

## **India-Bhutan relations**

Diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968 with the establishment of a special office of India in Thimphu. The basic framework of India-Bhutan bilateral relations is the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949 between the two countries and revised in February 2007. The Golden Jubilee of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan was celebrated in the year 2018.

India and Bhutan share a unique and time tested bilateral relationship, characterized by utmost trust, goodwill and mutual understanding. The special relationship has been sustained by a tradition of regular high level visits and dialogues between the two countries.

Government of India has consistently supported the socio-economic development of Bhutan. Hydro-power cooperation between the two countries is an example of win-win cooperation.

India has been extending economic assistance to Bhutan's socio-economic development since the early 1960s when Bhutan launched its Five Year Plans. India continues to be the principal development partner of Bhutan. For the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, India's contribution of Rs. 4500 cr. will constitute 73% of Bhutan's total external grant component. The key areas of focus of GOI's assistance include agriculture and irrigation development, ICT, health, industrial development, road transport, energy, civil aviation, urban development, human resource development, capacity building, scholarship, education and culture.

Mutually beneficial hydro-power cooperation with Bhutan forms the core of bilateral economic cooperation. For Bhutan, hydro-power development continues to be a vital catalyst for socio-economic development. The ongoing cooperation between India and Bhutan in the hydro-power sector is covered under the 2006 bilateral agreement for cooperation and its Protocol signed in 2009. Four hydro-electric projects (HEPs) totaling 2136 MW are already operational in Bhutan and are supplying electricity to India. The 720 MW Mangdechhu was commissioned in August 2019. Two HEPs namely, 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I, 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II in Inter-Governmental mode and Kholongchhu HEP (600 MWs) under the joint venture mode are under various stages of implementation. In consultation with the Ministry of Power/DoE, the implementation formalities of the 2585 MW Sankosh HEP are currently being finalized.

India is Bhutan's largest trading partner. In 2018, total bilateral trade between the two countries stood at Rs. 9227.7 crores. Major exports from India to Bhutan are mineral products, machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical equipments, base metals, vehicles, vegetable products, plastics and articles. The major items of export from Bhutan to India are electricity, ferro-silicon, portland cement, dolomite, carbides of calcium carbides of silicon, cement clinkers, timber and wood products, potatoes, cardamom and fruit products.

India is the most popular educational destination for Bhutanese students -almost 4000 Bhutanese students are enrolled in Indian Universities at any time, many of whom are also provided scholarship by Govt. of India.

There are vibrant cultural exchanges between the two countries. A number of Bhutanese pilgrims travel to holy Buddhists sites in India. Reflecting the special nature of

the relationship, the two countries share an open border with regular exchange of travelers in both directions for work, tourism, shopping, medical care etc.

### Recent visits

#### List of visits from Indian Side to Bhutan (Since January 2018)(President, Prime Minister and External Affairs Minister)

Sr. No	Visit	Date
1	External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Bhutan.	07-08 June, 2019
2	Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi paid a State Visit to Bhutan.	17-18 August 2019

#### List of visits from Bhutanese Side to India (Since January 2018) (His Majesty the King, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister)

Sr. No	Visit	Date
1	Prime Minister, Lyonchhen Tshering Tobgay visited Assam, India.	1-4 February, 2018
2	Foreign Minister, Lyonpo Damcho Dorji visited India.	20-23 February, 2018
3	His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyal Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan visited India to attend the State Funeral of the former Prime Minister of India, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee.	17 August, 2018
4	Prime Minister, Lyonchhen (Dr.) Lotay Tshering undertook his first official visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi,	27-29 December, 2018
5	Lyonchhen (Dr.) Lotay Tshering visited India to attend Swearing-in-Ceremony of PM Shri. Narendra Modi.	30 May-01 June, 2019
6	Foreign Minister, Lyonpo Dr. Tandi Dorji visited India	17-23 November 2019

#### Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Thimphu Website:  
<https://www.indembthimphu.gov.in/index.php>

Embassy of India, Thimphu Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/IndiainBhutan/>

Embassy of India, Thimphu Twitter account (India in Bhutan @Indiainbhutan)  
<https://twitter.com/indiainbhutan?lang=en>

Embassy of India, Thimphu-You tube channel (Embassy of India in Bhutan)  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC4kNze8j609kDjiXZH3anFQ>

Nehru -Wnagchuck Cultural Centre, Embassy of India, Thimphu, Facebook  
<https://www.facebook.com/NehruWangchuckCulturalCentre/>

National Portal of Bhutan  
<http://www.bhutan.gov.bt/>

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