

The Bhutan Monthly

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HIGHLIGHTS

Refugees Aids

The European Commission (EC) has donated five million euros to assist Bhutanese refugees and conflict-affected people in Nepal.

Two million euros will go towards feeding 107,000 Bhutanese refugees who have been living in UN camps in Nepal since the early 1990s. Louis Michel, the commissioner of the EC directorate general for humanitarian affairs said "Through this new global plan, the commission shows Europe's solidarity with the refugees from Bhutan and Nepal."

The refugees have no right to work or to own land in Nepal and rely almost entirely on external assistance to survive. The remaining three million euros will be used to improve the living conditions and food security of around 170,000 people in remote rural districts of Nepal.

Nepal Rejects Four Categorization

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs K.P. Sharma Oli on June 25 said that the government would reject the previous agreement to categorization if the refugees so desired.

Oli said while meeting with a delegation of Bhutanese representatives. He also said, he had informed to international community that Nepal will not be able to reach an agreement the Bhutanese people cannot accept.

All seven camp secretaries including senior political and human rights leaders attended the meet. According to Goldhap Camp Secretary Ram Chandra Baskota, they informed Oli about current developments in camps.

Earlier Deputy Prime Minister Amik Sherchen assured Nepalese leaders that Nepal would seek India's role in resolving the mess.

Sit-in Protest Continues

Refugees Demand UN intervention

Desvakta Mishra
Kathmandu, May-June

More than four dozens exile Bhutanese tortured, elderly and youths have staged indefinite sit-in protest in front of Nepal based United Nation (UN) office in Pulchowk, Lalitpur seeking attention of UN and international community towards refugee crisis from June 2.

The protest led by Bhutanese Refugee Repatriation Representative Committee (BRRRC) demanded UN's intervention on Bhutan in solving long standing exile Bhutanese issue. They have also demanded direct talk between the refugee representatives and Bhutanese King. 'We donot want to be refugees forever' reads a placard. Claiming India's involvement be necessary, the protest has seek UN bodies not to stop aiding to refugees until amicable solution.

According to sources from BRRRC 48 participants including at least eight women have



Help Us go Home: Refugees at Sit-in Protest in front of UN House in Kathmandu. Photo:Vidhyapati/TBR

represented individual huts from seven different camps. The Bhutanese youths and students staying in Kathmandu have also extended their strong support, solidarity and active physical participation. The sit-in protest is reportedly known to be another phase and a continuation of relay hunger strike that was ongoing in Beldangi-II and Khudunabari camps since six months. Presently, half of the sit-in protest participants are sick.

They are victimized of diarrhoea, fever, back pain, chest pain, stomach ache and headache. Similarly, the common disease ringworm is spread to many participants who have been staying together in a congested room. Sources from BRRRC claimed it has been managing physicians for those patients from AMDA- Nepal.

Chairman of BRRRC Tek Nath Rizal has handed over an appeal to Kofi Anan via UN country representative- Nepal. Yet UN and other concerned bodies

'Black Day'

Sit-in protest participants here in Kathmandu marked recent World Refugee Day as 'black day' and lighted candles spreading a message to world community to help get repatriated soon.

Meanwhile, on the occasion, all seven Camp Secretaries issued an appeal with a slogan 'we donot want to be refugees any more.' The appeal was handed over to various donor agencies. According to Camp Secretary of Sanischare Menuka Nepal the appeal meant for UNHCR turned controversial. Camp Management Committee including public demanded to stress on repatriation rather than focusing on permanent settlement as demanded by the appeal.

have not responded to demands put forward. It is reported that soon they are staging sit-in in front of SAARC and Indian Embassy.

SAHR, Civil Society to Garner Support

Special Correspondent
Kathmandu, May-June

South Asians for Human Rights (SAHR) - Nepal Chapter organized an interaction program based on a theme 'Loktantra in Bhutan now' to garner possible support and solidarity for earliest repatriation in Kathmandu on June 23.

Bhutanese human rights and political leaders, senior members of Nepal Civil Society, Advocate, Artists, writers and party leaders attended it. SAHR Chairman, Dr. Devendra Raj Pandey addressing the program said that Nepal Civil Society has been

extending its support to refugees from the early begin-

Meanwhile, on behalf of the Bhutanese refugee community,



Thinley Penjore, Vice Chairman, Bhutanese Refugee Steering Committee (BMSC) presented a paper concerned on Bhutan and its situation. According to appeal presented, BMSC has new hope and anticipates SAHR to continue their noble mission for the cause of Bhutanese people in particular and the SAARC region as a whole. The appeal which has entirely covered current developments both inside and outside camps.

Through appeal, BMSC has sought attention of Nepal government towards cut-short and unnecessary replacement in facilities provided. It has also drawn attention of international community towards indefinite sit in protest staged in front of UN complex since June 2.

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Resettlement Opposed

Special Correspondent
Kathmandu, May-June

Country representatives of UNHCR in Nepal Abraham Abraham has urged the Nepal government to expedite the process to end the long standing refugees mess on world refugee day while addressing media persons in the Reporter's Club. He also said that he received number of applications from the exiled Bhutanese who wanted to be resettled.

Meanwhile refugee leaders and different organizations have strongly opposed the new package of resettlement. Talking to TBR, Tek Nath Rizal said, such decisions would only encourage Bhutanese regime towards further cleansing. "When this situation comes, who will shoulder sole responsibility" he added. Vice Chairman of Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee Thinley Penjore claimed UNHCR to be

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Pandey Seized Refugee File

Refugee leaders strongly condemned former Foreign Minister Ramesh Nath Pandey for seizing some of the important files related to Bhutanese refugee issue sent by Bhutan during his tenure. They claimed negligence of Nepal Government and appealed Nepali Civil Society to help investigate. Earlier Nepali media including the *Samaya Weekly* revealed out the story.

Protracted Refugee Situation

Address Dilemma

Almost a month has gone by; more than four dozens exile Bhutanese are under indefinite sit-in protest since June 2, 2006. The initiation day that coincides with Coronation Day of King Jigme Singye aims at drawing the immediate attention of UN towards refugees' plight. Still then concerned sectors are turning deaf ears to their demands.

Amidst such protest towards repatriation, UNHCR has coined a controversial package of resettlement. This has brought further confusions in innocent refugees. Refugee leaders have strongly opposed the concept. It seems concerned agencies rather than addressing refugee's demands are pouring butter on fire. Not to ignore the fact, a portion of refugees seems willing to accept such decisions; however this may create devastation as at this moment they are trying for repatriation.

All political including non-political forces have already agreed to work under common platform in Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC). Ironically, this indicates continuation of hope towards immediate repatriation. Nevertheless, only refugee leaders' effort will be fruitless until big donor agencies and concerned states extend their strong support. Meanwhile, the final hopes of refugees have rested upon the ongoing sit-in protest in getting repatriated. The more there comes negligence the more risk it generates as people in unimproved camps are frustrated.

On the other side, Bhutan and Nepal are members of United Nations (UN). Comparatively, UN has dominating roles towards pressurizing both states to expedite repatriation. It is already clear that through only futile bi-lateral talks between these two countries refugees cannot predict amicable solution. India's significant position must be considered necessarily to ensure earliest repatriation with honor and dignity.

As it is almost late now UN should immediately address their demands otherwise the admix of rising frustration will draw further disorder. Let there be instantaneous steps in addressing the third voice.

No one chooses to be a refugee. Being a refugee means more than living in exile and depending on others. One of the most complex and difficult problems facing UNHCR today is that of protracted refugee situations. Over 64% of refugees in the world today are trapped in protracted refugee situations. Unwanted by their home country, grudgingly tolerated by their Nepalis hosts and of little interest to the international community, over 106000 Bhutanese refugees have been warehoused for more than a decade in the Jhapa and Morang district of Eastern Nepal.

Certain crimes lie beyond the scope of repentance. From torture to denationalization and ethnic cleansing, many of the rights violations experienced by refugees count amongst those grave injustices in the world for which it is impossible to truly make amends. More generally, the prolonged encampment of refugee populations has led to the violation of a number of rights contained in the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. Faced with the restrictions, refugees become dependent on subsistence-level assistance, or less, and lead lives of poverty, frustration and unrealized potential.

They are frustrated and often dependent on others to find a solution to their plight. This is exactly the reason why they are now sitting on an indefinite hunger strike in front of UN House. This also indicates the level of frustration in the refugee community. Unresolved Bhutanese refugee situation represents a significant political phenomenon as well as a humanitarian problem. Protracted refugee situation often leads to a number of political and security concerns for host country, the country of origin, regional actors and the international community.

Through the simplifying lens of theory, it appears that if Bhutan created the refugees, then it should shoulder the challenge to take back its citizens. Not surprisingly, however, reality complicates the picture painted by theory. The negotiation between Bhutan and Nepal, the identification of the bonafide nationals, the terms and conditions for such identification and repatriation were all dictated by

Bhutan. It has totally ignored the UNHCR and international community. It has been acquiesced by Nepal and tacitly supported by India. Bhutan government is steadfast in its resolve to continue the dead lock as it will give time to the regime to consolidate its hold on power by bringing artificially engineered demographic balance.

Time has come for us to ask: Why do these innocent refugees have to suffer? Is it a crime to become a refugee? Is this due to weak and partisan leadership among refugees, who have failed to aggregate and articulate their interests to deal with such complex human crisis? Is it due to disappointing response of India to the long-standing refugee affair? Is it due to declining interest of the USA, European Union and International Community? Are these people forgotten by International media like CNN and BBC, who claims to be the voice of the voiceless? Is a permanent and durable solution to the Bhutanese refugee crises evaporating? These questions can only raise and resonate the conflict of "Values and Interests" among the stakeholders of Bhutanese refugees crisis.

It is an unequal fight between the voiceless refugees and the government in power. The refugee policies, practices and solution are determined by the predominant power struggle for regional and global dominance. Political, socio-cultural and economic freedom, freedom from ideological constraints, freedom to define a new code of morality, which defines peace and security, democracy, human rights and sustainable development, can become truly universal values only if exercised alike without hidden interests and double standards. If we believe in these values, which we preach to others, then stakeholders of refugee crisis should intervene with utmost seriousness to support the cause of refugee and tame the regime. It is time to convey to Bhutan that the ultimate achievement of Gross National Happiness is intrinsically linked to the larger framework of inclusive democracy - politically, economically and socio-culturally.

Bhutanese refugees continue to stagnate in over-crowded camps, which have neither the political nor the economic capacity to solve the problem.

How can international community forget that Bhutan has created the largest per capita refugee population in the world? They are the one to tell the world that there are over a hundred thousand people, who have had their lives on hold for more than 15 years. How much longer would the world have them wait? If International community fails, they have to share in the blame for not having done enough, when there is the time for these voiceless refugees. It is only by redefining international solidarity in these terms, that we can hope to solve the problem of refugees. Notwithstanding the growing significance of the problem, protracted Bhutanese refugee situations have not yet featured prominently on the international political agenda of major world power including the USA and India.

In the past, chronic and recurring refugee problems in Europe, Southeast Asia and Latin America have been resolved through comprehensive plans of action, involving not only humanitarian actors but also a range of political, security and development actors. Such an integrated approach is also needed to effectively resolve the protracted Bhutanese refugee crisis. The situation of the Bhutanese refugees has reached an impasse. The bilateral process has so far totally failed to respect the rights of the refugees or to achieve a durable solution for them. It is time for the international community and donor states of Nepal and Bhutan to convene an international conference, bringing all stakeholders together, including UN agencies and refugee representatives, to devise a comprehensive solution to this protracted refugee situation that meets international standards and gives due consideration to durable solutions. India, the US, European Union, Nepal and donor countries to Bhutan, should take active measures to ensure that refugee problem is resolved in full compliance with international human rights standards. If not resolved now, the refugee problem would fester and the role of the UNHCR and international community would be reduced to "simply administering human misery". The UNHCR has rightly said that "the consequence of having so many human beings in a static state include wasted lives, squandered resources and increased threats to security."

Media privatization: A praiseworthy concept

Thakur P Mishra

journalism in Bhutan. The other private weekly, Bhutan Times had unveiled its first batch of copies on April 30 at a special functions attended by Prime Minister. In September last year His Majesty had expressed his desire to launch private media in the country.

In practice there are no laws, by-laws, rules or regulations regarding media in Bhutan. Government officials used to censor on the news to be published or broadcasted or telecasted in government media. Programs for radio and television and most of the news items for the newspaper had to be gone thorough checking by the government officials before they come out to the public. Thus, media were discouraged. In course of time, positive indications have been seen at increasing rate. People never demanded press freedom nor did they try for private publication in the past. It was only after 1990 that freedom of press and right to information was felt. Radio service (NYAB radio) in Bhutan started in November 1973 in the initiation of youths who formed National Youth Association of Bhutan (NYAB) led by a Royal a female member. The NYAB club office was transformed to announcing studio on weekends and increased to an hour a week after a few weeks' trial. The 400-watt transmitter was rented from a local tele-

graph office. The station was called Radio NYAB. Now it has reached its transmission throughout the country with a number of FM stations.

Bhutan Times has stated that it aimed at working for press freedom, freedom of speech and expression. Similarly, www.bhutanimes.com, uncovered whether a conjuncture of weekly Bhutan Times, has been giving wide coverage to the issues of exile Bhutanese as well as national, regional and international hot issues. Indeed, this is a good beginning. Bhutan is gradually stepping up towards guaranteeing press freedom. It would sound better at a glance if the papers could accommodate balance views of people from all section of society including those in exile.

Undecided yet, there are news that the government-owned weekly, Kuensel will be published daily. Intact with the ethics of journalism, this paper also should raise the third voice of the suppressed people. The Bhutanese king's wish to establish private media houses and newspapers would certainly be a milestone to democratization of the state mechanism if they could widely and freely cover the issues, voice and sentiments of individual Bhutanese. Bhutanese king's wish and will to enroll Bhutan into privatization of media is a positive and welcoming step.

(Source: www.apfanews.com)

Exile Voices

Tree Crash claims Child death, six injured

**TBR Correspondent
Beldangi-3, May-June**

Suresh Giri 12 years old boy, student of Grade 4, Beldangi-II extension A/2-50 died on the way to hospital when a tree near by LWF ward crashed down and hit him on World Refugee Day, June 20. Suresh after observing the Refugee Day was at his friend's house when the incident took place.

Among six of the serious injury cases, Aita Shamsher Rai was referred to B.P.Koirala Memorial Dharan while In-charge of Marigold Academy (MGA) 'E' Deoraj Puri including other two had gone treatment at

AMDAN- Nepal, damak. According to latest report the injured have returned to normalcy.

Meanwhile, camp secretary of Beldangi-II extension Manorath Khanal had issued a press release seeking attention of UNHCR and Nepal government to help cut-off all trees that are inside refugee camps. The release had given an ultimatum of two days.

Former camp secretary of Beldangi-II extension Subash Acharya talking to TBR said even during his tenure he attempted many times in convincing concerned areas to

cut-off trees. He said he had also met Chief District Officer, District Forestry Office, Zone Administrator including the then Home Minister Dan Bahadur Sahi, however they turned deaf ears. Acharya claimed the negligence of UNHCR and Nepal government for such incidents and have urged concerned bodies to compensate loss and help to injured ones. Suresh, the only son from a family member of five is permanent resident of Samchi district. There are reports of similar cases each year from exile camps resulting deaths and severe injuries.



Chairman of Druk National Congress (DNC) and Vice-Chairman and Spokesperson of Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC), Thinley Penjore stands against UNHCR's package of resettlement of refugees.

Born in 1954, Thinley left Bhutan and joined political movement in 1997. While in Bhutan he worked in different civil services as a Translator in the Kuensel, Section Judge in High Court, Chief Executive in Royal Insurance Corporation Bhutan and as a Secretary General in Bhutan Chambers of Commerce and Industries. He spoke to Vidhyapati Mishra of TBR on various relevant issues. Excerpts:

TBR: What is BMSC? What are its programs ahead?

Thinley: It is a body consisting of all political, human rights and social organizations. It was officially declared on March 2, 2006. Presently it comprises five political representatives, three refugee individuals, two are nominees of chairman, a vice-chairman and chairman. It works to steer all programs organized by all parties. BRRRC works to co-ordinate camp activities but BMSC co-ordinates all political and apolitical activities target for establishment of democracy in Bhutan. We are working for creating a central understanding so that we can develop a unified force. We hope that all organizations join BMSC.

TBR: Now you are with Rizal who is known as Human Rights Activist, don't you think of any difficulty in working with him?

Face-to-face with Thinley Penjore

“ It is very much unfortunate that UNHCR is creating confusion among refugees. If it has got evidences of resettlement, BMSC would be happy to see the details of demands made by refugees. ”

Thinley: No I don't see that. Once you are in BMSC, you are above all. All issues can be properly dealt by BMSC. If there is any one to say so, that person is not educated or committed to Bhutanese Movement.

What caused DNC to Split?

Thinley: I don't see the existence of another DNC. If second is ever existing, it should be visible.

TBR: There is a rumour in public that DNC runs Youths Empowerment Programs with big grant assistance from abroad. Is it true?

Thinley: I request you to be justified from the source from where you have got this information. I do not know this. If there is any suspicion, people who suspect should form a committee and approach DNC.

TBR: You are the Chairperson of National Front for Democracy (NFD) as well. What is NFD doing now?

Thinley: It co-ordinates activities that are to be initiated inside Bhutan. It is an amalgamation of Bhutan People's Party (BPP), DNC and Bhutan Gorkha National Liberation Front (BGNLF). But presently we are concentrated at BMSC and we all are working for better popularization. But it depends on the political situa-



tion of Nepal. The situation inside Bhutan is not sound. NFD is conducting educational and youth awareness programs inside Bhutan.

TBR: UNHCR has a resettlement package. Why don't political forces in Bhutan retaliate this?

From Regime

India to Help hold Election in Bhutan

**Binod Sanyashi
Thimphu, May-June**

India will help Bhutan to hold the first ever national elections in 2008 when the Himalayan kingdom formally makes it transition from a monarchy to parliamentary democracy.

India's chief election commissioner B.B. Tandon and his Bhutanese counterpart Dasho Kunzang Wangdi signed a memorandum of understanding in capital Thimphu last month.

Bhutan has sought help of India's Election Commission to train Bhutanese citizens and its officials to participate and conduct the historic polls.

“The exchange of visits, training of Bhutanese election workers, and the exposure to the electoral processes in India would go a long way in helping us to prepare for the historic elections”, Bhutan's chief election commissioner Wangdi was quoted as saying by the kingdom's government-run newspaper Kuensel.

The 50-year-old king in December last year made a landmark decision to abdicate the throne in favour of his eldest son, Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, 25, before Bhutan adopts a constitution and elects a prime minister in 2008.

Bhutan Held two Christians

**Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, May-June**

Two brothers, Benjamin and John Dai, have been given prison sentences up to three-and-a-half-year last week for their involvement in popularizing Christianity in Bhutan.

The News of arrest was given by the World Evangelical Alliance Religious Liberty Commission (WEARLC). The two men had been reported by

a young man who had attended the screening.

Benjamin received a prison sentence of three-and-a-half years, while John was sentenced to three years. They were given ten days to appeal to the court with the help of a lawyer. WEARLC has asked for prayers that these two brothers be freed and that religious freedom be effectively recognized.

Computers speak Dzongkha

**Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, May-June**

Bhutan has developed a computer operating system in its national language Dzongkha. Recent laws in the country have enforced the use of Dzongkha for all official events and communication. After waiting a solution from Microsoft, Bhutan's ministry of information and communication launched the Dzongkha Linux

project two and a half years ago. Launched earlier this month in the capital Thimphu, the Dzongkha Linux system was the result of collaboration with the technical project head, Pema Geyleg, for inclusion of Dzongkha support in Debian Installer. Dzongkha bears a linguistic relationship to modern Tibetan and both languages share a common ancestor language, which is still used in liturgical contexts.

Publisher's Notice

**Dear Readers and Welwishers,
The Bhutan Reporter would like to request its readers and welwishers to support the publication. We are at very crucial time and we appeal to all to join hand in hand to fight for freedom of speech and expression in Bhutan.**

SHORT CLIP



I want to go back to Bhutan: BM Dhakal, Chief Editor of TBR reports to a foreign radio journalist in Kathmandu.

Photo Vidhyapati/TBR

Refugees Around Us

Work of UNHCR Around Globe

While the number of refugees worldwide has reached a 26-year low, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees reported today that its annual global count of uprooted people rose last year to nearly 21 million, primarily because of the agency's expanding role in caring for the world's internally displaced.

UNHCR's "2005 Global Refugee Trends" report says that despite a drop in refugee totals from 9.5 million in 2004 to 8.4 million last year, the overall number of concern to the agency has increased by 1.3 million — from 19.5 million to 20.8 million. Much of the increase is due to a rise in the number of people living in refugee-like situations within their own countries.

UNHCR now counts 6.6 million conflict-generated internally displaced people in 16 countries as being "of concern," compared to 5.4 million in 13 countries at the end of 2004.

"As we approach World Refugee Day on June 20, the good news is that global refugee numbers are the lowest since 1980; that last year saw the smallest mass outflows of new refugees into neighbouring states in 29 years; and that more than 6 million refugees have been able to go home since 2002," said High Commissioner António Guterres. "We're finding lasting solutions for millions of refugees through voluntary repatriation, through local integration in countries of first asylum, and through resettlement to third countries."

"But the bad news is that the

Compiled By

Vidhyapati Mishra

international community still has a long way to go in resolving the plight of millions of internally displaced people in places like Darfur, Uganda and the Democratic Republic of Congo," Guterres added. "While we have helped hundreds of thousands of internally displaced people go home in Liberia, the Russian Federation, the Balkans and elsewhere, millions more are still living like refugees within their own borders. They need much more help than they currently get, and

UNHCR's Report: World Refugee Day 2006

UNHCR intends to do its share."

The 6.6 million internally displaced people for whom UNHCR already works represent 32 percent of the total population of concern (20.8 million) to the agency, second only to refugees at 40 percent. The remaining 28 percent in the agency's 2005 count includes returned refugees and returned displaced (1.6 million); asylum seekers (773,000); stateless people (2.4 million); and "various" such as those unable to apply for asylum despite being in need of protection (960,000). UNHCR's figures do not include 4.3 million Palestinian refugees who fall under the responsibility of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA).

The vast majority of the world's uprooted people remain in developing nations. The 2005

statistics show five nationalities accounting for nearly half of the total population of concern to UNHCR: Afghans (2.9 million); Colombians (2.5 million); Iraqis (1.8 million); Sudanese (1.6 million); and Somalis (839,000). With more than 2 million internally displaced, Colombia hosted the largest population of uprooted people of concern to UNHCR, followed by Iraq (1.6 million), Pakistan (1.1 million), Sudan (1 million) and Afghanistan (912,000).

Although Afghanistan remained the source of the largest number of refugees — 1.9 million in 72 asylum countries — the overall total of Afghan refugees fell by 21 percent last year because of an ongoing repatriation program that has seen more than 4.6 million people go home since 2002. UNHCR repatriation operations also accounted for declines in the numbers of Burundi refugees (down 10 percent) and Liberian refugees (down 31 percent). Of the 1.1 million refugees who went home last year, 752,000 went to Afghanistan, 70,000 to Liberia, 68,000 to Burundi, 56,000 to Iraq and 54,000 to Angola. In all, there were 15 UNHCR repatriation operations involving at least 1,000 refugees last year.

The number of people seeking asylum or appeals last year totaled 668,000 in 149 countries, down 2 percent over 2004 when 680,000 applications were lodged globally. Most were registered in Europe (374,000), Africa (125,000), Asia-Pacific (75,000), and the Americas (72,000).

shouldn't ignore the sentiments of those who like to get repatriated for establishing democracy inside Bhutan" Founding Coordinator Ganga Neopane said. HUORO, DNC, Region number five under District Eight, CPB (MLM) Committee including most of the exile Bhutanese organizations have opposed it.

Gopal Gurung said, the decision is out of imagination. Claiming that there is no future in such option he said "how dare is it to ignore the priority based option i.e. repatriation". Voice for Change-women and family group has considered it a normal matter due to 16 years of unimproved camp lives. "UNHCR on the other hand

Abraham.....

just a body that helps to fulfill wants and desires of refugees remaining under the UN norms and values. He urged UNHCR to rather enroll and deal with shortage of facilities.

Bhutan People's Party (BPP) also stands as an opposing force for UNHCR package. Talking to TBR, Spokesperson

Possible Support.....

Similarly, human rights leader Tek Nath Rizal expressing heartfelt thanks to SAHR and Nepal Civil Society said, refugee problem was not evolved due to willingness. "It was a compellation for us as government totally exercised inhuman

acts' he added. Rizal strongly opposed resettlement package recently brought-up by UNHCR.

Other refugee representatives Menuka Nepal, Parshu Ram Nepal, HUORO Chairman S.B.Subba addressing the program made aware of current developments in camps. Partici-

pants including senior leader Jhala Nath Khanal of Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-UML), Journalist Bharat Bhurtel, INSEC Chairman, Subod Raj Pyakurel and other senior Civil Society Members assured refugees of the possible help for repatriation.

Int'l Coverage On Bhutanese Issues

Relocation Proposal Rejected

Biswajyoti Das
Guwahati, June

Bhutanese refugees languishing in camps in Nepal rejected a proposal by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to resettle them in other countries to resolve their plight.

The UNHCR representative in Nepal, Abraham Abraham, this month proposed relocating more than 100,000 refugees from eastern Nepal to third countries if their repatriation did not come through. "We are not happy with it because we are trying hard for our repatriation," Thinley Penjore, leader of the Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee, told Reuters by phone.

"With the third country resettlement programme, we fear

losing our national identity and right to return to Bhutan." In the early 1990s, the king of Bhutan stripped hundreds of ethnic Nepalis of their citizenship and threw them out of the Himalayan country after they complained of racial discrimination and campaigned for democracy.

Now that the king of Bhutan, Jigme Singye Wangchuck, has slowly begun pushing his isolated kingdom towards democracy, the refugees want to return and vote in elections scheduled for 2008.

"We may have lived in the camps for many years, but still we have not forgotten our homeland where we have left behind our close relatives, including our aged parents and properties," Penjore said.

Source: Reuters

ABRSU Protested against Absolute Monarch

Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, May-June

All Bhutan Revolutionary Students' Union (ABRSU) student wing of Communist Party of Bhutan (MLM) in Goldhap Camp organized a protest against absolute Bhutanese monarch on June 25.

Some thousands of exile Bhutanese from all different camps showed active participation in the demonstration. They marched around the camp chanting anti-monarch slogans. Central leader of CPB-MLM addressing the mass said that this party has been holding massive preparation to end the absolute monarchy in the country. Student leaders also informed that their programs are almost limited inside Bhutan not in camps. They demand Nepalese government not to obstruct them while they launch peaceful protest series in Nepal. ABRSU have already warned refugee students studying below grade 10 not

to get admission in local boarding schools. During the program, Bhutanese artists performed cultural shows by dancing with fake weapons.

Maoist had held similar program in Goldhap some weeks ago. They have been launching campaign programs in all camps urging students and camp based teachers to extend possible support. Comrade 'Nabin' who denied revealing his position in Party, talking to TBR claimed that more than ten thousands people actively participated in their recent program in Sanisshare camp.

Similarly, Bhutanese Maoists have formally formed three members Dungkhag Committee of Region number five under District eight including 'Aviskar' and 'Pradip' in an unknown place, sources from the new committee informed TBR. CPB-MLM has been seen active in campaign programs outside camps as well where even party cadres from inside Bhutan have shown participation.

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