

Shamarpa kin making last-ditch efforts to cremate him in Nepal

by PURNA BASNET

Family members of the late Tibetan guru Shamar Rinpoche are now preparing to make a last-ditch effort to perform his last rites in Nepal.

The Rinpoche's brother, Jigme Tsering Uthap, has arrived in Kathmandu to request Prime Minister Sushil Koirala to allow them to perform his last rites in Nepal. PM Koirala, who was in the US for cancer treatment, arrived in Kathmandu just on Tuesday evening.

The high lama, also known as the Shamarpa, had died in Germany last month. Before his death, he had reportedly asked his followers to perform his last rites in Nepal. However, the government of Nepal has not yet given a permission. Although a section of media has reported that the government denied permission under 'pressure from China', government officials have claimed that they did so as the Shamarpa was holding Bhutanese citizenship at the time of his death.

According to sources at the Tibetan camp, Kalimpong, where the Shamarpa's body is being kept, the late Rinpoche's relatives will wait for PM Koirala's response till Wednesday. If the government does not issue permission then the Shamarpa's last rites will be performed in Kalimpong itself on July 30. The government of Bhutan, where the Shamarpa legally belongs to, has also denied permission to perform his last rites there.

Since followers of the late Rinpoche have already gathered in Kathmandu from across the world, the Shamarpa's relatives want to make every possible effort for performing his last rites in Nepal. Kalimpong is the last option for his last rites.

The Shamarpa is the third highest religious leader after the Dalai Lama and Karmapa in the Tibetan community. Born in eastern Tibet in 1952, the Shamarpa was taken to Sikkim by the sixteenth Karmapa. He was just a seven-year-old boy when he was taken to Sikkim. He studied Buddhism in a monastery in Rumtek, Sikkim before heading for the US for higher studies. He was active in spreading the teachings of the Buddha in Nepal, India and Bhutan.