

Mizoram-Bru talks regarding repatriation of Bru refugees

Aizawl, Jan 21: The Mizoram government would hold talks with representatives of Bru community here tomorrow regarding repatriation of Bru refugees from six relief camps in North Tripura.

A Mizoram government delegation will be led by additional secretary in the state home department T V Fambol while the Bru delegation will comprise two representatives each from the former Bru National Liberation Front (BNLF), former Bru Liberation Front of Mizoram (BLFM), Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) and two from the families displaced by communal tension during November last.

About 35,000 Bru refugees are now lodged in Tripura's relief camps after they fled Mizoram following a communal strife with the Mizo in the western belt of Mizoram in 1997. Their repatriation scheduled to start from November 16, 2009 had been derailed by the gunning down of a Mizo youth by members of Bru Revolutionary Union, a newly formed Bru outfit.

Meanwhile, Delhi-based Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR), in its fact-finding report released today, accused the Mizoram government of failing to protect the Brus from communal violence.

The absence of a written agreement created fears and suspicion among both the Mizos and Brus and the murder of a Mizo youth, Zarzokima has been used to stall the repatriation process. UNI

2 militants arrested for killing Mizo youth

Aizawl, Jan 21: Two suspected militants have been arrested in connection with the killing of a youth that sparked off ethnic violence in the state last year, displacing thousands of minority tribals, officials said here Thursday.

'Vanlalfela, 28 and Chusarai, 31 -- both suspected militants -- were arrested Tuesday by the special investigation team (SIT) for killing 18-year-old Mizo youth Zarzokima on Nov 13 last year,' a police official told reporters.

The official said: 'Both the detainees are members of United Liberation Army (ULA), a little known separatist outfit.'

Zarzokima's death led to ethnic violence that displaced around 5,000 Reang tribals, forcing them to take shelter in adjacent southern Assam and in northern Tripura.

The much expected tribal refugees' repatriation from Tripura to Mizoram also suffered following the ethnic troubles.

Over 35,000 Reang tribal refugees have been living in six camps in north Tripura since 1997 when they fled west Mizoram following ethnic clashes with the majority Mizos over the killing of a Mizo forest official.

A fact finding team (FFT) from the Asian Centre for Human Rights (ACHR) in New Delhi visited Mizoram and Tripura Dec 8-15, last year to facilitate a resolution to the ethnic conflict between the Reang tribals and the majority Mizos.

Over 100,000 Reang tribals, locally called 'Bru', reside in the Christian-dominated mountainous state of Mizoram and are demanding an autonomous district council for their all round development.

Earlier this month, Mizoram Chief Minister Lal Thanhawla visited north Tripura's Mizo-dominated areas and also participated in a Mizo cultural function.

Thanhawla told reporters: 'It is not possible to constitute an autonomous council for the Reang tribals residing in Mizoram. The refugees came to Tripura voluntarily and they should go to their homeland willingly.'

Referring to a meeting with Lal Thanhawla in New Delhi last week, Tripura Chief Minister Manik Sarkar said that the Mizoram government has taken fresh initiative to take back the Reang tribal refugees soon. Agencies