



# Master plan for 500-bed multispecialty hospital complete

**Lhakpa Tshering**

A detailed conceptual design and master plan for a 500-bedded world-class multi-disciplinary super-specialty hospital (MDSSH) for tertiary care has been completed and submitted to the Government of India (GoI) for experts' final comments and endorsement.

A schematic master plan was sent to Hospital Services Consultancy Corporation Limited (HSCC) in India to understand the requirement of clients brief as per the end-users following discussions with the core team of medical specialists from Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospital (JDWRH) and the Ministry of Health (MoH).

Health Minister Dasho Dechen Wangmo at the recent meet-the-press said that the first draft of a schematic drawing has been shared in consultation with the external consultant and submitted

to the GoI.

"We are waiting for feedback from the technical team of the GoI and then it will move forward," she said.

Following the visits of two experts' teams from India in August 2019 and March 2020 respectively, MoH held several meetings including video conferences with the team from HSCC for preparing the final detailed project report.

Lyonpo added that the preparations have gone through extensive planning to ensure all health services including human resources and equipment right till the final phase of inauguration.

"We just don't want the infrastructure to come first and services to come later," Lyonpo said, adding that the ministry has also completed the service mapping on what types of services will come up in the hospital.

She further said that they are already preparing for human resources.

"We have already sent people for super-specialist training in Bangkok," Lyonpo said. "The intake at KGUMS has also significantly increased compared to the previous years."

The multi-disciplinary hospital with the funding support from GoI is aimed at decongestion and providing specialized health care, and institutionalizing a robust referral system while also improving the tertiary health services in the country.

The hospital will benefit the patients facing severe hardships in travelling to a different country.

"We all know when people from the most remote part of Bhutan have to go to Calcutta how overwhelming it is," she said, adding this will bring a tremendous difference in the life of every Bhutanese.

The first of its kind hospital that is coming up between the old block of Jigme Dorji Wangchuck National Referral Hospi-

tal (JDWRH) and the Faculty of Nursing and Public Health (FNPH) will be the largest hospital in the country attached to the Khesar Gyalpo University of Medical Sciences of Bhutan (KGUMS).

Besides, it will also significantly help doctors to pursue post-graduate studies in the country. Lyonpo said that the hospital will ease up many things in the health sector.

Once complete, this Nu 5.6-billion facility is expected to meet the growing healthcare needs, and to reduce overseas referrals thus becoming a health destination in the country.

What is so unique about this hospital is that the people will experience a world-class treatment that too in traditional Bhutanese architecture style.

The two times larger than the old hospital will comprise four blocks – outpatient department (OPD), in-patient department, cancer center and treatment, and national

mental health services.

The 240-bed in-patient center including 80 cabins, 36 critical care units (ICU), 20 high dependency units (HDUs), 50 medical wards or isolation beds, and 54 surgical wards will cater the services of in-patient dialysis, and therapeutic apheresis, among others.

To ensure cancer sufferers receive the very best care within the country, the 110-bed cancer center and treatment will provide phlebotomy service, radio-diagnostics, and speech and swallowing rehabilitation services.

Other facilities include daycare chemotherapy services, and Palliative care services, transplant occupational therapy (OT), and transplant services, among many others.

The 60-bed national mental health services will be equipped with children and family wards, psychiatric wards, detoxification, and treatment ward, and cabins to provide mental health-related services.

## Formal market access for Bhutan's agri-exports to India

**Sonam Penjor**

Following extensive deliberations, including the virtual bilateral trade meeting held on 2 July, the Government of India (GoI) has decided to allow the import of seven fresh vegetables from Bhutan.

The seven fresh vegetables, includes chilli, beans, cabbage, cauliflower, carrot, peas, and soyabean from Bhutan into India through the plant quarantine station at Jaigaon on the India-Bhutan border with effect from 14 July.

According to a press release from the Indian Embassy in Thimphu, the initiative is an interim arrangement and an exceptional measure made only for Bhutan, till the necessary notifications are finalized and published as per due procedure by the GoI.

"This move to grant formal market access for these seven agri-exports, which are currently in season, is aimed at significantly easing the difficulties faced by Bhutanese farmers and traders," the press release stated.

Another press release from the Department of Trade in Ministry of Economic Affairs states: "The interim arrangement will be formalized once the necessary notifications are finalized and published as per due procedure by the GoI. This arrangement is expected to facilitate unhindered exports of these vegetables to Indian markets."

The decision is in keeping with the exceptionally close and friendly ties that India shares with Bhutan including mutually beneficial trade relations. "It may be recalled that, in a similar move in Octo-

ber last year, the GoI had granted formal market access for five agri-exports of arecanut, mandarin, apple, potato, and ginger from Bhutan and had also opened the first-ever plant quarantine office on the India-Bhutan border at Jaigaon for facilitating import of agricultural commodities from Bhutan into India."

Additionally, at Bhutan's request, the GoI had lifted the import restriction on potato only for Bhutan, up to 30 June 2022, thereby alleviating the difficulties faced by Bhutanese traders in exporting potato to India. This decision is of immense significance given that potato is Bhutan's most important cash crop and India is the top export destination for Bhutan's potato exports.

It states that the developments are concerted

efforts towards gradually transitioning the trade between India and Bhutan to the formal economy. The Indian side is committed to addressing the various hurdles and challenges that farmers and traders on both sides of the border face in the process of shifting to the formal sector.

The press release further states that India has been extending the fullest cooperation and support to Bhutan in terms of ensuring uninterrupted

movement of commodities through the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Our close trade and economic ties are a reflection of the special bonds of trust and understanding between India and Bhutan that have existed over decades and the Government and the people of India stand resolutely committed to the long term well-being and prosperity of the Government and the people of Bhutan," it states.

### Corrigendum

Please refer to our story "Report recommends improving compliance with Covid-19 safety measures in PLing" published on 11 July issue.

The fifth paragraph has been removed from the story since the inspection specifically did not conclude that transmission likely occurred via aerosols from people living at the other side of the border as was reflected in the story.

**Error is highly regretted**

**Editor**