



# TSHOGDU News

A Newsletter of the National Assembly Secretariat

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## FELICITATION TO HIS MAJESTY THE KING

On the auspicious occasion of the Coronation Day on 2 June 2006, the National Assembly of Bhutan presents its heartiest felicitations and unfathomed gratitude to our beloved King for 32 years of Glorious reign.

We pray for the long life of His Majesty the King and everlasting peace and prosperity under his noble and dynamic leadership.

## 85<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly commences on June 16, 2006

As the 85<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly is scheduled to be convened with effect from June 16, 2006 corresponding to the 20<sup>th</sup> day of the fourth month of the Bhutanese calendar, the Gewog Yargye Tshogchungs (GYTs) and Dzongkhag Yargye Tshogdus (DYTs) around the country has been meeting to discuss on the issues to be submitted to the National Assembly.

Some crucial legislations such as, The Auditor General Bill of Bhutan, 2006, The Anti-Corruption Bill of Bhutan 2006, Bhutan Information, Communications and Media

Bill, The Office of the Attorney General Bill of Bhutan, 2006 that needs to be in place before the enactment of Constitution are expected to be endorsed by the National Assembly during the current session.

In addition to these legislations, the issues that were submitted by different DYTs to the National Assembly to be deliberated during the current session ranges from tourism to environment, rural electrification to rural urban migration and promotion of culture and tradition to combating corruption.

## THE YEAR UNDER REVIEW

### 84<sup>th</sup> National Assembly

The 84<sup>th</sup> Session of the National Assembly commenced on the auspicious 18<sup>th</sup> day of the 9<sup>th</sup> Month of Bhutanese calendar year corresponding to 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 and concluded on December 1, 2005.

Some of the important legislations enacted during the 84<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly were; The Movable Cultural Act of Bhutan, 2005, The Evidence Act, 2005, The Food Act of Bhutan, 2005, Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and Substance Abuse Act, 2005. The extensive deliberations with strong mechanism of checks and balances had not only elevated the dignity and supremacy of the house but also enhanced the capacity of the members. It is the crucial responsibility of the members

to ensure that the resolutions translated into actions, said the Speaker in his address during the concluding ceremony.



## E-Governance Showcasing for the National Assembly Members

The Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Information and Communication organized E-Governance Showcasing for the National Assembly Members on June 4, 2005. The objective of the session was to excite the National Assembly Members to the possibilities of ICT to enhance governance and service delivery, and hence to stimulate demand for e-governance services, technologies and applications.

The E-Governance Showcasing among others included Computing in Dzongkha, Telemedicine, Market Information System, Distance Classroom, RNR Technologies, E-Library and Dzongkha Educational Software.

The hon'ble Minister of Information and Communication presided over the E-Governance Showcasing.



NA Member at Showcase

## SAARCLAW delegates visits National Assembly

The Chief Justices and delegates to the 11<sup>th</sup> SAARCLAW and the 8<sup>th</sup> SAARC Chief Justices Conference held in Paro, Bhutan visited the National Assembly Hall on June 11, 2005. The delegates were received by the Secretary and officials at the National Assembly. Welcoming the delegates, Dasho Jigme Zangpo briefed the delegates on the functional roles and responsibilities of the National Assembly. The documentary film titled "TSHOGDU – The Peoples' House" was also screened during their visit to the National Assembly.



SAARCLAW Delagates

## Blood donation campaign

The National Assembly of Bhutan arranged a blood donation campaign on June 11, 2005. 'Donate blood and start young' read a banner hung on the wall at the Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital. The blood donation campaign was organized by the Ministry of Health.

The representatives of the peoples, the monk body, government and the Royal Advisory Councillors lead by the Hon'ble Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje took part in the campaign and donated blood. Amongst the members present were the Minster of Works and Human Settlement, Finance, Labour & Human Resources, Health and the Zhung Kalyon.



NA Member Donates Blood

## Student Education Programme

The National Assembly Secretariat initiated the Student Education Programme from the 82<sup>nd</sup> Session of the National Assembly in 2004. The programme included witnessing the National Assembly in Session and screening of the documentary film on National Assembly titled "TSHOGDU The Peoples' House".

The student programme was started from June 6, 2005 and ended on June 16, 2005 with Dechencholing Lower Secondary School being the last School to witness the 83<sup>rd</sup> Session of the National Assembly..

More than 500 students from National Resource Training Institute (NRTI), Royal Institute for Health Science and the Institute for Zorig Chhoesum attended the 84<sup>th</sup> Session of the National Assembly.

A total number of 3500 students has participated in this programme since 2003.

The Secretariat is organizing this event during every session of the National Assembly to create awareness among the students in the conduct and functioning of the National Assembly. The student in the National Assembly Programme will be a regular feature particularly when the National Assembly is in Session.

The Secretariat would like to thank all the teachers and students for the keen interest shown to know more about our National Assembly. The Secretariat looks forward to welcome many more students from different schools in the near future.



Students Observing House in Session

### Denmark supports National Assembly of Bhutan

An Agreement to support Strengthening of Bhutan's National Assembly and its Secretariat was signed on 16 June 2005 between the Royal Government and the Liaison Office of Denmark, Thimphu.

Denmark will provide, as Grant Assistance, Danish Kroner 3.385 million (approximately Ngultrum 21.531million) over a period of three years (2005-2008) excluding short-term technical assistance. The support is provided with the objective of enabling *"Increased effectiveness in performance of legislative, oversight and representational functions by the National Assembly"*.

The support will form a part of the on-going Danish assisted Good Governance & Public Administrative Reform Programme, Phase II in Bhutan (GG/PARP II). More specifically, it seeks to assist the National Assembly and its Secretariat in developing the required capacities to meet future challenges at systems, organisational and individual levels required to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in the National Assembly's performance of its legislative, oversight and representational functions.



### National Assembly launches Web-site

Coinciding with the 83<sup>rd</sup> Session of the National Assembly after 52 years of its establishment, the National Assembly launched its Website on June 2, 2005 in commemoration of the 31<sup>st</sup> Coronation Day to usher the Bhutanese legislature into the threshold of information technology.

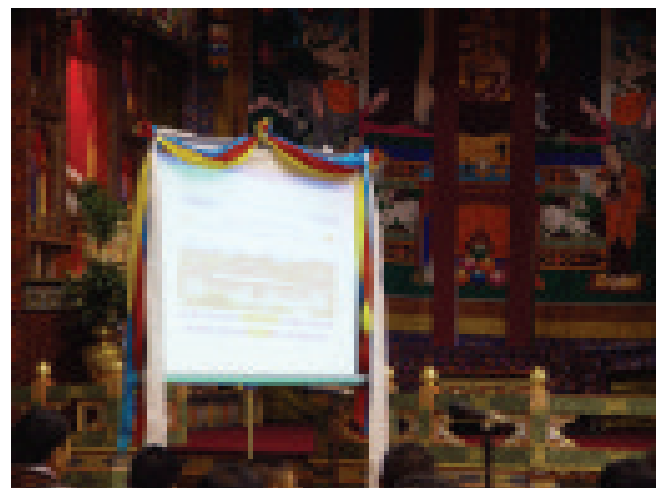
This web site is aimed at serving as a window to the world at large and to the Bhutanese people in particular with information on the history, functions, proceedings and resolutions and other aspects on the workings of the Bhutanese legislature.

It is also expected to serve as the channel and medium of constant communication and interaction between the members and their constituencies as the e-governance gains its popularity and utility both conceptually and practically.

- i. Resolutions from 76<sup>th</sup> to 84<sup>th</sup> in English and from 76<sup>th</sup> to 79<sup>th</sup> in Dzongkha have been included in the Website. It is hoped to make available the complete set of the resolutions in the second phase.
- ii. List of Acts/Conventions passed in the National Assembly have been provided for general information.

We hope to improve the Website and provide additional information on the National Assembly specifically geared towards disseminating information to the people particularly the members of the National Assembly in due course.

Please log on to [www.nab.gov.bt](http://www.nab.gov.bt) for your information needs on the Bhutanese legislature.



Launching of website

## Visit by Japanese Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs

The Secretary of the National Assembly briefly met with H.E. Mr. Katsuguki Kawai, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Japan on June 11, 2005 during the visit to the National Assembly Hall.



Dasho Jigme Zangpo with Mr. Katsuguki

## Thimphu City Cleaning Campaign

The National Assembly of Bhutan arranged the Thimphu City cleaning campaign on June 18, 2005.

The representatives of the people, the monk body, government and the Royal Advisory Councillors lead by the Hon'ble Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje took part in the cleaning campaign organized by the Thimphu City Corporation. It was an exercise to sensitize the people on the importance of keeping our surrounding clean and healthy. The Dzong area, Phendey Lam, Norzin Lam and Zorig Lam was covered during the cleaning campaign. The town residents and the employees of City Corporation also participated in the cleaning campaign.



NA Members at Work

## National Assembly concludes

The Speaker offered Tashi Moenlam to His Majesty the King, the Prime Minister and the members of the National Assembly on the auspicious concluding ceremony of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Session of the National Assembly which commenced from the 27<sup>th</sup> day of the 4<sup>th</sup> month to the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the Bhutanese calendar year for a period of three weeks.

The National Assembly offered prayers for all the sentient beings to be saved from disease, epidemics, wars and natural calamities. The members wished that the precious teachings of Lord Buddha, a source of well being for mankind, continued to flourish. They offered prayers for the long life of His Majesty the King and happiness of the Bhutanese people. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Session of the National Assembly concluded on the 16<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the Wood Bird Year corresponding to June 23, 2005 with fervent hope for a happy union in front of the golden throne in the next Session.



NA Members offering "TASHI MOENLAM"

## Delegation led by H.E. Shri B.K. Handique, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs & Defence, Government of India visit the National Assembly

H.E. Shri B.K. Handique, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs & Defence, Government of India and the members of his delegation were received by Dasho Jigme Zangpo, Secretary and other officials from the National Assembly Secretariat at Kuengachholing State Guest House on July 15, 2005. The Minister and the delegates, besides Call on Dasho Ugen Dorje, Hon'ble Speaker of the National Assembly visited the National Assembly Hall. Dinner was hosted by the Hon'ble Speaker in honour of the visiting dignitaries.



## German Bundestag Deputy Speaker visits National Assembly

Dr. (Mrs.) Antje Vollmer, Deputy Speaker, German Bundestag and party visited Bhutan from 4-11 August, 2005. The Deputy Speaker along with the delegates called on the Hon'ble Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje on August 5, 2005. Dinner was also hosted by the Hon'ble Speaker in honour of the visiting dignitaries on the same day. The other members of the delegation were Mrs. Gudrun Sraga, Minister Counsellor, German Embassy, New Delhi, Mr. Klaus Nawarotzky, Protocol Section of Bundestag, Ms. Anja Malhotra, Interpreter and Klaus Mettig, Photographer.

## Mr. Pema Wangchuck, Chief Legislative Officer appointed Drangpon

Mr. Pema Wangchuck, Chief Legislative Officer, Legal and Committee Affairs Division of the Secretariat was appointed as Drangpon of Bench IV in the Thimphu District Court. Dasho Pema Wangchuck formally took over the charge of office in a *Tendrel* ceremony on August 19, 2005 at the Thimphu District Court.

The National Assembly wishes Dasho Pema Wangchuck all the success and a fruitful career in the judiciary.

## Officials from US Embassy, New Delhi visit National Assembly

Mr. Gregory Drazek, Second Secretary (Political) and Mr. David A. Brown, Second Secretary (Economic) from the US Embassy, New Delhi visited the National Assembly on August 24, 2005. After their meeting with Mr. Lobzang Dorji, Deputy Director, they also visited the National Assembly Hall.

## Secretary attends Executive Council meeting of AAPP in Islamabad, Pakistan

Dasho Jigme Zangpo, Secretary attended the Executive Council meeting of the AAPP which was held in Islamabad, Pakistan from 21-24 August 2005. The meeting was held as a follow up of the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and in pursuance of the AAPP charter to discuss and exchange views on the development made since the 5<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and to consider the agenda for the forthcoming 6<sup>th</sup> General Assembly to be held in Thailand later this year.

The AAPP Executive Council meeting decided that the next Conference of AAPP will be held from 19-25 November 2005, in Pattaya City, Chonburi Province,

Kingdom of Thailand. The theme of the Conference is 'Peace, Democracy and Solidarity' while the topics for discussion are Political, Socio-Economics, Peace and Security and Women and Youths.



AAPP in Islamabad, Pakistan

## Summit of Speakers of Parliaments

The hon'ble Speaker, Dasho Ugen Dorje led a three-member Bhutanese Parliamentary delegation to the Second Summit of Speakers of Parliaments organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) at the United Nations Headquarters in New York from 7 to 9 September 2005. The overall purpose of the Second World Conference of Speakers of Parliaments was to present the United Nations with a comprehensive view, at the highest possible level, of the contribution of the world's parliaments in strengthening the multilateral system and in furthering peace, security, democracy, human rights and development pursuant to internationally agreed commitments. More than 150 Speakers of parliaments attended the Conference.

The IPU President, Chilean Senator Sergio Pérez, and the President of the United Nations General Assembly, Mr. Jean Ping, opened the summit, which was also addressed by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan. The Conference presented its Declaration directly to the Summit of Heads of State and Government that took place at the same venue from 14 to 19 September 2005.

The first Speakers' Conference took place in 2000, on the eve of the Millennium Summit.

The Speakers of parliaments brought the concerns of their citizens to the United Nations. In so doing, they discussed ways to deepen the involvement of parliaments in international affairs and to support efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. They also reviewed a proposed new framework of criteria and good practices to advance democracy through the institution of parliament.

## National Graduate Orientation Programme 2005

The hon'ble Speaker, Dasho Ugen Dorje accompanied by the Deputy Speaker and officials from the National Assembly Secretariat addressed the graduates attending the National Graduate Orientation Programme 2005 on August 30, 2005 at the Youth Centre. The Hon'ble Speaker briefed the graduates on the National Assembly and the many legislative reforms taking place in the legislature. There were 664 Graduates attending the National Orientation Programme - 2005.



Graduates Of 2005

## Officials on Parliamentary Study Visit

A delegation comprising of six officials visited the Parliament of Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia from October 4 to 17, 2005.

The officials underwent orientation and exposure studies in the spheres of documentation procedures, parliamentary administration and accounting, legislative drafting, committee systems, computerization and audio-visual service, information storage and retrieval system and verbatim recording. They also received first hand information on the types of secretarial supports required for the smooth functioning of a parliament to enhance the concept and enthusiasm of the employees besides exchanging ideas in the context of experience in legislatures and acquaint with the environment, culture, traditions and working of parliamentary institutions.

### Contribution of articles.....

To enable the Secretariat to produce the Newsletter on a regularly basis, we would like to encourage the honorable members to contribute news and articles about respective constituencies and any other issues relating to the National Assembly.

## CALL on the Honourable Speaker by the Danida Consultants

The Consultants attached to the National Assembly Secretariat met the honourable Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje on October 11, 2005 to solicit views on the formulation of a new Organisational Strategy and Action Plan for the Secretariat. Among others, views solicited from the Honourable Speaker were on the core functions of the National Assembly after the endorsement of the Constitution, main challenges for the National Assembly in performing these functions in the future, the functional responsibilities of the Secretariat to help the National Assembly to perform these functions, improvement of services of the Secretariat and the key goals for the development of the Secretariat over the next five years.



## Official residence for Chimis

An official residence for the elected members of the National Assembly will be constructed at Taba in Thimphu under the Government of India funding.

The ground breaking ceremony on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> October, 2005 was presided by Ven. Tsegnyi Lupon and attended by the Prime Minister Lyonpo Sangay Ngedup as the Chief Guest, the Speaker of the National Assembly Dasho Ugen Dorje, the Finance Minister Lyonpo Wangdi Norbu, Royal Advisory Councillors, senior government officials and dignitaries from international agencies.



The official residence would not only solve their accommodation problem but would also provide a congenial atmosphere to carry out their functions more effectively. The project is estimated to cost approximately Nu. 250 million. The Project report has been submitted to the Government of India through the Ministry of Finance.

### Brain storming session

A brain storming session was held on November 5, 2005 to review layout for National Assembly Hall and design seating arrangements based on Constitution. The Speaker of the National Assembly, the Minister for Labour and Human Resources, Zhung Kalyon, the Legislative Committee members, consultants, architects and officials of the Secretariat were present during the discussion. The meeting unanimously felt that the present set up was the best and modifications should be carried out to



incorporate individual desk, voting system, mikes and other facilities comparable with other Parliaments maintaining the aesthetic value of our art and architecture.

The project would be funded by Danida under the Good Governance & Public Administration Reform Programme Phase II.

### The National Assembly Members visit ICT Fair 2005

A special invitation was extended to the Members of the National Assembly by the Department of Information Technology and ICT private sector to attend the inaugural of Bhutan ICT Fair 2005 on November 26, 2005 at the Swimming Pool Complex. The theme of the Fair was “Our ICT private sector, up to the challenge”.

The Fair was organized to showcase the capabilities of Bhutanese ICT private sector to the public. Latest ICT equipment and gadgets were displayed and demonstrated. The Fair was one of numerous activities conducted by DIT to promote ICT in general and ICT private sector in

particular. It was also a follow up activity to the “E-governance showcasing” presented to the National Assembly members in June 2005.

There was also a free lottery draw on the occasion. Mr. Cheku, Member from Trashigang won the lottery and



carried home a digital camera. Lunch was also hosted by the organizers in honour of the members of the National Assembly.

### Call on by Good Governance Review Mission

The Review Mission on Good Governance and Public Administration Reform Programme Phase II called on the honourable Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje on November 27, 2005. The review team consisted of Ms. Helle Marianne Vadmand (Team Leader), Mr. Jacob Haugaard and Ms. Mette Jacobsgaard together with LOD resource persons Mr. Torben Bellers, Minister Counsellor, Ms. Marie Veno Thesbjerg, Intern, Mr. Pem Topden Dorji, Programme Officer and Mr. Norbu Wangchuk, Programme Officer from DADM.

The objective of the review was to assess the Good Governance Projects (GG/PARP II) and the impact and relevance of the programme's activities. The call on with the honourable Speaker was basically to discuss selected elements of the draft Constitution of Bhutan focusing on legislature, ongoing Danida support to the National Assembly and its Secretariat and the role of legislature in the post constitution period.



## Briefing by Ministry of Health

A briefing on the introduction of Rubella Vaccination to the honourable members of the National Assembly was organized by the Ministry of Health at the Royal Banquet Hall on November 28, 2005. The briefing included an introductory remarks by the Hon'ble Minister for Health, a presentation on Rubella Vaccination, discussion and closing remarks.

## BANFF Mountain Film Festival in Bhutan



The honourable members of the National Assembly attended the Banff Mountain Film festival on November 29, 2005 at RIM Auditorium which was organized by the Canadian Government and the Motion Picture Association of Bhutan. Reception was also hosted by H.E. Ms. Lucie Edwards, Ambassador of Canada to Bhutan, in the honor of members of the National Assembly.

## Third Focus Group meeting of Parliamentarians

The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) in coordination with UNFPA and Indian Association of Parliamentarian on Population and Development (IAPPD) organized the Third Focus Group meeting of parliamentarians on Maternal and child Health with focus on South Asia was held in New Delhi from 27th to 28th December 2005.

The Focus Group brought small number of parliamentarians to have in depth discussion on the issue of Maternal and Child Health to motivate parliamentarians on a time bound individual commitment.

Jamphel and Pelden Dorji, members of National Assembly, and Jigme Zangpo, Secretary to the National Assembly represented the National Assembly of Bhutan in the meeting.

## Launching of the Organizational Development Strategy

The Organizational Development Strategy (2006-2012) for the National Assembly of Bhutan was launched on January 12, 2006 by the Honourable Speaker Dasho Ugen Dorje in the presence of Mr. Torben Bellers, Minister Counsellor, Liaison Office of Denmark, Mr. Frank Jensen, Consultant and the Secretary and other staffs of the Secretariat.



Hon'ble Speaker launched ODS

## Rinchen Penjor appointed as Drangpon of Dagana Court

Mr. Rinchen Penjor, Chief Research Officer, Legislative Research & Development Division of the Secretariat has been appointed as Drangpon of District Court, Dagana. Dasho Rinchen Penjor took the oath of office and secrecy in a Tendrel ceremony on December 18, 2005 at the District Court, Dagana. Dash Jigme Zangpo, Secretary and few officials from the Secretariat accompanied Dasho Rinchen Penjor to Dagana.

The National Assembly wishes Dasho Rinchen Penjor all the success and a fruitful career in the judiciary.

## Call on by the Ambassador of India

The Ambassador of India to Bhutan His Excellency Mr. Sudhir Vyas called on the Speaker of the National Assembly Dasho Ugen Dorje at the Gyelyong Tshokhang on October 4, 2005. The Ambassador visited the National Assembly Hall prior to meeting the Speaker.





## **Dasho Jigme Zangpo appointed Judge to the High Court**

Dasho Jigme Zangpo, Secretary to the National Assembly was appointed Judge to the High Court along with four other judges. All the five judges took the Oath of Office on February 12 at the High Court in Thimphu.



**Newly appointed High Court Judge with H.E Chief Justice of Bhutan: From left, Dasho Jigme Zangpo, Dasho Sherab Gyeltsen, H.E Chief Justice, Dasho Sithar Namgyel, Dasho Tshering Wangchuk and Dasho Kinley Tshering**

The Oath was administered by the Chief Justice. The Judges were appointed to the High Court by His Majesty the King on the recommendation of the National Judicial Commission on January 24, 2006.

## **Friends who joined us**

Mr. Ugyen Tshering, Legislative Officer, Mr. Sampa Dhendup, Data Manager and Ms. Tashi Dem, Assistant ICT Officer joined the Secretariat. While Mr. Ugyen Tshering has joined us on deputation from the High Court for a period of two year, the other two are the permanent employees of the Secretariat. We wish them a very fruitful and successful career in the Secretariat.

## **A delegation from National Assembly Secretariat visits Danish Parliament**

A five member delegation led by the Secretary of the National Assembly of Bhutan visited the National Assembly of Thailand and the Parliament of Denmark.

In Thailand, the delegation met Mr. Chareonpun, the Advisor on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives. The Secretary of the National Assembly of Bhutan and the Advisor on Foreign Affairs discussed issues and areas of cooperation between two Parliaments.

In Denmark, the delegation met the Secretary General of the Danish Parliament. The delegation also met the Deputy

Secretary General, the Clerk of the Parliament and other staff of the Danish Folketing. A Parliamentary Twinning Programme between National Assembly and Folketing was also prepared, and is still in the process of finalization.

## **The fourth conference of the Association of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians**

The 4th Conference of SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians held at Colombo, Sri Lanka with effect from 28 March to 3rd April 2006 was aimed at discussing regional cooperation regarding matters relating to parliamentary traditions, rights and duties of Parliamentarians and effective cooperation in the South Asian region. A seven member Bhutanese Parliamentary delegation to the conference was led by Dasho Ugen Dorje, Hon'ble Speaker of the National Assembly.

Bhutan will be moving into Parliamentary democracy in 2008. This Political reforms are initiated by His Majesty the king for the present well being of the Bhutanese people and the future stability of the country, and it is not the product of popular demand of the people, said Honorable Speaker Dasho Ugyen Dorje. The Association of SAARC Speakers' 4th Conference was held after a lapse of seven years and was seen as an important opportunity for cooperation and collaboration among parliamentarians of SAARC member states.

The most significant outcome of the conference was the decision taken by the seven countries to meet on a regular basis and discuss matters of regional importance. The conference was able to agree on a schedule up to 2010. According to the schedule, Pakistan will host the next SAARC Speakers and Parliamentarians conference in 2007 while India, Bhutan and Bangladesh have been chosen as the venues for the 2008, 2009 and 2010.

## **Dasho Nima Tshering takes over as the Secretary to the National Assembly**

Dasho Nima Tshering, Dzongdag, Dzongkhag Administration Punakha took over from Dasho Jigme Zangpo as the Secretary to the National Assembly of Bhutan in a simple traditional Zhundrel ceremony on 10 April, 2006.



## ANNOUNCEMENT

This is for the general information of all concerned that the 85<sup>th</sup> session of the National Assembly of Bhutan is scheduled to commence from 16 June, 2006.

All concerned those who wish to observe the session are hereby informed that as in the past, the Royal Bhutan Police looking after the security of the Gyelyong Tshogkhang premises shall be issuing gallery passes. While the passes for the Diplomats can be availed in advance on daily basis, the same for others will be issued in first come first serve basis during the session.

Chief Security Officer, RBP, Thimphu and the Security Officers at the Gyelyong Tshogkhang are the issuing authority of the gallery passes during the National Assembly session.



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