

Government of India provides a grant of Nu./Rs 1.204 billion

Press Release : Government of India provides a grant of Nu./Rs 1.204 billion towards key development projects in Bhutan

Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj this week handed a cheque of Nu. 1.204 billion to Dr. Tandi Dorji, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Bhutan, for the smooth functioning of various development projects in Bhutan. These projects are spread over diverse sectors inter alia Health, Education, Culture, Cottage and Small Industry Development, Livestock Enterprise Development and Infrastructure. This grant is part of the Project Tied Assistance (PTA) committed by the Government of India to the Royal Government of Bhutan under the 12th Five Year Plan.

A major part of this grant amounting to Nu. 667.88 million will be spent on improving the quality and access to education for the children

living in the remote parts of Bhutan under the "Existing Central Schools" project. This project strives to enhance the facilities in various central schools and aims to provide economies of scale in terms of resource allocation. It is being implemented by various Dzongkhags and Thromdes across Bhutan.

Government of India will also be providing funds to the tune of Nu. 149.49 million under this grant towards the "Procurement of Medical Equipment for JDWNRH". The money would be utilised to purchase and upgrade medical equipment for the hospital for improved service delivery, reduced referral cost, speedy diagnosis and treatment.

For accelerating the

growth of cottage and small scale industries in Bhutan, a dedicated market place has been set up at Changzamtog, Thimphu and a common service centre is being developed. Funds have been earmarked in this grant for the renovation of the market place and procurement of necessary equipment. For development of Livestock Enterprise in Bhutan, funds have been allocated to improve livestock breeds, facilitate access to markets and introducing new livestock production technologies.

Major infrastructure projects such as "Reinforcement of Bridges on Samtse - Tashichhoeling Road and Improvement of Jamtsholing Road" would get funding under this grant amount.

Further, money will also be spent on the development of infrastructure in the College of Language & Cultural Studies - Trongsa, College of Natural Resources - Punakha and the Samtse College of Education.

Funds have also been earmarked for the preservation and restoration of Lingzhi Dzong and Sanchen Monastery. These works would include creation of sanitation, water and electricity supply facilities for the improving the living conditions of the monasteries.

For the 12th Five Year Plan of Bhutan, Government of India has committed a financial support of Nu./Rs. 45 billion comprising Nu./Rs. 28 billion of Project Tied Assistance, Nu./Rs. 8.5 billion

of assistance towards High Impact Community Development Projects and Nu./Rs. 8.5 billion of Program Grant assistance. Since the start of the 12th plan, India has released Nu./Rs. 22.05 billion till date, which is 49% of the total commitment. To mitigate the effects of COVID - 19 pandemic, Government of India has provided early releases of Nu./Rs. 5.01 billion from the committed development assistance since March 2020.

The people and the Government of India stand resolutely committed to the long term well-being and prosperity of the people and the Royal Government of Bhutan.

World Consumer Rights Day- Tackling Plastic Pollution

The "World Consumer Rights Day" is observed on 15th March every year coordinated by Consumers International and it takes place to highlight the importance of consumer protection and empowerment. This year, the Consumers International has proclaimed the theme for World Consumer Rights Day 2021 as "Tackling Plastic Pollution". The global consumer organizations intend to highlight the role of consumers and consumer advocacy in tackling plastic pollution and demonstrate the consumers everywhere demand change for our environment and health. With this theme, the consumer organisations around the world are calling the member nations and organisations for global change to tackle plastic pollution.

The celebration of day with this theme intends to create awareness on the harmful impact of plastic consumption by the consumers on the environment and health of the consum-

ers. Plastic is a highly useful material in our everyday life but our consumption and production of plastics, especially single-use plastics, have become unsustainable. This is impacting our ecosystems, affecting our environment due to pollution, and threatening the health of the consumers.

The Consumer Protection Act of Bhutan 2012 guarantees health and safety of the consumers; however, they are also given the responsibility to be mindful of their consumption and its impact on the environment and their health. The Consumers' right to safety comes along with the responsibility to consider the impact of their consumption patterns on the environment to maintain the ecological balance and ensure their safety.

Therefore, this year's World Consumer Rights Day intends to create general awareness on the harmful impact of consumptions of plastic on the environ-

ment and health and intends to raise awareness and encourage consumers to adopt and promote more sustainable practices based on 7Rs: Rethink, Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Repair and Replace. By observing the day, the consumers are advised and encouraged to re-evaluate their consumption habits to minimise plastic use, refuse unnecessary

plastic where possible and demand more sustainable alternatives from businesses, reduce the amount of plastic they purchase and dispose of, extend the lifetime of plastic products by reusing them, dispose of plastic waste appropriately by following local recycling guidelines, repair items and appliances where possible, and replace plastic products or packaging with

more sustainable alternatives.

With the rights comes responsibility, let's exercise our rights to safety and responsibility to ensure safety. Let's protect ourselves and others, and let's all use plastic responsibly and tackle plastic pollution.

