



Monthly E-Newsletter of the Embassy of India in Thimphu

AUGUST 2020

September 3, 2020

Dear Reader,

I am delighted to present the first monthly e-newsletter of the Embassy of India in Thimphu! This newsletter will capture our activities in Bhutan, key developments in India and of course, heart-warming stories of community and companionship.

August is, of course, a special month for us as we celebrated India's 74th Independence Day. The warm messages we received from Bhutan are an indication of the strong bonds we share, not just at the political level, but also at a personal one.

The Government of India launched a slew of development initiatives in August 2020 in the areas of education, agriculture, taxation, and health, all aimed at helping India achieve self-reliance: 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat'.

We hope you enjoy reading this first edition of our monthly e-newsletter.

Tashi Delek! Jai Hind!

- *Ruchira Kamboj*, Ambassador of India to Bhutan

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BILATERAL: Covid-19 RT-PCR test kits to Bhutan



17 August 2020: The Government of India handed over the 6th consignment of medical supplies with 20,000 Covid-19 RT-PCR tests to the Royal Government of Bhutan, at Phuentsholing, to assist Bhutan in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic.

Going forward, India will continue to extend all possible support to Bhutan to minimize the health and economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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BILATERAL: Two-way movement of cargo traffic via Ahllay, Pasakha



19 August 2020: In response to a request from the Royal Government of Bhutan, the Government of India allowed both the import and export of goods via the Land Customs Station at Ahllay, Pasakha on the India-Bhutan border. This will greatly mitigate any disruption in the movement of goods between the two countries arising from the recent outbreak of Covid-19 at Phuentsholing.

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BILATERAL: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Bhutan #OnThisDay in 2019





17 August 2020: On this day in August 2019, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid his second State Visit to Bhutan.

Key outcomes of the visit were:

1. inauguration of 720 MW Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Plant;
2. release of Bhutanese stamps commemorating five decades of mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in the hydro-power sector;
3. launch of Indian-issued RuPay cards in Bhutan;
4. inauguration of the Ground Earth Station of ISRO's South Asia Satellite in Thimphu;
5. inauguration of the inter-connection between India's National Knowledge Network and Bhutan's Druk Research and Education Network;
6. signing of 10 bilateral MoUs including four MoUs on enhancement of Academic Exchanges and STEM cooperation;
7. enhancement of currency swap limit under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework;
8. enhancement of subsidised LPG to 1000 MT per month;
9. extension in loan of the statue of the revered Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal;
10. increase in scholarships at Nalanda University for Bhutan.

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[BII ATFRAI](#) · India provides IIT scholarships to Bhutanese

India-Bhutan provides 11 scholarships to Bhutanese students, promoting STEM education



Srijana Gajmer: IIT-Kanpur



Sonam Tshering: IIT-Kanpur



Suraj Mukhia: IIT Tirupati



Sanjit Bhattarai: IIT Bombay



Raygina Lepcha: IIT Bombay



**Bhowani Shankar Nirola:
IIT Delhi**

With a focus on STEM education, agreements between the Royal University of Bhutan and premier Indian institutes, viz. the Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur, IIT-Delhi, and IIT-Bombay were signed during Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's visit to Bhutan in August 2019.

As a follow up to this, two Bhutanese students, Ms. Srijana Gajmer and Mr. Sonam Tshering, have recently been selected to pursue an M.Tech. Engineering degree at the prestigious IIT-Kanpur under the newly instituted India-Bhutan Friendship Scholarship.

Additionally, the Government of India has offered Nehru-Wangchuck scholarships for Bhutanese Post Graduate students in IITs Bombay and Delhi in the current financial year. Ms. Raygina Lepcha and Mr. Sanjit Bhattarai have been selected to pursue PG studies at IIT Bombay. Mr. Bhowani Shankar Nirola has been selected to study at IIT Delhi. Further, one more student, Mr. Suraj Mukhia, has been accepted by IIT Tirupati, another first for the Bhutan-India friendship.

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BILATERAL: Two Bhutanese win second position in Global #MyLifeMyYoga competition



Chainga Dorji



Phuntsho Dema

01 August 2020: Ms. Phuntsho Dema and Mr. Chainga Dorji, avid yoga practitioners from Bhutan, came second in the global 'My Life My Yoga' online video blogging competition organised by the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy), India.

Ms. Phuntsho Dema said, "This recognition will set the foundation to pursue my future career as a yoga professional," while recalling the Yoga Instructors' course she had undertaken at the Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana University near Mysore.

Mr. Chainga Dorji said, "I was surprised that I have won and I want to say thanks to the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi ji, Ministry of AYUSH and ICCR for organizing this yoga competition. The awareness of yoga carried out by the Culture Centre of the Embassy of India in Thimphu is making a positive impact in Bhutan."

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INDIA FOCUS: PM Modi addresses the Nation on 74th Independence Day: #AatmaNirbharBharat



15 August 2020: Addressing the nation on the occasion of India's 74th Independence Day from the ramparts of the Red Fort in New Delhi, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi emphasized the theme of Aatma Nirbhar Bharat or Self-Reliant India. It is the need of the hour for India to increase its contribution to the world economy and the world's welfare.

PM Modi spoke of achieving self-reliance in the areas of agriculture, space, energy, health infrastructure, and skills. As an example, he said that after having built up our capacities in a short span, India is now producing medical equipment such as ventilators and personal protection equipment kits to the extent that India is now supplying these items to other countries. This was possible only because India set out on a path to achieve self-sufficiency.

PM Modi urged Indians everywhere to take pride in local products by going 'vocal for Local'.

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INDIA FOCUS: Independence Day Greetings from Bhutan



Narendra Modi
[@narendramodi](#)

Thank you, Lyonchhen [@PMBhutan](#) for your good wishes and your prayers! We also thank Their Majesties and the Bhutanese people for the unique and time tested friendship between India and Bhutan.



PM Bhutan [@PMBhutan](#) · Aug 15

On behalf of the people of Bhutan, I would like to convey the warmest wishes to the people and government of India on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day.

15 August 2020: On the occasion of India's 74th Independence Day, messages of greetings were received from all quarters of Bhutan from Their Majesties The Druk Gyalpos, Prime Minister Lyonchhen (Dr.) Lotay Tshering, Foreign Minister Lyonpo (Dr.) Tandi Dorji, Health Minister Lyonpo Dechen Wangmo, key institutions in the Royal Government of Bhutan, political parties, bi-national hydro-power project authorities, prominent businesses, media houses, and the civil society, a reflection of our close and friendly relations, underpinned by warm people-to-people ties.

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INDIA FOCUS: The Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir: #OneYearOfDevelopment



05 August 2020: On this day in August 2019, the Parliament of India took the historic decision to reorganise the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir into the two new Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. In this one year, the Government of India has undertaken a number of developmental initiatives to bring back the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir into the nation's mainstream, ranging from governance, education, employment generation, sports, electrification of households, road and rail connectivity, economic stimulus, and boosting the production of Kashmiri apples and saffron.

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INDIA FOCUS: India introduces the new National Education Policy #NEP2020



07 August 2020: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi spoke on the new National Education Policy, which was approved by the Union Cabinet on 29 July 2020. The new National Education Policy will bring transformational reforms in both school and higher education sectors.

Under the NEP 2020, the highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary schools by 2025. The regulatory system of higher education will be transformed, to make Indian higher education institutes a hub of knowledge and creativity.

An Academic Bank of Credit would digitally store academic credits earned from various recognized higher education institutes, so that degrees can be awarded taking credits earned into account. Vocational education will be integrated into all school and higher education institutions in a phased manner over the next decade.

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INDIA FOCUS: PM Modi launches Agri-Infra Fund: #AatmaNirbharKrishi

The infographic is titled "PM Modi Launches Agriculture Infrastructure Fund" and is set against a background of a green field with a white fence. It features a portrait of PM Narendra Modi at the top right. The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India, is mentioned at the top left. The infographic lists five key features of the fund, each accompanied by an icon: 1. Debt financing facility for post-harvest management infrastructure and community farming assets. 2. Corpus of ₹1 lakh crore for FPOs, SHGs, PACS*, Startups, Agri-entrepreneurs, for other farm processing-based activities. 3. Interest subvention of 3% per annum up to ₹2 crore for a max. period of 7 years. 4. Moratorium for repayment from 6 months up to 2 yrs. 5. Scheme to be implemented from August 2020. At the bottom, it includes the hashtag #AatmaNirbharKrishi, a note about Primary Agri Credit Societies, and the date 8 August, 2020. There are also illustrations of a blue tractor, a green tractor, and a woman carrying a basket.

कृषि एवं किसान कल्याण मंत्रालय
MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

PM Modi Launches
Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

To provide debt financing facility for post-harvest management Infrastructure & community farming assets

Corpus of ₹1 lakh crore for FPOs, SHGs, PACS*, Startups, Agri-entrepreneurs, for other farm processing-based activities

Interest subvention of 3% per annum up to ₹2 crore for a max. period of 7 years

Moratorium for repayment from **6 months up to 2 yrs**

Scheme to be implemented from August 2020

#AatmaNirbharKrishi *Primary Agri Credit Societies Date: 8 August, 2020

09 August 2020: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched an Agriculture Infrastructure Fund of Rs. 1 lakh crore, which will benefit farmers and help agri-entrepreneurs in building farming assets and post-harvest infrastructure, thereby promoting self-sufficiency in the agriculture sector.

This initiative is in line with the national campaign of 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' or Self-Reliant India.

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INDIA FOCUS: India celebrates National Handloom Day: #Vocal4Handmade



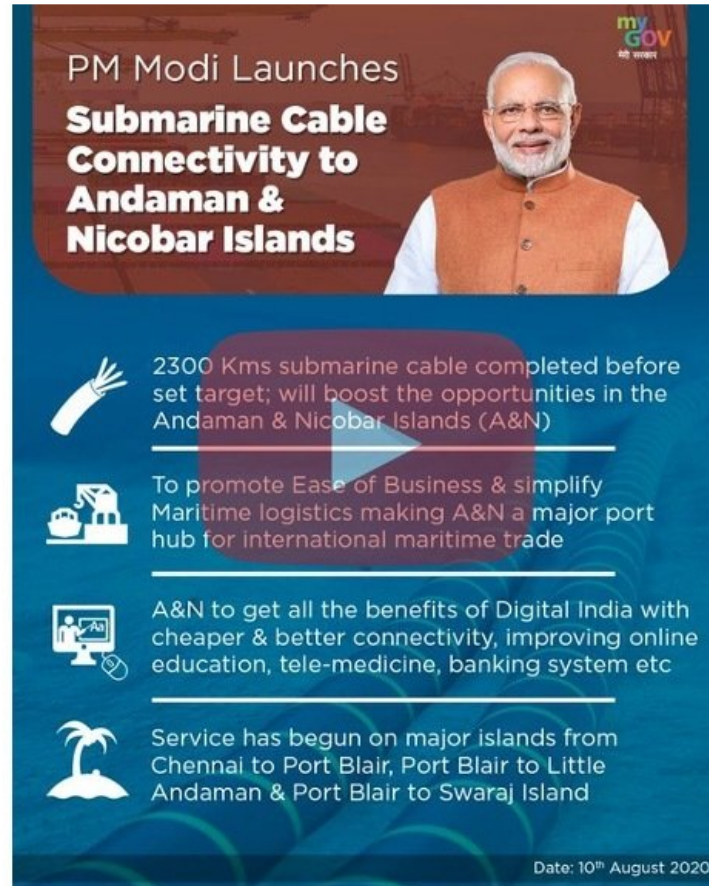
07 August 2020: Indians world-over celebrated the 6th National Handloom Day on 07 August 2020 as a tribute to India's Swadeshi Movement, which was launched on this day in 1905. This day commemorates India's rich and diverse handloom legacy and acknowledges the contribution of weavers in conserving the country's heritage. In doing so, this theme aligns with the national campaign for 'Aatma Nirbhar Bharat' or Self-Reliant India.

India's Ministry of Textiles also launched 'My Handloom Portal' as a one-stop platform for information on everything related to handloom. This portal will enable weavers and other stakeholders track applications in real-time, thereby enhancing transparency and efficiency.

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INDIA FOCUS: PM Modi launches Optical Fibre Connectivity to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands



10 August 2020: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched through video conferencing the submarine Optical Fibre Cable (OFC) connecting Chennai and Port Blair in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands. This connectivity will enable delivery of faster and more reliable mobile and landline telecom services to the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, at par with other parts of India.

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INDIA FOCUS: PM Modi launches new tax system: #HonoringTheHonest



MINISTRY OF FINANCE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Taxpayer's Charter

TRUST, TRANSPARENCY & TAX

1/2

I TRUST MY Gov

COMMITMENT TO TAXPAYERS

- To provide fair, courteous, and reasonable treatment
- Treat taxpayer as honest
- To provide mechanism for appeal and review
- To provide complete and accurate information
- To provide timely decisions
- To collect the correct amount of tax
- To respect privacy of taxpayers
- To maintain confidentiality
- To hold its authorities accountable
- To enable representative of choice
- To provide mechanism to lodge complaint
- To provide a fair & just system
- To publish service standards & report periodically
- To reduce cost of compliance

#HonoringTheHonest

Date: 13th August, 2020

13 August 2020: Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched a new tax system 'Transparent Taxation - Honouring the Honest', touching a new milestone in the ongoing process of Structural Reforms in India.

The platform has major reforms like Faceless Assessment, Faceless Appeal and Taxpayers' Charter, which reinforce the Government of India's commitment towards 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'.

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INDIA FOCUS: PM Modi Launches the National Digital Health Mission





15 August 2020: Speaking on the occasion of India's 74th Independence Day celebration, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched the National Digital Health Mission, which aims to create a national digital health ecosystem by leveraging advancements in technology for a healthier India.

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INDIA FOCUS: New National Recruitment Agency to conduct Common Eligibility Test





19 August 2020: The Union Cabinet of India approved the creation of a National Recruitment Agency (NRA), paving the way for a transformational reform in the recruitment process for central government jobs by conducting a Common Eligibility Test (CET).

This would enable candidates to appear once and apply to any or all of the respective recruitment agencies for the higher level of examination. The expected benefits include: better access to examination centres, major relief to women candidates and candidates from lower economic strata and rural areas, the CET would be available in several languages and the CET score would be valid for three years with no bar on the number of attempts, standardised testing.

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HUMAN INTEREST STORY: De-Suups Saluting the Indian Flag





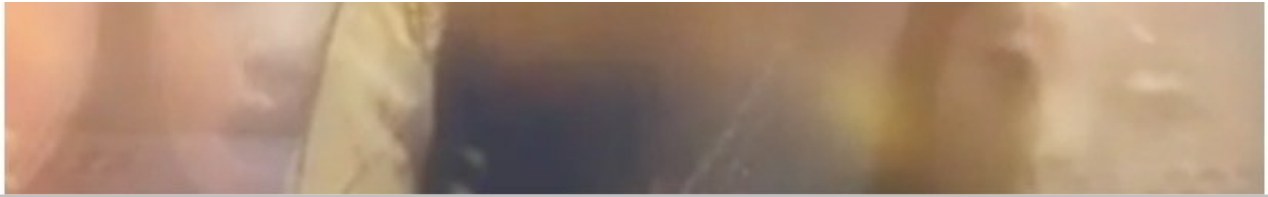
15 August 2020: In a beautiful act of solidarity, De-Suups (Bhutanese national service volunteers in orange uniform) were seen saluting the Indian national flag, while on frontline duty at the India-Bhutan border, capturing the sentiments of the warm and exceptional friendship between the two countries. The respect and dignity accorded by the De-Suups to the National Flag on 15 August 2020 was exemplary and unparalleled, not least when Bhutan has been in a nationwide lockdown since 11 August 2020 and combating the spectre of community transmission.

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HUMAN INTEREST STORY: Indian National Anthem sung by 5-year old Bhutanese girl





15 August 2020: A five-year old Bhutanese girl, Khenrab Y Syeldon, presented the Indian National Anthem in a beautiful, melodious manner on Independence Day 2020 to extend greetings to the people of India. She is extremely popular in Bhutan and has over 18,000 Facebook followers.

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INDIA IN BHUTAN

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