

Editorial

Wednesday, April 11, 2018

Food safety concerns

With the increasing pace of life and the corresponding increase in social as well as work pressures, food habits of the people around the world have taken a hit for the worse. The most glaring evidence of this unfortunate changing trend is the gradual increase in the number of fast-food joints and ready-to-eat snack bars as well as local kiosks catering to the public with mostly fried stuffs to satiate the hunger instantaneously. Food that can be had on the go is being preferred over those which are healthy and wholesome but takes time to prepare. However, there is also an increasing awareness amongst the conscious and connected public cutting across age groups and professions regarding the need to inculcate a good dietary habit in order to combat the increasing stress and strains of our daily life. The general consensus amongst the conscious eaters is that fruits and vegetables play a vital role in maintaining the health and even reversing the harmful effects of work and environment.

A very disturbing news doing the rounds about some unscrupulous elements using unfair and potentially harmful methods of ripening fruits in the state have however put a question mark on the safety and reliability of the food products being sold in the state. However, the incident should not come as a surprise to many as the practice has been carried on for decades without any significant restrictions or objections from the authorities. The failure of those authorized and entrusted to ensure the safety and usability of foodstuffs for so long have only emboldened these elements who would not think twice about using any and all means at their disposal, fair or foul to speed up their earnings.

The menace of food adulteration and indiscriminate use of chemicals to either speed up the ripening process or to slow down the rate of decomposition is not confined to fruits alone. If anybody would care to recollect, there had been news of farmers using chemicals to increase their products both in size as well as quantity, or even halt the process of decomposition by using formaldehyde as reported in the case of fishes being brought into the state. On the other hand, there is also the disturbing report of plastic rice and even eggs being dumped into the country. While most of the chemicals used for such purposes such as Calcium Carbide have been banned by the government, their use is still rampant. There is still the danger of misusing those chemicals which are still not banned such as Ethylene (if used within certain limits) as there is every chance of the chemical being abused in the mad rush for quicker profit. Today, the threat of harmful chemicals contaminating our foods on a daily basis is a very real and disconcerting one, and such practice cannot be allowed to propagate and continue any longer. However, the issue is a complex one especially in a state like Manipur where the mechanism to ensure safety of food is almost absent as of now, and any means or effort to check such unfair practices requires the combined involvement of the whole community, government agencies, policymakers, fruit-sellers, farmers, scientists and consumers to find an effective solution to this matter. Meanwhile, the best and most satisfying option is to start our own fruit and vegetable garden.

Name Change

My old name is Jajo Silla W/o Michael Athing Konghay a residence of Leikoiching Village, Senapati Dist. Manipur and New name is Silla Jajo Konghay W/o Michael Athing Konghay as per my documents. I shall be known as Silla Jajo Konghay W/o Michael Athing Konghay.

Sd/-
Silla Jajo Konghay
W/o Michael Athing Konghay
Leikoiching Village Senapati Dist.
Manipur

Name Change

My old name is S Thongjalun Mate and father's name is S Haopu Mate a residence of Lajang Veng Saikul Senapati Dist. Manipur and New Name is Thongjalun Mate and father's name is Thangkhoah Mate, as per my document. I shall be known as Thongzalun Mate S/o Thangkhoah Mate.

Sd/-
Thongzalun Mate
S/o Thangkhoah Mate
of Lajang Veng Saikul Senapati Dist. Manipur

Name changed

I, the undersigned, **Rajkumar Biswajit Singh** of Thangmeiband Polem Leikai, P.O. Imphal, P.S. Imphal, Pin - 795001, Manipur do hereby declare that, I have wholly renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of old name **Rajkumar Biswajit Singh**, as I have assumed my new name **Rajkumar Viswajit Singh**

Sd/-
Rajkumar Viswajit Singh
Thangmeiband Polem Leikai,
Contact no:- 90893337487

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : imphaltimes@gmail.com. For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (0)

National & International News

Civilian, Army man killed in ongoing encounter and protests in south Kashmir

Agency
Srinagar, April 11

An army man was killed and three armed forces personnel were injured in an ongoing encounter in Khudwani area of Kulgam district in south Kashmir. Soon after the gunfight started in Wani Mohallah of Khudwani at around 11:30pm last night, locals came out to protest near the encounter site to disrupt the anti-militancy operation. During the protests, a 28-year-old civilian Sharjeel Ahmad received bullet injuries in stomach and succumbed.

He was declared dead at district hospital. Another civilian is seriously injured. Even as the encounter is going on, the protests in nearby areas also intensified. The government has snapped the Internet in Anantnag and Kulgam districts of south Kashmir and all the educational institutions have been closed in Kulgam district. The train services from Srinagar to Banihal have also been suspended. "All of us are sitting in one room of our house and continue to hear gunshots," a local from Kulgam, who lives near the encounter site, told ET over phone. In 2018, till now,

around 100 people including 24 civilians, 48 militants and 27 police, army and paramilitary forces were killed. J&K police officials claim that two to three militants are trapped in the house. "As room intervention is not possible, so the house may be blasted soon," a police official told ET. A joint team of Army's 1 RR, Special Operation Group of J&K police, CRPF started cordon and search operation in Wani Mohallah. "Cordon and search operation in Wani Mohallah turns into encounter. Information preliminary

and details being collected," J&K police spokesperson said. In the first week of April, 13 militants, five civilians and three army men were killed in three different encounters and protests in south Kashmir, after which Kashmir Valley observed shutdown for four days. After killing of Burhan Wani in 2016 militancy gathered steam and became deadlier as around 100 locals joined militancy in 2016, 124 in 2017 and around 27 in 2018 till now. The government launched Operation All Out to wipe out the militancy and killed more than 213 militants in 2017.

US, Russia clash at UN over chemical weapons attacks in Syria

Agency
Beirut, April 11

Russia and the United States tangled on Tuesday at the United Nations over the use of chemical weapons in Syria as Washington and its allies considered whether to strike at President Bashar al-Assad's forces over a suspected poison gas attack last weekend. Moscow and Washington halted attempts by each other in the U.N. Security Council to set up international investigations into chemical weapons attacks in Syria, which is in the throes of a seven-year-old civil war.

US President Donald Trump and Western allies are discussing possible military action to punish Assad for a suspected poison gas attack on Saturday on a rebel-held town that long had held out against government forces. Trump on Tuesday cancelled a planned trip to Latin America later this week to focus instead on responding to the Syria incident, the White House said. Trump had on Monday warned of a quick, forceful response once responsibility for the Syria attack was established. Pan-European air traffic control agency Eurocontrol warned airlines to exercise caution in the eastern Mediterranean due to the possible launch of air strikes into Syria in next 72 hours.

On the diplomatic front, the United Nations Security Council failed to approve three draft resolutions on chemical weapons attacks in Syria. Russia vetoed a US text, while two Russian-drafted resolutions failed to get a minimum nine votes to pass. Moscow opposes any Western strike on its close ally Assad and has vetoed Security Council action on Syria 12 times since the conflict started.

US Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley told the Security Council that adopting the US-drafted resolution was the least that member nations could do. "History will record that, on this day, Russia chose protecting a monster over the lives of the Syrian people," Haley said, referring to Assad.

At least 60 people were killed and more than 1,000 injured in Saturday's suspected chemical weapons attack on the town of Douma, according to a Syrian relief group. Doctors and witnesses have said victims showed symptoms of poisoning, possibly by a nerve agent, and reported the smell of chlorine gas.

RUSIA ACCUSES
Russian U.N. Ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said Washington's decision to put forward its resolution could be a prelude to a Western strike on Syria. "I would once again ask you, once again beseech you, to refrain from the plans that you're currently developing for Syria," he said after the council failed to approve a third draft resolution on chemical weapons attacks in Syria.

International chemical weapons experts are expected to go to Douma to investigate the suspected poison gas attack. France and Britain discussed with the Trump administration how to respond to the Douma attack. Both stressed that the culprit still needed to be confirmed. The Douma incident has thrust Syria's conflict back to the forefront of the international stage, pitting Washington and Moscow against each other once again.

Trump said that he would make a decision about how to respond within a few days, adding that the United States had "a lot of options militarily" on Syria. Assad's government and Russia have said there was no evidence a gas attack had taken place and that the claim was bogus. Any US strike is likely to involve naval assets, given the risk to aircraft from Russian and Syrian air defence systems. A US Navy guided-missile destroyer, the USS Donald Cook, is in the Mediterranean.

A key issue being considered by US defence and intelligence agencies and war planners is the effectiveness of Syrian air defences and the extent to which Russia is helping to organise, and ultimately, direct Syrian air defence operations, according to two US government sources.

Last year, the United States launched strikes from two Navy destroyers against a Syrian air base. US military action similar to last year's would likely not cause a shift in the direction of the war that has gone Assad's way since 2015 with massive aid from Iran and Russia. There was little expectation that

members of Congress would object if Trump launched an attack on Syria, despite some calls for lawmakers to exert their power to authorize military action. Most members of Congress - Democrats as well as his fellow Republicans - praised Trump after the strike last year. French President Emmanuel Macron said on Tuesday that any strikes would not target the Syrian government's allies or anybody in particular, but would be aimed at the Syrian government's chemical facilities.

CHEMICAL WEAPONS PROBE

The Hague-based Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) said Syria had been asked to make the necessary arrangements for the deployment of an investigation team. "The team is preparing to deploy to Syria shortly," it said in a statement. The mission will aim to determine whether banned munitions were used but will not assign blame. The Assad government and Russia both urged the OPCW to investigate the allegations of chemical weapons use in Douma, a move by the two countries that was apparently aimed at averting any US-led action. "Syria is keen on cooperating with the OPCW to uncover the truth behind the allegations that some Western sides have been advertising to justify their aggressive intentions," Syria's state news agency SANA said. A European source said European governments were waiting for the OPCW to carry out its investigation and for more solid forensic evidence from the attack to emerge. Any plan by Washington and its allies to take military action was likely to be on hold until then, the source said.

In Syria, thousands of militants and their families arrived in rebel-held parts of the country's northwest after surrendering Douma to government forces.

Their evacuation restored Assad's control over eastern Ghouta, formerly the biggest rebel bastion near Damascus, and gave him his biggest battlefield victory since 2016, when he took back Aleppo. Aggravating the volatile situation in the region, Iran - Assad's other main ally - threatened to respond to an air strike on a Syrian military base on Monday that Tehran, Damascus and Moscow have blamed on Israel. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, meanwhile, said there was no threat of the situation in Syria resulting in a military clash between Russia and the United States. TASS news agency quoted him as saying he believed common sense would prevail.

A Russian warplane flew over a French warship at low altitude in the eastern Mediterranean this weekend, a deliberate breach of international regulations, a French naval source said on Tuesday. The weekly magazine Le Point said the Russian plane had flown over the frigate Aquitaine and was fully armed. The Aquitaine is equipped with 16 cruise missiles and 16 surface-to-air missiles. It is currently operating off Lebanon alongside US ships as part of France's military contingent fighting Islamic State militants in Syria and Iraq. Despite the international revulsion over chemical weapons attacks, the death toll from such incidents in Syria is only a fraction of the hundreds of thousands of combatants and civilians killed since the war began in 2011.

Rahul Gandhi congratulates newly-wed IAS toppers, says 'inspiration to all Indians'

Agency
New Delhi, April 11

When 2015 Indian Administrative Services (IAS) toppers, Tina Dabi and Athar Aamir UI Shafi Khan, tied the knot in Jammu and Kashmir last week, little did they know that Congress president Rahul Gandhi would call them an "inspiration to all Indians." Gandhi took to Twitter not only to congratulate the newly-wed couple but also to subtly politicize their marriage using words like "communal hatred and the growing intolerance in India."

On the day of their wedding, Twitter was abuzz with the IAS officers' marriage photos. Rahul Gandhi had also tweeted a picture from their wedding along with his congratulatory message. Dabi had secured the first spot in the 2015 Union Public Service Exam, while Khan was second. The duo had met for the first time at a felicitation function organized by the department of personnel and training (DoPT) in New Delhi.

The couple, who are allocated the Rajasthan cadre of the IAS, got married in a private ceremony at the Pahalgam Club Saturday, April 7. Despite only inviting a few friends and family members to the wedding, their marriage later became the talk of the town. The couple's relationship was marred with a lot of complications and hurdles due to their different religious backgrounds. "There have been a lot of comments attributed to me falsely. Then there are comments that are anti-caste, targeting reservations, religion. It's as if I have

committed a crime by falling in love with someone who is not the same religion or caste as me," Dabi was quoted as saying by The Times of India.

She added, "At times, things do become offensive. I then wonder if I should be active on social media and confront such stuff. But then I tell myself that I don't have to prove anything to anyone." Ultimately, love triumphs hatred as the couple got married and became an "inspiration to all Indians."

committed a crime by falling in love with someone who is not the same religion or caste as me," Dabi was quoted as saying by The Times of India. She added, "At times, things do become offensive. I then wonder if I should be active on social media and confront such stuff. But then I tell myself that I don't have to prove anything to anyone." Ultimately, love triumphs hatred as the couple got married and became an "inspiration to all Indians."

Algeria military plane crashes near Boufarik airport; 100 army personnel on board, several dead

Agency
Algiers, April 11

Algeria's state news agency says that a military plane has crashed near the military base of Boufarik in Algeria. The Algeria Presse service agency said the Ilouchine-type plane was headed for Bechar in south-western Algeria. Emergency services have been dispatched to the site of the crash. No death toll was immediately available. Boufarik is

located in northern Algeria, near the Mediterranean sea, some 30 kilometers (20 miles) from the capital, Algiers.

The plane was carrying more than 100 military personnel, a local TV station said. The crash Boufarik airport near the capital Algiers, killed several people, local media and a witness said. The plane was carrying more than 100 military personnel, a local TV station said.