



GoI provides grant of Nu 759 M under Project Tied Assistance

By **Puran Gurung**
Thimphu

For the smooth implementation of various key development projects in the country including education, infrastructure development, and agriculture and livestock enterprise development the Government of India (GoI) releases a grant of Nu 759 million.

The Government of India has released an amount of Nu 759 million to the Royal Government of Bhutan for the smooth implementation of various development projects in Bhutan. These projects are spread over diverse sectors inter alia Education, Infrastructure Development, Agriculture and Livestock Enterprise Development.

This grant has been made under the Project Tied Assistance (PTA) committed by the Government of India to the Royal Government of Bhutan for the 12th Five

Year Plan of Bhutan.

The people and the Government of India stand resolutely committed to the long term well-being and prosperity of the people and the Royal Government of Bhutan, states the press release from Embassy of India, Bhutan.

Out of this grant amount, Nu 188 million has been earmarked for the Construction of a Halhalay Dorokha Namchukhola Road. The 40 Km road in Samtse will reduce the travel time between Halhalay and Namchukhola. Once blacktopping and resurfacing works are completed by June 2022, this road will provide for continuous year-round traffic movement and help improve regional connectivity.

India is also supporting Bhutan's Education Flagship Program which is being implemented in all 20 Dzongkhags and 4 Thromdes of Bhutan. This project aims to enhance ICT skills of students, supply digital devices to schools and aug-

ment trainers' competencies in computer coding. An amount of Nu 280 million has been released for this program.

An amount of Nu 170 million will be dedicated to the Improvement of Puili Road in Dewathang. Under this project, road widening and pavement works are being undertaken for a stretch of 43 Kms in Samdrupjongkhar. Once completed, this road project will provide smooth and safe movement for all types of vehicular traffic.

For the Development of Livestock enterprise in all Dzongkhags of Bhutan, Nu 121.028 million is being released under the grant. This project is undertaking enterprise development in the sectors of Dairy, Egg, Broiler, Pork, Trout, Warm Water Fishery, Chevron Goat and Forage Production. The Project is being implemented by the Department of Livestock and is being monitored at Dzongkhag level by Regional Livestock Development Centres. This



Project will contribute to greater food, nutrition and livelihood security of the Bhutanese people and help in poverty reduction, creation of employment and income generation opportunities.

For the 12th Five Year Plan of Bhutan, Government of India has committed a financial support of Nu 45 billion comprising Nu 28 billion of Project Tied Assis-

tance, Nu 8.5 billion of assistance towards High Impact Community Development Projects and Nu 8.5 billion of Program Grant assistance.

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Bhutan under threat of contamination of domestic wastewater

By **Sangay Choden**
Thimphu

Domestic wastewater in Bhutan has increased in recent years with the increase in population growth and urbanization, and Bhutan should concentrate on vehicle wash wastewater (VWW) treatment and monitoring of contaminant levels, says a report in Bhutan Ecological Society.

Domestic wastewater in Bhutan has increased in recent years with the increase in population growth and urbanization.

The issue of wastewater increases as a result of increased economic activities, urbanization, and population density. The report stated that depending on the sources of the water, wastewater may contain organic

waste, pathogens, nutrients, pesticides, heavy metals, and other chemicals related to pharmaceuticals, personal care products, industrial, and household products. The threat to human and ecological health increases with the open disposal of untreated wastewater into the environment.

According to the report, there are two main categories of wastewater that is black water and greywater. The wastewater from the kitchen and laundry activities, as well as bathroom effluents, are referred to as greywater while the flush water, urine, feces, and toilet paper are referred to as black water. Additionally, the report stated that Industrial Wastewater is a major source of pollution in the environment and surface water bodies, negatively impacting ecosystems and human health.

According to the report, only Thimphu has an Effluent Treatment Plant (ETP) for separating oil and grease and sludge, which also remains frequently inoperative, allowing untreated VWW to enter the nearby water bodies.

Moreover, only a few vehicle wash centers are environmentally friendly washing facilities, including recycling and reusing approximately 80 percent of the wastewater. The report stated that Bhutan should concentrate on VWW treatment and monitoring of contaminant levels before discharging into surface water or the environment.

Another factor that increases the wastewater in Bhutan is the pulp and paper industry. It produces wastewater containing a high concentration of chemicals. According to the report, there

are 136 sawmills in the country including 16 mobile sawmills and eight integrated wood processing units.

Nearly 70 percent of Bhutan's population is directly or indirectly dependent on subsistence agriculture which consumes 86 percent of the country's total water. Due to the rugged topography and steep-sloped land, farming is difficult in mountainous areas. The report stated that it is further hampered by the loss of topsoil and added nutrients. Sustainable Land Management (SLM) interventions include bench terracing and hedgerow plantation. These practices are adopted in Bhutan to improve soil fertility, as the terraces prevent topsoil from being washed away by rain. According to the report, Bhutan is losing more than 3 tonnes of topsoil per hectare each year due to

land degradation resulting in a loss of SLM.

The report also points that although Bhutan has a plethora of policies and regulations directing the appropriate management of water resources and wastewater, actual reports on how these policies and regulations are implemented are not maintained regularly in the form of an authentic database.

Bhutan's surface water bodies have become a point where people discharge solid waste. The wastewater is also increasing as a result of growing economic activities, industrialization, and the population. Bhutan's freshwater resources are increasingly polluted due to the pollutants present in the wastewater.