

**Press Release: Provision of COVID-19 RT-PCR Test Kits to Bhutan**

In keeping with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance that India would stand by its close friend and neighbour, Bhutan, in fighting the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, a consignment of **COVID-19 RT-PCR test kits for 50,000 tests** was delivered at Phuentsholing, today through Consul General Prashant Das to Director General Dr. Pandup Tshering, Ministry of Health, Royal Government of Bhutan. This is the 10<sup>th</sup> consignment of medical supplies handed over by the Government of India to the Royal Government of Bhutan since March 2020. The timely delivery of these RT-PCR test kits is meant to assist Bhutan's Ministry of Health in carrying out essential testing during the ongoing lockdown in the country.

2. With the outbreak of COVID-19, India acted quickly in responding to and addressing the challenges in the region. As a close friend and neighbour, India has accorded utmost priority to the requirements of Bhutan. Since March 2020, the Government of India has delivered ten consignments of essential medicines (including Paracetamol, Cetrizine, Hydroxychloroquine) and medical equipment (including PPE kits, N95 masks, RT-PCR test kits, portable digital x-ray machine) to Bhutan. India is also collaborating with Bhutan for conducting Phase-III clinical trials of the COVID-19 vaccine candidates.

3. India's 'gesture' to continue delivery of essential medical supplies is a reflection of the special bonds of trust and understanding between India and Bhutan that have existed over decades. Going forward, India will continue to extend all possible support to Bhutan to minimize the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj stated: "Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with Bhutan. India will always be a reliable partner and dependable friend."

