

**Embassy of India, Thimphu  
Press Release**

**Subject: Digital Connectivity for Bhutan through India's National Knowledge Network**

Indias National Knowledge Network is a multi-gigabit national research and education network which provides a unified high-speed network backbone for educational and research institutions. The network is managed by the National Informatics Centre. By facilitating the flow of information and knowledge at a speed of multiple gigabits per second, the network addresses the critical issue of access to quality digital content for students and researchers. More than 1711 institutes and 50 million students in India are connected to the National Knowledge Network. The network also connects its users to global research and education networks such as SingAREN (Singapore), NORUnet (Nordic countries), Internet2 (USA), *GEANT (Europe)*, *TIEN4*, and *Asi@connect*.

**In keeping with the request made by the Royal Government of Bhutan, Bhutan's Druk Research and Education Network, which is connected to Indias National Knowledge Network, will be provided increased internet bandwidth from 1 GBPS to 5 GBPS.** The additional bandwidth complements Digital Drukyl, the Royal Government of Bhutan flagship program under the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, and is over and above the funding of Nu 1.98 billion given to the Digital Drukyl Program.

The benefits of additional bandwidth for Bhutanese institutions are multifarious. The connectivity link supports Bhutan's efforts at providing effective **distance education by enabling virtual classrooms**. It equips Bhutan hospitals to provide **telemedicine services** through remote diagnosis and treatment of patients. Additional bandwidth will **increase access of Bhutanese youth to global research and educational content** and have a direct positive impact on their educational journeys. Critically, the link connects Bhutanese institutions to academicians and scholars beyond its borders. It also provides a level of **internet redundancy** to the educational and research community in Bhutan in case of failure of commercial internet. Benefiting more than 10,000 Bhutanese citizens and 85 educational institutions and hospitals at present, the additional bandwidth will connect more than 600 schools in Bhutan and 38 higher educational institutions to high-speed and secure internet through the National Knowledge Network.

The peering arrangement between Indias National Knowledge Network and Bhutan DRUK Research and Education Network for a 1 GBPS link was launched during Prime Minister Modis State Visit to Bhutan in August 2019. Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj stated Digital connectivity is a key component of smart societies and economies. It is a crucial tool in the context of Covid-19 response- enabling remote learning, remote working, and e-medicine. I am certain the additional connectivity through the National Knowledge Network, delivered per the wishes and priorities of the Royal Government, will help bridge the digital divide and provide the youth of Bhutan with myriad opportunities. **As Bhutan's foremost development partner, India is proud to deliver on high speed and dependable internet connectivity for Bhutan.**

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**22 June 2022**