

**Opening Remarks by Ambassador  
Ruchira Kamboj on the occasion of  
*Bhutan Echoes 2022***

**Time is ephemeral as it is eternal!**

**It seems just yesterday that I spoke at Mountain Echoes, Bhutan's and India's Annual Literature Festival in Thimphu.**

**Three years on, and with an understandable hiatus because of COVID, the Literature Festival is back!**

**Thus, it is my privilege to contribute to Bhutan Echoes, the successor event to Mountain Echoes, albeit in virtual mode, as a sign of our changing times.**

**I do not doubt that this celebration of literature, the arts and culture inspired under the royal patronage and guidance of Her Majesty The Royal Queen Mother Ashi Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck, has returned**

**reinvigorated, with the same two partners, Bhutan and India, but suffused with new ideas and new stories!**

**Over the last decade we have seen a galaxy of storytellers, writers, intellectuals, cultural practitioners, and performers travel to Bhutan from India for the Festival.**

**Their many voices informed Bhutanese audiences of the literary traditions of India, ranging from oral histories to prose, poetry, folklore, chants, and ballads.**

**In turn, these wordsmiths were exposed to the rich traditions of this enchanting landlocked Himalayan Kingdom.**

**Most movingly, the increased presence of younger Bhutanese, who in a bid to attend this celebration of the arts, keenly traversed mountains and**

**valleys, sometimes on foot - is in itself a statement of the Festival's appeal.**

**Joining the formidable list of former participants is an equally formidable list from India this year: *Dharmacharya Shantum Seth, Namita Gokhale, Kabir Bedi, Ashwin Sanghi, Avni Doshi, Priya Kapoor, Somi Roy, Mita Kapur and Jhilam Chattaraj.***

**From the Embassy, our very own Murthy ji and Kamer Singh ji will speak to the timeless Indian traditions of Yoga and Indian classical music.**

**I am confident that they will contribute substantively to this celebration of literature and the arts, cutting across generations, cultures, religions and experiences.**

**The famous writer Robert Louis Stevenson once said, "I kept always two**

**books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in.”**

**The budding writers amongst you may do well to heed this advise, so let’s pick up our books and our pens, as we rally around literature over the next few days.**

**I now turn to “India at 75”!**

**We are currently celebrating 75 years of India’s Independence and the glorious history of its people, culture and achievements.**

**Our Festival – the *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav* - commenced in 12 March last year kicking off a 75-week countdown to the 75th anniversary of India’s Independence, which will conclude on 15th August 2023.**

**In this vein, we are pleased that the entire programme of Bhutan Echoes is**

**also a celebration of India's Amrit Mahotsav, joining you-our Bhutanese friends-with fellow Indians, and an international constituency.**

**This year's theme of Bhutan Echoes is *'Stories and Ideas for a Changing World'*. In this spirit and a little later, I too will be sharing my story!**

**The Upanishads, a volume of sacred scriptures of deep wisdom from India, have said:**

**Quote**

**“Where there is joy there is creation. Where there is no joy there is no creation: know the nature of joy.”**

**Unquote**

**May the joy that emanates from the celebration of 'Bhutan Echoes' continue to envelope and charm not only the**

**people of Bhutan and India, but  
humanity, for times eternal.**

**My deepest respects and regards to Her  
Majesty Ashi Dorji Wangmo  
Wangchuck.**

**Congratulations Kelly Dorji and Kitso  
Pelmo.**

**Tashi Delek!**

**Thank you!**