

Remarks by Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj at Paro International Airport on 22 March 2021 upon arrival of 400,000 doses of the Made-in-India COVISHIELD VACCINE.

India prides itself upon being a committed partner and friend to Bhutan. The exemplary relationship between our two nations, rooted in its mutual respect, has been blessed by the Druk Gyalpos of Bhutan and Indian leadership. Today is yet another testimony to our enduring partnership that has stood the test of time.

The Government of India is delighted to gift 400,000 doses of the Covishield vaccine to the Government and people of Bhutan. This brings the total doses in Bhutan to 550,000, enabling Bhutan to embark on its nation-wide mass vaccination program.

At his address to the United Nations General Assembly in September last year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised that India's vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all of humanity in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister Modi has indeed kept to that promise. Under the Vaccine Maitri initiative, India has supplied more than 60 million doses of vaccines to over 70 countries as grants, as well as under commercial arrangements at a time when it is confronted with its own national imperative to scale up vaccination. From the countries in the immediate neighbourhood to nations beyond the Indian Ocean to the Gulf, Africa and the Caribbean, India is truly demonstrating global leadership, internationalism and vaccine equity. The driving force behind Vaccine Maitri is found in India's ancient scriptures:

One is a relative, the other stranger, say the small minded.

The entire world is a family, say the magnanimous.

I congratulate the Royal Government of Bhutan on this auspicious day and pray for the continued success of the unique and time-tested friendship.
