



Jigme Thinley

Bhutan's first ever elected
Prime Minister

Jigme Yoser Thinley is the first democratically elected Prime Minister of Bhutan. He held the office from April 2008 to April 2013. Prior to the beginning of democracy in Nepal, he served as Prime Minister twice, from July 20, 1998, to July 9, 1999, and from August 30, 2003, to August 20, 2004.

He laid focus on 'Gross National Happiness', thus policies and programs of his government including agriculture, foreign trade and transportation were based on such notion instead sheer economic factors. The motto was not to judge the programs by the economic benefits but by the happiness attained thus strengthening the policy of the Fourth King Jigme Singye, which focus more on maximizing 'Gross National Happiness' instead of 'Gross National Product'. His government also enforced the tenth five-year plan of Bhutan. On December 17, 2008, he was conferred with the 'Druk Wangyal' medal, the 'Order of Great Victory of the Thunder Dragon' which is bestowed to recognise excellent dedication, commitment and loyalty and is considered as one of the highest civilian honours of the country. Thinley became a member of the 'International Advisory Board' of 'Netherlands Development Organisation' in July 2009 and aided in the organisation's endeavour in reduction of poverty and continual work on development by contributions from his personal experiences. Université catholique de Louvain in Belgium conferred him with an honorary degree on February 3, 2014. He has attended various seminars, conferences and meetings including addressing the 'United Nations General assembly' several times. He has given speeches in international meetings

Prior to his political career he was engaged with the Royal Government of Bhutan for over three decades as a civil servant holding various senior positions including that in the 'Department of Home Affairs'. He remained administrator of the Eastern Zone and also served as secretary in the 'Ministry of Home Affairs'. He held several significant political positions before becoming the Lyonchen. He was inducted as the 'Deputy Minister of Home Affairs' and thereafter served as 'Minister of Foreign Affairs' and 'Minister of Home and Cultural Affairs'. He was 'Permanent Representative' of Bhutan to the 'United Nations' office and also in other international organisations in Geneva. He is the recipient of the Red Scarf and the Orange Scarf and was also conferred with the title of 'Dasho'.