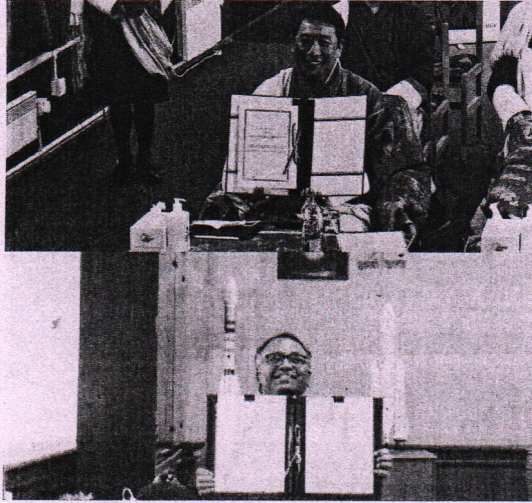


Bhutan and India sign joint satellite Implementing Arrangement



► The agreement was signed virtually

Yangyel Lhaden

The Ministry of Information and Communications (MoIC) and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) signed Implementing Arrangement (IA) to jointly develop a small satellite for Bhutan on September 24.

The agreement was signed virtually by Department of Information Technology and Telecom (DITT), Jigme Tenzing, and Scientific Secretary of ISRO, R Umamaheshwaram.

MoIC Secretary Phuntsho Tobgay, Officiating Foreign Secretary Pema Choden, and other officials of the two ministries, Bhutan's Ambassador to India Major General Vetsop Namgyel, Indian Ambassador to Bhutan Ruchira Kamboj and senior officials from India's external affairs ministry attended the event through video conference.

Following the agreement, the DITT and ISRO will develop a joint satellite to be launched sometime towards the end of this year.

This is in line with the MoU signed on November 19 last year between the two countries on Collaboration in Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj said that for the second phase Bhutanese engineers would travel to India in October.

In the first phase of the project, a team of three engineers from DITT and one from the College of Science and Technology attended a two months course with ISRO in Bangalore and developed a prototype of secondary payload.

Ruchira Kamboj said that the agreement captured the spirits of friendship enjoyed by India and Bhutan, and implementing arrangement significantly reflected upon resolving opening new chapters of cooperation between the two nations.

She said that India's space programme was not just a national priority but a vital instrument of national development of global cooperation. "We are indeed honoured to share our learnings, and experience striving for excellence with Bhutan." Capacity building, knowledge sharing and technical training are also in heart of this project."

While the agreement was formally signed last week, R Umamaheshwaram said that the planned activities under IA were being implemented without hindrance despite the pandemic. "I am fortunate to be part of this project since the beginning and I am extremely delighted by the enthusiasm shown by Bhutanese engineers."

He said that in ISRO Bhutanese engineers would continue to learn assembly, interaction, and testing of satellite.

MoIC Minister Karma Donnen Wangdi said that the Royal vision of His Majesty The King was to harness space technology and its applications for the benefit of the country and to use space-related activities to create a greater sense of interest and passion in students for science, technology and innovation to help elevate Bhutan's space ambitions to great heights.

