

THE BHUTAN

R E P O R T E R

Volume II No 22, August 2006

Monthly Newspaper for Private Circulation

Pages 4, Rs 4/-

HIGHLIGHT

Bhutanese Demonstrate Against Third Country Settlement

Hundreds of exiled Bhutanese organized demonstrations against the recent proposal of the UNHCR to resettle some of the refugees in third country on Sunday.

Saying that the proposal as ploy against their future, women, children, youth and elderly people from Pathari of Morang district carried out a rally chanting slogans against the agency. They also blocked the east-west Mahendra Highway for about an hour.

A day before Assistant High Commissioner for Refugees (Operations) Judy Cheng-Hopkins had announced to resettle 16 women and girls, who were raped or torture victims and orphan, in Canada and the US.

Addressing the mass, youths said that they wanted to return to their homeland not go to a third country and claimed that the move will benefit the Bhutanese regime, as it would create a rift among them rather than resolving the problem.

They have urged Nepal government to annul the exit visas for those 16 persons.

EU Express Concerns

European parliament mission in Nepal visit has expressed concern over the increasing uncertainty of future of the Bhutanese and Tibetans living as refugees in Nepal.

Addressing a press meet in the Nepali capital, Kathmandu, on Friday at the end of six-day long visit to Kathmandu, leader of the European Parliament Monitoring Mission to Nepal, Neena Gill, expressed EU's concerns towards the fate of more than 100,000 exiled Bhutanese who live in camps since 1991 and the problems faced by the Tibetan refugees.

"Members called for immediate action, at both domestic and international levels on those issues and are prepared to take up the concerns of those people to the appropriate level," the statement said.

BRDSCC Seeks Resettlement Nepal Police Arrests Agitating Bhutanese Including a Journalist

Desvakta Mishra
Kathmandu, July 5

At the time when exile Bhutanese have been continuing sit-in protest in front of UN House and SAARC secretariat seeking help for repatriation, the Bhutanese Refugee Durable Solution Coordination Committee (BRDSCC) has sought for unlocking all possible options for solution to refugee crisis on July 4.

In an interaction program organized at Hotel Himalaya, Lalitpur by BRDSCC, spokesperson Hari Adhikari Bangaley said there are many people in camps who do not like to be repatriated. He, however, did mention what number of people falls in this category. He also said BRDSCC has not seen possibility of getting repatriated through only efforts of futile bilateral talks between Nepal and Bhutan. "We have seen some countries that are willing to share our burden. It's late and if we still linger in repatriation, it may complicate the issue and further deteriorate our future" he added.

Coordinator of Association of Human Rights Activists (AHURA-Bhutan), Ratan Gajmer said he saw no other ways than opting resettlement. Gajmer claimed repatriation was impossible. Emphasizing that establishing democracy in Bhutan would not be feasible staying in Nepal, he said "frontline leaders should understand the ground reality as all people in camps are not willing to repatriate."

Tek Bir Chhetri strongly supported BRDSCC package and stressed for combined work of BRDSCC with other Bhutanese leaders and organizations. General Secretary of Association of Press Freedom Activists (APFA) Bhutan, Vidhyapati Mishra sought attention of BRDSCC towards making public aware of the consequences of resettlement. He said "Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC),

Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, July 24

Nepal police arrested 16 agitating Bhutanese from the SAARC secretariat on July 24 who were demonstrating against the UNHCR decision of resettling 16 vulnerable Bhutanese in Canada and the US. Police also arrested the Special Correspondent of the Bhutan News Service and The Bhutan Reporter monthly Thakur P Mishra who was collecting news on the spot.

According to Mishra, seven out of 16, including at least six women, were kept in Kamalpokhari Ward Police Station and nine others were kept in Durbar Marg Ward Police Station. The agitators who staged protest in front of the

SAARC gate were forcefully dragged onto police van using excessive force.

They chanted anti-UNHCR slogans even after they were arrested. Majority of them are reported to have been victim of police torture while arresting. Police at Kamalpokhari told Bhim Bahadur Adhikari, who has severe chest pain due to police using excessive force, to get admission in hospital on his own effort.

Meanwhile, issuing press statement Association of Press Freedom Activists (APFA) Bhutan has strongly condemned police repression on peaceful protest. APFA has sought serious attention of the Nepal government for the arrest of the demonstrators

along with its Central Committee member Thakur P Mishra. The association also urged the Nepal government not to intervene on peaceful protest programs in the future.

The arrested Bhutanese were later released in the evening on the same day.

Earlier, Nepal police arrested 14 refugees from the same spot and were released later.

Participants staging indefinite sit-in protest in front of the SAARC secretariat and the UN office since June 2 have complained Bhutan News Service that currently there are no one to lead the protest. Tek Nath Rizal is in Pokhara for his health treatment while other leaders are out of Kathmandu.

Nepalese MPs Object Third Country Settlement

Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, July 24

Members of the Nepal's House of Representatives raised serious concerns over the government's "reported" consent to resettle exiled Bhutanese in third country.

Speaking during the special hour of the House session on Sunday, Nepali Congress MP Shiva Kumar Basnet said it was against the interest of the Bhutanese people and injustice to them if the government agrees for

third country resettlement without consulting Bhutanese themselves.

"The government's agreement to resettle the refugees in third country means direct support to Bhutan's royal regime," Basnet was quoted by the Nepalese newspapers as saying.

Another NC member Dilli Raj Sharma said it will be against Bhutan's democratic movement to agree to resettle Bhutanese in a third country.

which stresses repatriation, should also clarify about possible challenges after repatriation".

On the occasion, camp secretaries briefed the frustrating developments in camps about the repatriation and depleting future. They said they were warned by some groups not to participate the programme.

Head of National Unit for Coordination of Refugee Affairs (NUCRA) Kabi Raj Khanal, Nepal Red Cross Society (NRCS) representative Kedar Babu Dhungana, Human Rights Organization of Nepal (HURON) member Abi Keshar Oli, former member of National Human Rights Commission of Nepal Pro Kapil Shrestha and representative of South Asian forum for Human Rights (SAFHR) addressed the programme.

Pro Shrestha supported the concept of resettlement and assured BRDSCC that Nepalese

Contd in page 3

Bhutan and India Ink Trade Agreement

Bhutan News Service
New Delhi, Aug 02

Bhutan and India signed a new ten-year agreement that gives the Himalayan kingdom four more entry and exit points. The pact also simplifies procedures for import and export between the two countries.

Bhutan's Minister for Trade, Industry and Power Lyonpo Yeshey Zimba and Indian Trade Minister Kamal Nath inked the new agreement, which replaces a previous Agreement on Trade and Commerce signed in 1995 that expired in March this year.

The four more entry and exit points will help Bhutanese good have access to the port cities of Mumbai in the west

and Chennai in the south. There already existed 12 entry points. The other two are land routes, namely Phulbari and Dawki.

According to press statement, the new pact also allows movement of goods from one part of Bhutan to another through Indian territory by giving a transit declaration in a prescribed form.

The two countries also signed two hydro-electric power deals, with target of Bhutan's power export to 5,000 MW by 2020.

This will boost the economic growth of Bhutan alongside helping India to meet increasing demands of power in recent years.

pdfMachine

Is a pdf writer that produces quality PDF files with ease!

Produce quality PDF files in seconds and preserve the integrity of your original documents. Compatible across nearly all Windows platforms, if you can print from a windows application you can use pdfMachine.

Get yours now!

Hear Them

The government of Nepal has recently banned the movements of exiled Bhutanese from camps in Jhapa in accusation that their demonstration against the third country settlement program of the UNHCR disrupted vehicular travel along the highway.

Obviously, the restriction is against the humanitarian law and international conventions. There are no adequate reasons that the government can ban their travel. Bhutanese have rights to express their feelings and protest against what they don't like.

Banning of demonstrations and restriction of travel meant forcing them to accept the proposal of third country settlement. It is the Bhutanese who should determine their future course, and neither Nepal nor the UNHCR. Though, the proposal by the refugee agency itself is not negative, compelling Bhutanese to accept it against their will is violation international laws and 1951 refugee convention. We urge the Nepal government and the UNHCR to hear the voice of people from ramshacks.

The government of Nepal has come to the power after the democratic movement. In that sense, Nepal government must respect the democratic rights of Bhutanese. Imposition of forceful measures is the means to suppress only the physical activities but it further encourages for burst into more uncontrollable situation. Since UNHCR and the Nepal government have repeatedly stressed for peace in the camps, acts of suppression and intimidation should end.

Everyone has right to express.

Hopkins Says Refugees Crisis is Getting an End

For the second time, a top UNHCR official assured Bhutanese refugees in the eastern districts of Jhapa and Nepal that the one-and-half decade long impasse could be coming to an end.

Talking to refugees in Beldangi II camp in Jhapa on Thursday, assistant high commissioner of the refugee agency's operation department, who is also the assistant secretary general of the United Nations, Judy Cheng-Hopkins told that refugees need to be patient to help UNHCR find permanent solution of the crisis.

Hopkins repeated the UNHCR's stand that all three options floated by the agency should be made open to facilitate the solution of the crisis at the earliest possible. The refugee agency has been advocating on three options – repatriation, integration in host country or third country settlement – of the refugees. Most of the refugees and their leaders strongly criticized the idea of the agency, some asking Nepal government and the UN to send back UNHCR Nepal representative Abraham Abraham. They accuse that Indian interests play in the UNHCR's idea with the presence of Abraham in Nepal since he is Indian by origin.

"Please have faith in us. We are doing everything we can to bring your plight to the attention of the international community," Hopkins told more than 18,000 refugees leaders and representatives in Beldangi.

After hearing refugee leaders say people in Beldangi-I refugee camp are "depressed" and "frustrated," spending 15 or 16 years in the camp with no realistic prospect of going home, Hopkins said: "We are well aware of your frustrations, and we really,

really hope that in the not too distant future we will be able to solve a good many of your problems."

She said she was reassured by her talks with the Nepalese government that the refugee issue is given priority.

Amid rumours of radicalisation of youth in the camps, Hopkins appealed to the refugee leaders to maintain peace and calm to avoid spoiling their chances of repatriation, local integration or resettlement.

There are mixed reactions from the refugee community about the idea of opening all options floated by the refugee agency. Hari Bangale, one of the leaders of Appeal Movement Coordination Council (AMCC) peace march organised by the refugees in 1996 in their attempt to enter Bhutan peacefully and voluntarily, says since it was certain that all refugees cannot go back to Bhutan, other options should remain opened. Human rights activist Ratan Gazmere has also given positive note to the UNHCR idea.

But Tek Nath Rizal and other leaders strongly oppose the idea of integration in Nepal or third country settlement. "The only option is repatriation. Others are bogus," Rizal says.

General Secretary of Bhutan National Democratic Party (BNDP) Hari Adhikari, who is also the former member of Bhutan's National Assembly, wrote in the latest issue of Nepal weekly that Bhutan government have already begun the design of further expulsion of ethnic Nepalis from Bhutan saying their relatives in Nepal have got opportunity to go America or Europe. He fears further expulsion of Nepalis from India and Bhutan if Nepal accepts the idea of third country settlement of the refugees.

Leaders Indifferent, People Confused (Survey)

Kathmandu, July 24: More than five dozen exiled Bhutanese have been organizing sit-in program in front of the UN House in Lalitpur since June 2. A back-up sit-in has also been staged at the SAARC secretariat. However, people back in camps are confused with the mission and future strategy of the programme. Nine sector heads from Beldangi-II camp and the Deputy Camp Secretary of the camp have come to Kathmandu to evaluate the strength and possible outcomes of the programme on July 18. Before leaving for Beldangi, they talked to the Bhutan News Service on variety of issues. Excerpts:

Parbati Biswa, Deputy Camp Secretary, Beldangi-II

I saw the programme and am confident that the movement is going in the right track. However, there is no unity among the leaders in exile. But, I saw no fruitful results from this programme yet from this program.

D. B. Monger, Sector head 'C'

I knew that President of Bhutan People's Party Balaram Poudel is the one to make plans and strategy of the sit-in program. Now he is in Birtamode. There is no unity among the Bhutanese leaders. I saw seen no possibility of repatriation till leaders remain divided. Now I'm sad

because donation by the public has gone to vain.

Nandalal Dhakal, Sector head, 'D'

I knew that the steering of movement is turning to wrong direction. This is all because of ideological differences among seven camp secretaries. However, I can say this movement will be able to hit the target. Leaders are trying get into unity.

Ash B. Tamang, Sector head 'H'

This movement will make a success but we must extend strong support and solidarity. I knew that BMSC itself is inactive and it does not allow others to work freely. People in camps should activate it.

Tara Nidhi Phuyel, Sector head 'E'

I knew that Tek Nath Rizal has no vision. There are no strong strategies for movement. Everything is done is hitting around the bush. There should be massive changes in the movement strategies to make it successful. It has clearly been noted that Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee is trying to sideline/isolate Rizal. What I heard in the camps is correct; the movement has not taken any step into progressive phase. It is lazing where it was. If it continues the same way, there are no

reasons to be optimistic for repatriation. Everybody should clearly understand all Bhutanese in camps are not in a position to support the movement. The sentiments of the young generation should also be respected for its success.

Despite difference among the refugee leaders, UNHCR continue to lobby for third country settlement. This is contrasting to the assurance given by UNHCR chief Sadako Ogata during her visit in May 2000. Addressing refugees in Beldangi on May 2, Ogata had said Bhutan was ready to take them back very soon.

Fueled by the warning of donors round table conference held in November that year in Thimphu to stop assistance, Bhutan agreed with the Nepal government for verification, categorization and repatriation of refugees who were identified as original Bhutanese. However, the process come to a complete halt with a simple issue that refugees hurled stones to the Bhutanese verification officials in Khudunabari camp while declaring the verification results of the camp in December 2002.

Refugees have little hope with the assurances by Hopkins. Buddha Mani Dhakal, who edits The Bhutan Reporter monthly newspaper, says, "We have little hopes on Hopkins' statement because such assurances were not implemented in the past years."

However, prospects are positive. The new Nepal government has stated that solving Bhutanese refugee impasse is one the priority programmes for this year. Visit of Hopkins at a time refugees are staging in-front of the UN House and SAARC secretariat since 45 days urging UN to interfere into the issue, is taken positively in finding solution of the crisis.

There are over 105,000 Bhutanese refugees living in UNHCR supported camps in Jhapa and Morang since last 16 years.

Bel B. Bhattarai, Sector head 'F'

I saw no satisfactory participation in the program. I still find differences within participants and the leaders. The movement is leaving its track. Youth feeling have not been considered. The lack of unity hinders the programme. Tek Nath Rizal is committed, he has already told people in camps he will take refugees back to their home and make the Bhutanese king surrender; I believe he would do that.

Purna Monger, Sector head 'G'

I could understand nothing. I cannot exactly say whether it is in right or wrong direction. The situation very vague.

Prem Kharka, Sector head 'I'

I found improvement in sit-in program. Different people are given separate responsibilities to maintain and manage in a well manner. On the other side, I could not see any reliable point that the movement would reach a success if it continued in the same manner.

From Regime Tala Protocol Signed

**Bhutan News Service
New Delhi, July 29**

India and Bhutan signed a protocol on purchase of power from the Tala Hydroelectric Project, the largest power plant in Bhutan. Through this sale, Bhutan will earn more than Nu.4.00 billion a year.

The tariff of export has been fixed at Rs 1.80 per unit and will be increased every five years by 10 percent until the loan of about Rs.17 billion for the project is repaid. Then after, the tariff will increase by five percent every five years.

The agreement was signed in the presence of Crown Prince Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck on July 28 in New Delhi by the Minister for Trade and Industry, Lyonpo Yeshey

Zimba, of Bhutan and Minister for Power, Sushil Kumar Shinde of India.

The agreement valid for 35 years will be signed by the two nodal agencies, the Department of Energy of Bhutan's Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the PTC India Ltd in August this year.

The Tala agreement was signed on March 5, 1996, in the presence of King and the then Indian Prime Minister Narasimha Rao.

After the transmission system connecting the Tala power to the Indian grid through four circuits, it will have a substantial impact on industrial growth in India.

Crown prince is in formal week-long India visit along with His Majesty.

Christainity on the rise

Paro, July 13: Christianity has been gradually taking steps of popularity in Bhutan as more and more Bhutanese are joining the team despite government suppression.

The Christians claim that there are over 28 churches in the country at present. They are called Youth Friendship Church or Friend's Church in places like Gasa, Thimphu, Tsirang, Phuentsholing and other towns.

It has been revealed that more than Nu 8 million is distributed to Bhutanese Christians through these churches, even the high level government officials or senior members of the community get share of this donation. Most are Roman Catholics.

Members of the Christian groups include people from all communities including Lhotshampas, Sharchops, Ngalongs, Doyas and others.

Government has banned the popularization of religions except Hinduism and Buddhism. However, lately, Hindus were forced to follow the Buddhist culture. Two preachers were sentenced to 3.5 years of jail term by the authority very recently accused them of preaching Christianity in the country.

In fear of government atrocities, boards were not erected by weekend prayers and Sunday classes are run in full fledged manner. Marriage ceremonies are conducted as per the Christian system and children are tough bible without giving them information what they are taught. Kuldip, who has been Christian since seven years, said the expansion of the religion has been gaining momentum in both urban and rural areas despite government's bull-eyes.

Others religions like Sai Baba, Manav Dharma and Pranami are also getting places in the Bhutanese societies. However, as they are sects of Hinduism, they are less targeted by the government authorities. *Bhutan News Service/ Binod Sanyashi*

Two Christians released

Thimphu, August 02: Government released on July 29 two Christians who had been imprisoned on charges of proselytism. According to Christians inside the country, the released met their family on the same day.

Two persons named 'Benjamin' (Buddha Mani Dunga) and 'John' (Purna Bahadur Tamang) were arrested on January 7, this year in Paro after sharing the gospel with a non-Christian family. There was sharp criticism from international community after the court sentenced them up to 3.5 year of jail term.

Jeremy Sewall, ICC's Regional Policy Analyst for South Asia, stated, "We wish to thank everyone who prayed for these men and contacted government officials to ask for their release. This is incredibly good news." The newly drafted constitution allows preaching of Buddhism only in the kingdom. *Bhutan News Service/Sangey Ondrey*

VfC Welcomes UNHCR Decision

**Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, July 28**

Just after a day, the UNHCR issued statement defending exit visas to 16 Bhutanese refugees, the Voice for Change, one of the Bhutanese organizations, has formally welcomed the position taken by the UNHCR.

A press release issued by the organization states that it was pleased with the flexibility shown by the Nepalese government to look for alternative solutions and grant exit visas to the 16 vulnerable exiled Bhutanese to be resettled in the third country.

Furthermore, the statement has said the result of futile bilateral talks has indicated that repatriation is not only the feasible option for every Bhutanese to keep waiting for another decade for solution. 'Although repatriation would be the primary solution for all Bhutanese, there are now fewer prospects left for all Bhutanese to return home in the immediate future and the situation demands exploring all options. The UNHCR's proposal of third country resettlement would be ideal package for those who see no prospect of repatriation and feasibility of integration in Nepal', the statement reads.

The organization also claimed that it has been extending support for durable solution to Bhutanese refugee crisis since the initiatives taken by the Bhutanese Refugees Representative Repatriation Committee (BRRRC) in October 2004.

It said, due to the long stay under the ramshack huts, people have almost dashed their lives towards miserable climax. They have been facing scarcity of basic needs. "As mothers, we cannot leave our children without basic right to identity and want to see them design and mend their future," it stated.

It has also requested responsible authorities and individuals in Nepal to take timely measures to speed up the process to find comprehensive solution to the protracted problem.

Earlier, National Front for Democracy (NFD), Bhutan People's Party (BPP) and Bhutanese Refugee Representative Repatriation Committee (BRRRC) strongly

Exile Voice Camps Turn Into Open Jails

**Bhutan News Service
Beldangi, August 02**

The local administration in Jhapa district has restricted exiled Bhutanese from venturing out of their camps effective from Tuesday.

Bhutanese had been launching agitation and protest programs in and around the camps demanding early repatriation and plans of the UNHCR to resettle them in the third country.

Following the requests from the civil society leader of Nepal and in agreement with the UNHCR, the local authority decided to ban Bhutanese from going out of their camps. A clash that occurred between Bhutanese and locals during protest programs also

prompted the administration to take such a step.

The District Administration Office on Tuesday sent a circular to the Refugee Coordination Unit in all the camps directing it that people do not come out of the camps. Following the orders, movement of people in camps has been closely observed.

Though there is provision of 'out pass' for them if they want to go out of camps for the past two years, the people rarely take the passes.

The unit is expected to impose the provision of out pass strictly after this incident.

The administration has also asked the exiled Bhutanese to limit their demonstrations within the camp premises.

Two Drowned

Kedar Niroula

Birtamode, July 29: At least two Bhutanese including a child died and few others severe injured when a jeep carrying passengers more than its capacity fell down into Biring River on July 26.

The river is eight kilometers away from Khudunabari camp.

Laxmi Pokhrel, 6, and Dilli Ram Bharati, 43, of Khudunabari were drowned to the river while they were returning from Birtamode. The dead bodies were recovered from the bank of river with the help of police and local people.

Laxmi, the youngest daughter of Yoga Nath Pokhrel is a registered Bhutanese of Khudunabari, Sector A/4, hut no. 41 while Dilli Ram Bharati is the father of six children from the same camp. Bharati had been working as a labor in Birtamode.

Khudunabari camp is located at 18 kilometers north of the Mahendra Highway. People have to cross the two big rivers namely the Tanting and the Biring to reach the camp.

Bhutanese have demanded the construction of bridge since years not initiation was taken by the Nepal government and UNHCR. Bhutanese have to face shortage of facilities in monsoon seasons due to upsurging rivers. There are reports of late referral to even pregnancy cases due in monsoon seasons.

BRDSCC Seeks Resettlement

civil society would help to bring other Bhutanese organizations and BRDSCC into common framework on this agenda. Dhungana stressed on applying diversified approaches for comprehensive solution to the impasse. He pointed out the necessity of forming a common forum to negotiate among individual Bhutanese, parties and leaders.

Tek Nath Rizal did not participate.

opposed the UNHCR decision of resettling vulnerable Bhutanese in Canada and the US. People in camps have also demonstrated against the UNHCR decision.

However, issuing a press statement on Thursday, the

Few weeks ago, UNHCR country representative in Nepal Abraham Abraham talking to media persons in Reporter's Club of Nepal had requested the Nepal government to open all options including third country resettlement and local integration. He had said UNHCR can help for resettlement but not for repatriation.

UNHCR claimed that the protests were 'orchestrated' by few leaders and that does not represent the views of the majority people.

VC is the first Bhutanese organization in exile to formally welcome such decision.

16 People Located Under UNHCR's Special Protection Policy

The announcement of relocation of the 16 exiled Bhutanese has become a hot debate at present with hundreds of Bhutanese demonstrating against it. Amidst the demonstration and strong protest by the Bhutanese United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on July 27 stated that they are taken to other countries not under its project for third country resettlement. We talked to UNHCR country representatives in Nepal Abraham Abraham at length on July 28 in our attempt to find out the essence of relocation and third country resettlement. Excerpts:

Who are these 16 people and how are they selected?

I cannot tell you the details of these people because it is not under UNHCR policy. UNHCR cannot publicise the cases of individual refugees. Strictly, this is violation of personal rights. The protection policy of this agency does not allow us to reveal the details of these persons. We have every detail of the refugees collected through our implementing partners. We have records: who have been abused, tortured, raped or given other kind of punishment? We also know whose parents have died how many of such people have been living in very miserable condition. It is not that we have selected from the application that we received. We have submitted a big list of such people and these 16 are selected after thorough investigation by the resettlement countries. The relocation of the 16 individuals is strictly under the UNHCR's special protection policy which implies only to those who cannot live in camp environment any more. The relocation is not part of the comprehensive solution of the refugee crisis but an initiation to give special protection to most vulnerable people in the camps.

How will they be resettled?

UNHCR will make arrangements for their exit permits and others requisites until they land in the airport. The concerned organisations or individuals who have given

their commitments to take care of these people will pick them up from the airport itself. They will have full access to UNHCR at any time remaining under conditions of the land's law. They will be given residential status by the host countries if the refugees wish but they can also return to their country denying residential permits given. UNHCR officers or the partner organisations will visit them regularly to know how they are living, what difficulties are they facing, what more things they want, if they have access to adequate education or health facilities. The process will continue until they are fully integrated with that society.

You said demonstrations in camps are encouraged by a few leaders. But thousands have come to the streets. What proof you have?

I cannot name the persons who led the demonstrations but our informants have given us clear information that people in the camp have been forced to take part in the demonstrations. In our closer observations, it has been revealed that all people taking part in those demonstrations were not willing to be involved.

We have proofs that all people does not like to be repatriated, which is either not possible. Bhutan has been trying to delay the process and Nepal government has not been able to give a fruitful result out of the bilateral negotiation with Bhutan. Nepal neither has indicated that the Bhutanese will be integrated here itself. At the same time, UNHCR cannot help in all these process because it is not part of it. The only thing we can do is to talk to resettlement countries and try to solve the problem at the earliest possible.

So, we try those options which we can do. The individual refugee should be given right to choose his or her future. We are talking about individual rights. We take care of individuality. I have received more than 10 thousand appeals urging for solution: some seeking third country resettlement and others

seeking any option that UNHCR finds suitable.

Why don't you discuss the matter with the refugee leaders?

Sorry, I am not mandated to hold discussion with political leaders. I cannot go this leader and present my idea and if that person rejects it, go to another. I should not get an approval from them. UNHCR respects individual refugees. We talked to general public in camps, we talked to people who have made appeal to us and we have talked to those leading persons who came here for discussion. If they want us to help, let them come here. They should come here for their cause, we cannot go to individual persons asking his or her opinions.

What do you find the role of India in solving the crisis?

Obviously, India has greater role to play and it can do that. What India has assured us is that if repatriation takes place, it will provide all technical, physical, financial and human resources support for settling refugees in their land. If you my earlier press releases, I have repeatedly highlighted the role of India as important in the process of solving this crisis.

Is the UNHCR carrying on with mission to send refugees to west?

No. I love repatriation and it is the first priority of UNHCR as well. We will be most happy if the refugees are repatriated. But, as I said, as we are not part of the process till this date, we cannot help it. The only thing we could do is talk to western countries who have signed the UNHCR convention, and asked them to help resettle the refugees. Please, don't think UNHCR boycotts repatriation. We are ready to help in any form the refugee crisis gets solved. We have discussed at large with those resettlement countries and they have agreed. If time lapsed and new refugees appear on the other part of the world, these countries would certainly divert their interests and financial support to those new ones.

Jhapolis Say no For Bhutanese to Work Outside Camps

Bhutan News Service

Jhapa, July 2

Jhapolis have demanded that the exiled Bhutanese should not be allowed to work in various local offices of donor agencies or enter the local labour market in search of works.

An all-party committee of the local people instituted a few days ago handed over an appeal to Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister K. P. Oli on Sunday while he was in Jhapa tour. The locals demanded for recruitment of unemployed locals instead of refugees in the donor agencies and creation of employment opportunities in other sectors in the refugee affected areas. They said Bhutanese should not be allowed to come out of their camps.

The villagers have been protesting against the local authority for allowing the exiled Bhutanese work in local outside the camps.

A member of the committee Hom Bahadur Karki was quoted by a Nepalese daily saying that it was illegal for Bhutanese to come out of the camp and work as they have not been given permission to work by the government.

It has not been known how many Bhutanese come out of camps to work in the locality including those in donor agencies. Few years ago, the locals had carried out similar campaigns but failed when the agencies denied recruiting locals due to language constraints and other difficulties. It has been proclaimed that the inclusion of local in the projects will be ineffective because they lack command in English.

Illiterate Bhutanese work in low wages and this has forced the Nepalese people living on wages to be displaced from their place of work. However, most of the Bhutanese work in local boarding schools. Local leaders and senior civil society members concern that the boarding schools will be hit hard if Bhutanese were expelled out of schools. Though the local people forced the school administration not to recruit Bhutanese as teachers, the boarding school administration desire to employ Bhutanese than Nepalese though Bhutanese teachers demand higher payment than Nepalese.

Similarly, the meeting of villagers held in Sanichare Morang on Saturday decided to expel all the Bhutanese working outside the camp and not to allow them further to come out of the camp to work.

In midst of these, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been pressurizing the Nepal Government to provide work permit to the Bhutanese.

BNS correspondent gets award

Yadhu N Neupane
Beldangi, June 28

Bhutan Press Union (BPU) awarded BHN correspondent Dadi Ram Antim with 'Best of Bhutanese Journalist 2005' with cash Rs 1,818 and a merit certificate for his contribution in Bhutanese media.

Dadi Ram was given away the awarded amidst a function where BPU president C. N. Timsina, senior local Nepalese journalist and Bhutanese leaders attended it.

Dadi Ram, Beldangi II extension correspondent of The Bhutan Reporter monthly since October 2004 and Bhutan News Service is a reporter to Jagaran, a Nepali fortnightly of Nepali Sahitya Parishad Bhutan, as well.

Talking to Bhutan News Service Dadi Ram said that his career would not be disturbed whatsoever obstacles arise.

BPU gives away the award each year to one journalist in exile who makes good contribution in the field of journalism. *Bhutan News Service/*

Published By I. P Adhikari for Bhutan Media Society with financial and technical support of APFA-Bhutan.

Post Box 8975, EPC 2377 Kathmandu Nepal. Email: editbr@yahoo.co.uk or editor@apfanews.com URL: <http://www.apfanews.com>

Beldangi I: Dilip Rai, Ganga Bishwa; **Beldangi II:** Tek Nath Mishra, Pabi Rai, Bhim Kattel; **Beldangi III:** Dadi Ram Antim, Tara Man Khanal; **Goldhap:** Tika Ram Adhikari; **Timai:** Khem Adhikari; **Khudunabari:** Tri Bikram Adhikari; **Sanichare:** Yadav Neupane, Ravi Chandra Dhungana, Hira Lal Adhikari; **Damak:** Ratna Khadka, Jeetan Subba; **Birtamod:** Kedar Niraula, Puspa Lal Adhikari; **Bhadrapur:** Shanti Ram Adhikari; **Itahari/Biratnagar:** Devi Charan Pokhrel, Nanda Lal Bhandari; **Bhutan:** Binod Sanyashi, Sangey Oendray; **India:** Ganga Adhikari

pdfMachine

Is a pdf writer that produces quality PDF files with ease!

Produce quality PDF files in seconds and preserve the integrity of your original documents. Compatible across nearly all Windows platforms, if you can print from a windows application you can use pdfMachine.

Get yours now!