

PRESS RELEASE

Subject: Verdict passed by Royal Court of Justice, Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court, regarding the case of illegal entry across the international border that occurred on 26 May 2020

Three foreign workers without any documents issued by the Department of Immigration were apprehended by the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) on 26 May 2020 at a private construction site at Pekarzhing under Phuentsholing Thromde. All 3 workers had entered the country clandestinely in collusion with the site supervisor.

2. The 3 foreign workers and the site supervisor, who is a Bhutanese citizen, were immediately quarantined on 26 May 2020 at their own cost. They were tested for COVID-19 on 27 May 2020 and all tested negative.

3. The case of illegal entry was investigated by the Royal Bhutan Police and the Department of Immigration and charges were filed for violating provisions of the Immigration Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan and the Penal Code.

4. The Phuentsholing Dungkhag Court passed its verdict today as follows:

- a) Due to lack of adequate evidence, the owner of the construction site, Jigme Drukpa, could not be convicted for now. However, he has not been acquitted and may be charged when additional evidence is obtained.
- b) The site supervisor, Ugyen Wangchuk, was found guilty and has been sentenced for 4 years, 11 months and 29 days.

5. We hope that such selfish and reckless acts will not be repeated at a time when the entire nation is working hard to prevent the importation and transmission of COVID-19 in Bhutan.

6. In this context, the general public is reminded and urged to comply with all Notifications and measures put in place to mitigate the risks of importation and transmission of COVID-19 in Bhutan.