



TSHOGDU News

A Newsletter of the National Assembly of Bhutan



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Felicitations for the 102nd National Day

The Speaker, Members and Secretariat staff of the National Assembly of Bhutan would like to felicitate the Nation on its 102nd National day. We take this opportunity to join the Nation in offering our deepest prayers for continued peace and happiness under the wise and selfless leadership of our benevolent Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck. On this auspicious occasion, we pledge to serve the nation through a well functioning Parliamentary democracy that contributes to the attainment of Gross National Happiness. May Bhutan advance each step forward with every National day to reach the zenith of happiness and harmony.

First Parliament passed Eleven Acts in twenty one months

Within 21 months after introducing the constitutional democratic monarchy and formation of first ever elected government, the Parliament and the Parliamentarians have endeavoured to work towards fulfilling constitutional responsibility of seeing that the government safeguards the interests of the nation and fulfills the aspirations of the people through public review of policies and issues, Bills and other legislation, and scrutiny of the state functions.

With the historic adoption and signing of the Constitution on July 18, 2008 corresponding to the 15th Day of the Second 5th Month of the Earth Male Rat Year, the First Session of the First Parliament also passed the National Assembly Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, National Council Act of

the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, Parliamentary Entitlements Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, Public Election Fund Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 and National Referendum Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

The important Bills tabled during the Second Session of the First Parliament were The Royal Bhutan Police Bill, 2009, Prison Bill of Bhutan, 2009, Waste Prevention and Management Bill of Bhutan, 2009 and Co-operative Bill (Amendment), 2009. All of the above Bills were enacted in the Third Session of the First Parliament with His Majesty the King's assent.

During the 3rd Session of the First Parliament, a total of 114 agenda were received with 99 from DYT's and GYT's and 15 from the Hon Members. Consequently, 10 agenda were deliberated in the House with 41 relevant agenda forwarded to the ministries. Furthermore, those agenda which were well attended by the ministries were forwarded to respective Dzongkhags and Geogs and the details were submitted to the concerned Hon Members of Parliament.

Besides the total of 16 questions tabled during the Question Hour, 15 more questions were tabled from the agenda. Thus with a total of 31 questions tabled, only 23 questions were deliberated with remaining 8 questions which could not be deliberated further.

As per the Constitution, the Hon Prime Minister also presented the annual report on the state of the Nation including legislative plans, annual plans and the priorities of Government. Similarly, the Hon Finance Minister presented the annual budget report for the financial year 2009-2010 and the Chairperson of the Public Accounts Committee presented the Annual Audit Report to the Parliament.

Fourth Parliament Session in 1 year 11 months

The Fourth session of the First Parliament of Bhutan commenced on 20th November, 2009 corresponding to the 4th Day of the 10th Month of Bhutanese calendar. The Hon Members of the Parliament received His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo with elaborate Chipdrel and Serdrang procession to

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the August hall. The Hon Speaker of the Parliament, in his inaugural address welcomed and thanked His Majesty the King for gracing the inaugural ceremony. The Hon Speaker felicitated Hon Sonam Kinga, National Council Member for being unanimously elected as the Deputy Chairperson of National Council. On behalf of the Parliament, he also expressed condolences to the victims of earthquake and other disasters and thanked volunteers and donors who contributed in cash and kind. Further, the Hon Speaker highlighted the visit of the Bangladesh Prime Minister and the signing of the renewed trade agreement and expressed appreciation to the Prime Minister of Bhutan and Bangladesh. The Hon Members of Parliament also moved a motion of thanks to His Majesty the King for taking noble initiatives for the relief efforts to the victims of earthquake and other natural disasters.

The important agenda of the Fourth Session of the First Parliament were Civil Service Bill of Bhutan, 2009, Royal Monetary Authority Bill of Bhutan (Amendment), 2009, Standards Bill of Bhutan, 2009, Tobacco Control Bill of Bhutan, 2009 and Marriage (Amendment) Bill, 2009. The session concluded on 11th December, 2009.

Calling Attention

A calling attention was held for the clarification of accountability and responsibility between the two Houses of Parliament

Reports of non participation by the Ministers in the Question Hour session of the National Council by the media resulted in misconception by the people. Therefore, when the Hon Members asked for the elucidation by the Hon Ministers, the Hon Prime Minister responded, that it is important to consider the benefit and drawbacks of such practices to the institution of democracy. It is also imperative to see whether it will improve the ruling Government or induce hindrances and its merits and demerits to the needs of the people. H.E. Lyonchen, explained that the participation of Ministers in the Question Hour session of National Council has to be viewed in the light of above considerations. He also clarified distinctly that the Ministers did not eschewed participation due to the lack of respect or esteem for the institution of National Council.

Extraordinary Sitting of the Parliament

Local Government(LG) Bill, 2009 unveils the essence of Democracy

Individual participation, extreme varieties of opinions and power of a single vote was what the Third Session of the First Parliament apparently saw while deliberating on the Local Government Bill, 2009. The Bill was painstakingly and extensively deliberated. However, it could not be passed by a single vote required for a two third majority for its adoption. The atmosphere in the chamber of National Assembly was filled with intricacy but also saw the involution of Hon Members for a solution as the Local Government Bill, 2009 was tabled as an urgent Bill with Civil Service Bill, 2009 which could not be passed either.

Propositions from some, counter propositions from others, the Parliament finally decided on the convention of an Extraordinary Sitting subject to the grant of Royal approval.

In His Royal Message to the Houses of Parliament, His Majesty commanded that in order to ascertain causes of such deadlock and to prevent and minimize them in future, the Extraordinary Sitting should first discuss:

1. Criteria for Declaring Bills as Urgent
2. Addressing Disputed Bills in future
3. Voting on Bills in a Joint Sitting
4. Drafting of Bills

LG Bill, 2009 gets through the Extraordinary Sitting of the Parliament

The Extraordinary Sitting of the Parliament held on 11th September, 2009 unanimously passed the Local Government Bill 2009. The Parliament also deliberated on the draft criteria for declaring bills as urgent, addressing disputed bills in future, voting on bills in Joint Sitting and drafting of bills. One of the extensive deliberations was on Speaker's right to vote in the Parliament. Some Hon Members emphasized that the Speaker should have the right to vote in order to represent his Constituency. On the contrary, some argued that it is not necessary for the Speaker to vote and instead he should be fair and neutral. The Hon Speaker, however, informed the Parliament that this issue needs extensive deliberations.

Inter Parliamentary Exchange Programmes

Youngest and Biggest Democracy looks forward for a partnership

On 10th August, 2009 during a courtesy call on by the Indian Ambassador H.E Mr. Pawan K Varma to the Hon Speaker of National Assembly, it was discussed that MoU would be signed between Parliaments of Bhutan and India on Parliamentary exchange programme.

The Hon Speaker of the National Assembly extended an official invitation to Smt. Miera Kumari, the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Indian Parliament to visit Bhutan in early next year. The MoU is expected to be signed during the visit.



Ambassador of India H.E Mr. Pawan K Varma with Hon Speaker

The Hon Speaker calls on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh

On 6th November, 2009, Hon Speaker Jigme Tshultim along with the Hon Chairperson of National Council, Deputy Speaker, Chairperson of the foreign relations committee and

Hon Member Sangay Zam of National Council called on the Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina of Bangladesh at hotel Taj Tashi. H.E the Prime Minister said that Bhutan has set an extraordinary example in the world with the introduction of democracy and further said that “I am very happy to be in this great country”.

The Hon Speaker thanked H.E for the visit on behalf of the Parliament of Bhutan. He also congratulated H.E for a landslide victory in the last general election and said that it shows the faith of Bangladeshi people on her as they had on her father SM Rahman, the first President of Bangladesh. Prime Minister and other delegates were elevated in spirit to emphasize the close relation enjoyed by the two countries with Bhutan being the first country to recognize independent Bangladesh.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina was accompanied by a high level delegation including the Foreign Minister, Commerce Minister and Industry Minister.



Hon Speaker Jigme Tshulthim with Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina

Bhutanese Parliamentary delegation visits Down Under

Led by the Hon Speaker, a seven member delegation from Parliament of Bhutan left for Australia on 15th October, 2009 for a fortnight. During the visit, the delegation visited the Australian Parliament in Canberra, Charles Stuart University, University of New England and met with the Election Commission of Australia.

Visiting the University of New England (UNE), the delegation discussed future developments in Bhutan/UNE relationship with the Vice-Chancellor of UNE, Professor Alan Pettigrew, and their UNE host, Associate Professor Tom Maxwell, and met Bhutanese students over lunch. “We have had a long relationship with this university,” The Hon Speaker said, “and we are looking forward to continuing cooperation.” That cooperation, he said, would see an increasing number of Bhutanese students studying at UNE. The Hon Speaker also said that some of the alumni of the UNE was already holding important positions in the Bhutanese Government which includes the Health Minister, Education Minister, other MPs and the Vice Chancellor of RUB. He further added that UNE’s School of Education had provided valuable training for Bhutanese teachers by giving them experience in rural Bhutan.

Visiting the Parliament, the delegation attended a session of the Parliament and got a first hand experience of the Question Hour of the Australian Parliament. They also met with the Speaker of the House of the Representatives.

Besides gaining great insights from Australian democracy, culture and history, the delegation was also exposed to their election procedures and referendum system.



The delegates with Professor Alan Pettigrew of UNE

Visit by the Austrian Parliamentary Delegation

On 18th of August 2009, a delegation from Austrian Parliament led by Ms. Petra Bayr visited the National Assembly of Bhutan. The delegation met with the Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition and the committees of the National Assembly. The delegation consisted of 5 Parliamentarians, 3 officials and 5 journalists from the Austrian media who were on a Parliamentary exchange programme in Bhutan.

On meeting with the Hon Speaker, Ms. Petra Bayr expressed her best wishes on behalf of the Speaker of Austrian Parliament. The Speaker extended a formal welcome to the delegation and emphasized on the friendly relations between Bhutan and Austria.

The delegation also met with committees of the National Assembly and exchanged experiences and opinions especially on the subjects related to human rights, Gross National Happiness (GNH), agriculture and other issues related to Parliamentary committees.

Project ends but relations continue...

The Danish assisted project for strengthening institutional capacity of National Assembly and its Secretariat under the Good Governance programme amounting to Nu. 83.180 million came to an end in March, 2009. The project contributed for the tangible outcomes such as human resource development, refurbishing of National Assembly Hall, installation of digital conferencing system, simultaneous interpretation facility, electronic surveillance system and printing facilities in the National Assembly to name a few.

The MoU for Parliamentary Twinning Programme under the project has further strengthened relations between the

Parliaments of Bhutan and Denmark. As the part of last leg of the Parliamentary Twinning Programme between the Parliaments of Bhutan and Denmark, the Danish parliamentary delegation comprising of Mr. Peter Egemose Grib and Ms. Louise Piester visited the National Assembly of Bhutan from 13th October to 16th October, 2009. They conducted a workshop on Parliamentary committees and other Parliamentary affairs. The Hon Members of Parliament and Secretariat staff attended the workshop.

The workshop served as a resourceful platform for the participants to draw a valuable picture of function and system of the Danish Parliament. On the concluding day of the workshop, Mr. Peter Egemose said that the workshop has not only provided them to learn about Bhutanese Parliament but also about their own Constitution through effective interaction and exchange of views.

Meanwhile, the National Assembly of Bhutan is looking forward for continuous relation and programmes of mutual benefits between Parliaments of Bhutan and Denmark.

UN Resident Representative meets Hon Speaker

On 7th of July, 2009, the new UN Resident Representative to Bhutan, Ms. Claire Van der Vaeren called on the Hon Speaker in his chamber. The Hon Speaker extended a formal welcome to Ms. Claire Van den Vaeren who was impressed with the physical beauty of the National Assembly hall.

Ms. Claire Van de Vaeren expressed her desire to look forward for the active pursuit of joint co-operation with Bhutan. The Hon Speaker talked on the Parliamentary issues and highlighted on the fund received from DANIDA towards the enhancement of the Secretariat and also discussed on the UNDP assistance for the institutional capacity strengthening of the Parliament.

Call on to the Hon Speaker by the outgoing Ambassador of Australia to Bhutan

The outgoing Ambassador of Australia to Bhutan H.E Mr. John McCarthy called on the Speaker. He was accompanied by Ms. Sarah Kirlew, Second Secretary. Upon being asked about the opposition position taken by the National Council towards the Government, the Speaker emphasized that the National Council has done a good job to maintain check and balance. They also discussed on the Parliamentary exchange programmes between Bhutan and Australia.

The Speaker expressed that the priority of the Parliament till the next election would be solving poverty and unemployment problems and ensuring balanced development. The Speaker thanked H.E for his contribution in further strengthening ties between our two countries. H.E Mr. John McCarthy was accredited as Ambassador to Bhutan in April 2005.

Farewell visit by the Ambassador of Pakistan to Bhutan

On 26th of August 2009, Ambassador of Pakistan to Bhutan H.E Mr. Alamgir Babar called on the Hon Speaker. Appointed

as the Ambassador of Pakistan to Bhutan in 2005, H.E was on a farewell visit in the country.



“Farewell to a Friend”, Ambassador of Pakistan H.E Mr. Alamgir Babar shaking hand with the Hon Speaker.

Meeting with the Hon Speaker, H.E said that the new Bhutan has come of age. H.E also said that holding of SARRC summit is a significant signal on the part of Bhutan. “Our relation with Pakistan during your tenure has improved a lot” said the Speaker further adding that the prayers of Bhutan are always there for building stronger Pakistan. The Speaker also expressed his gratitude for Pakistan’s friendship and support for Bhutan.

Other foreign delegates who called on the Hon Speaker during the year 2009 were Ambassador Lars-Olof Lingdren of Sweden, Ambassador Miguel Angel Ramirez Ramos of Cuba, President of the Supreme Court Bar Association of India Mr. Pravin H Parekh and his team, Ambassador Joseph Caron of Canada, Ambassador Sakir Ozkan Torunlar of Turkey, officer trainees of the Indian Foreign Service, Advisor to the Thai Foreign Minister Ms. Chompoonute Nakornthap, Ambassador AKM Majibur Rahman Bhuiyan of Bangladesh and UNDP Parliamentary Development Advisor Mr. Kevin Deveaux.

Hon Members of Parliament visit industrial sites and projects

The Hon Members of the National Assembly visited industrial sites and projects under Wangduephodrang, Tsirang, Sarpang, Samtse and Chukha Dzongkhags from March 29 to April 6, 2009. The visit was coordinated through the Ministry of Economic Affairs to provide first hand information to our parliamentarians about the industries and projects in these Dzongkhags.

Training on Dynamics of Effective Negotiation

The Hon Members of Parliament attended Seminar on Dynamics of Effective Negotiation in four batches conducted by the Asian Center for Banking, Makati City, Manila, Philippines. The Hon Members of Parliament also visited the House of Representatives of the Philippines and exchanged views with their counterparts.

The third batch consisting of 8 parliamentarians and 3 officials also visited the Parliament of Denmark, Copenhagen from 9-13 March, 2009. The study programme was organized by Folketing, the Danish Parliament as a part of Parliamentary Twinning Programme (PTP) between the National Assembly of Bhutan and the Folketing. During their

stay in Copenhagen, the delegation attended briefing on various aspects of the working of the Danish Folketing, the committees and organization of the Danish Parliament. The delegation also visited the Municipality of Roskilde to learn about the organization and competences of a Danish Municipality. This programme was funded by DANIDA under the aegis of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two parliaments in July 2006 for a 3 year Parliamentary Twinning Programme.

Parliament and Media in Democracy Seminar

Graced by the Hon Speaker of the National Assembly more than 22 Parliamentarians and around 35 officials from different government agencies and media outlets attended a two day Seminar on "Parliament and Media in a Democracy" organized jointly by the National Assembly and Bhutan Centre for Media and Democracy with financial assistance from UNDP at the Gyelyong Tshokhang from 26-27 March, 2009.



Participants during the Seminar

Welcoming the participants to the Seminar, the Secretary of the National Assembly briefly highlighted the objectives of the seminar and expressed hopes that the seminar would provide constructive inputs and insight in the media arena.

Inaugurating the Seminar, the Chief Guest Mr. Bakhodir Burkhanov, UNDP Resident Representative said that access to information is a key empowerment tool that is central to effective interventions in the areas of democratic governance and poverty reduction-and to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. He said that it is vital for strengthening accountability, transparency, participation and rule of law.

Following which, there was a talk on Bhutan's media experience and policy, Media in Bhutan today, Law and Media: Democracy and media accountability and Parliament and Media.

On the concluding day of the seminar, Hon member Ugyen Dorji, Member of Parliament and the member of the Media and ICT Committee of the National Assembly said that this first ever organized seminar on Parliament and Media had come at an opportune time as our democracy has just turned one year old. He said that it has become increasingly necessary now to work towards a more transparent system of governance and the parliament and media are key players in providing the transparency required to take Bhutan forward. The lively small group discussions came up with

some interesting recommendations to improve media relations and transparency.

Hon member Ugyen Dorji said that the ICT and Media Committee of the National Assembly will follow on the recommendations of the seminar and review, revise and make all efforts to build a sound strategy for enhancing the relationship between the Parliament and the Media.

Seminar on the Work of Parliamentary Committees

On 11th September, 2009 a Seminar on "The work of Parliamentary Committees"-A comparison on contemporary committee working practices was conducted by Mr. Kevin Deveaux in the conference hall of the National Assembly. The Seminar was attended by the Chairperson of the National Council, UNDP Resident Representative Ms. Claire Van den Vaeren, Members of Parliament and other officials.

Following the presentation, Mr. Kevin Deveaux explained on various kinds of committees, their structures and functions. He also talked on engagement of the Parliamentarians with citizens and highlighted the importance of committees in a bicameral Parliament. Questions related to the functions of committees such as overriding the decisions of Houses by the committees, criteria for declaring bills as urgent, modalities for introducing a bill, role of upper House and others were also asked and discussed.

Mr. Kevin Deveaux is a Parliamentary Development Adviser with UNDP New York. The Seminar and the visit were funded by the UN Project- Support for Strengthening Institutional Capacity of the Parliament of Bhutan.

Hon MPs briefed on Ministry of Labour and Human Resources

On 28th of August 2009, the Ministry of Labour and Human Resources conducted a presentation programme on its policies, objectives and functions in the conference hall of the National Assembly. Led by the Minister for Labour and Human Resources Lyonpo Dorji Wangdi, Dasho Sonam Tenzin (Secretary, MoLHR), the Chairperson and the members of Labour and Employment Committee and other officials participated in the presentation.

Following the presentation, the participants were briefed on the various departments and divisions of the Ministry of Labour and & Human Resources and their functions. The Secretary to the MoLHR also said that the Ministry is trying its best to convince the Government to join International Labour Organization (ILO).

The participants also discussed various issues on dignity of labour, fund for HR development in private sectors, employment issues in hotels, ILO and others.

Contributions of articles

To enable the Secretariat to produce the Newsletter on a regular basis, we would like to encourage the Honourable Members to contribute news and articles and the same may be given to Mr. Sonam Tobgay, Asst. Media Officer of the Secretariat.

DYT Tshodrungs on Parliamentary Attachment Programme

Under the initiative of Hon Speaker, two week Parliamentary attachment program for DYT Tshodrungs from eleven Dzongkhags which began on 26th June concluded on 10th July, 2009. The participants were briefed on the following:

1. Functions of the Parliamentary Committees.
2. Role and status of the Parliament and
3. Other parliamentary practices.



Participants with Hon'ble Speaker

At the conclusion of the programme, the participants met with the Hon Speaker of the National Assembly. The participants expressed that the attachment program was very useful and informative. The participants also met with the Secretary General of the National Assembly before leaving for their respective Dzongkhags.

Presentation by Royal Audit Authority (RAA)

The Hon Speaker, the Opposition Leader and the Members of the National Assembly attended presentation on the roles and mandates of the Royal Audit Authority (RAA) organized by RAA on June 11, 2009 in the conference hall of the National Assembly.

The Auditor General briefed the participants on the history, mandates, achievements, future plans and challenges of RAA. Following the presentation, the Hon Speaker said that this kind of programme is very important and pertinent in fostering better understanding and working relationships between RAA and the Parliament in ensuring the success of its oversight functions. The Hon Members commended RAA for its professionalism in generating comprehensive and balanced audit reports on very pertinent issues.

The Hon Speaker, on behalf of the Parliament expressed his appreciation for the change in auditing and reporting approach adopted by RAA. He also suggested that RAA instead of focusing their audit initiatives on financial matters only could also take up audit of some physical facilities such as drinking water and irrigation projects. He pointed out that these kinds of projects are very often rendered defunct and abandoned after substantial investment.

The programme provided good opportunity for the Hon Members to better understand the roles and functions of RAA and clarify their doubts regarding the auditing system.

Presentation by the Election Commission of Bhutan

The Hon Speaker and the Members of the National Assembly attended a presentation on Public Election Fund Act, National

Referendum Act and the procedures of local government elections organized by the Election Commission of Bhutan, led by the Chief Election Commissioner on 17th June in the conference hall of the National Assembly.

Following the presentation, some of the Hon Members of the National Assembly voiced their concern on disqualification of a candidate under section 79 (a) and (g) of the Election Act. However, the Chief Election Commissioner ensured that the provisions were according to the constitution. He also said that ECB only lays the ground rules and other necessary works were done by independent monitors. He further added that the ultimate determination would be done by the court of law.

MPs and students set rendezvous on the eve of International Day of Democracy

International day of democracy was observed in Bhutan with Hon Members of Parliament and the students engaging in active interaction on 14th September, 2009 in the National Council Building. The audience also included the representatives from the international community, civil society, government officials, Members of Parliament and media.

Apart from the three Members of Parliament the panel also included an election commissioner to whom the students asked questions related to the Constitution and the function of Parliament in democratic Bhutan.

Secretariat related news

Training on Translation Techniques

The Staff of the National Assembly Secretariat attended a basic translation techniques and methodology course for a fortnight beginning October 5th 2009. The course was conducted by Dzongkha Development Training Institute and funded through Dzongkha Development Programme. During the course participants were briefed on the basic principles of translation and guidelines to translate from English to Dzongkha and vice versa. Frequent practical activities were also inculcated to the course for better attainment of translation skills by the participants.

Donation for the victims of the earthquake

September 21st, 2009 shall be remembered by every Bhutanese and well wishers of Bhutan as one of the tragic days which engulfed the nation in to realm of sorrow. The earthquake had severe impact on lives and properties not only in the east but literally to every Bhutanese. As a token of empathy and unity, the National Assembly Secretariat contributed an amount of Nu.46, 505 for the acceleration of relief efforts in the east. The National Assembly Secretariat deeply express our sympathy and condolences to the victims of the September 21st earthquake.

Four Divisions, One goal

We the National Assembly Secretariat serve the elected Members of the National Assembly of Bhutan with the **Mission** to provide efficient and effective professional services that will enable the Members of the National Assembly to perform their functions and responsibilities to the aspiration of the Bhutanese people.



The Secretariat staff preparing for the Fourth Session

The Secretariat is committed to realize the **Vision** of a well-functioning parliamentary democracy that contributes to the attainment of Gross National Happiness. Over the last few years the Secretariat of the National Assembly has grown with time vis-a-vis new challenges. Today the Secretariat has four operational divisions with a total strength of 50 employees. With the honour and responsibility of working in the highest legislative body of the Nation, the Secretariat staff members have worked and continue to work with diligence and dedication.

Friends who left us

The Chief Information & Media Officer of the Secretariat Mr. Lakshuman Chettri was transferred to BICMA as Chief Information & Media Officer after more than twenty two years of his service in the National Assembly Secretariat. The Secretariat family wishes him a successful and fulfilling career ahead.

Friends who joined us

Mr. Sonam Tobgay joined the National Assembly Secretariat as an Asst. Information and Media Officer after appointment by the Royal Civil Service Commission in May, 2009. He completed his degree in journalism from Bangalore University in 2008. Similarly Ms. Dechen Choden joined the Tshogdu family as Personal Secretary to the Hon Opposition Leader after getting selected in a rigorous interview. She completed her MBA from Sikkim Manipal University.

Looking back after 34 years

Some one has rightly remarked “experience is the greatest teacher”. The editorial team of *Tshogdu* sets on an odyssey into the past with the man who has been a part of the change. Today, if one asks for Mr. Kazilal Rai, he is there with an unassuming smile and bears gentle personality as he was thirty four years ago with a sense of dedication and loyalty to work and to work.

As a young boy Mr. Rai completed his high school from Paro central school ready and anxious to sail into the voyage of working, earning and yearning. He joined the Civil Service in 1975 where he worked as Accountant for five years in the Ministry of Health and later joined National Assembly Secretariat in 1981. “In the first year of my service, I availed a loan of Nu. 8,000 to buy a scooter to move between my

home and work” said Mr. Rai. “Scooter by then was like a Toyota Yaris of present times, but it was not very comfortable to ride around in the rain and biting cold of Thimphu” jokes Mr. Rai in reminiscence. Rung by rung, he climbed the ladder of life and today he is the Sr. Administrative Officer in the National Assembly Secretariat. With an overwhelming astonishment in his eyes, Mr. Rai recalls the days when the Secretariat of National Assembly was what today, office of a Gup virtually is. There were total of only six working staff in three scanty rooms and to make the matters worst, there were neither computer nor photocopier and fax machines. The status quo of the organization was such that to own a fully mechanized printing machine as today was a fact at par with returning from inferno. Mr. Rai shares that the National Assembly sessions by then were held in first floor of the Kunrey in Tashi Chodzhong. The Assembly resolutions then were brought out with hours of laborious typing on mere stencil papers and cyclostyle. Today, the National Assembly hall is equipped with modern digital public address and simultaneous interpretation facilities and electronic surveillance system. It even has a independent printing offset machine with more than 50 regular staff working in the Secretariat, compares Rai.

Thirty four years down the line, Mr. Kazilal Rai has served under six Speakers starting from the late Lyonpo Tamzhing Jakar, by then who was the Third and Eighth Speaker of the National Assembly to the present Speaker, Lyonpo Jigme Tshultim of democratic Bhutan. “Visiting Lhakhangs during field trips of the Assembly Members during the session” was what he says are the most memorable moments he cherishes being and serving in the highest legislative body of the country.



Apa Rai in reminiscence

Today at 54, Mr. Rai flashes around a newly bought red Maruti Suzuki Swift car and bade farewell to his scooter. He is fondly looked up to as fatherly figure in the Secretariat and his younger office colleagues refers to him as Apa Rai, who stands as the repository of the institutional memory. He bears that energy and enthusiasm with which he began his career and looks forward for a very rewarding experience in remaining chapter of his career.



Members of the Parliament with His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo at the Closing Ceremony of the 4th Session of the First Parliament



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