

# Editorial

Monday, May 20, 2019

## The wrath of Mother Nature: Mercury is rising

A disturbing news appeared in one of the leading Imphal based newspaper is the temperature reaching 40 degree Celsius in Chandel district of Manipur. June / July the summer season is yet to arrive and if the mercury level reached 40 degree Celsius in May, it is likely that people may not be able to go outdoor in June and July.

20 years back, May season's favourite outfit for the people in the state of Manipur was either a jacket or Jersey. Today, we can't even wear a full man's casual shirt or a long pant. Reason - the mercury is rising, by next year the temperature is likely to reach 40 degree Celsius.

In during late 90's, when people, particularly the environmentalists showed serious concern to the rise in the mercury, the temperature recorded in Manipur On April 14, 1999, was 36 degree Celsius. That was the hottest day people.

April normally was most of the pleasant days during 80s. The climatic condition was excellent. The temperature those days was much lower than 30 degree Celsius. Months with Maximum temperature was during June and July. Everyone who are in the 40s know that the mercury level during the hottest month here in the state did not exceed 35 degree Celsius. Summer in Manipur was equivalent with those of the Indian states close to the Rajasthan cities.

Temperature recorded today here in Imphal is 31 degree Celsius and is expected to rise tomorrow. As of today there are no report of any dead due to the rise of temperature, but for sure news paper of tomorrow will have to reserve space for news story about dead of human by the scorching heat.

Well whom are we going to blame for the kind of happening? Is the drastic change in the climatic condition a natural phenomenon or is it because of the kind of crime committee by the human being? - A matter everyone needs to ponder.

Leaving aside the environmentalists, it now becomes a fashion for the ministers and bureaucrats to talk about environment. A selfie while planting trees in their best outfit seem to be pride for them.

As according to environmentalists, the geographical character of the state is perhaps a boon. The climate of Imphal and other valley districts are maintained by the hills surrounding the valley. As for the Imphal Valley, it the Langol Hill Range and the number of trees on it that has been controlling the carbon emission. The Khoubru Hill range, the Baruni etc. too are also important factor that control the climate of the state. Saying so it was the number of wild trees that grows on those hills that actually controlled the climate. When there is no trees in the mentioned Hill range they are too helpless in maintaining the climatic condition of the state.

Is it the common men that has to be blamed for cutting of the trees? Wel common man always struggle for live and they do whatever available to feed themselves as well as their family. Those in the village are left with no choice but to cut down the trees for earning their livelihood. As for holding top job in the government and those ruling the state, they know that trees should be saved. Crore and crore of rupees have been spent to make plant grows at barren land of the state. They also know that until a proper planning is taken up by framing a policy for those who are depending on the forest product, the hills of the state which had been controlling the Imphal valley will look barren. So, it is definitely the government that is responsible for the kind of destruction of forest that has been taking place in the state.

Seizure of truck loads of woods is also a means to help in protecting the forest, but if it is done for photo session and publicity matters, then Manipur may perhaps become a desert like state someday.

Government authority's commitment is reminded as the recent plantation of saplings by volunteer of Manipuri Students' Federation at the peak of the Koubru Hill will make no sense.

Villagers of Koubru should be rehabilitated so that they themselves started protecting trees in the hill range. On how to change the mindset of the villagers, it is left upto the bureaucrats to think on it, or what is the use spending so much public money for each of them in the form of paying salary and allowances.

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# Fall Army Worm Outbreak Wreaks Havoc in Maize Fields of Mizoram

Courtesy The Wire  
By : Sageeta Barooah Oisharoty

The fall army worm (FAW), noticed in early April in the maize fields of Mizoram, has continued its menace in the northeastern state. The outbreak has already caused substantial damage to crops in neighbouring Bangladesh and Myanmar as well. Mizoram is one of the top producers of maize in India. Between 2017-18, it produced about 9,470 metric tonnes.

C. Lalrinsanga, the Mizoram Agriculture Minister, told *The Wire* from Aizawl on May 17 that the insect - after it was first spotted on April 8 - has so far affected 2,424 hectares of the 3,439 hectares of maize cultivation across all eight districts of the state.

"Till now, about 68% of the maize fields have been affected by the pest. As per our initial estimate, the loss was around Rs 20 crore. But it is likely to go up if the outbreak is not brought under control."

James Lalrinsanga, joint director of the agriculture department, told *The Wire* that over 5,000 farmer families have been affected by the pest attack. He said rapid response teams, created following the detection, are working out a strategy to tame it. Holding workshops with the maize farmers to spread awareness about the life cycle of the pest, the use of bio-pesticides to control the outbreak,



the state government control the outbreak.

The minister said, "I had a detailed meeting this morning with the team of scientists who have come from IIMR's Ludhiana and Hyderabad branches. They have already explored the maize fields, detected the problem and have assured me that they should be able to control it soon."

The agriculture joint director said, "The good news is, the crop is still in its early stage and if we can arrest the problem now, and get a good bout of rain to help fresh growth, we should be able

any pesticide is not good for health. Additionally, I have requested the Young Mizo Association (YMA) also to organise a fire in the affected areas at night. These worms get attracted to light at night and might kill themselves. It has been a traditional method of controlling pests in our areas."

With over 700 branches spread across the north-eastern state, the YMA - formed in 1935 - is a socio-cultural voluntary organisation that has a huge influence over the Mizo.

"Since the pest has already been detected in neighbouring Myanmar and Bangladesh, I think it was inevitable that Mizoram, which grows maize, would get affected too. So would our neighbouring states that also have maize fields. But we are relatively lucky as we have been able to detect it at an early stage," the minister said.

### Across continents

Though the fall army worm has been a problem in the maize fields of the Americas for a long time, it was noticed in 2016 in western and central Africa as well. By mid-2018, it had affected the continent's agriculture production and has since been moving towards Asia. It survives on the leaves and stems of more than 80 plant species. Experts say that apart from maize, it can affect rice, cotton, sugarcane and sorghum, and also some vegetable crops.

In 2018, fall army worms were found in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, as well as in maize fields of Karnataka in India. In Sri Lanka, it

affected over 40,000 hectares of the maize crop. By July-August, the pest ate up 70% of the standing maize crop in Karnataka, leading to a drop in its production by 20%.

Following the ICAR's pest alert in August 2018, Bangladesh's Department of Agriculture Extension issued an alert in the following month. Bangladesh produces only 70% of its annual maize requirement and is dependent on Indian maize besides that of Egypt and some other countries to meet its annual requirement of five million tons.

In Myanmar, the worm was first noticed in the maize fields of the Shah State this past January. Shan state, which borders China, and is also hugely affected by the worm, is the largest producer of maize in that country. The Myanmar government has since been working with the American government to minimise the damage.

Since the pest has affected most of Asia, including Thailand and China - the largest global producer of maize after the Americas - the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has also recently expressed concern over it. In March this year, the FAO held a consultative meeting in Bangkok to tailor strategies.

The organisation noted in a statement, "The use of chemical pesticides needs to be very carefully considered, given that FAW larvae hide largely in the ring of leaves (whorl), and that chemical pesticides can have negative effects on the environment and public health."



etc., have been rolled out on the ground, he added.

On May 15, a team of scientists from the Indian Institute of Maize Research (IIMR), under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), arrived in Mizoram to help

to stem the loss."

The minister added, "Though we are using a very good pesticide, my suggestion to the farmers during our meeting was also to try and pluck out the worms by hand wherever possible as using

## Advanced Robotic Surgeries boon for morbidly obese patients



Dr. Ashish Vashistha, Director & Head Department of Surgery, Advanced - Laparoscopic, Bariatric & Robotic Surgeon, Max Super Speciality Hospital Saket

With increased urbanization and changing lifestyle, sedentary lifestyle has become a major contributing factor for obesity to become and epidemic. Obesity among middle aged persons is very common now a days, that it is the root cause of several serious illnesses like Diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disorders, sleeping disorders,

joint pains, infertility and increased chances of cancer. The mesh of interactions between genetics, nutrition, lifestyle, sleep pattern and psychology contribute to weight gain. People often say, 'Zip your mouth, have control, be motivated enough', but little do they know this may not work for everyone. Getting the numbers on the scale down is an uphill battle that many struggle with almost all their lives. The weight management is beyond calorie balance as there are several other factors that come into play which need to be understood and dealt with.

"Fundamental to any weight loss effort is lifestyle change, diet, and increased physical activity. Following our biological clock is the key to good health and well being. Altered sleep patterns that is untimely sleep at odd hours

contributes to eating at wrong times thus disturbing metabolism. 7-9 hours of daily sleep at the right time is imperative. Obesity can be treated. But it involves more than just swallowing a pill or sticking to a diet. It needs a multidisciplinary assessment involving a coordinated approach by different specialists such as dietician, endocrinologist, psychologist, internist, cardiologist, family doctor, bariatric surgeon. The last resort is surgical management i.e. Bariatric surgery which has proven to be the most effective treatment option for sustained weight loss and significant improvement of all obesity related illnesses." Urbanization and improved economic status has led to easily available means of transport that has cut down the physical activity to almost zero. Furthermore, easily

accessible processed foods with calorie dense constituents and little/no nutrient value inevitably add to the waistline circumference.

Bariatric (Obesity) surgery, or weight loss surgery or metabolic surgery, includes a variety of procedures performed on people who are obese. Weight loss is achieved by reducing the size of the stomach through removal of a portion of the stomach (sleeve gastrectomy) or by resecting and re-routing the small intestines to a small stomach pouch (gastric bypass surgery/ One Anatomises Gastric bypass).

Robotic bariatric surgical procedures are offered to patient with high Body Mass Index (BMI) and other medical conditions related to obesity. Also good results are seen in revisional bariatric surgery cases. The main advantages of Robotic system are seen with Gastric bypass.