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Conserving the Medicinal plants

By : Ratnadeep Banerji

One-sixth of Indian plants have medicinal attributes but the threat of extinction looms large. The anti-fatigue property of *Trichopus zeylanicus* traditionally used by Kani tribes of Western Ghats in Kerala is an accepted fact discovered per chance by Council of Scientific and Industrial Research team during a forest expedition. Plant-derived compounds hold source of several clinically useful anti-cancer agents like vinblastine, vincristine and the chemical paclitaxel. Taking cognizance of healing properties of plants, this year AYUSH Ministry of the Government of India and the Department of Health & Human Services of the Government of USA along with National Institute of Health (US) and National Cancer Institute (US) conducted a workshop on fighting cancer with traditional medicine. India has over 50,000 herbal formulations attributed under traditional knowledge falling under the ambit of Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Tibetan medicine and folk tradition. 960 medicinal aromatic plants are used by the contemporary trade and Ayurvedic industry and 178 species of them are consumed in volumes exceeding 100 metric tonnes per year and these constitute about 80% of the total industrial demand of all botanicals in the country. This dire need for medicines leads to rampant and over cultivation of plant parts leading to rare, endangered, critical and extinct state. It has been estimated by World Health Organization, WHO that 70 to 80 percent people worldwide resort to traditional, largely herbal medicine to meet their primary health-care

needs. The global market potential is pegged at US\$ 62 billion but sadly India has less than 0.5% share. However, after China, India is the largest exporter of medicinal plants and herbal products. This is a result of export without proper certification that fetches low returns. The Indian chapter of World Wildlife Fund TRAFFIC has deliberated over standards and certification schemes in medicinal and aromatic plants in India. India has about 45,000 plant species and over a sixth of them standing at 7,333 are medicinal aromatic plants. But only 15% of medicinal plants are cultivated while the remaining 85% are collected by the industry from forest ecosystems and other natural habitats. Dr S K Niraj, spearheading TRAFFIC is apprehensive of the glaring threat of mass extinction of 3000 medicinal plants in India in the face of escalating commercial demand. Dr M K Sarkar, former Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Tamil Nadu Forest Department has been working on bio-governance for endemic and threatened plants in India. According to Dr Sarkar 'In the last 10 years, several Indian plants have gone extinct. It is estimated that more than 1200 plants that are exclusively found in India suffer from various degrees of threats. Again, 3471 species found in the Himalayas, 2015 species found in Peninsular India and 239 species in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are under serious threats of extinction.' The Biological Diversity Act, 2002 states that the Central Government is empowered to notify any species as threatened and make regulation on it. Forests being in the concurrent list, the

central government can only give guidelines to the state. The state government has to make the implementation of their policies. Dr Sarkar corroborates, 'Only 6 medicinal plants are covered under Indian Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and remains so even after 44 years, till date. Wildlife Protection Act is stringent enough to protect animal species but covers only 6 plants. Forest Conservation Act of 1980 and 1988 harps only on habitat protection. Instead of negative listing and putting a ban on the use of these medicinal plants, they should be grown more and more. Banning leads to discouragement in the industry and less production and it gets more endangered owing to more illegal trade that can't be stopped.' '70% of the medicinal plants are harvested in destructive way,' asserts M.K.Ranjeet Singh, former forest secretary with Madhya Pradesh and also instrumental in framing of the India Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. Good Agricultural and Collection Practices for Medicinal Plants (GACP) are a set of guidelines developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) aimed at improving the quality of medicinal plant material being used in the herbal medicines in the market. Dr S K Niraj, cautions, 'If medicinal plants are not cultivated in a suitable environment, if they are harvested at the wrong time of the year or if they are processed incorrectly, the potency of the medicinal properties may be reduced, leading to the manufacture of ineffective herbal medicines'. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and Good Field Collection Practices (GFCP) lay down the main principles that should be followed

by farmers and collectors to ensure they are producing medicinal plant materials with maximum levels of active ingredients. Tribal population can derive thriving income from the cultivation of medicinal plants done on scientific lines to enable storage. The government has been offering them minimum support price to ensure tribal population to feel safe. S.S. Maity, deputy general manager with Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd, under Ministry of Tribal Affairs says, 'Around 35% of the income of tribal comes from medicinal plants. We have been teaching them ways of storage and processing into various items on scientific lines. TRIFED have been offering them minimum support price for 12 products.' Ravi Singh, Secretary General and CEO with World Wildlife Federation, India points out, 'India has just 22 certified medicinal plants whereas China has 200. I've spoken to people in Panna and Bundelkhand. They are unable to export medicinal plants owing to absence of certification.' All medicinal plants exclusively found in India are teetering on extinction in the coming years if stringent contingency plan doesn't get implemented. The National Medicinal Plants Board (NMPB) under Ministry of AYUSH is implementing Central Sector Scheme, conservation of medicinal plants carried out mainly through in-situ conservation by way of plantation augmentation of species in their natural habitat and establishing Medicinal Plants Conservation and Development Areas (MPCDAs) through ex-situ conservation by developing herbal gardens. (Courtesy PIB Feature)

National & International News

Curfew reimposed in many parts of Kashmir

PTI Srinagar, Sep 2: Curfew was today reimposed in many parts of Kashmir including Srinagar as a precautionary measure ahead of Friday prayer congregations even as normal life remained paralysed in the Valley for the 56th day. "Curfew has been imposed in entire Srinagar district and some other towns of the Valley as a precautionary measure," a police

official said. He said other towns where curfew was imposed included Anantnag, Pulwama, Kulgam, Shopian, Baramulla and Pattan. "Restrictions on assembly of people have been imposed in rest of the Valley due to apprehensions of violence after Friday prayers," the official said. Curfew was lifted in most parts of Kashmir from Monday and it was completely withdrawn two

days ago. The Valley has been hit by violent protests following the killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani on July 8. Normal life remained affected due to the separatist sponsored strike as educational institutions and private offices were closed while public transport continued to be off the roads. The separatists have extended the shutdown programme till

September 8 and have asked people to occupy the Srinagar Airport road on September 3 and 4, when Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to lead an all-party delegation to the Valley. As many as 69 persons including two police personnel, have been killed and several thousand others injured in the clashes between protesters and security forces in the Valley since July 8.

4 terrorists, 1 civilian killed in attack on Christian colony in Pak's Peshawar

Peshawar, Sept. 2: A group of militants attacked a Christian colony near Pakistan's northwestern city of Peshawar early Friday, triggering a shootout in which four attackers were killed and one Christian died, police and the military said. Three security officials and two civilian guards were wounded in the attack. Army spokesman Lt. Gen. Asim Saleem Bajwa said in a statement that the attack was quickly repulsed and that security forces were

searching for any accomplices of the attackers. The security forces have gunned down all the four attackers. General Director of the Inter-Services Public Relations Bajwa said in a tweet. According to a report in Dawn, the gunmen, wearing suicide jackets, attacked the colony around 6 am and eyewitnesses claimed to have heard sounds of explosions in the area, which has been cordoned off. Local police official Shaukat Khan

said four suicide bombers entered the Christian colony and one of them went into a church but no one was there at the time. He said they killed one Christian in the colony, adding that a quick response from the local civilian guards and security forces prevented more deaths. No one claimed responsibility but the attack came a day after the military said it foiled a bid by the Islamic State group to expand its network into this predominantly

Muslim country, with the military arresting 309 suspects, including IS members from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan.

First BRICS film festival to begin in Delhi

New Delhi, Sept. 2: The first BRICS film festival will begin in New Delhi from today. Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting Rajyavardhan Rathore and Minister of State for External Affairs V.K. Singh will inaugurate the festival. The film festival is the run up to the BRICS summit which is to be held in Goa next month.

The five day festival will act as a platform for people of the film industry of member countries to explore areas of cooperation in the domain of cinema, culture and cuisine. The I & B Ministry said Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed a BRICS film festival and film awards at the last BRICS Summit. The Ministry said, it is a step taken to build bridges and bring harmony amongst the BRICS countries Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. The festival will ensure more people to people contact, especially youth among member countries.

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