

**Inaugural Address by Tshogpoen Wangchuk Namgyel at the Opening  
Ceremony of the Fourth Session of the Third Parliament  
(26 November, 2020)**

1. The Fourth Session of the Third Parliament commences on this auspicious day.
2. On behalf of all Members of Parliament and on my own behalf, I would like to welcome and express our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the King for gracing the Opening Ceremony, leaving aside numerous royal engagements.
3. Parliament of Bhutan could not extend invitations to all national and international dignitaries to witness today's opening ceremony considering public safety amid rising global pandemic.

In the times of the need to maintain social distancing for public safety, people may question if it is really safe and appropriate to convene a parliamentary session amid this global pandemic. To this, I would like to clarify that there are numerous important bills and legislative activities that have been deferred; and therefore, it is imperative that all the deliberations be carried out in this session.

4. His Majesty the King has always shown great compassion and love to the people. Under His Majesty's noble vision to prevent global pandemic, and to ensure every single Bhutanese soul remain unaffected by the global pandemic, His Majesty the King has tirelessly visited southern borders and various Dzongkhags leaving aside numerous royal engagements, making sacrifices to the Royal Family, working through endless nights and sacrificing sleep and even meals. His Majesty the King has constantly

monitored the situation, and provided strategic directions and wise counsel on the prevention and overcoming the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic to the people and the community.

His Majesty the King repatriated many Bhutanese from abroad and granted necessary support with regard to the flight services.

His Majesty the King also granted continuous monetary and financial to the families and individuals affected by the global pandemic, through His Majesty's monetary and financial relief programme, and provided free medical services to the people. Such noble initiatives and sacrifices portrayed the exemplary leadership of His Majesty the King to other leaders in the world.

The people of Bhutan are indeed fortunate to have been born in this most blessed country. It is even more fortunate to be the citizens under the glorious and benevolent reign of the Wangchuck Dynasty.

I would like to reiterate that we are well aware of the global pandemic, which has claimed numerous lives around the world. However, our country remains safe.

Firstly, it is due to the blessings of our Triple Gem, and protection from our powerful deities.

Secondly, it is due to the wise leadership and foresighted vision of His Majesty the King.

Thirdly, it is due to the Prime Minister's initiative, and preventive measures taken up and monitored constantly by staff under the Ministry of Health, that our country has been able to record a zero death calamity.

There are cases of rising one or two Covid-19 in the country. However, under the leadership of His Majesty the King, conduct of numerous prayers from the Monastic Bodies, constant support from the Government and the Ministry, the people of Bhutan were able to live in peace without much panic. Nevertheless, it is essential that every individual must be mindful and responsible to remain safe.

All these have been only possible due to the wise and benign leadership of His Majesty the King. Therefore, the Parliament of Bhutan would like to offer our deepest gratitude and unwavering reverence to His Majesty the King.

5. Similarly, His Majesty the Fourth King has visited southern borders, and imparted wise guidance on the prevention and overcoming the challenges of Covid-19 pandemic to the people. Therefore, the Parliament of Bhutan would like to offer our deepest gratitude to His Majesty the Fourth King.
6. Likewise, 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 of the global pandemic. Therefore, the Parliament of Bhutan would like to offer sincere gratitude to His Holiness the Je Khenpo and the religious bodies.

7. Her Majesty the Queen has also shown great compassion, leaving aside royal engagements to Their Highnesses the two Princes, and granting numerous gifts to the volunteers and front liners during the global pandemic. Therefore, the Parliament of Bhutan would like to offer sincere gratitude to Her Majesty the Queen.

8. Parliament of Bhutan would also like to thank the Prime Minister, Members of the National Covid-19 Task Force, and staff under the Ministry of Health led by the Health Minister, Three Armed Forces, Desuups, forest officials, financial institutions, Thromdes, Bhutan Red Cross Society, private entities and all volunteers for their support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Similarly, the Parliament would like to thank Dzongkhags and Gewogs, Local Government Leaders and staff for supplying necessities to the people, and carrying out effective activities as per the directives of the Government.

9. Furthermore, the Parliament would like to thank all mission offices in Thimphu, development partners and non-governmental agencies for the support during the global Covid-19 pandemic.

I feel that it has been inevitable to reiterate again and again on the global Covid-19 pandemic today.

10. Besides the normal Legislative and parliamentary functions, I would also like to take the opportunity to share some of the important agenda items that will be deliberated during this session:

1. The Entitlement & Service Conditions (Amendment) Act for the Holders, Members and Commissioner of Constitutional Offices of Bhutan 2020;

2. The Lhengye Zhungtshog Bill of Bhutan 2020;
3. The Fiscal Incentives Bill of Bhutan 2020;
4. The Framework Agreement between the RGoB and European Investment Bank (EIB) Governing Activities in Bhutan;
5. The Agreement between the RGoB and the Green Climate Fund (GCF) on the Privileges and Immunities of the Green Climate Fund (GCF).

The Joint Sitting of the parliament will deliberate the following:

1. The Civil and Criminal Procedural Code (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2019;
2. The Penal Code (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2019;
3. The Annual Audit Report 2019;
4. The Annual Report on the State of the Nation, including Legislative Plans and Annual Plans and Priorities of the Government by the Prime Minister of Bhutan.

The National Assembly will re-deliberate on the following bills:

1. The Mines and Minerals Bill of Bhutan 2020;
2. The Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill of Bhutan 2020;
3. The Charter (Amendment) of the SAARC Development Fund 2020;
4. The BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking, among many other agendas.

11.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, and support from the Members of the Parliament, I would like to offer prayers for fruitful deliberation in the session and successful conclusion of the Fourth Session.

**Thank You.**