

**Address by Hon'ble Speaker on the Opening Ceremony of the 8th Session of the Third
Parliament on 4th November 2022**

1. The Winter Session of the Third Parliament session commences today under the grace of His Majesty the King.
2. Despite the numerous and busy schedule of His Majesty the King in looking after the welfare of the people, His Majesty always had the time to show benevolence to the Parliament.

I on behalf of all Members of Parliament and on my own behalf, would like to humbly welcome and express my deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King for gracing the Opening Ceremony.

3. The Parliament also welcomes Her Majesty the Queen and the Members of the Royal Family, former Ministers and the retired Dashos, senior government officials and foreign diplomats and dignitaries, the institute and college students and the students of the school to the opening ceremony.
4. I would like to seek permission from the Throne to share some of the selfless services of His Majesty the King for his Country and the people with the House today. Although, it would be difficult to do justice in covering His Majesty's noble deeds that are as expansive and as deep as the sky and ocean. However, if I may, I would attempt to share a few as a reminder to the people of Bhutan.
5. His Majesty the King, on 24th August 2022, granted citizenship kidu to the armed forces families who had issues with their census. It has enabled them to lead a happy and peaceful life.
6. His Majesty the King has always worked towards asserting Bhutan's position in the international arena. Among the many other activities, Bhutan started participating in the United Nations Peacekeeping from 2014 by contributing military observers with staff officers and army personnel both from army and police.

This year too, on the request of the UN, Bhutan has sent a contingent of 180 personnel from the Royal Bhutan Army to support the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission for the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) under UN Peacekeeping. The opportunity for the armies and police personnel to participate in the UN Peacekeeping is a historic one. Parliament would like to express our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King.

7. With the improvement in the global pandemic situation, His Majesty The King was on a Royal tour to Phuentsholing and Samtse Dzongkhag to look after the welfare and wellbeing of the people and also visited all the border entrances and check posts. Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen and Their Royal Highnesses Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel Wangchuck and Gyalsey Ugyen Wangchuck accompanied His Majesty the King during the Royal Tour. While granting audiences and meeting with the people, His Majesty reminded the people to harness the lessons and new perspectives taught by Covid pandemic and to have more resilience. I would like to urge the people to be mindful of the golden words of advice in serving the country.

Further, His Majesty also visited colleges and granted audiences to the students and college faculties. His Majesty reiterated the need for the students to work hard and endeavour to enhance and diversify their skills and credentials. I would like to humbly report that His Majesty's visits have deeply inspired the faculties and the students.

8. His Majesty The King, Her Majesty The Gyaltsuen and His Royal Highness Gyalsey Jigme Namgyel have travelled to London to attend the state funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. His Majesty The King also met with the Prime Minister of India and granted an audience to the Minister of External Affairs of India which reaffirmed the commitment and friendship that has defined the special and exemplary relations that exist between Bhutan and India. The Parliament offers our immense gratitude to His Majesty The King.
9. His Holiness the Je Khenpo with deep compassion to the people and for the benefit of the religious lamas and teachers in particular is in a month-long engagement of a very rare and important oral transmission of the 24 volumes of Kuenkhyen Kabum. This is considered a very special blessing. The Parliament would like to express our gratitude and also thank the other religious masters who have been performing numerous prayers and religious activities for the country.

10. The Government has also successfully managed the challenges presented by the global pandemic. Now with the improvement of the pandemic situation in the country and in the interest of the country and the people, the border gates were opened to the public from 23rd September 2022 with clear rules and regulations. This has greatly benefited the conduct of business and commerce including the opening of tourism. The Parliament would like to express our appreciation to the government for handling the covid situation successfully and reopening the country back to thriving economic life.

11. Now, if I may present a brief report on the business of the House during this Session, beside the Legislative and parliamentary functions including Question Hours and Motions, as a normal process, the National Assembly in this Session will deliberate on:
 1. Civil Liability Bill of Bhutan 2022; and
 2. Civil Service Reform Bill of Bhutan 2022.
 3. Clean Wage (Pay Revision) Bill of Bhutan 2022; and
 4. Property Tax Bill of Bhutan 2022.
 5. Tax Bill of Bhutan 2022; and
 6. Forest and Nature Conservation Bill of Bhutan 2021 will be under consideration for re-deliberation; and

In addition, the following reports on:

1. The analysis of the Anti-Corruption Commission's Annual Report 2021-2022;
 2. The Committee Report on balance of trade;
 3. The follow-up reports on the Implementation Status of the resolutions are there in agenda for deliberation.
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12. The Parliament will also have the Joint Sitting to deliberate on the:
 1. Public Account Committee follow up report on the Implementation Status of the resolutions; and
 2. Analysis on the two Performance Audit Reports.

13. The Joint Session will also deliberate on the few disputed sections of the Royal Bhutan Police (Amendment) Bill 2021.
14. Furthermore, the Hon'ble Prime Minister's Annual Report on the state of the nation, including legislative plans and the annual plans and priorities of the government has also been scheduled.
15. The sessions will be conducted in accordance with the Rules of Procedure to ensure healthy deliberations that would enable framing laws that will enable the implementing agencies and benefit the people and country at large.
16. The four petitions received from the Dzongkhag Tshogdu were deliberated at length during the preliminary meeting and were referred to the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests and Ministry of Home and Culture Affairs for due consideration. The. Petitions were found to be administrative and managerial in nature..
17. Lastly, under the wise guidance and advice of His Majesty the King and the Members of the Royal Family, prayers from His Holiness the Je Khenpo and monastic bodies and collective merits of the faithful Bhutanese people; with huge co-operation from the well-seasoned Members of the Parliament and the expertise support from the relevant Civil Servants, I would like to offer prayers for fruitful deliberation and successful conclusion of the 8th Session.

Thank You and Kadrinche.