

# Remarks by External Affairs Minister, Dr. S Jaishankar at Handing Over Ceremony and E-Inaugurations in Bhutan

April 29, 2022

**Excellency Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji;  
Foreign Secretary Aum Pema Choden;  
Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj; Ambassador Vinay Kwatra  
Colleagues from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of External Affairs;  
Kuzuzampo! Namaste!**

I am, as my delegation is, deeply honoured to be your first visitor as Bhutan opens up after a two year gap in the wake of the COVID pandemic.

Our gathering here today is also a celebration of your success in the fight against COVID-19 these past two years. This has been a difficult journey for all of us. I think, it is a testimony to our friendship that we have displayed the kind of solidarity that we have done in these times. I congratulate His Majesty who has led from the front, and the Government and the people of Bhutan, for the resilience that you have shown. It is a matter of great satisfaction as well that our bilateral cooperation has continued to flourish even during this difficult period. Given our long-standing ties and special bilateral partnership, Bhutan was the natural choice to be the first country to receive the Covishield vaccines under our Vaccine Maitri Initiative.

Our relationship, Excellency, is based on a genuine concern for each other's welfare and interests. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has often emphasized that Bhutan being a close friend and a privileged neighbour, the friendly people of Bhutan enjoy a special place in the hearts and minds of Indians. This relationship, rooted in history and yet forward looking, always delivers!

I am happy that our traditional relations have grown in new sectors since the Prime Minister's visit in 2019, in keeping with the wishes and aspirations of the Bhutanese people.

In this vein, financial connectivity has touched new heights through the launch of the RuPay card and the BHIM app; our two countries are collaborating closely on STEM through regular placement of Bhutanese youth in our IITs; we have successfully linked up the Start-Up systems of our two countries via structured workshops; through the National Knowledge Network & the Druk-REN connection and the e-Library project, we have opened up new vistas of education and knowledge sharing between our two countries. I am also pleased to share that the INDIA BHUTAN-SAT is due to launch into space shortly.

Today, excellencies, dear friends, it gives me particular pleasure to join you excellency in inauguration of three projects and dedicate these to the people of Bhutan. It is heartening to know that these were completed within these last two years, despite the logistical challenges posed by the COVID pandemic. India's development cooperation paradigm is unique, prompted as much by economic impulse as by moral principles and emotional bonds.

It is also my honour to handover the 12th consignment of medical supplies to Bhutan, as a gift from the Government and people of India to the Government and people of Bhutan. We will continue to stand resolutely by your side through a post COVID sustainable recovery which is your current focus.

It promises today, to be a very busy and almost an action-packed day. I was honoured to have an audience with His

Majesty The Fourth Druk Gyalpo earlier today. I now look forward to my audience with His Majesty The King of Bhutan, as I do to my call-on on the Prime Minister and excellency, my meeting with you. I am confident that these meetings will be fruitful and outcome oriented, leading to further strengthening of our bilateral relations.

I also take this opportunity to thank His Majesty, His Excellency The Prime Minister, Excellency The Foreign Minister and the people of Bhutan for being such excellent hosts. I am deeply touched by the gesture of hosting me and my delegation, and for the very warm and gracious hospitality that has accompanied us all along.

All visits to Thimphu and to Bhutan are always memorable, but, I think this one has a very special sense. I will return with a great sense of satisfaction that our partnership is as solid as it is special, that it always delivers results, especially in face of daunting challenges as we have experienced in the last two years and above all it responds to the wishes, aspirations and priorities of the people of Bhutan.

**Tashi Delek! Thank you!**