



International Solar Alliance Helps Boost Bhutanese Solar Initiatives

New Delhi, India | 17 April 2024: Continuing the momentum of collaboration between the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Royal Government of Bhutan, a high-level delegation from ISA, New Delhi, led by its Director-General, Dr Ajay Mathur, is currently visiting Bhutan to further solidify solar energy initiatives. The ongoing visit marks the signing of the Country Partnership Agreement (CPA) between the Department of Energy (DoE), the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources (MoENR), the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) and ISA.

Through this CPA, ISA will collaborate with the Department of Energy (DoE)-the focal department under the MoENR, to further implement the programmes/projects to enhance energy access and ensure energy security through solar energy interventions and diversification of energy portfolio in the country. The CPA was signed by Mr Karma Tshering, Secretary, MoENR and Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, ISA, on 15 April 2024 in the presence of the Minister for Energy and Natural Resources & other senior officials from RGoB and ISA.

Underlining the significance of the CPA signing, Dr Ajay Mathur, DG-ISA, stated, "*I am delighted to see the progress our partnership has made. This signing will further bolster our actions and facilitate the attainment of our goals. I commend the dedication of Bhutanese officials and my colleagues, whose efforts have made this partnership meaningful and fruitful.*" ISA is also working with Bhutan on developing a National Solar Energy Roadmap and provides regulatory support for developing solar tariffs, licensing and de-licensing regulations, standards, and guidelines to the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) of Bhutan.

A MoU focussing on the Solar Technology Application Resource Centre (STAR-C) initiative has been signed during the ongoing visit. ISA is collaborating with the DoE (MoENR) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) to establish the (STAR-C) at the College of Science & Technology (CST) under the Royal University of Bhutan (RUB), with funding support from the French government. This centre aims to strengthen local capacity that promotes the development and dissemination of solar energy technologies and provides technical assistance to accelerate the deployment of solar energy solutions.

As part of the visit, DG-ISA, Dr Ajay Mathur, also called on the Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Tshering Tobgay. During the meeting, the Hon'ble Prime Minister acknowledged that while hydropower is the primary source of energy in Bhutan for now, renewable energy sources such as solar will become critical in the coming years. Furthermore, the Prime Minister commended ISA for its efforts towards advancing solar energy in Bhutan.

In addition to strategic meetings, the visit also marked the inauguration of a modular solar-powered cold storage facility at the National Post Harvest Centre in Paro. This initiative, funded by ISA, underscores the Alliance's commitment to promoting sustainable agricultural practices and reducing food wastage. With a storage capacity of 5MT and a power capacity of 5-kilowatt peak, this facility represents a significant technological leap towards efficient post-harvest management in Bhutan.

"The two 5MT Solar Cold Storages established through ISA as a Pilot Project symbolises a significant step forward in our journey towards building a more resilient and sustainable future," remarked H.E. Lyonpo Gem Tshering, Hon'ble Minister of MoENR, who attended the inaugural opening ceremony on 16 April 2024. *"By minimising post-harvest losses and ensuring a steady supply of fresh produce, we not only bolster food security but also empower our farming communities to thrive in an increasingly uncertain climate."*

The partnership between Bhutan and the ISA, which began when Bhutan joined the Alliance in July 2022, continues to thrive. Bhutan has accordingly submitted an Expression of Interest (EOI) to join seven of the nine ISA programmes. Subsequently, the ISA works closely with the Department of Energy, Ministry of Energy, and Natural Resources on the EOIs. Bhutan's active engagement with various ISA programmes underscores its commitment to harnessing solar energy to enhance sustainable development.

The recent engagements and developments signify a shared vision between Bhutan and the ISA to embrace renewable energy solutions for a sustainable future. As the partnership strengthens, both parties are poised to achieve significant milestones in advancing solar energy adoption and combating climate change.

Furthermore, ISA's focus also includes conducting assessments, demonstrating innovative technologies like solar cold storage, and devising strategies for effectively scaling solar energy initiatives in Bhutan.

About the International Solar Alliance

The International Solar Alliance is an international organisation with 119 Member and Signatory countries. It works with governments to ease solar deployment and promote solar power as a sustainable transition to a carbon-neutral future. ISA's mission is to unlock US\$ 1 trillion of investments in solar by 2030 while reducing technology and its financing costs. It promotes the use of solar energy in the agriculture, health, transport, and power generation sectors. ISA Member Countries are driving change by enacting policies and regulations, sharing best practices, agreeing on common standards, and mobilising investments. Through this work, ISA has identified, designed and tested new business models for solar projects; supported governments to make their energy legislation and policies solar-friendly through Ease of Doing Solar analytics and advisory; pooled demand for solar technology from different countries; and drove down costs; improved access to finance by reducing the risks and making the sector more attractive to private investment; increased access to solar training, data and insights for solar engineers and energy policymakers. ISA is one of the first international intergovernmental organisations headquartered in India. It is partnering with multilateral development banks (MDBs), development financial institutions (DFIs), private and public sector organisations, civil society, and other international institutions to deploy cost-effective and transformational solutions through solar energy, especially in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and the Small Island Developing States (SIDS). More information at <https://isolaralliance.org/>

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Dr Ajay Mathur, Director General, International Solar Alliance in a meeting with Hon'ble Prime Minister of Bhutan, H.E. Tshering Tobgay

