



## **International Conference on Science, Mindfulness, and Meditation**

The Centre for Bhutan & GNH Studies (CBS), in collaboration with the Central Monastic Body of Bhutan, convened its International Conference on Science, Mindfulness, and Meditation today. The conference is scheduled to last until June 6 at Zhichenkhar in Thimphu. Her Majesty The Queen Mother, Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, Her Royal Highness Sonam Dechan Wangchuck, His Eminence Vairotsana Rinpoche, and His Eminence Dorji Lopen of the Central Monastic Body graced the opening of the Science, Mindfulness, and Meditation Conference.

The four-day conference will foster dialogue and a wide range of talks and presentations that showcase both traditional knowledge and research. Key topics include scientific views on chakra and mantra practices, along with research on neuroplasticity and meditation's effects on brain synchronisation.

The conference will also explore the connection between contemplative practices and scientific research, fostering dialogue among philosophers, spiritual practitioners, neuroscientists, meditation masters, and mindfulness professionals from diverse traditions and disciplines.

The role of artificial intelligence and emerging technologies such as virtual reality and biometric tools in meditation research will be featured. Historical and cultural perspectives will look at how Buddhist traditions have impacted other customs and society.

On the first day of the conference, over 400 people attended, with more than 200 of them being international participants and over 60 international speakers. Attendees came from various countries, including India, the United States, Thailand, Latvia, South Africa, Ukraine, Mexico, Venezuela, Russia, and Hungary, among others.

The Prime Minister, Tshering Tobgay, graced the opening ceremony of the pre-conference by welcoming the international participants and speakers on June 2. Prime Minister said, "If the mind is restless, relationships suffer. If the heart is heavy, even the best technology can't bring peace. So, this gathering, where science meets meditation, where research meets ancient wisdom, is not just timely. It's necessary."

Prime Minister added that while complex meditation is performed by learned masters, simple meditation, such as calm abiding meditation, is suitable for lay practitioners, the GNH report, 2022, shows an increase of about 5 percent over the last six years in the number of people practising meditation, excluding those in long-term retreats. "As meditation becomes global, we must honour its roots while nurturing its growth."

Thank you.