



His Majesty the King's National Day address

Posted on Saturday, December 17 @ 17:34:08 EST BST
(Translated from Dzongkha)

Trashiyangtse: 17 December 2005 - As we celebrate our National Day today, we have only one and a half years left before completing the Ninth Five Year Plan which was started in 2002. During this Plan period we faced serious security challenges but successfully strengthened the security of our nation.

The process of bringing about political changes has been progressing well and the development plans and programmes of the Ninth Plan are being implemented successfully for the well being of our people. Next year, the Tala Hydro-electric Project will be completed and it will bring an annual revenue of more than Nu. 4,000 million. The revenue from this one project alone will greatly benefit the government and people of Bhutan.

The level of economic self-reliance achieved by a nation is one of the important measures of its status in the world as a sovereign, independent country. Achieving economic self-reliance and being able to stand on our own feet is a very important national objective that we have always strived to attain for Bhutan.

I am happy to mention that, by the year 2007, Bhutan will no longer be among the countries categorised by the United Nations as least developed countries. While other countries have taken hundreds of years to reach their present level of development, for us in Bhutan, we have achieved tremendous socio-economic development in every field in the 44 years since we first started implementing development programmes. How much our country has developed and how the lives of our people have changed and improved during this period in our own lifetime is there for all of us to see.

This unprecedented progress has been possible due to the sound policies followed by the government and sustained efforts of our people. The government and people of Bhutan can be truly proud of this great achievement.

While drafting the Constitution of our country we have attached the highest importance to ensuring the security and sovereignty of our nation and the interest and kidu of our people. The highest importance was also given to ensuring that the new political system will be able to serve the national interest of the country and fulfil our people's aspirations. The Constitution has been framed with the sole objective of ensuring the long-term interest of our country and people.

During my consultations on the Constitution in the different dzongkhags, the main concern of our people is that it is too early to introduce parliamentary democracy in

Bhutan. As our people know, Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdus were established in 1981 when we first started the policy of decentralisation. Thereafter, Gewog Yargay Tshogchungs were introduced 10 years later in 1991. Furthermore, under the policy of greater empowerment of the people, administrative and financial powers were also given to the Dzongkhag Yargay Tshogdus.

During the next two years in 2006 and 2007, the Election Commission will educate our people in the process of parliamentary democracy and electoral practice sessions will be conducted in all the 20 dzongkhags. After 26 years of the process of decentralisation and devolution of powers to the people, I have every confidence that our people will be able to choose the best political party that can provide good governance and serve the interest of the nation. I would like our people to know that the first national election to elect a government under a system of parliamentary democracy will take place in 2008.

I would also like our people to know that the Chhoetse Penlop will be enthroned as the Fifth Druk Gyalpo in 2008. As it is necessary and important for a King to gain as much experience as possible to serve his country to his fullest capacity, I will be delegating my responsibilities to the Chhoetse Penlop before 2008. It is my wish and prayer that during the reign of Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the Palden Drukpa will remain strong and glorious, that our country will achieve greater prosperity with the sun of peace and happiness shining on our people, that all the national objectives of the country and the hopes and aspirations of our people will be fulfilled and the Bhutanese people will enjoy a greater level of contentment and happiness.

Today, on the auspicious occasion of our National Day, I would like to express my Tashi Delek to our people in all the twenty dzongkhags.