

**Inaugural Address by Tshogpon Jigme Zangpo at the Opening
Ceremony of the Eleventh Session of Second Parliament of Bhutan
Friday, 15 June, 2018**

1. The Eleventh Session of the Second Parliament of Bhutan commences today on this auspicious day graced by the kind presence of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.
2. On behalf of the Parliament, it is my pleasure to welcome His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo with immense gratitude for gracing the opening ceremony of the Eleventh Session, leaving aside numerous royal engagements.
3. I would also like to welcome Her Majesty the Gyaltsuen, Members of the Royal Family, representatives of the Central Monastic Body, senior government officials and foreign dignitaries who have come to witness the occasion.
4. In commemoration of the Golden Jubilee of Indo-Bhutan diplomatic relations, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo recently inaugurated Nganglam-Gyalpozhing highway on May 10, 2018. The highway, besides benefitting the economic development of the nation, will greatly benefit Bhutanese people travelling to the eastern Dzongkhags in particular. On behalf of the Bhutanese people, I would like to express heartfelt gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

Similarly, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo graced the opening of the Third Royal Bhutan Flower Exhibition held in Punakha. Coinciding with the auspicious day of Lord Buddha's Parinirvana, His Majesty also graced the installation of *Sertog* (golden pinnacle) on the *Utse* (main tower) of Wangdue Phodrang Dzong. His Majesty personally visited all the Dzongkhags to evaluate rural development and meet the people. His Majesty visited various schools and granted audiences to teachers, students and the people, and also granted *kidu* to the needy

people during the visit. Therefore, the Parliament would like to express utmost gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

5. His Holiness the Je Khenpo has carried out numerous initiatives for the promotion of Buddha Dharma in the country for the benefit of sustaining peace and harmony in the country. Thus, the Parliament would like to express gratefulness to His Holiness the Je Khenpo.
6. The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB) has carried out procedural reviews and advocacies for free and fair elections in the country. Hence, the Third Parliamentary National Council Election was completed successfully on April 20 with maximum number of people participating in the election. The successful completion of the National Council election was possible due to collaborative efforts of the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), Local Government leaders, civil servants and armed forces. Therefore, the Parliament would like to extend gratitude to all institutions and individuals involved and to our people for their participation in the election.
7. As per the Royal Command to commemorate a yearlong Golden Jubilee of Indo-Bhutan diplomatic relations, the Ministry of Education (MoE) hosted a grand celebration of Teachers' Day on 2nd May at Changlimithang, among many other initiatives. Such initiative reaffirmed to further strengthen and stabilize the existing diplomatic ties between the two countries. Teachers from various schools in the country and retired teachers who served since 1960s from India were also invited to mark the day together.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) invited senior retired teachers from India who served in Bhutan as guests of honour to celebrate Teachers' Day and awarded the certificates of commendation to each of them. In addition, His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo graced the Teachers' Day celebrations and granted special audiences to the Indian teachers, who were extremely gratified by such noble initiative from His Majesty.

The Parliament would like to thank all 43 senior Indian teachers for marking the celebration.

Such a historical initiative from the Ministry of Education (MoE) has only been successful due to His Majesty's noble guidance and counsel for sustaining eternal harmony among the people and generations to come. Therefore, we would like to express our utmost gratitude to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.

8. On behalf of the National Assembly, I would like to congratulate and welcome the Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Eminent Members, Members re-elected and the newly elected Members of the National Council of Bhutan. I am hopeful that the Members of National Council will continue to uphold its service in this highest legislative body that has strong democratic foundation with utmost responsibility and accountability for the welfare of the country and the people.
9. The Parliament of Bhutan will be deliberating the following agenda items in the Joint Sitting of the session:
 - a. Deliberation on the disputed clauses of the Audit Bill of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2017;
 - b. Deliberation on the Implementation Status of the 10th Session resolution of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), Performance Audit Report; and
 - c. Report on the State of the Nation.
10. The National Assembly during its 11th Session will be discussing on following:
 - a. Annual Anti-Corruption Report 2017;
 - b. Interim Budget for Fiscal Year 2018-2019, Fiscal Report for Fiscal Year 2016-2017, Supplementary Budget for Fiscal Year 2017-2018, and the Macro-Economic Status Reports.

11. The agenda items received from Wangdue Phodrang, Pemagatshel and Zhemgang Dzongkhags had been deliberated during the Preliminary Meeting held on May 31, 2018, and forwarded to relevant ministries and agencies for necessary action. It is imperative that the ministries and agencies take necessary actions at the earliest possible.
12. I would like to inform the general public that I have led a parliamentary delegation to the 138th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and related meetings in Geneva. On the invitation of the President of the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand, I also visited the Parliament of Thailand and reaffirmed mutual cooperation, friendship and future collaborations between the two parliaments.
13. In conclusion, with the blessings of the Triple Gem, mighty grace of His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo and the Members of the Royal family, collective merits of the people of Bhutan, I would like to offer prayers for the successful conclusion of the Eleventh Session of Second Parliament.

TASHI DELEK
