

## SPECIAL EDITORIAL ... Deep Concern

We received mobile SMSs, verbal messages and e-mails demanding withdrawal of news reports related to Beldangi incident. Some of those messages have even claimed that our correspondents are affiliated to 'Maoists' and the news story seemed bias. We deny it.

We are always committed to provide authentic news to our valued readers since the beginning. We would like to once again make clear that the TBR and the Bhutan News Service are not simply serving as the mouthpiece of any political or apolitical organizations or groups. Rather we try to dig out ground reality. We have been selflessly sweating a lot to bring the world community closer to Bhutan through apfanews.com. Not only this, we are already successful establishing good relationship with both national and international media organizations.

Media organization has its own norms and values. And, TBR has already proved that its working team is always committed to extend its sincere help in the camps during the emergency hours, for instance, TBR even provided basic relief aids to victims of fire at Beldangi - I camp some months back. Not to an exception, it's because of TBR correspondents' initiatives that ambulances, even escorted by them, reached the tensed site during the recent incident in Beldangi camp.

We try to work as a bridge to end communication gaps. We extend sincere thanks to those who commented on our news report and once again like to state that the BNS would rather prefer formal approaches with authenticity. We also let you know that our mission is to raise voice for complete media freedom, freedom of speech and expression in Bhutan. We are committed to cover news irrespective of any thoughts or ideologies. TBR urges kind support in the days ahead, both individually and organizationally from all.

## Two Die in Repatriation Struggle

Special Correspondent  
Bhutan News Service  
Kakarvitta, May

Two exiled Bhutanese died when the Indian security personnel fired them during the 'Long March' to Bhutan at the Mechi Bridge.

National Front for Democracy (NFD) - Bhutan, after three days, called off the Long March for voluntary repatriation following two-hour long talks with Indian officials at Panitanki after the latter agreed to release 14 arrested exiled Bhutanese and hold dialogue with Bhutan.

The Nepali talks team headed by Chief District Officer of Jhapa Jaya Mukunda Khanal comprised Bhutanese leaders and local political leaders.

However, irate exiled Bhutanese tried to cross the



Mechi Bridge after the West Bengal security officials asked the Bhutanese talks team led by Mohan Tamang and others to call off their march program warning that 'anything could happen otherwise'.

The Indian security personnel beat up exiled Bhutanese attempting to cross the Mechi Bridge with truncheons and fired a dozen rounds of tear gas canisters to push back the crowd while the protesters pelted stones in return. Violating the agreement, the

Indian authorities accused two exiled Bhutanese - Chetan Khanal and Dilip Rai - of carrying out illegal activities in the bordering areas and filed cases of criminal offenses at a local court in West Bengal. On the other hand, despite the crackdown by Indian security personnel, agitators who organized a sit-in on the

Mechi Bridge were made forced to leave the area by Nepalese security personnels. Some dozens have sustained serious injuries during the scuffle.

Over two dozens demonstrators, injured during the scuffle have been taken to hospitals in Birtamod, Bhadrapur, Dharan and Dhulabari for treatment. Despite the deteriorating condition of health of the injured people aid agencies denied providing assistance.

## Students Protest

At least a dozen of exiled Bhutanese students studying in Kathmandu demonstrated in front of the Indian Embassy on May 30 urging India not to intervene in the 'Long March'.

Som Subedi informed the BNS that some hundreds of security personnel deployed at the Embassy area barred agitators to burn the effigy of the Prime Minister of India Dr. Man Mohan Singh. "However we successfully burnt the portrait of Indian PM," said Subedi.



## India Washes its Hands Again

Bhutan News Service  
New Delhi, June

Amid rising demand that India have to play role in finding solution of the Bhutanese political crisis, India on June 1 said the issue related with the exiled Bhutanese is a bilateral one between Nepal and Bhutan and hoped that both countries would be able to resolve the crisis soon.

In a press statement, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs said that the subject of exiled Bhutanese living in Nepal was a bilateral issue between Nepal and Bhutan and that India was hopeful both countries would be able to resolve this humanitarian problem soon through talks.

The Ministry also said that security was beefed up along the Indo-Nepal border after the incident on Mechi Bridge on May 30. "The Indian security officials have stepped up security measures along the border for maintaining law and order and we are in constant contact with the government of Nepal in this regard", the press release states.

## Welcome Laura

We heartily welcome Laura Pohl, American Freelancer, who is doing a story on TBR.

We are happy that you are working to highlight our status.

## Secy's Interview Sparks Tension

Jeetan Subba/Puspa Adhikari  
Damak, May

At least two died and some dozens sustained injuries at police firing in Beldangi camp on May 27 and 28. The deceased were Narapati Dhungel, 17, of Beldangi-II camp, Sector G/3-38 and Purna Bahadur Tamang, 18, of Beldangi-II extension, Sector D/4-01.

The situation became tensed after self-motivated youths' circled and physically attacked Hari Adhikari Bangale, camp secretary of the same camp accusing him of speaking against the sentiments of youths in camps in an interview with Pathivara FM. Bangale sustained injuries in head and ears.

Those who sustained serious injuries at the police firing are now undergoing treatment at local hospitals nearby. Some 24 including four security personnel have also sustained injuries.

Eyewitnesses have claimed that the dispute aroused since Bangale physically assaulted Bishnu Maya Karki of Beldangi-II, D/3-24 while she inquired him about the contents of his interview with the FM. The source further quoted Bangale

ashaving said that every youth in camps posses weapons.

Karki, over a telephone interview with an FM program, *Saranarathi Sarokar*, has claimed that Bangale physically assaulted her. "I am neither an advocator for resettlement nor do I belong to communist wings. I am a student. I can just say that Bangale physically



assaulted me, whether or not he accepts it now," said Karki.

The aggressive mass chanting slogans against Bangale's interview, later set ablaze the Counseling Board Office that completely destroyed it. The five camp secretaries from Beldangi I, II extension, Goldhap, Timai and Khudunabari at a press meet in Birtamode on May 27 evening strongly condemned the physical attack on Bangale. Meanwhile, Bangale was quoted by The Kathmandu Post daily as

claiming that the cadres of Communists Party of Bhutan (CPB-MLM) attacked him.

Setu Nepal, the Director of Kathmandu-based sub-committee of the Bhutanese Refugee Durable Solution Coordination Committee (BRDSCC), its Executive Director is Bangale, has termed the incident as being 'pre-planned'. "The remote of this incident is in Kathmandu", said Nepal.

The district administration in Jhapa has formed a team to stigate the whole incident. The meeting of the ruling eight parties held in Jhapa in the initiation of the district administration decided the formation of the investigation committee under the leadership of

assistant Chief District Officer (CDO) Murari Prasad Poudel. The team has been given 15 days to prepare the report and submit to the local authority. Meanwhile BRDSCC repeatedly claimed that the news story related to Beldangi incident, covered by Bhutan News Service (BNS), in its online version was bias. They said Bangale didn't assault Bishnu Maya Karki rather he was assaulted at first. Activists of the BRDSCC have also urged the BNS to withdraw its news report. **Contd. Pg-3**

## Cobra Attracts Students in Camps

It is wise to burn the candle than to remain in dark. This quote is very noticeable and quite matching to people in camps. With the cut-short in basic facilities people are opting for various alternatives to earn their living. And in particular, the UNHCR decision of replacing

By Tribikram Adhikari

kerosene oil with harmful briquettes has further complicated the lives of people. Especially students are totally deprived from studying during the night time due to lack of source for light. Now-

a-days students in camps are forced to use the alternative source of fuel to light during the night time. These lights, generally used only inside camps, are named as 'Cobra' lights, Batte lights and Cassette Lights. **Contd. Pg-4**

## EDITORIAL

## Vulnerable situation

*A period of 17 years has brought factions within exiled Bhutanese to its optimum. The latest incident of Beldangi camp has revealed that there is a diverse of opinion among the people and there exists distinct polarization among leaders in exile.*

*At the time when insecurity has already crippled the lives in camps, the polarity among the so-called leaders has implied towards different havocs and predicaments that are inevitable.*

*The recent developments in the camp has given an urgent call to all the leaders to search for a common point so as to address the immediate issue of the Lhotshampas, both inside and outside Bhutan. It is also noteworthy that authorities concerned seem indifferent towards the sufferings of people in camps; even the dead one of different incidents do not receive compensation just because they are exiled people.*

*To add further, if this situation prevails there is chance of further complication of the situation that would surely greet unexpected hazards. All leaders, irrespective of any ideologies, must act accordingly and address the situation comprehensively at the earliest.*

*Authorities concerned including leaders in exile should not shake their legs to probe into the facts behind the incident that claimed innocent lives leaving a large number of injuries at police firing.*

## Opinion &amp; column

## Democratic Struggle Must Continue

By Suren Ghale

THE democratic struggle for democracy in Bhutan must continue unanimously to achieve greater democracy and to lead to democratic government where people representatives must be elected to serve the concern of ordinary citizens of Bhutan.

The democratic form of government to be formed after 2008's first general election cannot be considered as legitimate democracy but the democracy for the king, yet another form of dictatorship. Bhutan may be undergoing towards a democratic progress to only delude the common Bhutanese citizens and international community.

Even after 2008 election, dominance of king will live on in political sphere of the country. Bhutanese regime will never permit free and fair political election and many basic rights guaranteed by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights such as freedom of expression, freedom of media and press, freedom of association, that are regarded as the basic infrastructure for progressive democracy. Bhutanese citizen will never enjoy statutory liberties and rights unless people's democracy is established.

Disbanding of recently formed three parties — Bhutan National Party, People's Democratic Party and Bhutan People's United Party - inside Bhutan, not allowing the participation of existing parties in exile in election and not willing to repatriate exiled Bhutanese is evident that King's direct rule will continue in the years to come.

"Bhutan regime has given democracy without having to fight for it. In any other country it would be the other way round," Tshering Tobgay has said recently. To remember the fact that it was not the gracious grant from the fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuk but the continued struggle that Bhutanese citizens made even from the exile.

If the king had been so generous, Bhutanese struggling for 17 years for democratic transition in the country would have been repatriated with honor and dignity and allow participating in democratic reforms. However, the Bhutan regime has been trying its best to stop the

voice from exile. Many political prisoners are still held. Citizens in southern and eastern Bhutan demonstrated peaceful rallies demanding human rights and democracy about two decades back. Instead of giving justice and statutory rights, regime used armed forces to crash the emerging voices. Casualties were unnumbered, unnoticed for the international community was far behind from what was happening inside Bhutan. This led the people fled their homes due to fear of persecutions.

Democratic Bhutan must consider the demand and voice of the people. The political system has to embrace every Bhutanese and should have tolerance, a will to compromise, consensus-building, respect to all without discrimination in any form and repatriate Bhutanese in exile. Bhutan must ensure true democratic government by allowing the people to participate in decision-making and the decision should be truly to the will of the people.

*(Ghale, affiliated to Youths Organization of Bhutan, is currently living abroad)*

## Time Has Ripen to Decide



Deep Rose

THE refugees have been found to be cut between repatriation and resettlement. The proposal of resettlement for the refugees by western countries, including America seems enigmatic due to lack of reliable and adequate information on it. Hence, a brief discussion about the US resettlement scheme should be always felt essential.

The US has been resettling yearly an estimated 75,000 refugees from different countries. It has also maintained rich and vibrant traditions of offering refugees to those who fear persecution. The coordination of the admission of the refugees is assigned to the department of State which works in concert with other key government agencies, Department of Homeland security, Justice, Health and Human services.

The US Refugee Admissions Program is the global leader in this field and offers admission to the largest number of refugees in need of resettlement. The offer of resettlement as a durable solution, and in particular to Bhutanese refugee impasse is a crucial responsibility in a highly visible policy arena. Third country resettlement certainly benefits the refugees, the host country and the community offering the refugee.

Last year, an estimated 1,500 Vietnamese refugees who had been living in Philippines were resettled in the US. They were granted all the rights as the first class citizens of the US. The Bermudian refugees, the survivors of horrific massacre at Gatumba refugee camp, were also resettled.

The legal basis of refugee admission program is the Refugee Act of 1980 pub, 1 No 96-212 201(b), 94 stat. 103. The refugee admission department is interested over the Bhutanese and Tibetan refugees, which was discussed in its fourth annual public meeting. As this is a legal procedure, the refugees should not sense any suspicions as regards the US resettlement scheme. In a

period of almost two decades, numerous futile attempts have been made to repatriate the refugees. The steps taken by Nepal in this regard were less pragmatic. Bhutan has been denying accepting its citizens currently staying inside the UNHCR-sponsored camps in Nepal. Instead of taking back its people, it is hatching conspiracies to evict some 80,000 Nepali speaking people. It seems that Bhutan has taken the US proposal as an opportunity to evict more Lhotshampas. It is also tacitly preparing to exclude them from participating in the country's first and historic general election to be held in 2008 and to eyewash the international community. This indicates tin pot dictator's repressive mechanism towards its genuine citizens.

The report published recently by Human Rights Watch (HRW) highlights the predicaments that the ethnic Nepalis in Bhutan have been facing such problems. The NOC, introduced by the government in the early 90s is needed for the admission of children in schools, running a business firm, buying and selling houses, and lands, and the likes. The implementation of NOC has sparked tensions among the minorities in Bhutan as they are not issued to the Lhotshampas. The denial of NOC is the clear indication towards evicting more Lhotshampas in the days ahead.

Also, to the utter dismay of the refugees, India, the biggest democrat, has backed Bhutan's policy of ethnic cleansing. Major donor countries including Denmark, Norway and Japan are pouring their support for the development projects in Bhutan while one-fifth of the country's population has been languishing in the refugee camps.

Having seen no way, Bhutanese leaders in exile have formally announced the movement against the Druk oligarchy. However, the refugees are still ambivalent at the credibility of the movement. Indian indifference towards the refugees' endeavors shall surely hinder the entrance of the refugees to Bhutan. If the movement fails this time as well, the issue would be pushed towards complication. The Druk regime will never accept voluntarily these forcefully evicted people. Accepting them would turn Bhutan to breath into democratic atmosphere which is dead against the aspirations of the Druk dictator. The

Bhutanese case is similar to that of Palestinians. The Palestinians, who fled Israel in around 1948, are still not accepted. The acceptance of the Palestinians would change Israel from Jewish state to Arab state.

This is the right time that the refugees themselves make decision whether to accept or reject the US proposal. It might prove a hard blow to them if they fail to realize what they are waiting for. They must read the complexities surrounding this issue. They have a right to decide and speak what they wish for. However, there is web of deceit and suspiciousness among the refugees that has prevented them to speak freely about the option on hand.

Over millions of Palestinians, having neglected by the international community, are leading pathetic lives in the refugee camps of Lebanon and Jordan. Hence, if no grave decision is taken, the condition of the Bhutanese refugees would go worst than that of the Palestinians.

The option of local integration also deserves special mention. Nepal should make its stance clear whether it is ready to assimilate the refugees willing for local integration as a part of the Nepalese society; similar to what Ivory Coast did during the infiltration of the Liberian refugees in 1989. President Felix H. Boigny set an example by accepting Liberian refugees as "brothers in Distress".

Having seen no way, Bhutanese leaders in exile have formally announced the movement against the Druk oligarchy. However, the refugees are still ambivalent at the credibility of the movement.

## From Regime Druk Security Arrested Lhotsampas

**Bhutan News Service  
Phuentsholing, May**

Bhutanese authorities, at different times during May last week, have arrested at least 11 ethnic Nepalis from Samtse district.

According to sources, the authorities detained at least six Lhotsampas on the fake charge of opposing the 'mock election' on May 26.

The Druk security forces arrested Shreeram Chhetri of Ghumauney while Ratan Monger of Suntalabari and Prahalad Chhetri, Jit Bahadur Ghaley, Neema Tamang and Tej Kumar Ghaley of Nainatal under the same district were arrested at around 12.30 in the midnight after security personnel raided their houses. The identity of other detainees is not yet known. Bhutanese authorities have claimed that they also found brochures and pamphlets related to Communists Party of Bhutan. However, none of the existing political parties formed both in exile and inside the country have taken the responsibility that these people were their cadres.

Human rights leader Tek Nath Rizal talking to the BNS said the families of those detained also informed him via telephone. "Family members of the detainees are repeatedly making calls to me", he said, adding that they urged the world communities to probe into the facts behind their relatives' arrest.

It is reportedly learnt that those held by the security personnel were, however, trying to meet United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Antonio Guterres who had reached Thimphu on an official visit.

### Journalist Association Muled in Bhutan

**Bhutan News Service  
Thimphu, May**

The media workers associated to private newspapers and government-owned media discussed to establish Journalists Association of Bhutan. Ten senior editors from Kuensel, Bhutan Times, Bhutan Observer and Bhutan Broadcasting Service attended the meeting.

The participants highlighted the importance and need for such a body at a time political scenario is changing in the country swiftly. They hope this would make the

mainstream media more professional and responsible.

Those attending the meeting in Thimphu include Chief Editor of BBS (TV) Kaka Tshering, Bhutan Times editor K. B. Lama, Managing Director of Bhutan Times, Tenzin Rigden, Gopi Lal Acharya from Kuensel, Rinzin Wangchuk, Ugyen Penjore, Phuntsho Wangdi, Tashi Dorji, Sherpem Sherpa and Chencho Gyelmo. They also agreed to draft association charter and named four persons to carry on the responsibilities.

### Secy's interview....

Meanwhile, Bhutanese Refugee Durable Solution Coordination Committee (BRDSCC) has expressed its heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of Narapati, Purna Bahadur Tamang, Saha Bahadur Dewan and Kumari Mishra who died in Beldangi incident and Mechi Bridge.

This was stated in a press release issued by the BRDSCC on June 5.

"We categorically condemn the attack on the camp secretary who is also the Executive Director of BRDSCC and the security personnel present in the camps" it stated.

It further said that the allegation put upon Hari Adhikari Bangale with regard to speaking

against the sentiments of the general youths and kicking a girl was untrue. "He had never said that each youth in the camp had a weapon" it said. Further it said "How can anyone believe that a person who was almost paralyzed by a mob and being shielded by police able to kick a girl unconscious?"

It also accused that some of the refugee factions led by Tek Nath Rizal and Baram Poudyel have been opposing the activities of BRDSCC. "It is also unfortunate to mention that these people are directly or indirectly misguiding and encouraging the Communist Party of Bhutan (MLM) to terrorize innocent people inside the camps so as to obstruct the offer of resettlement", it stated.

## Condolence

We express heartfelt condolences to those died during the police firing in Beldangi and Mechi Bridge and share the grievances borne by their family members.

We pray for peace in heaven for the departed souls.

**APFA-Bhutan & TWMN-Bhutan**

## LIVING MEMORY



**Jeetan Subba**

I am Bhanu Adhikari, a genuine citizen under Tshirang district, Bhutan. If I have to speak about my job while inside Bhutan then I was a 'District Officer'. During early 1990s Bhutan Peoples' Party (BPP) blindly mobilizes the southern people who were unknown about political rights and democracy.

Comparatively I was among very handful of educated persons in the southern region. People were ignorant about the then demand to democracy in the country. The lack of adequate interaction among people was one of the chief reasons for the failure of the then movement launched by the BPP. Considering all these things I tried convincing my colleagues, youths and other people for their continued commitment in the movement.

Unfortunately I was arrested by the security force of the RGOB on December 19, 1990. I was taken to Chemgang jail. Not to an exception I have tested mad-fists, heavy shoes and prodding paws.

More than 500 jailors were compelled to accept the inhumanly torture. And, even lots of my friends were killed in front of my eyes. After six months I was shifted to Galapuri, one of the underground jails, where even no light can penetrate through. The security force put pins in the end of our fingers. Those pins nearly oozed out my urine. However, my friends did it. When I met with such a critical situation, I was taken to hospital along with seven of my colleagues. The security personnel used to laugh at each other by seeing our pathetic condition. I was released on April 30, 1991.

I started to trace the unknown path that brought me in Beldangi-II extension camp under Sector A/1, 103. All most all the properties were seized by the then absolute regime. Now also I do have a strong sense of returning to my home country, Bhutan. I still love my native land. But, there are no possibilities of early and dignified return to Bhutan. Thus, I openly accept the US offer of third country resettlement.

## Exile Voice

### Photo voice Officer Meets Students

**Yadhu Nath Neopaney  
Damak, May**

Matt Daw, the project supporter of the London based NGO Photovoice met with the photography students under the children forum of Beldangi and Sanisshare camps. A meeting was organized in Damak where eight students attended.

Matt said Photovoice has observed good progress made by the students of the Photography group under the supervision of

Lutheran World Federation.

A member of the group, Hari Koirala said, the program run by Photovoice has helped exiled Bhutanese students to sharpen their skills but is not to satisfaction. He said they need the advanced training in photography, and reading materials, books and digital photography workshops.

In response, Matt said the organization does not have a big budget to run such advanced trainings immediately.

### Appeal for Help

**Bhutan News Service  
Kathmandu, May**

Parang Kush Pyakural, 22, a temporary resident of Beldangi - II, Sector A/2 - 22/23 has appealed for financial aid to undergo valvular replacement at Shahid Ganganal National Heart Centre in Kathmandu.

According to his brother Dharani Dhar Pyakurel, they are facing financial hardship to manage the expenses to replace the valve as diagnosed by the doctors.

Pyakurel family members appealed organizations in exile, aid agencies, exiled Bhutanese living overseas, well-wishers and individuals to extend possible financial support for the treatment.

Pyakurel family also informed the BNS that they have so far received Rs 80,000 from various organizations and individuals from Nepal and India. Doctors said the replacement would cost Rs 150,000. Despite repeated appeals UNHCR denied assistance saying it is beyond their criteria.

## Facts Behind The Scene

### Cultural Orientation

The Department of State strives to ensure that refugees who are accepted for admission to the United States are prepared for the significant life changes they will experience by providing cultural orientation programs prior to departure for the United States. It is critical that refugees arrive with a realistic view of what their new lives will be like, what services are available to them, and what their responsibilities will be. Every refugee family receives Welcome to the United States, a resettlement guidebook developed with input from refugee resettlement workers, resettled refugees, and state government officials. Welcome to the United States is produced in 11 languages: Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Russian, Somali, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Through this book, refugees have access to accurate information about initial resettlement before they arrive. The material in *Welcome to the United States* is also provided in some locations in DVD and VHS formats. In addition, the Department of State enters into cooperative agreements for one- to three-day pre-departure orientation classes for eligible refugees at sites throughout the world.

### Transportation

The Department of State makes funds available for the transportation of refugees resettled in the United States through a program administered by International Organisation of Migration. The cost of transportation is provided to refugees in the form of a loan. Refugees are responsible for repaying these



**Vidhyapati  
Mishra**

costs over time, beginning six months after their arrival.

### Reception and Placement (R&P)

PRM currently funds cooperative agreements with ten organizations, including nine private voluntary agencies and one state government agency, to provide initial resettlement services to arriving refugees. The R&P agencies agree to provide initial reception and core services (including housing, furnishings, clothing, food, and medical referrals) to arriving refugees. These services are now provided according to standards of care developed jointly by the NGO community and U.S. Government agencies in Fiscal Year 2001, and implemented in Fiscal Year 2002. The ten organizations maintain a nationwide network of over 370 affiliated offices to provide services.

The R&P agreement obligates the participating agencies to provide the following services, using R&P funds supplemented by cash and in-kind contributions from private and other sources: Sponsorship, pre-arrival resettlement planning, including placement, reception on arrival, basic needs support (including housing, furnishings, food, and clothing) for at least 30 days, community orientation, referrals to health, employment, and other services as needed, and case management and tracking for 90-180 days.

**(To be continued)**

## Interview of the Month

# Ethnic Nepalis Are in Threat - Bill Frelick

Human Rights Watch, a New York based human rights organization recently published a report on the present situation of Nepalis in Bhutan and exiled Bhutanese in camps. The report has presented a real picture of gross violation of human rights in Bhutan of the ethnic Nepalis. It has also implied towards the eviction of the Lhotsampas in the days ahead; and focused on the three comprehensive options to solving the impasse of the exiled Bhutanese. On this context Bhutan News Service (BNS) talked to **Bill Frelick**, Refugee Policy Officer of Human Rights Watch (HRW) to explore more about the report. Excerpts:

**BNS: How did you prepare the report?**

**Frelick:** Our team visited India (West Bengal) and conducted 30 in-depth interviews with exiled Bhutanese who live in India (21 men and 9 women), and 18 in-depth interviews with Bhutanese citizens (17 men and 1 woman). Of the 18 Bhutanese citizens interviewed, 13 were ethnic Nepalis and the rest were Non-Nepalis.

We also conducted 121 in-depth interviews with the exiled Bhutanese in the camps in Nepal (64 men and 57 women), and three group interviews with children and teenagers in the camps.

**BNS: Did not you visit Bhutan?**

**Frelick:** No, we didn't. Actually we tried to explore the possibilities of doing so but we could not succeed. We had to obtain travel documents from the travel agencies to enter Bhutan. The foreigners like we are not easily provided with the necessary documents needed to enter Bhutan. Moreover, we are the human rights activists. But, had we conducted interviews in Bhutan, one of the three things

would have happened. First, the people would not have talked to us with fear of getting punished by the government. Second, in case they talked to us, they would not give the true information. Third, the people interviewed by us would be in problem.

**BNS: Did you undergo any problem in India?**

**Frelick:** No, we did not tackle any problem.

**BNS: Does your study cover the report on the violation of rights of the people of northern Bhutan as well?**

**Frelick:** This time we based our interview to the people of south only because more ethnic Nepalis reside in the southern belt of Bhutan.

**BNS: What has the HRW concluded about the future of ethnic Nepalis? Are they secure in Bhutan?**

**Frelick:** Some democratic changes have been going on in Bhutan. These activities are positive. However, I suppose there might be some problem to the ethnic Nepalis in future.

**BNS: HRW has been conducting a survey on the Bhutanese case since long time. What has been its outcome on part of the Bhutanese government?**

**Frelick:** To speak candidly, the HRW explores the ground reality and makes public its report but it does not wait and watch the effect it has created to any individual.

**BNS: What is the real situation of the exiled Bhutanese in the camps at present?**

**Frelick:** There is confusion among the exiled Bhutanese as regards the US resettlement proposal. Some of the exiled Bhutanese are willing to return to Bhutan where as some are mentally prepared to assimilate

to the US plan. There is one section in the camp who seems interested in local integration.

**BNS: Did you find a faction among the exiled Bhutanese that is said to be created by the US plan of third country resettlement?**

**Frelick:** I don't think the resettlement scheme has created the faction among them. Every one is unique in his way of analysing the thing. I think it is only due to a lack of complete information as regards the US



plan that has created confusion. The most important point to be noted is that all three doors should be open.

**BNS: Do you mean that US did mistake by failing to publicise the terms and conditions for those willing to opt for the resettlement?**

**Frelick:** Yes, I do agree that US made mistake to impart enough information to the exiled Bhutanese as regards the proposal. Nevertheless, with a distribution of the Fact Sheet in the camps, it's been clear to everyone about the US plan.

**BNS: Can the exiled Bhutanese make a choice?**

**Frelick:** They can choose which door they want to enter to.

**BNS: How secure are the camps?**

**Frelick:** The great problem that the exiled Bhutanese are facing nowadays is a feeling of insecurity. Indeed, there is an urgent need of providing security to them so that that can feel free to study the options at hand. In our meeting with the officials in the Home Ministry of Nepal, I have informed them about the problem that the exiled Bhutanese are facing. They have shown a commitment to provide security by establishing the police camps and making other necessary arrangements.

**BNS: What about the domestic and gender violence that the exiled Bhutanese women have been affected with?**

**Frelick:** Of course, still there exist these problems in the camps. Though they women have made tremendous progress, they have been constantly terrorized and are subjected to domestic and gender based violence.

**BNS: Do you think repatriation is possible at this point of time?**

**Frelick:** Repatriation is possible if resettlement comes into effect. I think that after the resettlement, only some 10 to 15 thousand people would be left in the camps. As the figure becomes less, Bhutan would certainly be ready to take them back. Also some exiled Bhutanese might get integrated locally in Nepal.

**BNS: How do you evaluate the leaders' proclamation of the last movement against the Druk regime to begin shortly?**

**Frelick:** This is a positive move of the leaders. But I would like to remind everyone that the

movement must be peaceful. **BNS: Since the inception of this issue, India has been indifferent towards helping the exiled Bhutanese return to their country. What could be the Indian interest behind this?**

**Frelick:** I cannot say any thing as regards India's interest behind the issue. Before coming to Nepal, we tried to meet the Foreign Ministry officials in New Delhi to discuss this issue. But we could not meet any one.

**BNS: Do you think resettlement is comprehensive solution to the impasse?**

**Frelick:** In the last 17 years, numerous futile attempts have been made to repatriate the exiled Bhutanese. They have had enough endurance by this time. So I have analyzed resettlement to be a durable solution for them.

**BNS: The Bhutanese political movement began in the early 90s with an objective of establishing democracy in Bhutan. How can the exiled Bhutanese be sure that US resettlement program would not hamper their movement?**

**Frelick:** Let me tell you that the exiled Bhutanese can return to their country after resettlement as well. But they need to try themselves. The journalists like you must gain the support of international community through your writings.

I am sure that the countries where the exiled Bhutanese will be resettled shall definitely safeguard their right to return to their country.

I would like to give an instance of the Palestinian refugees who were resettled in the US. It is learnt that through US passport, they have been traveling to their country off and on. Some of them have already started business and other activities in their own country.

## Cobra Attracts Students in Camps

Rare cases of those using tube light run by the batteries can also be found in camps. Students who used to stay till midnights for the purpose of studying are now-a-days bound to opt for early bed due to lack of kerosene oil. However, guardians of those students seem committed in sorting-out alternatives for managing lights for their children to study at night time.

The very popular amongst these lights is 'Cobra' lights, which are usually managed by students by earning a bit of amount during their leisure time in the local areas. 'Cobra' light was first introduced in Beldangi camp and later it gradually appeared in rest of the camps.

These sorts of lights are made by joining the various parts which are bought from the markets. It produces very bright light. Students in a maxi-

mum number of two to three stay in one place and use such lights in an uncomfortable manner. Actually, small bulbs are used to generate lights.

Aita Sing Rai, an exiled Bhutanese youth, who makes cobra lights expresses that this sorts of lights are glowing in the camps as there are no any means to continue their studies during the night time. The different part forms a shape of a 'cobra'. This is the main reason why it is called as cobra light. Making such cobra lights is a challenging and time consuming work. The most interesting part is that all of these lights are made inside the camps and by the exiled Bhutanese.

However, cobra lights are harmful to normal health. Especially, these types of lights are harmful to eyes. There are even increasing number of eye patients in the hospitals inside

the camps. Krishna Rizal, health assistant at emergency ward in the health centre in Khudunabari camp says the lights which are colorful and also dim and brighter have direct impact in the eyes and also cause blindness slowly.

Govinda Subedi, a student reading in class nine in Sun Rise Academy says that it is very insufficient to use this type of light at night and is limited for less time. Prem Narayan Adhikari, however, said that despite its negative impact on our eyesight and also other problems people are bound to use it.

There is always a need for urgent attention of all agencies concerned to resume the regular supply of Kerosene oil. For how long will students in camps have to get attracted towards cobra lights?

## Two journo to participate in regional training

The president of TWMN - Bhutan Chapter, T P Mishra and Special Correspondent of TBR, Jeetan Subba have been selected to participate in the regional "Online Radio Broadcasting Training Workshop" scheduled to be held from June 19 to 23 in Kathmandu.

According to Mishra, altogether 23 participants, Sri-Lanka-3,

Bangladesh-2, India-4, Pakistan-2 Bhutan-3 and PRSA Radio Correspondents-6 will be participating in the five days training. Tenzin Phuntsho, Studio Director of Bhutan Broadcasting Service will also participate in the training.

The training organized by Panos South Asia will bear participants' course expenses, including travel to and from Kathmandu. **BNS**

## Best Wishes

We wish the early recovery of CN Timshina, President of Bhutan Press Union, who was severely beaten up by Indian security forces at the Mechi Bridge last month.

Bhutan News Service

Published by: Bhutan News Service Chief Editor: Kazi Gautam, Editor: T P Mishra Layout/Design: Vidhyapati Mishra Mailing Address: GPO 8975, EPC 2377, Ktm Email: edit@bns@yahoo.co.uk, URL: <http://www.apfanews.com>

Special Correspondent: Jeetan Subba, Bel-I: Ganga R Kalikotey, Bel-2: Ratna Bdr Khadka, Bel-3: Yadhu Nath Neopane, Sanischar: Ravi C Dhungana, K/bari: Ganga Ram Adhikari, Goldhap: Tika Ram Lamitarey, Damak: Pabi Maya Rai, Birtamod/Bhadrapur: Kedar Niroula/Trivikram Adhikari, Biratnagar: Devi Pokhrel, Dharan: Tek N Mishra, Siliguri: Dhana Pati Acharya, Delhi/Patna: Mahananda Pokhrel, Kolkatta: Purna Siwakoti, Bhutan: Binod Sanyashi/Sangay Oendray

