

## Leaders vow their stance towards repatriation

**TBR Correspondent  
Damak-December**

Exiled Bhutanese leaders have repeated their stance for a dignified repatriation of the Bhutanese citizens.

Speaking at an interaction organized by the Bhutan Women's Development Association in Uurlabadi on Monday and central member of the Bhutan Human Rights Organization D. S. Kafley stressed that cooperation and support of all the political

parties and people in Nepal and India was essential for the dignified repatriation of the exiled Bhutanese.

General Secretary of the Association, Ambika Kafley said the exiled Bhutanese want to return to their country and asked the international community to support their wish.

Meanwhile, Australian Ambassador to Nepal Graeme Lade visit the camps on Monday. On the occasion, he said that the government of Australia would provide support as much as possible to resolve the problem. Talking to exiled Bhutanese in Beldangi-I camp, Lade assured for Australian support to the proposal put forward by the government of Nepal in order to resolve the protracted problem.

On the occasion, the Lade also inspected the census and relief distribution works taking place at the camp.

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### HRH gets honorary doctorate

His Royal Highness the Crown Prince, Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, was honoured with an honorary doctorate degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics by the Rangsit University in Thailand on November 26. The event coincided with the convocation ceremony of the university.

According to the university's Director of Public Relations Office, the University Council had unanimously agreed to confer an Honorary Doctorate Degree in recognition of His Royal Highness's substantial contributions in leadership and national development in Bhutan. BNS

#### Head count completes in Beldangi-I

The official registration of the exiled Bhutanese in Beldangi-I, which started from November 15 ended up on December 8.

According to interviewee, the census of Beldangi-II would commence. A UNHCR office said that census in Beldangi-II would start from December 18. It would take at least two weeks complete re-registration in this biggest camp. BNS

#### US envoy to Nepal Visits Camps

**Bhutan News Service  
Beldangi, November**

US envoy to Nepal James F Moriarty urged the exiled Bhutanese to take up the US proposition of resettling them to a third country as an "opportunity".

The US envoy who was in Beldangi, Jhapa on a field trip, told the exiled Bhutanese must reap the benefit by accepting the resettling proposal as an opportunity.

This is the first visit by Moriarty to the camp after the United States put forward the proposal to resettle up to 60,000 Bhutanese.

Calling the offer "an opportunity for them who had been living a sub-human life for the last 16 years", Moriarty said that the United States has always wished to have exiled Bhutanese's problems resolved.

Similarly, Danish Ambassador to Nepal, Finn Thilsted too

**Contd in page 2**

#### Bhutan Has New King

### Jigme Singye Wangchuck abdicates throne

**Special Correspondent  
Thimphu, December**

His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck abdicated the throne on December 9, formally announced on Thursday, December 14, at the age of 51.

HRH Trongsa Penlop Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck has succeeded his father.

On Thursday, in a special meeting of the sitting of Council of Minister (Lhengye Zhuntshog) in presence of National Assembly Speaker Dasho Ugyen Dorjee, Chief Justice Sonam Tobgye, and Chief Election Commissioner Dasho Kuenzang Wangdi, King announced that he has handed over the full responsibilities to Khesar with effect from December 9. It is claimed that he step down to make ways for the new king



Royal Kasho in full during his address. In it, the king expressed his gratitude to clergy, business community, government officials, security personnel and the people for their support during his 34 years of reign and added all in these years were achieved through people's cooperation, who are guardians of the sovereign Bhutan.

BBC on Friday quoted the Kuensel editor Kinley dorji as saying that the abdication was part of hte king's plan to introduce parliamentary democracy for which the young need to get experiences to adopt with the changes.

Last year, the kind had announced to abdicate the throne by 2008 opening doors for parliamentary democracy. The draft constitution to establish democracy is under consultation.

to get as much experience before the parliamentary democracy is established in the country by 2008.

The Prime Minister Lyonpo Khandu Wangchuk informed the nation through a public addressing on Thursday evening. PM also read out the

#### Nepalese Parties to Extend Political Support

**Bhutan News Service  
Beldangi-1/December**

Representatives of eight political parties in Nepal have vowed their continued support and solidarity towards Bhutanese political movement.

In an interaction program organized by GRINSO -Nepal at hotel Radisson on Friday, Chakra Bastola of Nepali Congress said that the only solution left behind is to involve India in the talks. He said the recent US offer of third country resettlement would not help find the solution to the Bhutanese political root cause. Another speaker Suresh Ale Monger of Communist Party of Nepal (CPN-Maoists) said that this problem is created by autocratic druk regime. "As it is a political problem, our party assumes that the solution should also be grasped through political means." He said- adding "Because of the establishment of com-

munist party in Bhutan, America has proposed for relocation." Monger also said that the problem would laze where it is even if these people are taken to America. He also said that CPN-Maoists would now on prioritize the issue at its top agenda. Jhalanath Khanal of CPN-UML said that all Nepalese are against absolute druk monarch. He said the political modality should be maintained by Bhutanese people themselves. He also stressed on the national common consensus in Nepal towards resolving the impasse. Former Foreign Minister Dr. Prakash Sharan Mahat said India has an influential role. "Now Nepal should call for international support besides India's involvement in the talks" he said, adding- "This problem should be solved within certain time framework otherwise there is no need to make people hostage inside unimproved

camps." Mahat also said that now those who want political change in Bhutan should give an option to America to bar its recent proposal of third country resettlement.

Representatives from other political parties also strongly extended their continued support and solidarity towards establishing democracy in Bhutan.

On the occasion, Indian leader Anand Swarup Verma said that the US hasn't yet officially aired the offer of third country migration. He stressed the Indian involvement in the talks. "India that has dropped these refugees via trucks near Indo-Nepal border must now allow them to use its soil to enter Bhutan."

Meanwhile, the Chairman of NFD-Bhutan Thinley Penjore presented a paper urging Nepal government to help expedite repatriation process. NFD-Bhutan has also demanded the official recognition for this Bhutanese political alliance.

Chief Editor  
'Kazi' Gautam

Editor  
Thakur P Mishra  
Publisher

IP Adhikari (APFA)  
for Bhutan Media Society

GPO Box 8975, EPC  
2377 Kathmandu, Nepal  
editbr@yahoo.co.uk  
www.apfanews.com

Editorial. . . .

## Bhutan! protect HR

*The International Human Rights day this year brought no charms in the faces of Bhutanese within the country and in exile in their longing for respect of human rights by the Bhutanese rulers.*

*While the country has been moving towards democratization, as the king wished so, respect to human rights and international humanitarian laws is essential for a country like Bhutan to present itself as the democratic state. Unfortunately, not events in Bhutan this year marked the international human rights day.*

*Bhutan is the state party to Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) since its admission to the UN. In terms of its commitment to implementation of the UDHR, it has become easier said than done for the autocrats. The Bhutan government and the Bhutanese ruler failed to integrate the necessity of protecting the rights of its citizens as the state responsibility.*

*Bhutan must initiate steps to institutionalize the human rights and protect the rights of the citizens without differences of caste, creeds or ethnicity, provided it is committed to UDHR. The rulers must include the fundamental principles of human rights in the constitution before it is adopted and all the bias laws of the land must be declared null and void. An independent national commission must be set up to monitor the human rights abuse by the state party.*

## Bhutan absconding from repatriation

The Bhutanese refugee impasse is progressively stepping towards complication. Gradually, it is attracting individual refugee and well-wishers into hot debate. This decade-and-half years of pending issue has been one of the biggest burdens for South Asia. Even the world community is unreceptive to the dilemma. The long stay in the unimproved camps under the plastic canopy with hesitant future has multiplied aggravations and dejections within individual refugee. The final hopes have once again revived after the news stating the announcement regarding 16th round of Nepal-Bhutan talk was publicized.

### Repatriation Vs Resettlement

Citing the unfeasibility of early repatriation, the US and few other countries and the refugees' chief aiding agency, UNHCR have almost begun hinting the package of third country settlement. Countries such as the Netherlands, Canada, and Switzerland are well-ahead to back the dealings of relocation. However, it is not yet made public about the procedures, pros and cons about resettlement. Indeed, the UNHCR's slow poisoning towards making refugees forced to opt for only one option is against international laws related to human rights.

Since the time when relocation package is brought-up it provoked faction within refugees; individual's opinion can be distinctly seen divided into different forms. The literate youths' circles are running behind third country resettlement. The other elderly, illiterate groups are still willing to get repatriated as they say they have sweated a lot to bring Bhutan into present state. A query, why America despite exerting pressure over Druk dictator to take back its citizens, is encouraging these refugees in allowing the US land to relocation, always remain hidden. The core group comprising 14 big world's democratic countries' joint effort for repatriation would pave a way for discouraging absolute monarchy towards further suppression inside Bhutan.

Leading political and apolitical organizations existing in exile have repeatedly criticized such moves claiming

this option would not give entire justice to refugees. The other interesting fact is that groupism in camps has begun to anti-campaign about leaders stand towards only repatriation. This proves that right to choose any options should be given to refugees unconditionally.

### Nepal's Fallacy

Nepal waited for the solution depending upon the futile bilateral talks between the two Himalayan nations, which held one after the other in Kathmandu and Thimphu. This is the biggest and uncorrectable mistake that Nepal did amidst refugees' appeal to involve India in the talks. These talks' unfruitful outcomes resulted into frustration and mental depression within refugees. Perhaps, it wouldn't be mistaken to say that India, the chief vigor to solve the issue, remained inert for the past 16 years. However, Indo-Bhutan Treaty of 1949 hands over the foreign policy control to India.

Nepal always stands flexible in its policy and situate towards the imbroglia. It would be better if Nepal could clearly and urgently make public about government stance and policy towards Bhutanese refugee issue to bar ideological differences and internal divergence within refugees. There will be Nepal's 'diplomatic failure' if it could not step towards safe landing of the crisis before it is too late. It was Nepal which entirely lingered in two-sided talks despite internationalizing the mess during the early years when few round of talks yielded no progress. The agreement of placing refugees into four categories was another biggest fault because of which innocent, old-staged including even children at Khudunabari, one of the verified camps were put under the "Terrorist group."

### 16th round of bilateral talks

Now, it is learnt that the government of Nepal is arranging for bilateral talks with Bhutan. This would be 16th attempt to find amicable solution to the prolonged refugee stalemate through bilateral talks. Refugees including their well-wishers are ea-

ger towards this talk as it is going to be held after a long gap and amidst confusing state. In fact, Bhutan at hand is having more risks in the days ahead if it still conceals the facts that these refugees are to be repatriated without a delay. The more divided opinion it finds in refugees the more problem it generates to Bhutan.

Bhutan should clearly understand that if these refugees opt for third country resettlement and still posse a feeling of nationality, it would be at menace because those refugees would be well equipped both physically and mentally to step towards normalizing silent state terrorism inside Bhutan. The rising of communism both inside Bhutan and in refugee camps would be an additional threat to Bhutan if it cannot return these refugees to their original homestead at the earliest possible.

Nepal, on the other hand should comprehend that the refugee problem is a problem aroused between

Bhutanese government and refugees. It shouldn't abscond Bhutan in the 16th round of bilateral talks free of giving concrete, practical and justifiable decision to refugee problem. Nepal must then understand that the US is in a position to overcome onto Nepal's policy forcing refugees to accept its package in case if it fails to grasp concluding decision during the talks. The Nepali community from every corner of the world will test Nepal's eligibility towards giving entire justice to the minority Lothsampa ethnic group from Bhutan making them return homeland with honor, dignity and compensation. Furthermore, Nepal is sure to encounter similar problems in the future if these refugees are allowed to relocation in western lands. Thus, it should not go agreeing with the unnecessary conditions of concerned states or other countries. Without delay, Nepal should work towards expediting repatriation process of these refugees.

## Bhutan agrees to take back some

### Bhutan News Service Kathmandu, November

Bhutan has agreed to take back those people falling under category I and IV as per the verification by Joint Verification Team of Nepal and Bhutan government.

According to the information given by head of EU Troika team Pekka Mesto, who recently visited Bhutan, the Bhutan government has expressed its willingness to accept those falling under the two categories.

He, however, said the number of people to be ac-

cepted has not been determined.

He urged the governments of Bhutan and Nepal to solve the problem at the earliest so that the huge amount being spent to fund the exiled Bhutanese would be turned to development activities.

He said third country settlement is only an option if repatriation all exiled Bhutanese could not take place.

While in Bhutan, the EU Troika team had asked the Bhutanese government to allow the formation of political parties as soon as possible.

## US envoy to Nepal Visits..

made a request to the exiled Bhutanese not to miss the opportunity which would help them begin a new life. Thilsted also said that Denmark has been assisting the exiled Bhutanese through the UN programmes.

Speaking at the same programme, Swiss ambassador to Nepal Dominique Dreyer said that Switzerland has been providing assistance to the exiled Bhutanese in Nepal through UN programmes and thanked the United States for the resettlement proposal.

Also present during the field visit were UNHCR Nepal representative Abraham Abraham and the Finnish ambassador among other dozen diplomats. The delegation also visited the Beldangi camp where a census is being carried out to get the exact number of Bhutanese in the camp.

## UNHCR organises HIV AIDS concert

**Bhutan News Service Kathmandu, December**

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) have joined hands with the exiled Bhutanese in camps in eastern Nepal and locals to organise an awareness-raising concert commemorating the World AIDS Day on December 1, said a joint statement issued by the UNHCR and WFP November 28.

The concert, the first of its kind to take place in the camps, will convey messages to both the exiled Bhutanese and the locals of the surrounding communities on awareness and prevention of HIV/AIDS, with a particular emphasis on the importance of getting tested for HIV and knowing one's HIV

status, said the statement.

International reggae artist from the Caribbean, Jerry Julian, and his reggae band from Kathmandu will join exiled Bhutanese singers and musicians as well as local artists on stage. A mobile Voluntary Counselling and Testing unit, provided by the Association of Medical Doctors of Asia (AMDA), an implementing partner, will be on site during the concert to provide free testing services.

"HIV/AIDS is much more than just an issue facing certain communities like IV-drug users or sex workers. It is something that the government, NGOs, UN agencies, and individual citizens must fight collectively," the statement quoted Richard Ragan, WFP Representative in Nepal, as saying.

## HRW expresses concern on human rights violations in Bhutan

**T. P. Mishra Kathmandu, November**

Human Rights Watch (HRW) has shown serious concern over the unimproved camp lives of exiled Bhutanese.

In an interaction program with the Bhutanese Refugee Durable Solution Coordinating Committee (BRDSCC), one of the members of the HRW, Katinka Ridderbos said that the situation is getting deteriorated. She also stressed on the necessity of coordination between the UNHCR and the Bhutanese community.

Ridderbos, who spent eight days in camps, said no individuals undeclared as 'refugees', now scattered in different parts of Nepal, should be barred from re-registering with the UNHCR. "However, those who have already acquired the Nepalese citizenship should be discouraged" she added. She said that it would be too early to comment on the weaknesses of the UNHCR unless it completes interviewing people of Beldangi-I and some individuals are left to be addressed.

She also urged Bhutanese community to keep vigilance if any cases will be left for registering from Beldangi-I camp.

Ridderbos said that during the interaction with people in

camps most of them wished for on repatriation as the best solution. "But when I interacted with individuals, they sought for possible durable solution" she said.

She also said some of the groups are found to have been selling the forms meant to apply for third country resettlement. "This is just exploitation" she added.

She further said neither any Bhutanese Maoists nor those who support them interact with her. "It is difficult to judge their strength at present," she added.

Ridderbos, who has also met the Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister K. P. Sharma Oli on Tuesday, said that Oli was in favor of durable solution. She said Oli was clear of one of the options of durable solution lying on the table.

BRDSCC handed over an appeal urging HRW to help find durable solution at the earliest. "These exiled Bhutanese do not wish to spend another decade with the hope of getting repatriated", reads the appeal.

Meanwhile, BRDSCC has strongly condemned the acts of the Bhutanese Maoists to forcibly collect donations from people.

## Bomb explodes in Phuentsholing

Phuentsholing, December 02::A powerful bomb hidden at a petrol pump in Phuentsholing in Bhutan exploded on Saturday seriously injuring four persons, including three Indians and one Bhutanese national, officials said.

The Indo-Bhutan border had been sealed soon after the blast and the Royal Bhutan government had closed all entry gates to the Himalayan kingdom, they said.

Officials said that the blast occurred between 6.30 am and 6.45 am in a waste bin at the Bhutan Gate petrol pump adjacent to the Royal Bhutan Revenue department office in Phuentsholing, 200 metres from the Indo-Bhutan border adjacent to bordering town of Joygaon in West Bengal's Jalpaiguri district.

Three injured Indian nationals are being evacuated to the Binaguri army hospital in Jalpaiguri district, they said. High police officials from North Bengal have rushed to Joygaon, they added. The Indo-Bhutan border has been sealed and there is additional deployment of the para military force, Shastra Seema Bal (SSB), following the incident of blast, police additional DGP of Assam B P Rao reporter Press Trust of India.

He said security has been tightened along the Indo-Bhutan border, including at Samdrup Jongkar in Nalbari district, which is the entry point to the Himalayan kingdom. When asked about any insurgent outfit behind the blast, Rao said preliminary reports point out the involvement of ULFA. "But involvement of other outfits other than ULFA cannot be ruled out at this moment", he said. The Assam police, he said, has taken all precautionary measures and are in touch with the BSF and SSB in this regard, Rao said. *Bhutan News Service*

## Indian Leaders Suggest Changes in Draft Constitution

**Bhutan News Service New Delhi, November**

A conference on Bhutan's proposed constitution, democracy and exiled Bhutanese was held on November 25 at Indian International Centre, New Delhi. Jointly organized by Public Interest Legal Support and Research Centre, Indo-Bhutan Friendship society and Druk National Congress, dozens of leaders from India joined to extend support to the Bhutanese democratic struggle.

Welcoming the guests, president of Druk National Congress Rongthong Kuenle Dorji raised the reservation on the provisions in the new Election Act, which stipulate that a Member of Parliament must be a graduate. He said, "In the present system of education, a 'graduate' is exclusively referred to a western-type qualification that essentially snubs the age-old traditional Bhutanese educational system. This appears a paradox, since government, including Crown Prince, advocates on preserving the rich cultural heritage and promoting Dzongkha as a mandatory medium and Lingua Franca of Bhutan".

He raised concerns that

the environment to conduct free and fair elections is absent in Bhutan at present. However, if Article 19 (i.e. interim government provision) of the draft Constitution is implemented, then Druk National Congress demands the inclusion of an elected Councilor from Sharchopa, Lhotshampas and Naglung communities to assist Chief Justice in the interim Government. Before the run up to the elections, he said, the King must resign from his executive post.

He added the King should, under the present legal system, legislate that all Bhutanese citizens should be guaranteed freedom of speech, expression and fundamental rights as will be enshrined in the draft constitution. All laws, inconsistent with democratic practices that are in force, must also be declared null and void, he said further. "All political prisoners imprisoned during his reign, must be freed unconditionally and be allowed to participate in politics. This is essential to usher a meaningful new democratic era in Bhutan," Dorji added.

Welcoming the third country settlement proposal by the US government, he said DNC advocates for adequate compensation for the repatriated exiled Bhutanese according to

## Government media play election

**Bhutan News Service Thimphu, November 29**

Two government-censored radio stations are continuously playing five election songs. These songs are played aiming at creating awareness among voters ahead of general election.

The songs aim to motivate and inform the Bhutanese voters to come forward and participate in the electoral process with the highest sense of pride.

The election songs in local language are being aired through Bhutan Broadcasting Service and Kuzu FM Radio.

Earlier Election Commission released communication materials including Bhutan Voters' Guide and a documentary film based on electoral poll.

UN norms with equal recognition like any other Bhutanese citizen and freedom of choice.

Dr. Mahendra Lama, Dr. DNS Dhakal, Dr. Gopal Siwakoti, Praful Bidwai, presentation carried the message that the further lingering issues of the exiled Bhutanese may prove harmful to Indian security in the backdrop of Maoist triumph in Nepal.

Ravi Nair outlined the ruthlessness in Indian foreign policy execution and protection of its interest and urged exiled Bhutanese youth to shun violence for he feared that Indian security officials will do more harm than what Bhutan government has done last fifteen years.

In regard to the US offer of resettling 60,000, Ravi Nair urged fellow exiled Bhutanese to take pragmatic initiative and grasp this opportunity to escape the bleak future.

Majority of other speakers said that the present draft constitution contained enormous power to King. Satya Prakash Malaviya said that involvement of Chief Justice in interim government completely distorts the basic features of constitution - Executive, Judiciary and Legislature.

Contd in page 4



# 'We haven't objected the offer of relocation' - Poudyal

Born in October 10, 1952, Balaram Poudyal started his career as social activist. He has written books like *Bhutan Pharkanda* (upon return to Bhutan), *Bhutan: Hijo-ra-Aaja* (Bhutan: past and present), *Sobal*. He also worked as an Editor of *Bhutani Aawaj*. Currently, Poudyal leads *Bhutan Peoples' Party (BPP)* that led the political demonstration of 1990 in southern Bhutan. Poudyal is the vice chairman of *National Front for Democracy (NFD)-Bhutan* and founding member of *Peoples Forum for Human Rights Bhutan (PFHRB)*. Besides this, he is the Central Committee member of *Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC)* as well. BPP follows democratic socialism. He talked to **TP Mishra**, Editor of *TBR* on various contemporary issues. Excerpts:

**BNS: Where has arrived Bhutan's political movement?**

**Poudyal:** It is no doubt that the Bhutanese movement is getting momentum. The popular peaceful movement by the eastern and northern Bhutanese threatened the regime resulting in the reshuffling of the cabinet in 1998. At the same time, the regime hoodwinked the international community assigning six ministers in the cabinet to represent the state on rotational basis as premier. The regime also campaigned the world community about Bhutan's willingness to proceed for democratization by further expanding the cabinet ten members in 2002.

This was followed by declaration of forming a *Constitution Drafting Committee*, which came out with its draft in the first quarter of 2005. All these changes are the result of political pressure mounted by its dissident people functioning as progressive political parties from exile.

**BNS: What is BMSC doing?**

**Poudyal:** BMSC began supporting dharna staged in Kathmandu. And this has indirectly been able to sought attention of world community. It also increased pressure on India and Bhutan, which turned out to the speeding up the preparation of electoral list in Bhutan. Nepal government despite also prioritized refugee issue and alliance members have actively been participating in the process of dealing with the impasse ever since then. The BMSC's lobby and campaign at the Kathmandu, international and regional arena also emerged with the UNHCR's speeding of re-registration proposal to determine authenticity of the figures in the camp besides looking forward to fulfilling various other objectives.

**BNS: Why is the BPP objecting the recent offer of third country resettlement?**

**Poudyal:** We have never objected the proposal of relocation. Actually, our deal is just misinterpreted. We only wanted to express concern about the future of our people. Due to ignorance and our innocence, we have landed up in camps here. We would not afford to repeat the same by



blindly accepting third country resettlement. Thousands of Bhutanese are in *Diasporas*. Besides, there are other hundreds who have been spending imprisoned lives in Bhutan jails. And those living outside the jails are treated with discriminatory policies of the *Druk oligarchy*. The American offer will not help resolve this entire problem. That is why we only wanted to know the *modus operandi* and the means of settlement with indication of their future prospects before we opt to go for any available options under durable solution framework. But this option is not at all going to hamper the political movement. Our political field is in Bhutan and not in exile. Therefore, question of hampering the movement and the political parties with holding refugees' choice of third country resettlement does not arise at all.

**BNS: How have you taken the latest development: visit of US and EU dignitaries to Bhutan, Nepal?**

**Poudyal:** We have taken the recent development as positive issue for those exiled Bhutanese who do not opt for repatriation. But for the people whose craze for returning home

continues, it would be unfortunate if they are misguided or allured into taking up the option of third country resettlement. The issue concerning resumption of the *ULFA camps* in Bhutan is the responsibility of the ruling regime. We are in exile and we cannot comment unless we are inside our country. However, if the resumption has taken place, it is unfortunate that Bhutan is again preparing to prevent return of Bhutanese citizens in one hand and conspiring to evict the remaining common people inside Bhutan on the other.

**BNS: Your party strongly criticized the new draft of constitution. What it lacks?**

**Poudyal:** It is not the BPP alone, but the *NFD-Bhutan* as a whole, to which the BPP is a constituent member, has criticized the draft constitution. The constitution was firstly drafted by handpicked members, who excluded diverse representations and political parties. The outcome of the committee appeared to strengthening the absolute monarch and provisions in most of the fundamental articles were vague and did not address the welfare of the people. The provisions such as commissions to control key executives were missing while royal power was delimited with the parliament not given the appropriate role in the legislation.

**BNS: What would be the role of international community and that of UN for repatriation?**

**Poudyal:** A unified voice of international campaign could help resolve this problem, repatriate the exiled Bhutanese and support improvement for the political changes in Bhutan. However this is lacking

behind. Issuance of the travel document when necessary and adequate funding is another that are lacking in our movement.

**BNS: There are no political parties in Bhutan to participate in 2008 election. Do you dream to take part in?**

**Poudyal:** This is not a matured question. How can we accept such an election where presence of diversity and genuine political parties are not included? The draft constitution should come out from an interim government and similarly the ad hoc government should develop election processes. Democracy cannot be dictated, but it can be practiced with the equal participatory role played by the presence of multi-ethnicity irrespective of caste, creed and race.

**BNS: Couche din between two big countries, what kind of political system is most suited in Bhutan?**

**Poudyal:** In order to give opportunities to all walks of life, well-organized multi-party political system should be promoted in Bhutan. Some people might recommend a government like in Switzerland, which is geographically apt in view of our little population and its physical landscape. But for Bhutan, to have that kind of government will take about a century, as the entire population would require gaining cent percent literacy to practice such a polity. Thus, multi-party system would be the most appropriate system for Bhutan. The rise in communist ideology among Bhutanese people is not extra ordinary. It makes no difference. However, that should be based on the milieu of twenty-first century. Our people would have been influenced by the political activities of the host country.

## Refugees Around US

### Ruling on refugees attacked

**Sydney, November 17:** Refugee advocates have attacked a High Court ruling that Australia is not obliged to let people on temporary protection visas stay here after the situation in their home country improves, saying it could be used to keep asylum-seekers from gaining permanent protection for lengthy periods.

International advocacy groups are analysing the 4-1 judgments in the parallel cases of two Afghan men to determine their effect overseas.

In Australia, advocates and immigration lawyers claim the

decision will make it harder for asylum-seekers asking for further protection, as they must now prove their refugee status still exists after their initial three-year visa expires, putting the onus of proof on them rather than the Government.

Immigration Minister Amanda Vanstone said yesterday the ruling would have a minimal practical impact on the decision-making process.

"I think in practice it doesn't make a big difference," Senator Vanstone told Sky News.

Father Jim Carty from the House of the Welcome, a

Sydney-based support centre for more than 650 TPV holders, said he was disappointed.

"My concern is: will the Government say, 'OK, Iraq may be safe and democratic in the next 10 years so we'll continue to give people TPV until they can go home'?" Father Carty said.

Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre co-ordinator David Manne said the decision was "profoundly disappointing". He said: "It condones the Government's further retreat from upholding the spirit and the letter of protection of refugees under the Refugee Convention."

## Indian Leaders....

Prof. Anand Kumar urged Bhutanese delegates that draft constitution may not be perfect yet the King has shed considerable power and Bhutanese must grasp this political process to bring out the democratic changes from within. The constitution can be amended as per the need of time. Every Bhutanese democrat must accept draft constitution as a milestone and urged every one to prepare for 2008, which is not far away. Therefore, unity in action from Bhutanese democrats is needed.

Other prominent Speakers in conference included Satya Prakash Malaviya, Former Union Minister and IBFS President, Praful Bidwai, Senior Journalist, Dr. Anand Kumar, Pro-

fessor at Jawaharlal Nehru University and vice-President Indo-Bhutan Friendship Society, Rongthong Kunley Dorji, President of Druk National Congress, Ravi Nair, Executive Director, SAHRDC. Dr. Mahendra Lama, Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Dr. Gopal Krishna Siwakoti, Prominent Nepalese human rights lawyer and President INHURD, Dr. D. N. Dhakal, Author and General Secretary, Bhutan National Democratic Party. Dr. Rajev Dhavan, Constitutional expert and senior Supreme Court lawyer, Dr. Arun K. Singh, water scientist, Anand Swaroop Verma, Dr. Arvind Chaturvedi, IBFS President, Praful Bidwai, Senior Journalist, Dr. Anand Kumar, Pro-