

Editorial

Wednesday, November 29, 2017

Free media is the only hope for success of democracy

Media plays vital roles in the running of proper effective governance. Be it in the dictatorial form of government or democracy, media has been always considered as a tool to run their respective government. The only differences of treating media in the above two case is that - in dictatorial form of government media is put under full control of the regime while in democracy media is free to criticize the government or is left to the wisdom of those running the media houses. Saying so, those in the media never left aside on what has been going on in the country where media is kept under their full control. When military junta ruled Burma now Myanmar, there was no free media in the country. Those existed are government controlled and had been published/broadcast for strengthening the military regime. But then, people working in the field of media business penetrated the country and let the people across the country aware of what actually has been happening in the country. The restoration of democracy in neighbouring Myanmar is perhaps because of the journalists across the globe who had been highlighting the issue of the country through various channels of Mass Media.

In a two days interaction programme with the journalists from Myanmar who had visited this region of India, on the invitation of the government of India, with journalist from the state as well as some few from the Capital city of India, it is learnt that, the change of regime in the Myanmar country from dictatorship to democracy, has also brought tremendous changes in the field of journalism and mass media. Now the media are let free to make their own decision of what to write and what not. As per what the delegates from the neighbouring Myanmar said, it was only in the year 2011 that the concept of free media has been understood and the government of Myanmar has let free the scribe work without the control of the authority. Yet the country is yet to go more journeys to make sure that the journalists of the country are protected at any cost.

Now coming to India, those in the field of media and mass communication are somewhat lucky comparing to the neighbouring counterpart. Before Independent, there were writers who highlighted the conditions of the Indians during British rule. The mass mobilization for struggling against the British colonial regime was done through various mode of media channels - print, public meeting and others etc. Had there been an internet, British would not have been able to ruled the country for over 200 years.

In Manipur the concept of print medium mass communication came late. It was only after Hijam Irabot started circulating a newspaper written by hand to spread his struggled, the importance of media was slowly understood. Since the launching of 'Meitei Chanu' the hand written newspapers by Hijam Irabot, the happening in the society of that time have been spread among the people of the state.

It cannot be denied that Mass media and other forms of communication technology have an enormous influence in helping to shape public opinion and underlying sentiment. But then the irony is that in India particularly in Manipur, those running the government are trying everything to keep the media houses under their control.

But it should be remembered that keeping the media under control in a democratic form of government will never do any good. Its better to let this fourth estate to perform their duty under their own wisdom. Democracy can only be successful when media is let free and guarantee full freedom of speech.

National and International News

Arunachal river turns black, officials blame China

TNN Guwahati, Nov. 29: The crystal clear waters of the Siang river, considered the lifeline of northern Arunachal Pradesh for centuries, has suddenly turned dark black triggering panic in the frontier state. The East Siang district authorities have pressed the alarm bell as the water of the river, containing large volumes of heavy slag, is no longer fit for consumption. "The water can't be used for any purpose because it contains a cement-like thick material. A lot of

fish died one-and-half months ago," said East Siang district deputy commissioner Tamyo Tatak. He added, "In the last monsoon season, the river turned dark and we thought that it was because of mud being carried by the river. The rainy season is long over but the river water is still black. From November to February, the water is crystal clear and pure. Even my grandfather has never seen or heard of such a thing happening to the waters of the Siang." Tatak said water samples have been collected by the central water

commission and China is the primary suspect. "It seems that some major cement work is on in the upper reaches of the river in China... may be China is carrying out some deep water boring work. What else could be the reason for such a big river, which becomes the Brahmaputra, remaining black in colour for nearly two months," Tatak said. The Siang is the principal constituent river of the Brahmaputra and flows for 1,600 km through southern Tibet as the Yarlung Tsangpo or Yarlung Zangbo before entering India.

Siang is also known as Dihang in India, which joins the Lohit after flowing for 230 km. The Dihang joins at about 35 km downstream of Pasighat in East Siang district to form the Brahmaputra. Tatak said he has submitted an independent report to the Arunachal government describing the situation. India's worst fears are from Chinese plans to dig a 1000-km tunnel, the world's longest, to divert the Yarlung Tsangpo river from Tibet to Taklimakan Desert in Xinjiang. However, China has denied having any such plans.

Cop, who alleged preferential treatment to Sasikala in jail, faces Rs 20 cr defamation suit

PTI Bengaluru, Nov. 29: A retired top police official has filed a Rs 20 crore defamation suit against senior police officer D Roopa for bringing him under a cloud of bribery allegations over "preferential" treatment given to jailed AIADMK leader V K Sasikala in the central prison in Bengaluru. In a report submitted in July to the then DGP (Prisons) H N Sathyanarayana Rao, Roopa as Deputy Inspector of General (Prisons) had said there was "a talk" that Rs 2 crore had exchanged hands to give "preferential treatment" for Sasikala and that there were bribery allegations against him also. Rao had rubished the charge by Roopa, terming it "absolutely false, baseless and wild", and said he would take legal recourse against his junior. Video footage

too had surfaced purportedly showing the embattled AIADMK leader walking inside the corridors of the Parappana Agrahara Central jail sporting a salwar suit instead of the prisoner's dress, as is mandated for every jail inmate. Puttige Ramesh, advocate for Rao, told PTI that the suit was filed on Monday on various counts in a Bengaluru court. The suit is also against a leading Kannada TV channel and a prominent English newspaper. He said Roopa did not issue any notice to her superior and directly accused him of wrongdoing, which was a violation of the rules. She also leaked the information to the media, he said. "The report was submitted on July 11 this year, but a day later, which means on July 12, the report was published in the media. It is very clear that the officer leaked the information to the media even before she submitted it to her superior (Rao)," said the lawyer. The third accusation

in the defamation suit is that she was after publicity. "We came to know that a movie on Roopa is in the making. In order to gain publicity for the movie, she prepared the defamatory report on my client (Sathyanarayana Rao)," he said. He said Rao had specially appointed a woman officer to keep an eye on Sasikala's activities inside the jail. "The woman officer used to regularly monitor and prepare a note sheet to ensure Sasikala does not indulge in any wrongdoing. Despite a strong measure taken by Rao to check corruption, such a defamatory report was prepared," he said. The advocate said it was initially planned to file a Rs 50 crore defamation suit, but the requisite deposit amount of Rs 30 lakh was not available. Hence the defamation amount was brought down to Rs 20 crore. Rao was not reachable for his comments. Meanwhile, Roopa said she has

not received any defamation notice. "I have not received any defamation notice. If I receive, I will answer in the court. As it is, there is no defamation made out - that is the first thing," she said. She also said she was given to understand that a probe ordered by the Karnataka government into her charges had confirmed that irregularities, including the special facilities to Sasikala, did happen. Roopa said it was for Rao to explain why these irregularities happened under his nose. The two officers were locked in a public spat over the bribery charge, which led to the state government asking Rao to go on leave and Roopa being transferred. Sasikala is lodged in prison in Bengaluru since her conviction in February in the disproportionate assets case, along with her two relatives V N Sudhakaran and Elavarasi, all serving a four-year jail term.

MHA seeks answers from Tihar over reports of assault on

PTI New Delhi, Nov 29: The Union Home Ministry has sought a report from the Director General of Tihar jail in the wake of media reports that a scuffle involving Kashmiri prisoners took place at the prison, leading to injuries. However, official sources said, as per the preliminary information, Syed Shahid Yusuf, son of Hizbul Mujahideen chief Syed Salahuddin, who is also lodged in Tihar jail in connection with terror funding cases, was not assaulted. The ministry has asked the

Director General of the Tihar jail to submit a report as early as possible detailing the incident and the action taken so far. The home ministry has also requested Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal to direct the appropriate authority to review the security arrangements in the high security prison and taken necessary measures wherever needed, the sources said. They said, as per the preliminary information, three prisoners were found to be having unauthorised materials and when the jail officials tried to remove them, the inmates resisted

and had to be overpowered. Details about the prisoners involved in the incident were awaited, the sources said. Asked whether Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti had telephoned Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba enquiring about the Tihar incident, a home ministry official stated that the home secretary's interaction with constitutional authorities are in the nature of privileged communication and hence the ministry can neither confirm or deny any such interaction.

Earlier, reports from Srinagar said Mehbooba spoke with Gauba about social media reports on the alleged assault of Kashmiri prisoners in Tihar jail and urged him to ensure their safety. Mufti spoke to Gauba after photographs of injured Kashmiri undertrials surfaced on social media sites here, state government officials said. "A prison is considered to be the safest place but the alleged incidents that have come to light put a question mark on it," she said in a statement.

Japan, China dominate list of world's top restaurants

AFP Paris, Nov 29: Japan and China have more of the world's best restaurants than anywhere else, according to the La Liste ranking, which will be published next week. Although the French-based list will declare Guy Savoy's flagship Paris riverside restaurant the best in the world for the second year running - and French cooking dominates the top 100 - the big trend is the climb of Chinese haute cuisine. "The rise and rise of China is the big story," said Jorg Zipprick, who crunched the numbers for the "guide of guides", which was set up as a "more scientific and reliable" rival three years ago to the British-based 50 Best Restaurants. Japan still tops the country table with 138 restaurants in the top 1,000 of the French classification - which aggregates reviews from guides, newspapers and websites including TripAdvisor - but China is closing the gap fast with 123. "Up to now China has been

one of the most difficult countries to get data from," Zipprick told AFP, but a boom in local gastronomic guides has changed all that. "Asia has a lot more restaurants than Europe and it is only logical that La Liste will reflect that," he added. Tokyo institution Kyubei, whose sushi is renowned for being both "extraordinary and reasonably priced", took third spot after Le Bernardin, a New York fish restaurant run by Emmy award-winning US television chef Eric Ripert. Two other restaurants in the Japanese capital made the top 20, the minuscule Kyo Aji and French chef Joel Robuchon's plush dining room in a reconstructed French chateau. They were followed by the highest-placed Chinese restaurant, the Huai Yang Fu at Andingmen in Beijing - whose speciality is a roast pork dish adored by Chairman Mao. While there is no dramatic change at the summit of the list, there were three newcomers to the top 10, including The French Laundry, a former saloon in California's Napa Valley which "Kitchen

Confidential" author Anthony Bourdain has called "the best restaurant in the world, period". It shared an almost perfect mark of 99 out of 100 with La Vague d'Or in the French Riviera resort of Saint Tropez and Martin Berasategui's restaurant in the village of Lasarte in Spain's Basque country. Another of the big climbers was Aponiente at the other end of Spain, where diners cleanse their palates with a plankton sorbet. The Andalusian fish specialist in El Puerto de Santa Maria jumped 200 places on the back of getting a third Michelin star. For the first time a Canadian restaurant, Alo in Toronto, has entered the top 100, while the Turkish female chef Aylin Yazicioglu makes the grade for her highly-rated Istanbul restaurant, Nicole. New York's Eleven Madison Park, which was first in the 50 Best Restaurants ranking in 2017, was placed fourth on La Liste. But the two lists differ widely beyond that - although they roughly agree that El Celler de Can Roca in Girona, Spain; Osteria Francescana in Modena, Italy, as well as Alain Ducasse and Le

Bernardin represent more or less the summit of the culinary arts. La Liste's aggregator of the 1,000 top-rated restaurants in the world is modelled on the world tennis rankings and the Shanghai Ranking for universities. While Japan, China, France and the United States top the league for having the highest number of best restaurants, Switzerland with 38 for a population of eight million, has the highest per capita rating. Zipprick said its database - which is available as a smartphone app - now includes 16,000 eateries across the world which it classifies from haute cuisine to lower-priced "Food Gems". Superstar chef Gordon Ramsay's flagship London restaurant remained the highest-rated British table, pipping L'Enclume, which operates in a former blacksmith's forge in Cumbria, northwest England. This year's winners will be formally announced at a banquet in Paris on Monday, with 40 of the world's leading chefs also invited to meet French President Emmanuel Macron at his Elysee Palace residence.

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