

HIGHLIGHT

Bhutan is conspiring: Rizal

Hetauda, September 18

Chairman of the Bhutanese Movement Steering Committee (BMSC) Tek Nath Rizal has said the government of Bhutan is conspiring against the relatives of exiled Bhutanese who still live inside Bhutan.

He accused the government is planning for further eviction.

He was addressing the inaugural session of a Nepalese human rights group 'Human Rights and Peace Society' (HURPES) here on Monday. He urged the government of Nepal not to seek any other alternatives than to repatriate the exiled Bhutanese to their homesteads.

He said Nepalese people and rights groups should pressurise their government not to adopt any other alternatives.

Rizal is honorary member of the organization. *BNS*

Demonstration in Phuentsholing

Phuentsholing, September 07

Bhutan Police arrested 14 exiled Bhutanese demonstrators who entered Phuentsholing after evading the police.

Out of 51 who arrived here from the camps in Nepal, 14 had managed to enter Bhutan. Police arrested immediately after they started demonstrating showing placards and banners.

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Maoist Militia and Police to Guard Camps

Bhutan News Service
Damak, September 05

A meeting of the seven political parties and the Maoists in Nepal held on Sunday in Jhapa decided on making proper security arrangements in the camps.

As per the decision, police and the Maoist militia will be jointly mobilised in order to curb anti-social activities in the camps.

So far only the government security forces have been stationed for the security of the camps. *BNS*

Inflation Rises

Sangev Oendrey

Thimphu, September 08

The consumer price index has doubled in the second quarter of this year compared to the first quarter.

The first quarter showed only around 3 percent but by the end of the second June, it has reached 6.2, according to the Royal Monetary Authority (RMA).

The RMA cited the cause of this increase as rising prices of both food and non-food items.

The import has sharply increased and trade deficit risen by three fold reaching Nu 8.4 billion compared to last year.

A negative overall balance of Nu. 918.5 million has been recorded. The stock of external debt outstanding crossed US\$ 670 million as of March 2006. It is an increase by 2.3 percent from December 2005.

Of this, US\$ 258.4 million were outstanding convertible currency debts and Rs. 18.4 billion Indian Rupee debts. Debt servicing in 2005-06 (March 2006) amounted to US\$ 5 million in convertible currency and Rs. 488 million in Indian Rupee.

However, the gross international reserves increased by 20 percent amounting to US\$ 451.7 million in May this year.

Convertible currency reserves increased by 35 percent to US\$ 366.8 million while the Indian Rupee reserves decreased by 15.9 percent to Rs. 3.8 billion. This reserve is sufficient to finance 11.8 months of imports.

The continuing inflation has also chopped down the purchasing power of the Ngultrum from 0.89 in the first quarter to 0.86 in the second quarter against US\$.



FOR DASHAIN FEAST: A usual scene of Dashain in Hindu community is common camps.

Open all Options: Nepalese PM Told

Bhutan News Service

Kathmandu, September 16

A team of leaders advocating for opening all options for the solution of the refugee crisis met the Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala on Friday and handed over a memorandum for early solution of the crisis.

Led by the camp secretary of Belgandi II Hari Bangale, the team urged the Nepal government to open up all the options that could help finding a permanent solution of the derailed crisis.

They demanded, "Especially, the government of Nepal should agree with the offer of the US government to resettle the exiled Bhutanese in any third country."

Bangale said, "The movement would be effective if it could be run with the support from strong countries like the US and the Canada than to launch movement from a

country like Nepal which is very feeble in its diplomatic stand."

During his Nepal visit to Nepal last month the US senator Jim Kolbe had proposed that third country settlement of the exiled Bhutanese would be the best way to find a permanent and early solution of the crisis. He had held discussion with king Jigme Singye Wangchuk regarding the the issue of third country settlement during his official visit last month.

The proposal was backed by Canada and European Union. However, the government of Nepal has not yet taken any decision other than repatriation through bilateral talks. The petitioners accuse that the crisis prolonged due to fragile stand of the Nepal government.

Bangale said, "We now no more believe that Nepal can find solution of the crisis

through bilateral talks." He claimed most of the Bhutanese in the camp have agreed with the proposal of third country settlement.

The country representative of the UN refugee agency in Nepal Abraham Abraham has already stated that UNHCR would act as mediator to any decisions of the government of Nepal.

The team also sent appeal to US envoy to Nepal Moriarty asking his support in finding solution of the crisis.

By this time, some 11 countries have assured the Nepalese government to help in settlement of exiled Bhutanese. The proposing country US has said it can take some 50,000 to 70,000 of the exiled Bhutanese. Other countries offering to take the people include Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, Netherlands, Germany, Finland and Ireland.

US Asks Bhutan to Take its Citizens

Bhutan News Service

Thimphu, September 2

The delegation of the US congress currently in Bhutan visit has urged Bhutan government to accept its citizens in Nepal and initiate repatriation process.

Republican Congress member Jim Kolbe, leader of the delegation, who is also the Chairman of the Sub Committee on Foreign Operations, called on the Bhutan government for repatriation of those who are its actual citizens, if not all.

He said that the Bhutan government need to show good faith to repatriate even a small number of those that it has agreed are citizens.

"Nonetheless, they are still in camps and some of them, may be many of them, are people who do qualify to come back to Bhutan because they are and were citizens of this country," Kolbe said.

He said the remaining people could either be reintegrated in Nepal, India, or if they believe Bhutan is their homeland and they are not able to return, be resettled in third countries like the US. "That would eliminate a vast majority of this problem and it remains

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Fire killed one in Beldangi I

Vidhyapati Mishra

Beldangi I, October 01

The fire that broke out in Beldangi I camp on Sunday morning killed at least one person and burnt more than 50 huts.

The fire started from Sector B/1 hut No. 33 that killed 62 years old Jit Bahadur Magar, who used to live alone in that hut. The fire that started at around 2:20 am and was put off

only after four hours after fire engines from Damak, Mechinagar and Bhadarpur arrived.

People displaced from the fire have been settled in temporary huts in the school ground of Green Vale Academy, Sector B. All of their documents, books, properties and food items were burnt.

Amount of losses is yet to be accessed.

PM Calls World Leaders to Support to LDCs

Bhutan News Service

New York, October 01

Prime Minister Khandu Wangchuk has stressed the need help the LDCs for development, abide by anti terrorism laws and reformation in the UN.

In his address to the UN 61 session in New York, Wangchuk said, "The mid-term comprehensive review of the

Brussels Programme of Action for the Least Development Countries for the decade 2001-2010 that was undertaken earlier this week, has shown much less progress than desired."

"Due to limited scopes of raising domestic resources, attracting foreign investment LDCs would not achieve the goals and targets of the BPoA and asked developed for support.

He stressed the need of urgent reformation and strengthening of the Economic and Social Council and the reform in the Security Council. "The Security Council need to be reformed to reflect the present day realities and challenges," Wangchuk said.

He also urged the world leaders to effectively implement the anti-terrorism resolution by the 60th session to counter the growing terrorism around the world.

The coup is condemning

Again the story repeated. Another royal tycoon in Thailand, who was well regarded as ceremonial, destroys democracy, ruins democracy.

We know until a person remains above the law, democracy remains incomplete.

Despite attempts of the democratic government to end political deadlock, the Thai king overthrew the civilian government. This is against the democracy and democratic principles.

The people of Nepal had gained their liberty from similar coup of royalties very recently. The remains of military coup of Pakistan are still worth noting. The coup in Thailand has reminded the world that unless sovereignty is returned to civilian government, elected through popular mandate, we always expect such crackdown in democracy at this or the other times. This is the characteristic of feudal family rule.

World has criticised the coup but terrorising people through the mobilization of army continues. Freedom of the people comes to 'zero-point' while all fundamental rights of the people are scrapped. Constitution is frozen and military rule has been declared.

What everyone should understand from such repeating stories around the world is that laws should govern the country, not the orders of a person. Unless check and balance among the various institutions of a political system is maintained, possibility of coup always remains.

Any form of condemnation of such coup will be lesser.

Everyone should remain under law.

Budding Democracy and Expectations

If media reports from Thimphu are true then Bhutan is all set for general elections in 2008. Recently mock elections were conducted by the Election Commission in Thimphu for dzongkhag officials and representatives. It is also reported that the electoral list of adult Bhutanese citizens eligible to exercise their franchise has already been prepared.

These are all good steps for any effort towards making people sovereign and positive steps for political transformation. A democratic Bhutan can occupy its rightful place in the big forum of democracies in the world. This would also pave the way for raising economic status of the poverty-hit Bhutanese masses and open the country for people to people interaction with the outside world. So far, this has been kept as a privilege of the government.

The people of Bhutan hitherto have been treated as subjects and not as free citizens of an independent nation. They have been deprived of their civil and political rights including their right to govern upon themselves.

Political opposition and dissident voices were brutally crushed as acts of treachery, disloyalty, sedition and threat to the absolute rule. Dissidents were branded as terrorists, criminals, illegal immigrants and Ngolops or anti-nationals and all unjust and illegal actions were taken against them to silence their voices.

It is unfortunate that the government is yet to scrap many of its anti-human rights laws that directly infringe upon citizen's fundamental rights. Their continuation does not cast good intention on the true spirit and aim of the written constitution declared by His Majesty King Singye Wangchuck in March last year.

The Bhutanese monarch stunned the world and set a new example by deciding to give up his power in favor of a popular rule. Such a gesture and magnanimity is rare in the recent history of mankind which

is found soaked in the blood of innocent people at the hands of kings and queens.

The declaration of a written constitution and promise of democracy by the king has heralded a new era that the country is ready for a transition from autocracy to democracy, from absolutism to openness and from fear to freedom.

Many Bhutan watchers, however, opine it is too early to guess anything about true enjoyment of rights and freedoms by the Bhutanese people as the government continues the ban on dress, language and culture imposed on certain sections of the Bhutanese society.

Though there has been extensive media propaganda about establishment of democracy and granting of freedoms in Bhutan, no efforts have been made to introduce political parties, pro-democracy groups and organizations so far and the fate of political parties and other organizations operating in exile remains undecided.

Bhutan is yet to announce its formal decision on the fate of over 105,000 exiled Bhutanese in Nepal even if the debate has been continuing for a durable solution. UNHCR alone cannot take any decision on the matter. It must seek the formal approval of both the Bhutan and Nepal governments.

The election exercise and achievement of democracy will remain incomplete without the participation of these tens of thousands of Bhutanese citizens. Most of the exiled Bhutanese have been found to hold documents to prove Bhutanese citizenship as per the verification results of Khudunabari camp undertaken jointly by Bhutan and Nepal.

The fate and future of Bhutanese exiles depend on the decision of the government of Bhutan and Nepal, not to forget the role of India as well. So far the present government has played down with this great humanitarian problem citing threat to

its unique culture, traditions and existence, an argument which many Bhutan watchers do not agree with. They argue if there were no threats to Bhutanese culture, traditions and existence by its myriad ethnicities in history how is it threatening now? They believe these arguments were brought forward simply to defend their inconsistent and wrong policies.

Democracy implies inculcation of qualities of tolerance, mutual respect and co-existence of different groups of people and cultures as a single political entity. It basically means recognition and granting of an individual's rights and freedom to enable him or her to live in dignity and enjoy all human rights without any state interference, better getting state protection on individual rights.

Too much obsession with religion, culture and tradition will lead to fundamentalism which interfere the rights and freedoms of individuals. The Bhutan state must realize this fundamental aspect of democracy and avoid measures that will result into fundamentalism. The world has already suffered a lot due to fundamentalism and extremism and such a path should be avoided from the beginning of any new political transition.

In fact, democracy means an end to any imposition, discrimination, domination or mistreatment. It implies rule of law and not the law of the ruler or the ruling group. In a heterogeneous nation like Bhutan any attempt to undermine the existence of different ethnic groups will ultimately lead to political unrest and instability. A true democracy must respect the rights and freedoms of all diverse cultural and ethnic groups.

It is hoped that the government will find a solution of the exiled Bhutanese citizens before the beginning of the democracy in Bhutan and protect their rights to cast vote in the first historic election.

skpfhrd@mos.com.np

The Only Option is Repatriation

By Bhola Nath Puranaghere

Individual interest of exiled Bhutanese is a different thing but what they have been appealing to the Nepalese government is to consider the spirit of the majority before taking any decisions or involve the Bhutanese leadership in the negotiation process. It was Nepal's fault to undergo 15 rounds of bilateral talks ignoring the voices of concerned community. Thereafter exiled Bhutanese were confident, it would reach nowhere. The involvement of their representatives is a must for early solution.

The other anticipating role of the Nepalese government is to mount pressure on the Druk regime to directly arrange talks with the evicted citizens. Indian can play major role in this regard since Indian influences in Bhutan is more than that any others. Nepal would face the multiplied problems if it unilaterally takes any decisions.

Currently, the UNHCR country representative Abraham Abraham is advocating only for resettlement. It is translucently seen that some of the exiled leaders are used to mobilize the innocent people in camps. Despite putting the innocent in problems it is the duty and responsibility of Nepalese government to help bar them from misfortunes and drudgeries.

Some European and American countries have even formed a core group

claiming that majority Bhutanese have already applied for relocation. This is disgusting. At present core groups are needed to take the initiatives to pressurize the concerned authorities to speed up the repatriation process.

Nepalese Government has a long hand and significant position to implement and execute what ever in the name of solution comes out. Nepal should turn only with the consent of majority of exiled Bhutanese. Now, it has ample chances to get corrected with its past misconducts. The same figures representing the previous government have given the snap judgment and emotional decisions vainly successful to stop the crisis from continuity.

The time has come to show the spirit of nationalism and patriotism for the Bhutanese people living in Nepal and India. Until today exiled leaders are unsuccessful to escort and lead the political movement in Bhutan. The time is seeking the leadership in new generation. Exile leaders must learn lessons of unity before attempting to launch any programs without any visions. Now, if all the exiled Bhutanese leaders do not come together for movement, the dream of people to go back home becomes the attempt of Sisyphus to roll the big boulder. The present petition shows that all those concerned must join the hand to let the exiled Bhutanese back to home with dignity, honor and compensation.

From Regime

City Corporation

Employee Jailed on Forgery

Sangey Oendrey

Thimphu, September 14

Tashi Wangmo has complained that her husband has been sentenced to jail term without any justifiable reasons.

Her husband is the employee of the Thimphu City Corporation, who was accused of making fake documents about the ownership of a plot of land. The government has accused the land owned by Santa Maya was illegally transferred

to her name. The government has also alleged that Santa Maya's husband illegally sells motors in Thimphu.

Wangmo said her husband had bought a 17 decimal plot in Sementokha at Nu.60,000 per decimal in 2004 which was later transferred to Santa Maya's name.

Government restricts any person having marital relation with foreigners from owning any land or personal assets in Bhutan.

Nepalese MPs Visit Camp

Bhutan News Service
Sanischare, September 01

The parliamentary committee on foreign relations and human rights of the Nepalese House of Representatives has visited the Sanischare camp in Morang district on Thursday and received suggestions from the exiled Bhutanese regarding the long-standing crisis and way forward for solution.

The committee chairman Suresh Karki led the team. Other members of the team included Chakra Prasad Bastola (former Nepalese ambassador to Bhutan), Shushila Nepal, Romi Gauchan Thakali, Arjun Jung Bahadur Singh and committee secretary Tuya Nath Bhattarai.

Exile Voice

Application for resettlement in the US

Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, September 19

Some 20 individuals send a joint appeal to the US envoy to Nepal James F Moriarty seeking transfer to the US along with their family members.

"Having no faith in Bhutan and Nepal Government to start

the repatriation process and also being Nepal government is in deteriorating situation we have no faith in settling here itself," the appeal sent the US diplomat reads.

The group said third country settlement was only the solution of the prolonged crisis. "We feel as if we are in the prison," they said.

The camp secretary Menuka Nepal explained the team regarding the deduction of ration and essential facilities like education and health. She also explained the problems that people have been facing these days in the camps.

Bastola assured that the committee would study the root

cause of the crisis and suggest its government to take immediate steps for finding solution of the crisis.

Bastola said that the Nepal government would not decide to send them to America or any other third countries but it would work for their repatriation with honor and dignity.

Bhutan Show in New York

Bhutan News Service

New York, September 14

The Cherry Lane Theatre of New York will present an off-Broadway premiere on Bhutan from October 19.

The premiere is presented in association with New York Stage & Film, written by Daisy and directed by Evan Yionoulis.

Performances will last till December 9.

The 'Bhutan' encompass the ups and downs of a New England family' after the death of their father. Frances Conroy wonders how she ended up here. Her mother is driving her crazy. Her aunt is stalking a married man. Her brother is in prison. She dreams of Bhutan but can barely find the kitchen door, Cherry Lane Theatre said.

Nepal Asks Bhutan for Final Talks on Repatriation

Bhutan News Service

New York, September 29

Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister K. P. Oli has urged Bhutanese Prime Minister Khandu Wangchuk to sit for final talks to settle the issue of Bhutanese stranded in UNHCR camps in Nepal for the last two decades.

During a meeting between the two leaders in New York on Wednesday, at the sidelines of the United Nations summit, Oli stressed that there is no need to seek any kind of excuse or pretext to extend the bilateral talks regarding repatriation. "Let's sit for last round of talks to send them back home," Oli told Wangchuk.

Pressure has been built on Bhutan from the international community for solving the crisis since frustration among the youths in the camp is growing, which may go out of control if the problem is not addressed on time.

It is learnt that Bhutanese prime minister did not respond to the request of Nepalese DPM. Neither Wangchuk took any attention towards the final round of bilateral talks.

Wangchuk had taken over the charge of prime minister only two weeks ago from Sangey Ngedup.

Few days back in country, Oli had said his government would take decisive steps to address the stranded issue of exiled Bhutanese while talking to journalists about the achievement of his government in 100 days.

Oli had said Bhutan's passivity in the process was not acceptable to Nepal and warned Nepal would be forced to take unpopular steps if the Druk regime continued to stay with its stand regarding taking back its citizens.

He had reiterated the government's pledge for their respectful repatriation.

Interview

BRRRC is Incomplete: Manoj Rai

Born in 1975 in Kalikhola Maurey of Sarpang District in Bhutan, Manoj Rai is presently the Camp Secretary of Khudunabari, the only verified camp by Joint Verification Team. He arrived in Maidhar in 1990 from where he was sifted to Khudunabari. He worked as a teacher in Sun Rise Academy and Druk Model School for ten years before he joined Camp Management Committee in 2005 in as admin. When he came to Kathmandu after Rizal called off the *dharna*, he talked to *Bhutan News Service* (BNS) in various relevant issues. Excerpts:

BNS: Camp Secretaries are elected by people in camps to look after their needs and issues. But they are alleged to be actively involved in politics instead of camp management. Manoj: In fact Camp Secretaries are people's representatives and are responsible for coordinating the needs and issues of these exiled Bhutanese with government of Nepal and UNHCR. But unfortunately they are forced to be involved in politics by BRRRC, as they are the central committee (CC) members of the body. In spite of this, they must be answerable to all issues including political.

BNS: BRRRC is to work for repatriation. But, as a CC member you have been advocating for comprehensive solution including third country settlement. Why?

Manoj: I say that BRRRC is incomplete and undemocratic. There is no democratic voting system in it. Dr. Bhumpa, the former Chairman made Tek Nath Rizal its chairman. All its CC members did not support that decision. Further, I have not seen any transparency in BRRRC. It must be a common platform for all exiled Bhutanese with transparency and accountability.

I want to elaborate that I represent people of three opinions. There are people who like all doors to be open for solving the crisis. That is why we Camp Secretaries are

advocating for comprehensive solution. I am not optimistic about repatriation. But I have been receiving the allegation that I am a cadre of Hari Bangaley group, which I strongly oppose. I respect his opinion of comprehensive solution but I have no affiliation with Bhutanese Refugee Durable Solution Committee.

BNS: What created misunderstanding between Rizal and Camp Secretaries?

Manoj: Rizal is not an elected chairperson of BRRRC. The misunderstanding started from *dharna*. I was the first among secretaries to promise Rizal with full physical participation with maximum number of participants. But Rizal did monopoly by withdrawing the sit-in programme after three months despite the will of the participants. If Rizal regards himself above all in our movement then I have nothing to comment. I just want to tell that he must try to accommodate all. I will try to coordinate a meet of BRRRC members to avoid all confusions created so far. Rizal must be answerable to that.

BNS: Rizal has blamed that Camp Secretaries did not support Rizal during *dharna*. Was that true?

Manoj: That was not true. Camp Secretaries supported Rizal with all possible means. All exiled Bhutanese have good faith in Rizal and I am not

an exception. Khudunabari was the only camp having maximum number of participants in the sit-in.

BNS: You are an executive member of Bhutan People's Party (BPP). Don't you think that your campaign is against the party's stand to repatriation?

Manoj: I have seen that works of BPP are passive and slow. That is why I am not active with the party activities. I too have my parents in Bhutan. So I cannot keep myself politically active. Although I am affiliated to BPP, I am compelled to speak the voice of voiceless in camps. Verified people of Khudunabari want comprehensive solution. So I must say what my people like and want. The party may take action on me. But I am representing Khudunabari but not BPP in my campaign.

BNS: What is your opinion to growing communalism in Bhutan?

Manoj: Inception of Communism in Bhutan is not bad. I have deep respect for such feelings. But I request not to promote camp-based activities to threaten people here. This will affect the smooth functioning of camps. I am against physical harassment of students in exile who study outside camps. Students inside Bhutan are highly competitive and potential. So we must prepare our students to compete with them.

Demonstration in Phuentsholing

Aaiman Rai of Bhutan Gorkha National Liberation Front (BGNLF) had led the demonstrators.

The demonstrators chanted slogans against the discriminatory policies, ethnic suppression and mock democracy.

Human Rights Organisation of Bhutan (HUROB) and BGNLF have been launching such demonstrations since months. They run several demonstrations in Mechi Bridge in Nepal-India border.

The Bhutan Police arrested the demonstrators and handed over to Indian police. It has been learnt that some of the demonstrators are kept in Indian custody for investigation. Many of them were dropped back to Nepal on the following day.

This is the fourth attempt of exiled Bhutanese to stage demonstrations in Bhutan demanding their repatriation. *BNS*

US Asks Bhutan to Take its Citizens

a contentious issue between Nepal and Bhutan," said Kolbe.

The delegation received an audience with His Majesty the King on August 30.

"For a monarch to voluntarily have faith in his people, to vest power into them and place the future of the country in their hands was tremendously courageous and wise, not just to do it, but the manner in which it is being done," said Democrat MP Brian Baird during the meeting. "It is very deliberative, thoughtful, methodical and systematic way of preparing leadership and citizens for this important transition."

Kolbe also expressed the desire of the US to increase cooperation cultural and educational exchanges and opening opportunities for trade of crafts and other Bhutanese products in the US.

'Bhutan at birth of republic'

The online version of the government-owned Kuensel weekly quoted the US congressmen as saying that that they were privileged to be

in Bhutan, which was at the birth of a 'democratic republic'.

This is the first time that the media stated Bhutan growing into democratic republic. It would be astonishing that Bhutan is growing into democratic republic even while the drafted constitution has so much provision for absolute monarchy and that the king has already announced to pass on the throne to his son to give continuity to monarchical system in the country.

BNC seek CP's Initiation in Repatriation

Bhutan News Service
Siliguri, September 21

Bhutan National Congress has sent an appeal to the crown prince Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuk urging him to find an early solution of the stalled problem of the exiled Bhutanese.

The crown prince is to succeed his father in 2008 after the first parliamentary democratic elections are held in the country.

The party had put forward 12-point demands including a proposal to king to become president of the country for nation's security. Other demands include dividing Bhutan into four administrative divisions and recognise Nepali language in the same manner as recognition is given to English. The party further demanded for establishment of civilian judiciary and repatriation of exiled Bhutanese to their homeland with respect and honour at the earliest possible.

This is the first petition sent to the crown prince urging him to look into political reforms.

US Provides Assistance

Bhutan News Service
Kathmandu, September 18

The United States has pledged US\$750,000 to the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) to support exiled Bhutanese in Nepal.

A press release issued by the American Centre in

Kathmandu on Monday said, "The US State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) provided the funds as part of a recent US\$11.5 million donation to the WFP."

WFP Executive Director, James Morris, said in response to the US offer that there would now be sufficient funding for nine refugee operations in Africa and a further three in Asia - until the end of this year.

WFP provide ration to over 105,000 exiled Bhutanese languishing in seven camps administered by the UNHCR since early 1990s.

Branded Kits to Khudunabari Children

Bhutan News Service
Khudunabari, September 18

A group of people few days ago travelled from Kathmandu, amid swollen rivers, rains and floods, to the Khudunabari camp in Jhapa, to distribute branded sporting (football) kit to the children of this camp.

Among the four who travelled to the camp was Grady Walker. He is making a documentary on the exiled Bhutanese. The sole intent of the team was to distribute the Adidas kit in the camp was that the kit was especially made for refugee children. The team said it was not prepared for the heavy ceremony and the welcome that awaited them here.

Tseten Namgyal, another member of the team, said they had expected it to be a quiet affair but those in the camp had prepared an entire day's function with football matches of men, women and children's and other things.

GNH Reaches Scotland

Bhutan News Service
New Delhi, September 11

Scotland in Europe follows the happiness formula that began in Bhutan some six years ago.

The Scottish Council Foundation in its new report to be published this week stated the declaration of the executives that economic growth as top priority of the country should be redirected to improving quality of

life that adds happiness and smiles in people's life.

This is in line with expression by David Cameron, the Tory leader.

For Scotland, radical action against advertising of unhealthy foods could be the public health equivalent in the 21st century of the introduction of clean water and proper sanitation in the 19th century, the report stated. In particular this could target

advertising aimed at children, the researchers expressed concerns.

The foundation suggests the executive to change from having growth as its top priority and building a national consensus behind well being improvements. "The biggest social challenge facing Scotland is its lagging health and well being, and our leaders can and should do more to address it," says the report.

Int'l Coverage on Bhutanese Issues

Widening GNH Differences

By I. P. Adhikari

Lip-tight democratisation of Bhutan has untowardly caste symptoms of mismanagement through the beginning despite the attempts for change from up.

Last week, during the transfer of the responsibility of prime minister to Khandu Wangchuk, the vision of mental happiness and economic prosperity has intermingled.

The new Prime Minister Wangchuk said he would concentrate on economic progress during his tenure for the next one year. This is in contravention with the king's philosophy of Gross National Happiness (GNH).

In his campaign of GNH, king Jigme Singye had advocated mental happiness and peace over economic prosperity. It had attracted many intellectuals and the way it could get implemented. The discourses followed amid criticism. The advocacy, in a society that has hardly seen and hard of political ups and downs and various principles, tightly caught up. Arrogance to economic development led the people to join the circle of prosperity encompass by the mental thoughts. This is like a 'yogi' leaving his physical prosperity in search of salvation and godliness.

The GNH inconsistently included the principles of peace and ignorance to physical pleasure that is moreover developed by Buddhism. Buddhists, by the nature of religion's principles, seek salvation and mental peace not physical pleasure brought by economic prosperity. This is what the king's philosophy attempted to accommodate.

Quite a few scholars from western countries appraised the GNH principles. They said economic prosperity lesser meaning over mental happiness in terms of maintaining peace and tranquillity in the country. A research foundation in Scotland

recently said it suggested the government to prioritise mental over physical prosperity. Though, it has yet to be proved whether mental happiness helps for economic prosperity or the economic prosperity is a formula for happiness, western critics growing allergy with economic booms, try to applaud the principles of mental happiness. But, this has to be appropriate with the political, social and economic situation of the country, which has not yet evolved in Bhutan. That is why, appraised in other countries, GNH is inappropriate to Bhutan at this juncture. GNH grow where there is social and cultural harmony.

King's principles took a second turn when prime minister stressed for economic progress over mental happiness. This is diversion in principal thoughts between the king and the minister would get further widen as more and more power is handed over to the elected government. In fact, political diversion is certain in open politics when the leaders have so far run the government in guidance and in the interest of the king. The more one become accountable to people, the more divergence can be observed between the king and the political rulers.

Leaders learn not by teaching but through practice. Bhutanese ruler has been trying to inculcate in leaders the principles and values of democracy like in school children along influencing through GNH principles. While democratic practices are competitive, that can even rise enmity among the political entities, GNH stresses unity and harmony. Certainly, the political entities advocate against the discriminatory policies to get wider support and this is inconsistent with the GNH principles, which say everyone in the country should come to one culture, one social system and one ethnicity.

Published by: I. P. Adhikari (APFA-Bhutan) for BMS, Chief Editor: Kazi Gautam, Editor: Thakur P. Mishra
Mailing Address: GPO 8975, EPC 2377, Ktm Nepal, Email: edittr@yahoo.co.uk, URL: <http://www.apfanews.com>

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