

**Address by Hon'ble Speaker on the Opening Ceremony of the Parliament session on the
2nd June 2022**

1. The Parliament session commences today on this auspicious day. On behalf of all Members of Parliament and on my own behalf, I would like to humbly welcome and express my deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King for gracing the opening ceremony.

2. The Parliament would like to welcome Her Majesty the Queen, Members of the Royal Family, senior government officials, and foreign diplomats and dignitaries to the opening ceremony. *(If it pleases Her Majesty the Queen and Members of the Royal Family attending the Opening Ceremony)*

3. If I may seek permission from the Golden Throne and make an attempt to share the selfless service of His Majesty the King for his Country and the people, time and my capacity would be simply inadequate to cover all aspects of the noble deeds as they are immeasurable. The country was progressing very well on the path of self-reliance in its economic development path under the leadership of His Majesty the King. However, with the outbreak of Covid, times had become challenging. His Majesty the King, leaving behind his precious Princes and the Queen and the family, had chosen to care more for the wellbeing of his people. He has been tirelessly travelling across the country disregarding his personal safety and health in combating Covid. The people are so grateful for the King's benevolence and hold it dear to their heart. The parliament, on behalf of the people, would like to thank His Majesty the King for the care and concern.

We all know His Majesty the King's deep concern for the meaningful engagement and welfare of the youth has led to the establishment of De-suung Programme. And we all are aware of the hard work and their selfless service of Dessups to the nation.

With his deep concern for the Dessups in particular and the youth of Bhutan in general, his Majesty the King has launched massive De-suung Skilling and Reskilling Programmes across the country to provide gainful employment. His Majesty has personally visited all the Skilling Programmes centres to ensure effectiveness and

advised the youth to make best use of the precious time in the centres and to work towards earning a decent livelihood to serve the nation. The golden words of advice from His Majesty have been very reassuring and inspirational in building self-confidence.

Furthermore, the institution of the Gyalsung National Service by His Majesty the King has been of higher order dedicated to nurture the young people. It is meant to give proper guidance, instil self-discipline and provide professional skills required to succeed in the 21st century and to contribute meaningfully to nation-building. Despite the hurdles presented by the global pandemic, the project has been progressing as desired.

For all these selfless acts for the wellbeing of the country and the people by His Majesty the King, the exemplary role model extends beyond Bhutan to the world. The Parliament on behalf of the people of Bhutan would like to offer our utmost admiration and deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King.

4. His Majesty the King, apart from granting numerous support and welfare to the people of Bhutan, has continued to grant citizenship. This year, Citizenship has been granted to 308 people enabling the citizens to live a honourable and a peaceful life.
5. His Majesty has commanded the Government to set up Royal Bhutan Helicopter Service regional offices. It is going to be very beneficial for the people especially during medical emergencies and creates scope in enhancing communication connectivity in the future. The Parliament, therefore, would like to express our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King for the direction.
6. Even though the COVID-19 restriction around the world has been relaxed, about half the population around the world didn't get the opportunity to avail vaccination to shield against COVID-19. Bhutan has a success story. With the graciousness of His Majesty the King, all the population from young to old have had the opportunity to avail a minimum of three rounds of COVID-19 vaccination. In this regard, the Parliament, on behalf of the people of Bhutan, would like to thank His Majesty the King.

7. The monastic body led by His Holiness the Je Khenpo and other religious masters have been performing numerous prayers and religious activities for the prevention and the protection against the global pandemic.

Moreover, this year, upon the command from His Majesty the King and His Holiness the Je Khenpo, the Central Monastic Body while observing the 371st death anniversary of Zhabdrung Rimpoche, had also commemorated the 400th anniversary of Central Monastic Body's establishment by Zhabdrung Nawang Namgyel in a grand manner befitting the occasion. The auspicious occasion telecasted through the national television and live streamed to the general public has enabled the people to pay their homage and facilitated in the reminiscences of past glories. For this, the Parliament expresses our heartfelt gratitude to the Central Monastic Body.

8. The Parliament would like to express sincere gratitude to Her Majesty the Queen, Her Majesty the Queen Mothers, and the Members of the Royal Family for standing close behind and looking after the welfare of His Majesty The King and also for taking utmost care of Their Royal Princes and for grating welfare support to the communities.
9. If I may present a brief report on the business of the House during this Session:

Besides the Legislative and parliamentary functions including Question Hours and Motions, as conducted in the past, the National Assembly in this Session will deliberate on:

- a) Budget Appropriation Bill for the Financial Year 2022-2023;
- b) Third Reading of the Forest and Nature Conservation Bill of Bhutan 2021;
- c) Fiscal Incentives (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2022;
- d) Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2022;
- e) Tourism Levy (Amendment) Bill Of Bhutan 2022;
- f) Rules of Procedure (Amendment) of the National Assembly of Bhutan 2022;
- g) United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (TIP Protocol).
- h) Three Follow Up Reports on the Implementation Status of the resolutions of the Sixth Session;

- i) Re-deliberation on the Biodiversity Bill of Bhutan 2021; and
 - j) Re-deliberation on the Royal Bhutan Police (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021 along with deliberations on several other Bills.
10. The Joint Sitting of the Parliament will deliberate the following:
- a) Royal Audit Authority's Annual Audit Report 2021;
 - b) Two Performance Audit Reports;
 - c) Follow up report on the Implementation Status of the resolutions; and
 - d) The Disputed Bills between the two Houses,
 - The Anti-Corruption (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021
 - The Civil Society Organizations (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2021; and
 - The United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) (Amendment).
11. The Parliament will ensure deliberations that would enable framing laws that are beneficial to the country, people and implementing agencies.
12. Lastly, under the wise leadership and guidance of His Majesty the King and the Members of the Royal Family, prayers from His Holiness the Je Khenpo and monastic bodies, collective merits of the Bhutanese people, massive support from the Members of the Parliament and the Civil Servants, I would like to offer prayers for fruitful deliberation and successful conclusion of the Seventh Session.

Thank You