

Indian cops alert on CPB (MLM)

Security along the Indo-Bhutan border has been tightened following reports of movement of Bhutanese Maoists from camps in Nepal into Bhutan through Indian territory, official sources said last week, quoted Press Trust of India (PTI).

Seema Sasathra Bal (SSB) has intensified patrolling along the border and a strict vigil was being maintained to prevent the movement of Maoists through Assam's border with Bhutan. Security was further tightened in view of the March 2008 elections in Bhutan as there are apprehensions that the Maoists may aid the Communist Party of Bhutan to create disturbances during the elections **BNS**

New ID cards distribution in Samtse

The Department of Civil Registration has asked the people from Samtse working in Thimphu to file their application for new Identity card within September 24.

If they failed to get it from Thimphu, they have to travel to Samtse and will be distributed by the gups.

The process would continue in Mongar after Samtse.

The distribution of new ID cards began in August 2004 and the government plans to complete it by October in view of the approaching election scheduled for December.

The cards being distributed according to the census records of 2001 which excludes over 80,000 citizens from southern districts. **BNS**

BRCF to publish report

Bhutanese Refugee Children Forum (BRCF) said it would publish the report on the impact of its activities in the community this month.

Bassu Dev Osti, chief coordinator of BRCF told Bhutan News Service that the report covers the impact of BRCF on child protection, participation and development and the current status of children's program.

14 people were selected from all camps to study and evaluate the impacts of BRCF activities after two days' orientation in early September.

This will be the first report published by BRCF since its establishment in 1997. Earlier, the BRCF had published a collection of literary articles by children. **BNS**

GoN is responsible for security, says Abraham

Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, September

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) country representative in Nepal Abraham Abraham has said that the UNHCR was seriously working with the government of Nepal for making security arrangements inside exiled Bhutanese camps.

In response to queries of Bhutan News Service (BNS), Abraham said the UNHCR has already taken initiative to create 'fearless' atmosphere for exiled Bhutanese following escalating violence inside the camps.

Abraham's response, regarding security in camps, comes at a time when an innocent refugee in Beldangi-I camp was killed by an unidentified armed gang on September 18.

Lok Nath Katel (47) of Beldangi-I camp under Sector D/1, Hut number 13/14 was killed by the gang at mid-night while he was trying to rescue

neighbors from the gang's attack.

Informing that the security posts would be built by September 25 in Morang-based Sanischare camp, and by October 5 in all remaining six camps, Abraham, however said that security of exiled Bhutanese depended on government of the host country, Nepal.

He also informed that the UNHCR has already dealt the issue of security with what he termed 'high level' in government of Nepal. "UNHCR is hopeful that Nepal government will deploy security forces in camps soon after the construction of security posts", said Abraham, adding the UNHCR has urged the government of Nepal to arrange 24 hours security vigilance in camps to ensure that people feel safe.

Indicating on the recent killing of an innocent people in Beldangi-I camp, Abraham also expressed the UNHCR's condolence, sympathy and grief to the bereaved family.

"This level of violence is



Abraham Abraham

senseless", said Abraham, adding that the UNHCR was committed towards bringing the perpetrator before the legal action of the host country. He also said that the UNHCR would leave no stones 'untuned' to bring such perpetrator before the court of justice.

Meanwhile, Abraham also urged all refugees to try to exercise a sense of mutual understanding for finding an outlet to the problem. He also informed that the UNHCR was seriously dealing with Nepal government in publicizing the

report of Beldangi-II incident that claimed lives of two youths.

Confirming that a handwritten 'pamphlet' was also left in the name of 'Cobra Group' on September 18 that has threatened nine more people including the camp secretary of Beldangi-I D. P. Pradhan among others, Abraham said the UNHCR has already dealt with the government of Nepal concerning their security.

When asked if escalating ideological divergences within people was occurring in camps with the offer of third country resettlement, Abraham said "Indeed, it is increasing violence that has divided people in camps but not the offer of third country resettlement."

Abraham also stressed on the UNHCR's parallel concern on all three options viz repatriation, local assimilation and third country resettlement. "But the latest offer of third country resettlement has come up as a feasible solution lying on the table", added Abraham.

Nepal delays exit permit

Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, September

The denial of the Nepalese government to issue exit permit for third country resettlement, some 107 exiled Bhutanese have not been able to fly to western country despite completing the processes.

According to Nepalese daily Nepal Samacharpatra, 60 of them are planned to be resettled in the United States, 40 in Australia and

seven in Norway. They are from the vulnerable group whom these countries expressed willingness to resettle.

The finalized files have been stranded at Home and Foreign Ministries in Kathmandu. The ministries have not been able to issue the permit since the issue has to be decided by the council of ministers. Most of these people now live in Kathmandu due to insecurity in camps.

Nepal police mistreats arrested journo

The police at Damak arrested and held general secretary of Bhutan Press Union (BPU) and columnist for TBR Bhola Nath Siwakoti (Puranaghere) for a night in custody without any reason.

Puranaghere informed the TBR over telephone that he, along with his younger brother, was arrested from the rented room in Damak on October 9. Despite his appeal to chief of the



Damak police posts, they were not released. Puranaghere and his brother were released on October 10 following lifting of the curfew imposed for at least four days.

Puranaghere further informed that the police manhandled him and his brother despite their repeated calls for early and unconditional release. Meanwhile, Associations of Press Freedom Activists (APFA) - Bhutan and Bhutan Chapter of 'Third World Media Network (TWMN) have condemned the act of the police administration of beating and manhandling Bhutanese journalists without any cause. They have asked the police not to repeat such acts in the future. **BNS**

After 12 years, a Bhutanese jail bird faces deportation

Trivikram Adhikari
Khudunabari, October

After 12 years of imprisonment, the Druk regime has forced Buddha Man Rai leave the country, who arrived in Jhapa to reunite with his evicted family in Khudunabari camp.

Rai, 31 from Sarkitar in Samtse district, had entered Bhutan as part of the pamphleteering campaign by the Bhutan National Democratic Party (BNDP) in 1995. He was arrested on September 3, 1995 from Samtse check post while returning to India after the campaigns.

For initial seven years, he was kept

at the Samtse jail and then later transferred to Thimphu, Gelephu and Samdrup Jongkhar jails.

Rai explained Bhutan News Service the poor conditions inside the jails where the inmates spent all days with nothing to read, write or see. He said the Lhotsampas once arrested are forced to accept the allegations clamped and if not, they should face severe torture - physically and mentally.

People from all faiths have to compulsorily attend the Buddhist prayers before breakfast and dinner. Neither the human rights organizations nor the humanitarian bodies including the UN are allowed to visit the inmates.

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EDITORIAL

Respect (ing) journo

Bhutanese media sector operating in exile in Nepal has long-faced pressures, internal intimidation and unfavorable environment for exercising their right to information/reporting. With the rise in disputes inside the exiled Bhutanese camps, journalists, who are working on the volunteer basis, now started fearing regarding their safety, security and creation of the conducive atmosphere for reporting in camps.

Media, in the context of the global community, has already reached the climax of success. People in camps are one way or the other deprived from their right to information. This is a sad part as every individual's right to information is safeguarded under fundamental right.

The arresting of general secretary of Bhutan Press Union, Puranaghare, by Nepalese police on October 9 without furnishing any reasons, can be one of the best instances of how local administration treats exiled Bhutanese journalists.

With the passage in time, there is much confusion among individuals in camps. None of the authority- neither individual nor any organization, can put an end to this confusion without informing people in an accurate way. It has to be always considered that the systematic method of disseminating accurate, reliable and justifiable information can never be done without the support from media groups.

There is always a need for Bhutanese organizations in exile, aid agencies, local administration, and individuals to extend all sorts of support to journalists and their organizations in exile for creating an informed atmosphere in camps resulting to an 'end-up' to the long-standing exiled Bhutanese imbroglio. Thus, let's create a sense of respecting journalists under any circumstances.

Opinion & column

Bhutan's Interest on Happiness Concept

Bhutanese mode of value judgment to happiness is fictional type and the version is hard to get universally accepted in this meta-physical world. It deviates from actual orientation and the theoretical backing is completely hypothetical. The royal decree is the only base that forces the commoners to accept the order, otherwise face the consequences of legal punishment. A person who does not agree the king's holy hymns is considered as anti-national and is dealt with the law of the country floated by a section of people.

The extremism of the punishment ranges from the use of Radar beam torture, eviction from country till the disappearance permanently. The person who doesn't support the king be it good or bad in any aspects is anti-national by definition and is dealt accordingly. The citizens are classified into stratified categories. The question is- will these different categories get satisfied from the induced class? Some of the lords are above the country's law and two different system of judgment prevail and are practised even today.

To be happy, every individual must have equal approach to everything as per their quality irrespective of origin and is not from the community-based and the blood relation to the honorable. The country policy should be of inclusive types that benefit all sectors of people and it should not be egoistic and beneficiary to only (12-15%) ruling class population. One or two groups are completely treated as second class citizens where the statistics clearly shows. The news published on 24th September, 2007 at Kuensel clearly shows the proportional up-gradation. How many southern Bhutanese are there above grade 3 in status grading in civil service from approximately 45% population? Is this fair? This propa-



By: Shanti Ram Poudel

ganda will not no longer as its falsifying public.

A person who convicts maximum crime advocates for law and order; one who is down to earth in sinful events shows the piousness and talks about gods and a person who compelled majority of the citizen suffer propagates the mission of happiness and acts as its ambassador. This is reality. Is this so-called happiness meant for the people or the rulers? If this is for the citizen then 108000 people from 650000 populations is camped in Nepalese soil.

"The citizens are classified into stratified categories. The question is- will these different categories get satisfied from the induced class?"

The core group of 9 countries including the USA, Canada, Australia, Denmark, Germany, and Norway among few other countries proved that the people at the camps are true and genuine Bhutanese citizens where they were evicted from mass exodus of Jigme-led government.

Mr. Tek Nath Rizal was the advisor at King's council and the government is now calling him as non-Bhutanese. Now, my question is if that person was non-Bhutanese than why did king of Bhutan

appoint him in that post? To appoint in that post to non-Bhutanese person is either misuse or abuse of authority. What ever king says is not correct and he changes his words quite routinely.

So, the propagation by king is incorrect and people aren't happy. It will be too ridiculous to mention the education backing and personal matters to argue with before theorizing the happiness. Entertainment and happiness isn't the same thing. A behavioral prospect mis-matches the level of understanding and is deontological with normative approach.

It should be clearly known that these people are the true and indigenous people of eastern Bhutan who have sweated a lot to transform Bhutan into this stage. Their life and living standard must be improved and must be given the equal opportunities in all the level of decision making. It is exactly like the British policy during their colonial reigns that gave the Macaulay system understanding to native people and prevent them to come on the front.

About the statistical 20% population is the projected data where round about this figure of population make their living from livestock. Livestock in the Himalayan contour is dominantly yak. Again in the 85% agricultural based economy, livestock goes in a dualistic order and the value would be still higher. This is not an exaggerated figure but calculated in an indirect approach.

Having justified the opinion and figures, the actual scene of Bhutanese model of happiness seems impractical and their ancestral dogmas to hide and seek game behavior need correction before practicing the democracy and courage to accept the criticism if it want to be happy.

(Chairman of Bhutan Engineers Association, Poudel is Advisor of TBR)

Oppressed and still on Press

Even though T.P. Mishra is the Top Editor at The Bhutan Reporter, a monthly English-language newspaper written by and for Bhutanese refugees, it is his responsibility to pick up the papers from the press and transport them to his rented room, which serves as the newspaper's head office. To say The Bhutan Reporter operates on a shoestring budget is an understatement.

Walk with T.P. Mishra through the streets of Kathmandu, Nepal as he delivers his shoulder-load of the month's issue of the newspaper. Watch and hear to some of the people responsible for taking the chance to create The Bhutan Reporter.

T.P. Mishra shifts his load of 1,000 newspapers from one shoulder to the other. Someone honks at him. He gracefully navigates through the maze of cars, motorcycles and people competing for space in the streets of Kathmandu, Nepal.

No staffers are paid and the paper's monthly budget of 2,500 Nepali rupees (about \$40) is contributed by the staff's editors, many of whom work as teachers. Subscriptions and advertisements are impossible.

Most of the newspaper's readers are refugees who have lived in camps near Damak, in eastern Nepal, for the last 17 years. They are legally barred from officially holding jobs in Nepal which means they have little disposable income. In addition, the paper cannot solicit advertisements since it is technically an illegal publication; Nepalese law does not allow foreign-owned media - like The Bhutan Reporter - to publish their Nepali-news papers and magazines in the

country.

"I always feel responsible to the 23 correspondents stationed in camps and other associate editors stationed in Kathmandu," said Mishra. "They have been sweating a lot selflessly, therefore the very frequent question I receive is that whether the paper will give continuity to its hard copy print."

Sometimes the answer Mishra gives is "no." The paper, which began printing in 2004, skips publishing at times due to lack of funds. Back in March, The Bhutan Reporter nearly ceased to exist until a story about the newspaper's plight appeared on Media Helping Media, an online portal for news about freedom of the press in transitional countries. An 11th-hour donation from the World Association of Newspapers saved the newspaper for three months.

Despite the financial hardships, the paper's reporters and editors remain steadfastly dedicated to journalism.

During a recent editorial meeting at one of the refugee camps, reporters told Mishra that he must find a way to continue publishing The Bhutan Reporter because it was the one thing they had to look forward to in their lives.

"I go to Damak by bicycle to bring (the) newspaper to camps," said Puspa Adhikari, one of the paper's special correspondents, referring to the town about an hour's bicycle ride from the Beldangi refugee camps. "I face lots of difficulties; I have ambition to become an international journalist."

Adhikari's dream is the dream of many of the paper's other reporters. But a lack of educational resources and opportunities may keep dreams from becoming reality. Most of The Bhutan Reporter's staff do not have formal journalism training and indeed, this is sometimes reflected in the newspaper's stories, which do not always name sources or attribute information. Read-



By: Laura Elizabeth Pohl

Adhikari's dream is the dream of many of the paper's other reporters. But a lack of educational resources and opportunities may keep dreams from becoming reality.

ers, too, have suggestions for improving the newspaper.

"If this paper could add more reporters they could give more fresh news from on the spot. It is lacking this," said Kapil Muni Dahal, a 10th-grade Nepali language teacher at a school inside one of the seven refugee camps.

Despite this lack of fresh news, Dahal said, "I share the paper with other people whenever I get it. I read it among the group and translate it into Nepali and the people listen and interact."

It's that commitment to readers like Dahal and his friends that keeps Mishra and the rest of The Bhutan Reporter staff working on the paper month after month. Their dream is to transform the newspaper into a bi-monthly publication and more.

"We have been working, keeping the aim that one day we will reach establishing this paper as the leading paper of Bhutan," said Mishra.

(Pohl is a freelance photographer based in Hampton Roads, Va in the US. She had come to Nepal to do a story on The Bhutan Reporter. This story initially appeared on the globally read magazine-Global Journalist)

Book Review

BIYOG, a Nepali *Gazal* assemblage, written by BP Mainali 'Ettaghare' has several lines reflecting nostalgic feelings towards home state Bhutan. Besides this, emotional sentiments and bitter realities after tragedy of love are presented.

The words are used in very simple but bit confusing style. Each line seems to contain hidden message to refugee community. Some verses straightly reflect firm determination of the writer in ending long-term statelessness. Mainali, a youth writer born due to situation in exile, expresses himself to be much worried but fully determined for congenial changes inside the country sooner or later.

56 paged-book has artistic pictures, by his fellowman Praja

Subedi. Each picture, closely looks as cartoon, clearly reveals the actual scene in the uncontrolled and thrilled verses of love and nationalism as expressed by the writer. But a reader, who wishes to choose the topic to go through, will have to sit for an hour or two to complete reading the book! There are no sub-topics mentioned and it is difficult to judge what contents you may go through.

The price of the book is Rs 50. Readers filled with patriotism must not miss to go through the book. It may be useful for those with abhorrence of love and betray. The write has mentioned, in the covering page, that he has some more compilations waiting for publication.

Name of Book: *BIYOG*
Writer: BP Mainali 'Ettaghare'
Price: NRS 50

Reviewed by: BNS

Living Memory



By: Jeetan Subba

Dil Maya Kalitkotay, a permanent resident of Tshirang district under Labsebhotte village, has been wondering whether she would be able to return homeland as it has been a dream for the last 17 years.

Actually, I was evicted from Bhutan in 1991. It was the first touch of political issue which reduces into ashes my Bhutanese identity. I didn't get any time to beat bye to my neighbors. After crossing the border of India, I came to know that there was Nepal, where familiar tradition and culture existed, to that of where I was habituated to.

I have passed nearly two decades in Beldangi one camp under Sector B/2 Hut no 216 along with my eight family members. My days are shortening but still have a sense of strong feeling that my coming generation would work towards collapsing roots of absolute regime from the beautiful kingdom, Bhutan.

I have begun sensing that my health is day-by-day getting deteriorated with the smokes of briquettes while using it at least twice in a day. Weaving threads, which helps generate a bit of amount, has been a regular schedule to further degrade my health. I have to work from morning till evening in order to run my family.

The US offer of third country resettlement has been shadowing other two options viz repatriation and local integration. I do believe that all the people in camps should speedily unite together to expedite the long-awaited repatriation process to original homeland.

Facts Behind The Scene

Third Country Resettlement



Vidhyapati Mishra

Of late, the rolling ball has come to a pause. Now the time has drawn closer for making an independent, possible and informed decision. This is a must to see what comes in the days ahead. Bygone days have revealed that until individual decision is made by exiled Bhutanese, nothing can go useful. Not only Nepali media, whole global community has emerged with the offer of the Third Country Resettlement (TCR). The trumpet will materialize sooner than later. The much-awaited resettlement process would begin as soon as Nepal grants mass exit permit for the TCR.

Nepal has formally signed an agreement with International Organization for Migration (IOM) to exercise the process of the TCR. It would not be immature to quote that the IOM selected as the Oversees Processing Entity (OPE) by the United States, has begun its office in Nepal. The US sources have been trumpeting that around 7,000 Bhutanese refugees would fly to its soil under the TCR package by latest by September 2008. It is an undeniable fact that these developments have engendered rays of hopes in many refugees wishing to go for TCR.

No doubt, TCR is a boon for those refugees who regard that condition in Bhutan for repatriation is not congenial and unwelcoming even two decades after the inception of mass exodus of majority of Nepali-origin Bhutanese. When refugees choose the TCR as an immediate option for durable solution, they would get a chance to develop them economically and could live as ordinary citizens with dignity and honour in countries like the USA, Canada, Australia or other, where individual rights are given top priority. It is note-worthy to mention here that refugees have been leading extremely despondent life inside the UNHCR-administered cantonments with limited facilities.

The TCR package is said to have been coined as an outlet based on

the humanitarian ground. There are no any vicious circles to keep a doubt upon this. But ground realities are bit different. Those countries in the front desk with resettlement offer should feel an urgency to inform pros and cons of the TCR to refugee community. There are laymen in camps who are uneducated and depressed or frustrated due to long stay in camps. For them, the offer is like a tale told to a child who understands nothing of its real content. While in Bhutan, they were farmers and still they have regimented will to go back to Bhutan. They just dream of their cattle and farms. They still vow to return home because their contemporaries influence them in the same way.

It cannot be denied that people in camps are gearing-up with mixed bag of opinions regarding three options of durable solution. Those wishing to choose to opt for the option of the TCR are often reported by media that they are insecure in camps or cannot 'say' what they like to choose due to internal intimidation and other similar threats from within the same community. The escalating violence inside camps shows these differences. Every one has right to practice independently. It is very sad that some exiled citizens are displaced even from camps. Forgetting personal issues and grievances, the time has come to let individual to decide his own fate without any threat from any third group or individual. There is always a need on the part of those advocating for the TCR to respect those who have adored returning homeland.

The fact behind the scene is that the authorities concerned are still trying to limit the information on the option of the TCR within their office. Let refugees be informed on what the TCR 'indicates' so that an alternative would be sorted out without further violence.

Exile Voice

TWMN demands BT's operation, declares award to BNS correspondent

Bhutan Chapter of Third World Media Network (TWMN) has said its deep attention has been drawn towards blockage of a popular site i.e. bhutantimes in June from being viewed within the country.

Issuing a press statement on its first anniversary on September 16, TWMN - Bhutan is a sheer attack on urged Bhutanese operation at the ear-



TWMN - Bhutan has declared an award 'Reporter of the Year' to Sangey Oendray, Bhutan-based correspondent of Bhutan News Service, for his selfless contribution towards independent media sectors. "We also believe that unless Bhutanese regime guarantees media freedom in the country, it cannot step into complete democratization", reads the release which has also welcomed SAFMA's entry into Bhutan. **BNS**

TBR hits the stand for four years

The Bhutan Reporter (TBR), month has stepped in fourth year of its continuous publication since October 2004.

Issuing a press statement on the eve of its fourth anniversary, the publisher of the paper has extended gratitude for those who have been extending moral, logistic and financial support for its continuous publication. "We are committed towards its continued publication despite several challenges as it has been the only English news bulletin in Bhutanese refugee community", reads the statement, adding that the support and solidarity was always felt necessary from all individuals and organizations in exile. **BNS**



BEST WISHES

We Wish Happy Vijaya Dashami and Colourful Dipawali to All Bhutanese in exile.

Bhutan News Service

THIRD VOICE



PURANAGHARE
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The success of a film greatly depends on the plot-writer, director and the musician but yet the audiences don't see them on the screen. The women are considered inferior in the family and society because their roles for the development remain at the background only. The unforgettable truth is that when the universe was vacant, woman in the form of nature came first and led the evolution and continuity of life on the earth became possible.

However, the present should not be practiced as what has been tackled in the past. Bhutan is a small but a beautiful country being ruled by absolute king. Bhutan is one of the top ranking countries where the status gaps between male and female exists at incalculable distances. Among all the communities living in Bhutan, there is acute difference between male and female. While we compare the condition of Bhutanese women living in the Country and living among the seven UNHCR-administered canton-

ments in Jhapa and Morang Districts of Nepal, we find that women in camps exercise greater freedom and a better status.

What we can infer is that education play a detrimental role in building up equality between man and woman. Besides foreign missions, organizations and agencies are investing viable effort and equal sum of money for the inculcation of gender balance in the exiled Bhutanese community, which seem a boon for the creation of gender free society basically stressing the improvement of the status of women. But still the goal of acquiring freedom in the eye of the Bhutanese woman is never achieved. Only 10% representation can hardly be found in the camp's scenario which is ignorable.

It is very sorry to think the thriving development of the family, society and the country without the full participation of woman. Our society which is wrongly led by the male dominated philosophy should cultivate the sense of equal participation in the entire social activities and other areas. If we take the allusion of all the organizations operating in camps, we can hardly see the female workers, participants, activists or advocates in them.

Interview of the Month

‘I don’t oppose those willing to resettle’



Still there are hopes of repatriation, if not, a prospect of good life in the US. As the preparation for third country settlement of the exiled Bhutanese, especially in US, Canada and Australia, as part of the international community to find durable solution of the protracted crisis is getting momentum, situation in the camps has worsened. Along with that the Bhutanese community in exile has divided clearly into two sections: one favoring resettlement and the others stressing repatriation. There have been several clashes between these two groups, not to mention the verbal wars. UNHCR and the international community have expressed concern over the deteriorating situation. In midst of this, the views from the Indian side have been controversial and unclear.

Of late, the issue has become the issue of debate. Under such debates, the Bhutanese leadership in exile have been raising concern that third country resettlement would degrade the fight for democracy, human rights and equality in Bhutan. The resettlement country has not affirmed the right to return of those to be resettled. Under these circumstances, Bhutan News Service talked with Tej Nath Rizal, the chairman of the Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC), to know his stand on resettlement. **Excerpts:**

Is the issue of exiled Bhutanese getting complex?

I don't support completely that the issue is getting complex. It is just the result of 'less concern' of international community to resolve the crisis. Bhutan is free to do its monopoly. Instead I have seen that international community is just giving pressure to exiled Bhutanese to opt third country settlement.

Clashes among exiled Bhutanese due to differences have become common. Some exiled Bhutanese recently in connection to incidents. What do you say?

Yes, there are some problems in camps. Nepal government is not monitoring the situation properly. There are some exiled Bhutanese associated to various active groups advocating for third country resettlement and repatriation. Those advocating third country settlement are working as agents of UNHCR or America to mobilize the mass for resettlement. Refugees who knew that they are being cheated by those agents, they started attacking them. Nepalese media are quoting that

there are clashes between exiled Bhutanese opting resettlement and repatriation. But I do not support that. Neither resettlement nor repatriation has begun yet. How can there be such clashes.

Government of Nepal must know that arresting exiled Bhutanese won't give positive solutions. If Nepal is initiating such steps, it is very unwise. Ours is a problem between the Bhutanese citizens and their government.

Do you accept that there is increasing gap between those opting resettlement and repatriation?

I just know there is some confusion. Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC) is never against resettlement. But exiled Bhutanese in the camps are not informed of terms and conditions on third country resettlement properly. The countries who have come forward with the offer are silent but there are some exiled Bhutanese who act as if they are paid employees to advocate for resettlement. So people have less trust on them. That is the reality. **It is sometimes said your leadership has failed.**

That will be evaluated in future. It matters little about the failure or success of leadership. Nepal government has never realized the need of listening to Bhutanese leaders in exile who are committed to repatriating the Bhutanese citizens. I don't think Bhutanese leadership has failed. We are doing our best. It should be clearly understood that we can never force any one to opt any options.

Why don't you encourage resettlement?

When we talk of exiled Bhutanese, we don't represent Bhutan as a whole. Exiled Bhutanese have passed their lives of misery for 17 years. They have long generated pains and tough life in the camps. For 17 years, they are told that international community is working to take them home with dignity and honor. But on contrary to what has been said, now proposal for resettlement is brought in. So, we leaders in exile are shocked. But it doesn't mean we are against resettlement.

We were telling ours is a political issue. But now international community has come to resolve it on humanitarian basis.

This is our family matter. Everyone knows that we have been demanding political changes in Bhutan. Bhutan is a key player to create this crisis. We are always ignored in all instances. We must be allowed to go back. If some exiled Bhutanese feel that they are not safe in Bhutan after their repatriation and would like to go to third country then that is a welcoming step.

Does that mean you don't oppose resettlement?

What should I do not to go against this? I cannot tie up their limbs and drop in the US or Canada. If anyone opts to go abroad, he or she has every right to decide that. And I don't think that I have been against this. Recently when I vis-

ited camps, I informed the fellow-men clearly that if they feel that they have secure life in America or elsewhere they can always make a choice for that.

The US has offered the package last year. But some exiled Bhutanese and UNHCR have been forcing others to fill-up forms since five years. So this is point where we are not satisfied and so are Bhutanese in the camps. The innocents are being forced to fill-up the forms luring them that they get 70 thousand US Dollars if they apply to go to the US. And UNHCR's chief in Nepal is making the propaganda regarding forms stating that a large number of the exiled Bhutanese have applied to go to the third country. So this is pre-planned drama.

How do you evaluate the growing frustration among youths and announcement of the Communist Party of Bhutan for armed struggle?

If any exiled Bhutanese is working for an armed struggle, then Bhutan and India must be responsible for that. Further, international community holds key responsibility for making us stay without any positive development in camps for almost two decades.

Frustration among youths is created by donor agencies. Facilities are limited. A youth is told that no treatment will be done to his father as he has crossed 60. This is just an instance. There are several cases where youths are being made victims of frustrations by UNHCR or its implementing partners.

Do you support such activities?

Being a human right leader, I don't support or believe on arm rebellion. But it should know that the situation in camp is going out of control and a prompt solution is required to address the demands of youths. Exiled Bhutanese must lead their life as human. I just request the concerned parties or nations not to support Bhutan that acted as a devil to one-lakh plus Nepali-speaking Bhutanese.

How long do they need to wait in camps for repatriation?

No one can tell that exiled Bhutanese cannot go back to their country. They have sweated on lands of Bhutan and several generations passed their life in Bhutan. It is not that exiled Bhutanese are not willing to go back but Bhutan is not interested to take them back home. We must not let our hopes vanish down. If Bhutan given pressure and India comes to the scene, I am sure that very soon we go back to our villages.

“A youth is told that no treatment will be done to his father as he has crossed 60. This is just an instance. There are several cases where youths are being made victims of frustrations by UNHCR or its implementing partners.”

Refugees Around Us

Story of a Samali mother



TEJU
PRAKASH

Selima works in Southampton as a bilingual assistant helping Somali schoolchildren. The 27-year-old says she loves her job, but it is tinged with sadness. “Whenever I see another mum bringing her children to school, I smile,” says Selima. “But I am empty inside because I have lost my own children.”

Selima's family belonged to a minority ethnic group which was being persecuted by a dominant tribe in Somalia's civil war. It is a conflict in which rape is routinely used as a form of terror.

“My father was taken away and murdered. I watched my auntie being raped in our home. My husband fled and he is now living in Ethiopia. I have two very young children. I lived in fear of being raped. My mum told me I had to escape because I was a young woman. She said it was better for her to die than for me.”

One day in 1999, fierce fighting broke out in Selima's town and her people scattered. “Everyone panicked and I was separated from my family. I fled to Kenya, where I spent three days in the bush with

no water and nothing to eat. But the Kenyans were returning people to Somalia, so I went to Ethiopia, where I stayed with my uncle. He found the money to get me to the UK.”

Selima lived in London for two years. It was a difficult time. “When I arrived here, it was like being dropped in the ocean. I couldn't bear to live without my children. I got very depressed and tried to kill myself.”

Selima found support from a network of Somali friends in London, who later



moved to Southampton. Refugee Action persuaded the Home Office to allow Selima to be rehoused near them. Selima learned fast at college and soon developed excellent

English. She began volunteering as an interpreter with Refugee Action in Southampton. It was through this work that she found her present job. In July Selima was told that she would be granted refugee status.

Selima recently managed to contact her mother through a family tracing service and learned that her children, now aged six and three, are safe and well. “I have found out where my family are and one day I hope they can come here. My dream is that one day soon I will be reunited with my children.”

Source: *Refugee Action, UK*

12 years jail...

For all the years he spent in jail, the BNDP remained silent. Even after his release, the party has not contacted him, which betrayed him from party politics. He also narrated the pathetic conditions of the Sarchops arrested recently. He said the Sarchops arrested recently from eastern district on charges of powdering against the regime, have been given severe and inhuman torture by the authorities. His jail term terminated on September 3, but has to remain there

Best Wishes

We extend our best wishes for 'Happy Vijaya Dashami and Colorful Dipawali' to all Bhutanese in exile. Let it bring a sense of unification among ourselves so that an outlet could be sorted out at the earliest. Let peace and friendly environment prevail in camps during the festivals.

Rajen Giri & family United States

Picture Speaks....



What to say? Thinley wishpers to Bangaley in ears in Kathmandu.

Photo: BNS/Vidhyapati

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