

**Embassy of India**

**Thimphu**

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**Press Release**

**Visit of Ambassador of India to Bhutan to Phuentsholing & Samtse (14-16 Sept 2023)**

Ambassador of India to Bhutan Shri Sudhakar Dalela visited Phuentsholing and Samtse from 14 to 16 September 2023.

On 16 September 2023, the new Diana Kuenphen Bridge in Samtse was jointly inaugurated by Lyonpo Dorji Tshering, Minister for Infrastructure and Transport and Shri Sudhakar Dalela, Ambassador of India to Bhutan. The Bhutan India friendship project has been constructed as part of the Project Tied Assistance project 'Construction and Replacement of Bridges', under which nine new bridges have been constructed in various parts of Bhutan improving connectivity for movement of people and goods. At 280 meters length, the Diana Kuenphen bridge is the longest motorable bridge of Bhutan, and will benefit ten Gewogs of Samtse. During the inauguration, Ambassador Dalela underlined the long - standing cooperation between Bhutan and India for infrastructure development, and reiterated Gol's commitment to expand the partnership further based on the priorities of the Royal Government.

Ambassador of India to Bhutan also visited the Dhamdum Industrial Park, a collaborative bilateral project for the development of low-emission industries in Samtse. During the visit, he held interactions with senior officials of local administration and business community of Samtse on ways to strengthen trade and investment ties between Bhutan and India. He also visited the Samtse College of Education and held discussions with the college management on ways to improve bilateral collaboration in higher education.

With an objective to further bolster cross-border trade and connectivity, Ambassador Dalela reviewed the existing infrastructure along the Phuentsholing-Jaigaon border and discussed ways to strengthen it with officials from both sides.

In Phuentsholing, Ambassador Dalela interacted with representatives of merchant associations from Jaigaon, India to understand areas of interest to them for deepening bilateral trade ties. Ambassador also engaged in a productive session with senior officials of the Royal Government, local administration, think-tanks and business leaders from diverse sectors in the Phuentsholing area.

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