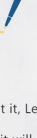


MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



Hello Family,

This Year, Just Go for It. Start it, Try that, Implement it, Learn, Initiate, Create and Give.

The world will return back to normal gradually but it will open with restrictions and those restrictions aren't going to be going away anytime in the near future. With the virus evolving and here to stay, the resounding message is that life has to go on.

It has been a major challenge for owners and managers or anybody, even independent contractors who are running a business and have had their own level of struggles.

I know what it feels like because we are going through the same struggles.

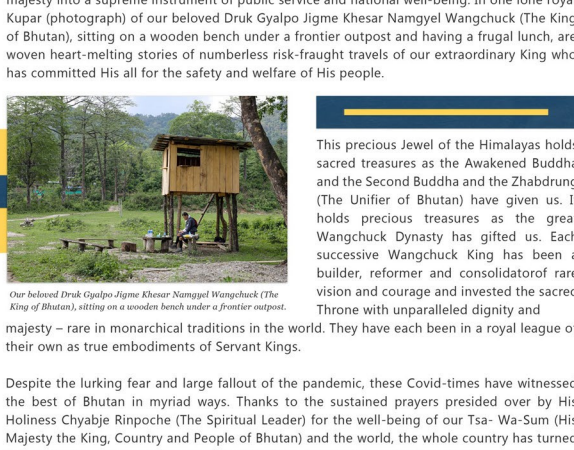
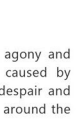
Meanwhile here at home we have practiced the importance of helping each other ever since our country closed to the outside world in March 2020 with our Majesty the King at the forefront. It has been a rough 23 months for the people and economy in Bhutan. And we are still counting the days for Bhutan to open. However, this has led to us focusing more on our mental health and supporting each other which has raised more awareness and positivity around us. What next, what's the solution? The solution would be to be fearless, welcome the issues, and start by taking responsibility. Rather than panicking, you embrace the situation. It calls for processing and planning your next moves.

When you start viewing a crisis as an opportunity, you are winning the game.

Our futures are all intertwined, and they will not be boring.

Have a truly memorable Year, and thank you for being a part of this family.

Yeshey Norbu
CEO
Norbu Bhutan Travels.



Bhutan at her Best, and for Good Reasons.

I am often given to understand that I am too naive to look only at the brighter side of the world and merrily ignore the other side of reality. But even in the dreary nights of despair, I know that with all its imperfections, the world is still a good place, and despite all its aches and afflictions, life is still beautiful and precious – worth-preserving and worth-celebrating.

I am not blind to the other side. But I cannot miss the obvious.

At a time like the present when the whole world is reeling under unrelenting agony and devastation unleashed by the scourge of Covid-19 and unmitigated misery caused by man-made catastrophes and natural calamities, it is ever so easy to give in to despair and despondency. At the same time, there are countless men and women of goodwill around the world who give their all and bring relief and respite to those in need.

Back home, Bhutan is writing a new epic of heroism and sacrifice through the personal examples of a People's King who has transformed the conventional notion of monarchy and majesty into a supreme instrument of public service and national well-being. In one lone royal Kupa (photograph) of our beloved Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (The King of Bhutan), sitting on a wooden bench under a frontier outpost and having a frugal lunch, are woven heart-melting stories of numberless risk-fraught travels of our extraordinary King who has committed His all for the safety and welfare of His people.



Our beloved Druk Gyalpo Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (The King of Bhutan), sitting on a wooden bench under a frontier outpost.

This precious Jewel of the Himalayas holds sacred treasures as the Awakened Buddha and the Second Buddha and the Zhabdrung (The Unifier of Bhutan) have given us. It holds precious treasures as the great Wangchuck Dynasty has gifted us. Each successive Wangchuck King has been a builder, reformer and consolidator of rare vision and courage and invested the sacred Throne with unparalleled dignity and majesty – rare in monarchical traditions in the world. They have each been in a royal league of their own as true embodiments of Servant Kings.

Despite the lurking fear and large fallout of the pandemic, these Covid-times have witnessed the best of Bhutan in myriad ways. Thanks to the sustained prayers presided over by His Holiness Chhyabje Rinpoche (The Spiritual Leader) for the well-being of our Tsa- Wa-Sum (His Majesty the King, Country and People of Bhutan) and the world, the whole country has turned into a veritable temple of worship right from the advent of the dreaded virus over a year ago.

It was indeed a rare privilege for the people and frontline warriors to meet our revered Drukgyal Zhipa (The Great Fourth King of Bhutan) as His Majesty Jigme Singye Wangchuck took an ordinary Hilux (pick up truck) to travel to the perilous south to provide succour and strength at a difficult time.

Her Majesty our beloved Queen has been deeply involved in looking after the well-being of the frontline workers and vulnerable groups throughout these challenging times. Members of the Royal Family have been making their own special contributions, including by serving as de-suup (Guardians of Peace and Harmony), to the national effort.

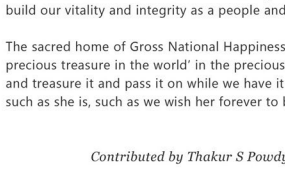
All sections of the Bhutanese society, at home and beyond, have joined the Royal Government and continue to make their inputs as it fights the spread of the invisible enemy.

As desired by His Majesty the King, no human life has been lost to the virus, barring 3 with pre-existing conditions. Isolation episodes have fluctuated between zero and around 300 at peak, recovery rates are very high and the overall infection cases are under 1500, the vast majority of them being imported.

Tracing, testing, quarantining, treatment, accommodation, food and transportation are undertaken by the government at state-cost. Hardly any case is allowed to slip through the cracks. Our dedicated de-suups (Guardians of Peace and Harmony), and security personnel keep constant vigil on the borders and across the country as our committed healthcare professionals and support teams attend to the needy. Some 95 percent of all eligible citizens have received both the doses of the vaccines and booster doses have already been initiated.

Chartered flights are organised by the government for all Bhutanese who wish to return home from abroad, including those undergoing medical treatment outside Bhutan. Financial support is provided to those rendered jobless as well as interest-waivers to the ones who have bank-loan burden. Farming activities are booming, skills development initiatives are picking up, and villages are returning to life again.

Tourism and construction sectors have faced major setbacks but they could bounce back quickly once the pandemic is behind us. In the meanwhile, goodwill and support from our bilateral and international partners have been deeply heartening.



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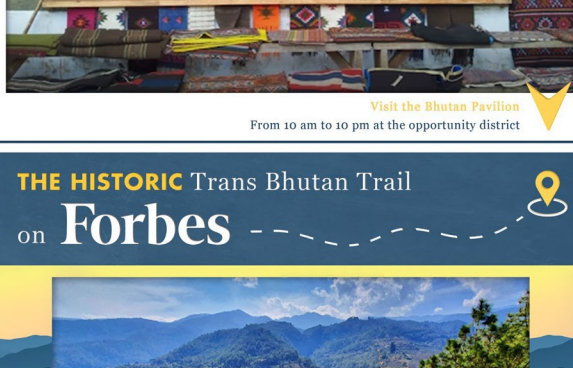
In many ways, this is a rare high point in the life of our beloved country. In the course of this past year, Bhutan has come together as a family under the extraordinary leadership of His Majesty the King; the Royal Government and the people have rallied round a common cause; and there has been a spontaneous manifestation of amazing goodwill, abundant positive energy, and a most heartening spirit of caring and sharing across the society. Bhutan at Her Best: Sun-rays through the rain reflects the country's response to Covid-19 through the eyes of a wide cross-section of the Bhutanese population and Bhutan-watchers.

This is how we call up the outer and the inner self of the nation and weave its collective memory and build our shared history and pass these on to succeeding generations to do their part in the forging of our common destiny.

Mother Nature's boundless grace and generosity are written over in the breath-taking beauty of our incredible country that is home to an amazing variety of flora and fauna, nourished and freshened by life-giving mountain-air and suckled by the gift of our silver-streams that gurgled down our snow-capped mountains to water our fields and turn our turbines below.

And, we have the blessings of the peerless Buddha etched in the myriad monasteries and lhakhangs (temples) that edify our land, in the prayer-flags and mantra-banners that stretch from hill to hill, and in the mani-walls and sacred objects that invoke the power of the divine for the gift of life beyond life.

Then, here are the human of the species, blessed citizens of Bhutan who call this god-gifted land their home and animate it with their hopes and their dreams, their faith and fealty, with their capacity for wonder and for creativity.



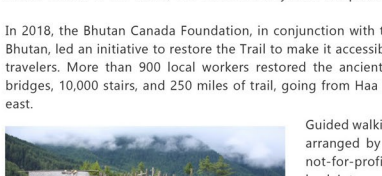
STAY SAFE!

But even in the dreary nights of despair, I know that with all its imperfections, the world is still a good place, and despite all its aches and afflictions, life is still beautiful and precious – worth-preserving and worth-celebrating.

And, where in the world would there be kings who stake their all for the well-being of their people but in the land favoured by the divine as Druk Yul? (Land of the Thunder Dragon) Remember the Father of Modern Bhutan (The Third King of Bhutan) who would travel incognito to find out His people's predicament, the King of Destiny (The Fourth King of Bhutan) who led the army and saved the country from grave danger, and witness the sacrifices of the People's King who serves with love and leads by example.

This moment in Druk Yul could mark a turning point in its destiny. It is not always that kinder skies arch over nations and align their lucky stars as we have now with the sublime presence of a saintly Chhyabje Rinpoche, the larger-than-life blessed presence of the Great Fourth, the wide-awake vigil of a peerless People's King, and the uplifting reassurance of our precious Gyalser (The Crown Prince). If our public servants, elected officials, political entities, and common citizens are not inspired by these blessings to rise above our frailties and measure up, we may never be this fortunate again.

Even as I celebrate the good fortune of this nation and its people, my heart aches at each weary step my King takes along risky border-trails, drenched in rain and soaked in sweat, far away from the joyous company of family and the comfort of palace. My heart breaks at each safety protocol breached and every trust betrayed, just as I shudder at each instance of death-rites conducted for a living person in this land of myriad blessings.



Bhutan at her best – such as she is, such as we wish her forever to be.

There are no miracles here. There are to match the blessings of this Dharma Land with the goodness of our thought and action. Certain acts are just not compatible with the purity of Druk Yul. We can begin by accepting where the rains are beating us, by identifying and checking the forces that divide us and weaken us, and by advancing the positive elements that unite us and build our vitality and integrity as a people and as a nation.

The sacred home of Gross National Happiness GNH, this is the only Bhutan we have, 'our most precious treasure in the world' in the precious words of our beloved King. We can only value it and treasure it and pass it on while we have it – pure, sublime, unsullied – Bhutan at her best – such as she is, such as we wish her forever to be.

Contributed by Thakur S Powdyel, Former Minister of Education.

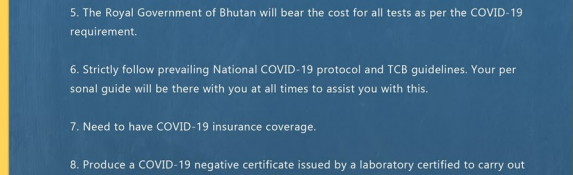


BHUTAN-The Last Shangrila on Earth

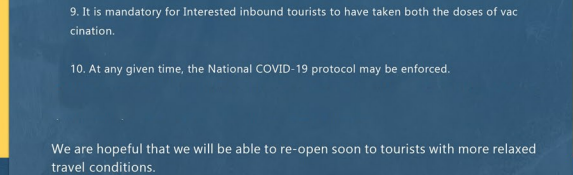
at the Dubai Expo.

In Bhutan, the quest for happiness is not only spiritual but is an essential socioeconomic indicator. See what makes this land, situated on the ancient Silk Road, truly unique.

1. Experience the thirteen different arts and crafts of Bhutan, from metal casting to needlework.



2. A showcase of performing arts in the form of mask dances and folk songs and dances.



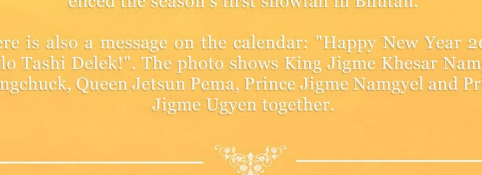
3. Own locally produced textiles, handicrafts and souvenirs, and herbal products.



Visit the Bhutan Pavilion
From 10 am to 10 pm at the opportunity district

THE HISTORIC Trans Bhutan Trail

on Forbes



The Trans Bhutan Trail is set to re-open in March 2022.

The ultimate bucket-list adventure for those who love hiking is finally set to welcome visitors for the first time in 60 years. The Trans Bhutan Trail is a 250-mile historic pilgrimage trail running the length of the Buddhist country of Bhutan, a nation on the edge of the Himalayas famed for its breathtaking mountain vistas and fascinating monasteries and temples rich with history.

Following years of extensive restoration, the Trans Bhutan Trail is set to re-open in March 2022, allowing travelers and pilgrims to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors. Visitors can elect to either walk or bike the trail and take advantage of an incredible opportunity to explore and connect with the remotest parts of Bhutan, deep in the Eastern Himalayas.

The now fully cleared trail crosses through nine dzongkhags (districts), 28 gewogs (local governments), two municipalities and one national park.

The Trail meanders through pristine virgin forest, offering distant vistas of soaring Himalayan peaks on its way and many sections of the trail will allow visitors access to parts of Bhutan seldom visited by foreigners.

The Trail is a path through Bhutan's history, with 400 historic and cultural sites identified along the route to date. The Trail's origins go back at least 500 years when it connected fortresses called Dzongs and served as the pilgrimage route for Buddhists in the east traveling to sacred sites in western Bhutan and Tibet. Garps (trail runners) worked the Trail and were legendary, traveling with mail and vital messages at great speed, without food or water.

The Trail also played a major role in uniting numerous Himalayan kingdoms which ultimately led to the birth of Bhutan as a nation in 1707. However, once the construction of roads began across Bhutan in the 1960s, the Trail's stairways and footpaths gradually fell into disrepair.

In 2018, the Bhutan Canada Foundation, in conjunction with the King and Tourism Council of Bhutan, led an initiative to restore the Trail to make it accessible again for locals, pilgrims, and travelers. More than 900 local workers restored the ancient route, which includes 18 major bridges, 10,000 stairs, and 250 miles of trail, going from Haa in the west to Trashigang in the east.

Guided walking and biking on the trail can be arranged by the Norbu Bhutan Travel on a not-for-profit basis, with all proceeds going back into communities along the route. Truly intrepid travelers can walk the entire trail in just over a month.

Half-day and full-day treks are possible with three, four or seven-day section hikes expected to be popular options for most visitors. The Trail presents a rich experience for birdwatchers and botanists, photographers, rafters and runners, as well as for those looking for a spiritual, wellness, or religious experience. Accommodation along the way will be offered in signature campsites, homestays, and hotels.

Opening ceremonies for the Trail will be hosted by The King in the ancient and sacred city of Trongsa, central Bhutan in March 2022. From April 2022, a limited number of permits will be issued to international travelers to hike the Trail, in whole or in part. Sam Blyth, Chair of the Bhutan Canada Foundation and lead donor to the Trail comments, "This is a community-based project in both its building and operation which will restore an ancient cultural icon and provide a sustainable, net carbon zero experience in the country for pilgrims and travelers. Spanning the world's only carbon negative country, the Trans Bhutan Trail also reflects the country's philosophy of Gross National Happiness and will allow the children of Bhutan to walk in the footsteps of their ancestors."

EXPECTED FUTURE FOR TRAVEL TO BHUTAN.

Quarantine, Vaccination, & Test Requirements.

Bhutan is yet to formally re-open to tourism, Tourism Council of Bhutan (TCB) will inform with an official announcement (press release) when Bhutan is ready and decides to open under safe and relaxed travel conditions.

Until then, TCB will be facilitating the entry of tourists on a case by case basis after fulfilling the existing COVID-19 requirements, including the 14 days mandatory quarantine.

In addition, the tourist wanting to visit Bhutan must also meet the following conditions.

- Interested inbound tourists to apply through a licensed Bhutanese tour operator.
- Entry will be facilitated only for those coming via air.
- Minimum Daily Package Rate (MDPR) and associated exemptions will be applicable for the entire tour duration after the mandatory quarantine.
- Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) per person per night will be levied only after the quarantine period.
- The Royal Government of Bhutan will bear the cost for all tests as per the COVID-19 requirement.
- Strictly follow prevailing National COVID-19 protocol and TCB guidelines. Your personal guide will be there with you at all times to assist you with this.
- Need to have COVID-19 insurance coverage.
- Produce a COVID-19 negative certificate issued by a laboratory certified to carry out RT-PCR test, not earlier than 72 hours before embarking or the initiation of a journey from the country of origin.
- It is mandatory for Interested inbound tourists to have taken both the doses of vaccination.
- At any given time, the National COVID-19 protocol may be enforced.

We are hopeful that we will be able to re-open soon to tourists with more relaxed travel conditions.

News Letter

Want to learn more about Bhutan?
Sign up for the newsletter and join our family.



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