

# The Bhutan MONTHLY

## REPORTER

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### Highlight

#### One dead in India

An exiled Bhutanese who had left for Gujarat, India, in search of job two months ago is found dead in mysterious condition in Maharashtra of India recently.

Man Bahadur Bhattarai, 51, a temporary resident of Sanischhare camp in Morang, had gone to Gujarat on October 29.

Though the deceased body was recovered by the Indian police of Maharashtra state from a well on November 1, the family back in the camp was informed of his death very recently in a letter sent by Indian embassy in Kathmandu.

Bhattarai was a former member of Royal Bhutan Army. He had left for Gujarat to find a security guard's job along with friends and got lost on the way. *BNS*

### More radio programs

From this month, Bhutan News Service in collaboration with Pathivara FM has started airing four episodes of Saranarathi Sarokar every week. The program had been run by BNS since one and half month. The program is aired from Nepal FM since a year and CJMC community radio in Kathmandu since a month.

In the mean time, five private radio stations have formed a network to launch radio program targeted for the exiled Bhutanese.

Managing director of Communication Corner, Gopal Guragai informed BNS that all procedures have been completed to start airing Saranarathi Sandesh from January 9. "The program goes on air from Ujyalo FM Kathmandu, and Mechi Tunes Kakarvitta, Saptarangi FM Damak, Kanchanjanga FM Birtamod and Sapta Koshi FM Biratnagar simultaneously from 6:30 PM to 7:00 PM every Wednesday and Friday".

Funded by Foundation of Open Society Institute, USA, Saranarathi Sandesh targets to inform all exiled Bhutanese with reliable and informed information on repatriation, local integration and third country resettlement.

## The first scene of drama completes



The election officials in Samdrup Jongkhar wait for the voters to come indicating the low voters' turnout

### Bhutan News Service Thimphu, December 31

Another round of drama to shift from autocratic regime to a democratic system performed in Bhutan by electing 15 members to the upper house National Council on December 31. Another five will be elected on January 29 while the rest five will be nominated by king.

The election commission claimed some 55 percent of the people voted in the process. A total of 147,789 people voted out of 269,337 registered voters in 15 districts where the election was held. ECB said 143,633 votes were cast through 724 EVM and 4,156 in postal ballots. Owing to large number of unregistered voters, authorities refusing to issue Voter Cards on several grounds and many denied participating in the election process, the voters' turnout is estimated to be around than 40 percent.

There were only nine international observers – one from Australia, three from India and five resident officers of the UN based in Thimphu. Since India pushed in all the prepara-

tion and provided guidance in the polls, Indian presence in the polls cannot be practically considered as international observer. So, there were six international observers.

Polling held between 8.00 am and 4.00 pm. Border with India was closed and security was tightened.

Reports of complaints from the voters' regarding the polling officials not being supporting were ample despite CEC Kinzang Wangdi claimed election was a 'huge success'. There were complaints about voter confusion, administrative lapses and postal ballots.

About 15,000 officials were deployed for the polls.

Justin Gurung in Tsirang and Dr Mani Kumar Rai are two Lhotsampas elected. Similarly, three female candidates have been elected. The details of the persons election for the upper house with their brief background is given in the last page.

In a statement, Association of Press Freedom Activists (APFA) Bhutan said, "The newly elected national council will certainly fail to catch up the sentiments and spirit of

the people. The election is another measure to pull the wool over the eyes of the international community. The support extended by India to the autocratic regime was the cause for

international community to remain mum over the irrational election. India, self claimed biggest democracy of the world, is covering its

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## Youths: Base For Success Of Democracy



### Bhutan News Service Thimphu, December 18

Thousands of Bhutanese residents of Thimphu and neighboring villages poured into the grand celebration of the centenary national day on December 17 under the clear sky and cold weather.

The celebration went live through BBS TV and radio expected to have watched by similar number of audiences.

Addressing the function in capital, where queens and the royal family members, the Prime Minister, representatives of the clergy, the armed forces, bureaucracy, the political parties, students, the international community, king Jigme Khesar Namgyal

Wangchuk paid special thanks to the fourth king who lead the country to this stage of development.

He said the day was not to celebrate 100 years of monarchy but to rejoice the socio-economic development, achievements and peace and prosperity that Bhutan has enjoyed so far under the leadership of benevolent monarchs.

Stressing the responsibility that Bhutanese now has to ensure the success of parliamentary democracy, he urged the young Bhutanese to bear in mind that they have an important responsibility of taking Bhutan forward and that country's future will be determined by the capability, conduct and attitude of these young people.

He also urged the new politicians to build healthy democratic culture and ensure peace and unity among the people.

Khesar, who spent most of his time praising his father, expressed commitment to fulfil his duty as a king in future. To end, he reiterated the 'one nation one people' police crafted by his father from ethnic cleansing in the south.

## Journos Intimidated Vikalpa Gets His Alternative

### Bhutan News Service Kathmandu, December 20

Three Bhutanese media organizations have said their deep attention was drawing towards escalating violence and subsequent intimidation of journalists associated with BNS.

In a joint press statement issued, APFA Bhutan, TWMN Bhutan Chapter and BPU said journalists working inside camps were receiving threats

from local authorities after December 13 when a youth was shot by an unidentified armed group near Beldangi-I camp.

They accused local authorities of clamping baseless accusation on journalists Arjun Pradhan and Jiten Subba in connection with the shooting. "We make clear that Pradhan don't have any connection to the incident", reads the release.

### Bhutan News Service Kathmandu, January 04

Vikalpa, literally 'alternative', the general secretary of the underground outfit CPB(MLM), after much dispute among the members, has been ousted by his party co-workers. He will no more be the party member.

In a statement, Birat, who claims to be the new general secretary, said Vikalpa has been ousted seeing him an obstacle to the militant war. As the press statement terms Vikalpa as 'so called' the existence of the post and the person has been questioned.

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## Editorial

### Dramatic Election

An election that was held for the 25-member National Council, or upper house in parliament, on December 31 in Bhutan, is nothing but a plot from different angle to hood-wink the international communities through legal means. The election aimed at transforming the country from absolute monarchy to constitutional democracy would have greater significance had Bhutan created a democratic atmosphere after repatriating all exiled Bhutanese, languishing in Nepal, to their original homeland.

Chief of the Election Commission of Bhutan, Dasho Kunzang Wangdi has claimed that the polling has completed in 15 districts with the response quite enthusiastic. Elections was held for the 25-member National Council, or upper house in parliament, although Monday's vote was for just 15 seats with another five due for polls in late January and the remaining 5 seats to be picked by junior King Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk.

In actuality, the election is a complete failure to incorporate the spirit of the Bhutanese people and address their demands. It is simply an attempt to fool international communities in the name of stepping towards democratization. The very low turnout of the people to vote in the election has adequately proved people's annoyance to the act of the autocratic ruler since centuries. Bhutanese nationals who had long-faced repression from the absolute regime still fear to cast vote citing that it would not be free and fair. This was one of the reasons behind decrement in voter's registration.

Besides, the voters' turnout was less than 40 percent while taking into considerations of a large populace not given Voters Photo Identity Cards (VPIC) on grounds of various allegations. VPIC is issued only to those who produce No Objection Certificate (NOC) that in turn is issued by Royal Bhutan Police. Many who supported 1990 and 1997 demonstrations were denied from issuance of this card. There are no rooms to believe that democracy would foster inside Bhutan. This is because people are always denied from their participatory power as has to be in a democratic society. This sort of dramatic election will never pave a way for people's democracy in Bhutan.

## Feature

# A Mother's Long Journey

By T P Mishra



had experienced same thing and now I am supposed to leave Nepal. I was really finding difficult to tolerate it as I left my community without any information due to fear of being intimidated.

**Are you given cultural orientation classes?**

Not much. I am just informed that our life would go easier as like that of Norwegian people after sometime. They also told

It is certain that you would feel astonished if you luckily happen to meet her and other family members in a small-congested room in Nepal's capital city Kathmandu – this is because her family is eagerly waiting for January 7, the scheduled-date to depart for Norway and begin a new life. A Bhutanese woman along with five other 6-16 years old finally took bold decision to opt Third Country Resettlement (TCR) offer despite being single to lead the whole family.

Suk Maya Rai, 32 of Beldangi-II, Sector I/3-22 succeeded after six years of her necessary processing for TCR. Suk Maya weepingly laments that she was compelled to apply it after her 8-year-old daughter was raped. Not much assumed about the possible struggling life in a new country, Suk Maya is confident that her five children will have bright future after the Norwegian government educates them as assured by the UNHCR before taking-off the flight from Nepal.

Whether or not the assurances given by the authorities would thump on a stand of reality, she is optimistic that the Norwegian government would look after her family completely for five years. Suk Maya on one hand is happy with her decision; however, she immediately pours flashes of 'sadness' when evoking her days in Bhutan.

Here is a portion from a translated version of inter-

view given by Suk Maya to a radio program 'Saranarathi Sarokar' before her departure

**Why you decided to opt the offer of TCR?**

As my daughter was raped, I wandered here and there in search of authorities that can extend support for her medical treatment. Later, when CVICT Nepal diagnosed that my daughter had sustained severe injury she was also getting mentally disturbed. During her treatment period, while in Kathmandu after seven days of her rape case, two sisters (officials) from the UNHCR extended their full cooperation and support.

After my arrival in camps, UNHCR officials inquired me if I was still facing any problems. I informed them that the community began neglecting our family. The UNHCR repeatedly made inquiries if I was interested to opt for the solution that it would furnish.

As my husband had a second marriage, I thought the way UNHCR was supporting me would lead my children's future to a brighter atmosphere. So, I was then informed of the fact that the Norwegian government was willing to accept my vulnerable family.

**Who decided that you are to go to Norway?**

It is not me but the UNHCR that decided it.

**How did you feel when you left your temporary hut in camps?**

I really felt sad to leave my dwelling place, though temporarily habituated, because when we left Bhutan I



me that I will have to struggle a bit to fit the Norwegian way.

**Will you have to pay air ticket charge?**

As I fall under most vulnerable group, I will not have to pay such charges. The UNHCR has informed me that the Norwegian government will bear my expenses.

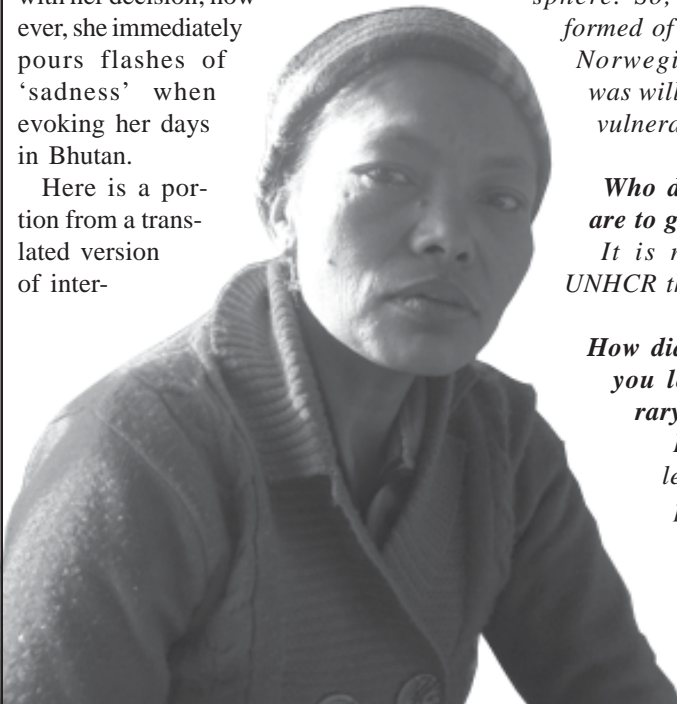
**Any thing at last?**

Many people in camps are intimidated by third parties not to openly advocate or opt for TCR. This is a sad part. Let individuals decide their future. Bhutan is not going to start repatriation process soon. More or less, we experienced the fact that democracy is hard to be achieved unless we do something. It is not that those opting TCR will forget Bhutan.

It may not be an easier outlet, as Suk Maya thinks, to get fit in a western society at once because she lacks cultural and other necessary orientation classes. The confidence that Suk Maya still posses to see bright future of her five children by pursuing them higher and better education is yet another part to offer her with a 'Bhutanese-cultured-salute' though he studied up to grade III.

"There is no doubt that I will immediately return to Bhutan when dignified repatriation process starts", says Suk Maya with tears rolling down her cheeks.

Suk Maya's undefined journey from the 'Last Shangri-la' to Nepal, and then to Norway comes to an ending point only when she, as wishes, gets back to Mechaytar under Samtse district in Bhutan one day.



## Exile Voices

### Consider Our Wives as 'Refugees'

Bhutan News Service  
Beldangi, December 27

Two exiled have urged the Nepalese government's home ministry to reconsider giving 'refugee' status to their wives who are not the Bhutanese citizens taking asylum in Nepal.

In a letter sent to Home Minister Krishna Prasad Sitaula of Nepal, Jas Bahadur Baniya of Beldangi II and Deo Kumar Lohagun of Beldangi II Extension appealed the Nepalese

government that they be considered as 'refugees'.

The appeal claimed that there are over 200 such males in camps who have married either Nepalese or Indian girls.

They said the UNHCR also excluded their wives in identity card issuance leading to separation in the family during process of finding long term solution of the crisis including repatriation and resettlement to third countries.

### Fire Damages Huts in Bel I

Bhutan News Service  
Kathmandu, December 22

Around 10 huts have been gutted but the fire in Beldangi I camp in Jhapa on December 22 evening. Other dozen huts have been dismantled for controlling the fire.

According to our correspondents Indra Timsina and Puranaghare in Beldangi I, the fire started from the hut of

Kabita Bishwa in Sector B/2 hut no 425.

The spreading fire also damaged two blocks of the Green Vale Academy Sector A Extension school.

The fire that started at around 10:12 pm was brought under control by exiled Bhutanese from three camps before the fire brigade from Damak municipality at 11 pm.

### BACC Convention

Bhutan News Service  
California, December 21

The first convention of the Bhutanese American Community Center (BACC) was held on December 16 in Mount Everest Restaurant at Berkeley California. Bhutanese dwelling in California formed BACC last year.

The convention elected its executive members. BACC unanimously elected Bir Thapa as chair person quoted the release issued by BACC. Other executive members include Umesh Rai, Jiwan Subba, Milan Rana and Ananta Gurung.

Formed with 'In people we trust, community we serve' motto, BACC has vowed to extend its possible supports to Bhutanese community in near future.

### Camp Secys Irked

Bhutan News Service  
Kathmandu, December 16

At a time when violence are erupting inside exiled Bhutanese camps, camp secretaries of all seven camps have appealed to Government of Nepal (GoN) to urge the UNHCR to stop motivation through hut-to-hut campaign for third country resettlement.

In an appeal sent to the prime minister of Nepal, camp secretaries have demanded for early repatriation to Bhutan.

"Government of Bhutan must not be allowed to with-

draw from its own proposals of categorization and verification process as proposed by government of Bhutan and verification must be continued in the speedy manner", reads the appeal.

"But since last six years onwards we found that UNHCR is only working for third country resettlement though it always keeps on telling that repatriation is the best option. Before repatriation of verified Bhutanese to Bhutan, UNHCR brought the proposal of third country resettlement, which is unjust", reads the appeal

### Vikalpa.. from page 1

The rebellion faction accused Vikalpa of being opportunist, communal and non cooperative to other members. The statement said Vikalpa's leadership demarcated 'between those who go to the battlefield and those who send others putting the friendly inner struggle towards rivalry in long run by the method of con-

spiracy and cliques' and flourished 'hostility in the party faith and belief on the basis of nose (Aryan or Mongoloid)'.

The rebellion faction also accused him of being fallen the prey of extreme skepticism and called on those who support Vikalpa into their faction to lead a stronger party in unity.

The second split in the party has surfaced amidst sharp criticism from all sectors that it merely intimidated and tor-

### Arjun Subba Shot At

Bhutan News Service  
Damak, December 13

Unidentified two persons who came on a motorbike ride shot a youth near Sangam Chowk in Damak municipality in Jhapa district on December 13.

According to C. L. Thapa, former camp secretary of Beldangi-I, the group shot Arjun Subba, former head of Sector 'D' from the same camp.

Subba sustained injury of two bullets on stomach underwent medical treatment at Life Line Hospital in Damak.

A report said, new outfit Bhutan Communist Party (Maoist) took responsibility of the incident.

Police in Damak arrested three youths from Beldangi-I and Beldangi-II extension in connection with the incident: Subash Acharya, Laxmi Narayan Dhungana and Bir Bahadur Subba. A team of police arrested them at around 10 pm.

Acharya was released the following day. Security has been beefed up in the camps after the incident.

### ID cards issuance

Bhutan News Service  
Kathmandu, December 10

The government of Nepal and the UNHCR started distributing identity cards to the exiled Bhutanese December 10.

UNHCR hoped this will improve protection and assistance for exiled Bhutanese.

A program was organized in Sanishare camp in Morang district to start the distribution. ID cards will be issued free of charge to all registered persons, 16 years of age and above. "ID cards are an important protection tool, because the most basic element of refugee protection is to prove one's identity in order to be able to readily access protection and assistance services," said Abraham ABRAHAM, UNHCR Representative in Nepal.

tured the exiled Bhutanese rather than its announced commitment to lead a war inside Bhutan.

The split has also raised questions if the party really exists inside Bhutan as has been claimed. It has reflected their ignorance to take over the responsibility of those civilians inside the country who were arrested on allegation of being associated with them.

## From Regime Complaints, counter-complaints of bribery

Bhutan News Service  
Thimphu, December 12

Along the heating campaigns by the political parties for upcoming first general elections, the dispute among candidates and cadres from two parties in Pemagatshel reached the apex this month.

Druk Phuensum Tshokpa members complained of bribery that Nanong constituency candidate of the People's Democratic Party, Jigme Drukpa, made.

Drukpa accepted that he gave Nu 200 each to three people, who were willing to become his party's tshogpas on pretext that they served him lunch at their place.

DPT members complained that he had earlier distributed money to other people as well to which Drukpa has denied.

To counter, the PDP member in the district submitted a written complaint to dzongkhag authorities and election officials, alleging DPT's candidate, Zangley Dukpa, of bribery.

Dukpa, candidate for Khar-Yurung constituency, has been alleged of trying to bribe a PDP 'tshogpa' in Zobel gewog, Sangay Wangchuk, with Nu 1,100.

Dukpa accepted he gave the money not on political ground but on humanitarian ground as the people were mourning on a relative's death.

### Third Voice

This is the age of advanced mind and technology. People around the globe have attained the good stage of life with regard to human development and gender balance. Gender balance, equity, equality and woman empowerment are no more problems in the western communities. The factors mentioned above are the basic elements of family development and the preliminary infrastructure for the development of an ideal society and a successful nation.

The past experiences have shown the importance of roles that stakeholders must play for human civilization. But still their stagnant roles remained detrimental in building the other part of the present society - particularly in the eastern world. The psychological inspections to these facts reveal that many things went untold and unwritten. Certainly, many unpredicted and unexpected thing will occur in the future as well.

Globally, some 98 percent of the historical accords have been built and established by man. Since time immemorial woman participation has been dominated and limited indoors in most societies. The history has a very limited space booked by the female in totality. Women made some efforts for making their roles equally pivotal but in vain because they become the victims of exploitations by the male counterparts.

The context in the east is very different from that of the west. In the western communities female members of the society is never treated as arrogantly, cruelly, and harshly as in the eastern countries. In the eastern countries, especially in the Hindu and Muslim communities women are treated as means for satisfying lust and breeding machine. Their participation cum roles for the upliftment of family and development of community, society or nation has never been felt. The concepts of equality and equity have never developed in



Puranaghare

any aspect.

The Hindu's traditional myths treat female as the God of the gods and the creator of the creators but the social treatment is antagonistically opposite. As each day is never Sunday, many buds came but only a few bloomed in the past. Despite the cruel treatment by the society and the male authorities, some attempts had been made for the freedom, equity and equality in the mainstream development and civilization process. But this attempt couldn't achieve success as much as it was desired and attempted. In SAARC zone, the scenario is much devastating than elsewhere.

In the history of India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, we have seen some women dignitaries in the mainstream of politics and economies but their landing showed the harsh treatment of the society, their counterparts and by their nations too. The cruel massap of the former prime minister of Pakistan, Benazir Bhutto is an instance. In Nepal, there is 33 percent reservation for women in every field guaranteed by the constitution. Nothing substantial exists in the perfectly male dominated country Bhutan.

In Bhutan, female who figured out are countable in hand. The so called democratic election held on December 31 also did not adequately reserved seats for the women.

One thing very certain is that if the treatment and the role of men and women for the upliftment of the family and development of the society and the nation is not balanced or parallel, many things couldn't be known by the male dominated society and could never be told by the female counterpart.

# The faces of the NC

shameless face to support an autocratic regime.

It further said, "The election will not pave way for democracy in Bhutan rather it will squeeze the rights of the people. It won't be a wonder to expect more ethnic cleansing policies from these selected people in future."



**CHUKHA: Tshewang Lhamo (6,140 votes)**  
Nothing is known about her

**BUMTHANG: Tshewang Jurmey (1965 votes)**  
Nothing is known about him



**DAGANA: Sonam Dorji (4,112 votes)**  
Sonam Dorji, 33, from Kana gewog, is brother-in-law of the village's gup. In addition to the strong family connection and influence that Sonam Dorji's family has in the villages, he has eight years of work experience and speaks fluent Lhotshampa and Dzongkha.

**MONGAR: Naichu (4,870 votes)**  
Naichu, 42, entered the game at the 11th hour, comes from Sailing geog. He has investments in various establishment in the country which he said amounts to around Nu 468,000. He said he also has the assets amounting to Nu 645,000 saved from his retirement benefit



**PARO: Ugyen Tshering (2,886 votes)**

Ugyen Tshering, 43, is resident of Shari gewog in Paro. He is a former General Manager of Bhutan Broadcasting Service (BBS).

Ugyen Tshering has a B.Com from Sherubtse College. He has undergone a film editing course with the Film and Television Institute of India's FTT and post graduate course

in film studies from the University of Waikato in New Zealand. After 16 years of service he resigned as the General Manager of Program and Production Department of the BBS.

His late father, Dasho Dorji Gyaltsen, alias ADO, who passed away earlier this year, was a Royal Advisory Councilor from 1993 to 1995

He started his career with the then Development Support Communication Services and continued with the BBS where he was instrumental in the launch of television in Bhutan in 1999. He resigned from BBS two years ago as the head of Radio/TV program productions.

**PEMAGATSHEL: Jigme Rinzin (6,100 votes)**

Jigme Rinzin, 36, resigned from the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC), where he was the Chief Investigating Officer.

Rinzin was the topper of the first B.Com (Honors) batch in Sherubtse College and stood third in civil service exams in 1994.

He previously worked in the Royal Audit Authority (RAA) after completing his Chartered Accountancy from London.



**PUNAKHA: Namgay Penjore (3,509 votes)**  
He hails from Goenshari geog and owns shares in various sectors amounting Nu 282,000.

**SAMDROUP JONGKHAR:**

**Jigme Wangchuk (4,569 votes)**  
Jigme Wangchuk, 28, served as a History and English teacher in Phuntshothang Lower Secondary School in Samdrupchholing, Samdrup Jongkhar for two years.

According to the asset declaration forms, Jigme Wangchuk of Jomotshangkha has the outstanding loan of Nu 15,000, least among the NC candidates.



**SAMTSE: Dr. M. K. Rai (7,996 votes)**

Dr. Mani Kumar Rai, 58, calls himself a bureaucrat, technocrat and a business executive. He is a veterinary doctor and worked in civil service.

He joined the civil service as a Veterinary Assistant Surgeon in 1972 and served in many dzongkhags and was instrumental in much development in the livestock sector. Dr. Mani initiated the present institutional networking of the country's veterinary services with the Regional and International Institutions. He was also instrumental in the Fishery development program at Gelephu during his tenure in Southern Region for increasing the income of the rural population. He retired in 2002.

He is the richest among the elected candidates in terms of saving in banks. He and his wife have cash worth Nu 1.55 million in fixed deposit.



**SARPANG: Karma Donnem Wangdi (5,968 votes)**

Karma D Wangdi, 37, is from Gelephu having legal background. He is from a well to do family. His father, a landlord, owns the maximum land in Sarpang and is a popular and influential figure.

Wangdi's father was the Gelephu dzongda back in the 1980s. Karma is appreciated

for his oratory skills and was soccer during the college years. He has post graduated with distinction from Maastricht School of Management, the Netherlands. He also holds a post graduate in information technology from the University of Technology in Sydney, Australia.

He worked as the deputy director of information and communication division with the Bhutan Chamber of Commerce and Industries and is a topper from a batch of students who undertook militia training in 1989.

**TRASHIGANG: Sonam Kinga (6,450 votes)**

Sonam Kinga, 34, from Shongphu geog is former executive editor of Bhutan Observer weekly. Presently a Ph.D fellow at Kyoto University in Japan and the author of six books, King is the civil service examination topper of 1997.



**TRONGSA: Dr. Jagar Dorji (1,823 votes)**

He is the former director of Sherubtse college in Kanglung



**TSIRANG: Justin Gurung (6,181 votes)**

Justin Gurung of Phuentenchu, Tsirang, is the lowest worthy with only Nu 100 as savings. A B.Com from St Xaviers College in Kolkata, Gurung served in government service for 12 years.



**WANGDUE PHODRANG: Sonam Yangchen (4,987 votes)**

Nothing is known about her



**ZHEMGANG: Pema Lhamo (4,839 votes)**

Aum Pema Lhamo was the Director of the RNR Information and Communication Service of the Agriculture Ministry.

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