

# Celebration of 5th Ayurveda Day in Bhutan

## HEALTH

By Karma Choden

in Thimphu

A special webinar aimed at sharing knowledge about Ayurveda and its utility as a system of traditional medicine was hosted by the Embassy of India in Thimphu as part of the observation of Ayurveda Day. The Ayurveda Day was first recognized in 2016 and is celebrated each year on 13 November.

The press release from the Embassy of India in Thimphu states, "The objective of observing Ayurveda Day is to focus on the strength of Ayurveda and its unique treatment principles, to tap into the potential of Ayurveda to contribute towards National Health Policy and National Health programmes as well as to promote Ayurvedic principles of healing in society. Thus, Ayurveda Day is more an occasion of re-dedication to the profession and to society, than one of festivities or celebrations."



Speaking of the day, Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi said, "Ayurveda is just not an alternative but a key basis of country's health."

The Ambassador of India in Bhutan, Ruchira Kamboj said of the Ayurveda Day, "Ayurveda literally means the knowledge of life. It originated in India more than 3000 years ago. Ayurveda is based

on evidence. According to Ayurveda, disease is due to an imbalance in the body, mind, consciousness and the environment. Ayurvedic treatment therefore aims at nullifying or minimizing the causes of the imbalance through life style intervention and natural therapies."

"Ayurveda, the original health care tradition of hu-

manity is not just a medical system but a manifestation of our symbiotic relationship with nature. It is a well-documented system of health care, wherein prevention of disease and promotion of health are both given due consideration," the Indian Embassy press release further read.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugu-

rated two Ayurveda institutions in India - the institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Jamnagar and the National Institute of Ayurveda (NA), Jaipur via video conferencing on Ayurveda Day. Both the institutes are premier institutions of Ayurveda in the country.

## Health Minister: follow health protocol to prevent second wave

## HEALTH

By Tenzin Lhamo

in Thimphu

Health Minister Dechen Wangmo said that if people do not obey or follow health protocols strictly, there is a high chance of getting a second wave of Covid-19 cases in Bhutan. The statement comes after Spain saw its worst week of Covid-19 cases since April.

Her Excellency said that the primary concern of the ministry was the noncompliance of the general public in terms of avoiding large gatherings and non-emergency travel and wearing masks. These, she said, greatly in-

crease the chances of a rise of infections. Many people feel that the situation is normalizing and the risk of infection is low. This is far from ground reality. The recent upsurge in cases in Europe have been because of a growing sense of safety and security that led to complacencies in following safety protocols.

"Whether we can stop a second wave lies in the public hand. If the public can follow the ministry's health protocols properly then I am sure nothing can affect us, even a second, third or fourth wave," said Lyonpo Dechen.

There is concern that the wearing of facemasks is seen by the public as an inconvenience they have to deal with only where supervised restrictions are in place. The ministry urged people again

to wear masks whenever they go out and to see it as the fundamental duty for the safety of the whole kingdom that it is.

The ministry also said that the quality of the material masks are made of can have an effect on how effective they are. Thinner materials do not provide as much protection as thicker ones do. It also matters how you wear the mask, and it must be ensured that the nose and mouth are fully covered.

There has been a recent resurgence of the virus in Europe, with Spain being worst affected with both new cases and deaths on the rise. This has been a cause for concern to the rest of the world amid relaxing travel restrictions and Bhutan's health professionals are also wary. While

we still have the strictest protocols in place, there is never a certainty that new cases will not enter Bhutan

Her Excellency highlighted some of the dangers that a country as small as Bhutan face. Our health facilities are not as advanced as other countries of the world and in the case of deaths from the virus, panic can spread very fast within such a small population. That is why the Bhutanese should be, more than most, aware of their responsibilities and always adhere to safety and preventive measures.

The responsibilities of the successful management of the pandemic is twofold. The government's responsibility is to make testing readily available and accessible and provide treatment for those

infected. The general public's responsibility, which is far more important, is to go and visit the flu clinic if symptoms manifest and get tested.

"If you do not undertake measures as a personal responsibility, it is impossible for the Health Ministry to supervise every individual. And if the public sees a lack of supervision as permission, we face the very real danger of an outbreak. The government and the public must work hand in hand to ensure the nation's safety," the Lyonpo said.

The fight so far has been successful and there has not been a single Covid-19 related death. Outbreaks in areas like Phuentsholing and Gelephu have also been contained effectively.