



Manila, Philippines

Title: Two 'litti' vendors from state to exhibit culinary skills in Manila

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PATNA: Two roadside 'litti' stall owners from Bihar, Dinesh Kumar and Ashok Kumar, will participate in the World Street Food Congress (WSFC) to be held at the SM Mall of Asia in Manila (the Philippines) from May 31 to June 4. At least 28 stalls from 12 countries will be put up at the five-day event whose theme this year is 'Reimagine Possibilities'.

"There are four participants from India, including two from Bihar and two from Delhi. While Dinesh and Ashok are from Bihar, Dalchand Kashyap and Shyam Ji Shah belong to New Delhi. They were selected by the WSFC on the recommendation of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) on the basis of cleanliness, hygiene, health and mode of operation," NASVI official Sangeeta Singh told TOI over phone from Delhi on Tuesday.

The first WSFC was organized at Singapore in 2013 to make the Asian heritage street food culture known to the entire world. After two successful runs, it was shifted to the Philippines.

According to NASVI's state programme coordinator Sonal Sinha, "All the street food vendors associated with us undergo a weeklong training programme, christened 'Hunar se rozgar', at Hajipur's Institute of Hotel Management in which they learn to practise cleanliness. Each of them is also paid Rs 300 per day."

One of the participants, Dinesh Kumar, who hails from Darbhanga district, started selling 'bhelpuri' near the Patna Museum in the early 2000s. "With time, I realized that I was good at making 'bhelpuri' and moved my shop to Maurya Lok complex. My tryst with 'littis' began in 2003 when I participated in a food exhibition. Gradually, I began making soft 'littis' which were liked and appreciated by the city food lovers," Dinesh said and advised vendors to maintain cleanliness and avoid contamination of food.

Dinesh, who sends his children to private schools, further said, "One should cut one's nails, keep hair trimmed and cook food at least three feet above the ground. The good quality of my food and clean surroundings helped me get more customers."

Ashok, the other 'litti' vendor, puts up his stall near Gandhi Maidan.