

Embassy of India  
Thimphu  
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**Press Release: Visit of Bhutanese space engineers for training at ISRO, India for joint development of a Small Satellite for Bhutan**



During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Bhutan in August 2019, the Prime Ministers of India and Bhutan agreed to collaborate on the **joint development of a small satellite for Bhutan**. A Joint Working Group (JWG) was formed to implement the project and other related activities, including developing a geo-portal system for Bhutan for natural resources and disaster management, using remote sensing and geo-spatial data. This project is in line with the vision of His Majesty The King of Bhutan to harness space technology and its applications for the benefit of the country and its people.

2. In a recent virtual meeting between the two Prime Ministers on 20 November 2020, Prime Minister Modi had announced that the small satellite for Bhutan will be launched in 2021 and that the Indian side will extend capacity building to Bhutanese engineers for this purpose.

3. Taking this proposal forward, a team of **four Bhutanese space engineers** from the Department of Information Technology and Telecom, under the Ministry of Information and Communications of Bhutan, are travelling to India today in order to undergo the first phase of training at the UR Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), Indian Space

Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru, India from 28 December 2020 to 25 February 2021. Phase-I of the training will involve various theoretical and technical aspects as well as visits to laboratories and test facilities. Subsequently, the Bhutanese team will work with ISRO to formulate the second phase of training, which will involve activities towards developing the small satellite for Bhutan, INS-2B.

4. The Government of India has been working closely with the Royal Government of Bhutan in the area of space cooperation. On 17 August 2019, Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Bhutan Dr. Lotay Tshering had jointly inaugurated the Ground Earth Station of the South Asia Satellite (SAS) in Thimphu, which was constructed with the support of ISRO. The SAS was launched by India in 2017 as a gift to the countries in the South Asia region, including Bhutan. Recognizing the positive impact that the SAS would have on the socio-economic development of Bhutan in areas such as communication and disaster management, Prime Minister Modi had offered increased bandwidth on an additional transponder as per Bhutan's requirements, as a gift to the people of Bhutan.

5. As a close friend and partner, India accords high priority to its bilateral relations with Bhutan under the Government of India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy. Cooperation in new frontiers such as space technology has been given an impetus by the leadership of the countries and will be bolstered further through the joint development of the small satellite for Bhutan.

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