

# Bhutan becomes first country to receive Covishield vaccines from India

Staff Reporter/ *Thimphu*

An AN32 glided its way into the Paro valley around 3.25 pm today, ferrying Bhutan's first consignment of COVID-19 vaccine.

The aircraft of Indian Air Force delivered 150,000 doses of Covishield vaccines from India, making Bhutan the first country to receive the gift, just four days after India's own massive roll out of the vaccine.

Led by Prime Minister Dasho Dr Lotay Tshering, the health minister Dasho Dechen Wangmo, Foreign secretary Kinga Singye and a few other senior officials received the vaccines at the

Paro International Airport.

The Ambassador of India to Bhutan, Ruchira Kamboj and embassy officials handed over the Oxford-Astra Zeneca vaccine, manufactured by the Serum Institute of India.

Receiving the vaccine, Prime Minister said it was a gift from a trusted friend, who has been with Bhutan all through the decades and in this pandemic too.

"As we celebrate the arrival of vaccine as the new milestone in our battle to beat the pandemic at home, we applaud the gesture that signifies the compassion and generosity of the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi,

and the people of India for the wellbeing of the humanity," he said.

"It is the display of altruism at best, and an exhibit of India's sincerity in the relationship we cherish," Prime Minister said, adding it comes despite enormous challenges India was facing due to the pandemic.

"It is of unimaginable value when precious commodities are shared even before meeting your own needs, as opposed to giving out only after you have enough."

The PM said the dispatch of the vaccine was the testimony to India's commitment of "neighbourhood first" and its leadership in the global fight

against COVID-19.

He said these supports translate into hope and confidence for all the countries to successfully sail across the pandemic soon.

The contribution of 150,000 vaccines prepares Bhutan to wage forward to protect the people and heal from the destructions of the pandemic, together with the rest of the world. India has also extended timely and generous support through supply of medicines, medical equipment and personal protective equipment since March last year, said the PM.

Meanwhile, the Indian government has assured

to cover the two doses requirement of Bhutan's target population of slightly over 533,500 and has committed to deliver the remaining consignments soon.

Prime Minister said the government and the people of Bhutan are immensely grateful to the government and people of India for remembering us at this time.

"These will all translate into the prayers and prosperity of the people of India, emanating from the grateful hearts of Bhutan," he said. "We thank you."