

# Government of India provides grant of Nu. 759 million towards key development projects in Bhutan

## DEVELOPMENT

By Staff Reporter, Thimphu

The Government of India has released an amount of Nu. 759 million to the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOB) 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.

A press release from the Embassy of India, Thimphu, says 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. Out of this grant amount, Nu.188 million has been earmarked for the Construction of the 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 four Thromdes of Bhutan. This project aims to enhance Information Communications Technology (ICT) skills of students, supply digital devices to schools and augment trainers' competencies in computer coding. An amount of Nu. 280 million has been released for this program.

Additionally, 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 Samdrup Jongkhar. 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, Chevon Goat and Forage Production. The Project is being implemented by the Department of Livestock and 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, the Government of India has committed a financial support of Nu. 45 billion comprising Nu. 28 billion of Project Tied Assistance, Nu. 8.5 billion of assistance towards High Impact Community Development Projects and Nu. 8.5 billion of Program Grant assistance. "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," the press release says.

Indian remains Bhutan's biggest development partner till date and the two nations share a relation that is an example of how two countries, despite differences in size and economy can co-exist peacefully. The Second Druk Gyalpo Jigme Wangchuck had established a relationship with independent India through the Treaty of 1949. During the reign of the Third Druk Gyalpo,



● ICT is part of GOI's support to Bhutan

this relationship was further strengthened and foundations for the very special and globally acknowledged relations that Bhutan and India today share established. The seeds of this special relation were sown during King Jigme Dorji Wangchuck's visit to India in 1954. This was reciprocated by the historic seventeen-day visit by Indian Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru to Bhutan in 1958. This laid the foundations for Bhutan's planned development through incorporation

of the First Five Year Plan in 1961, which was fully funded by the Indian government. The budget for the plan period was 1,747 lakh rupees.

Since then development and technical assistance provided by India led to Bhutan's socio-economic development. Some of the major areas of support were in hydropower, with the two governments signing of the ambitious Chukha Hydro-Project in March 1974. It paved way for similar projects

to be initiated within Bhutan. Hydropower is today Bhutan's top generator of revenue. Similarly, in 1979 the construction of Penden Cement Plant began with Indian support. It was operational by 1983. The Paro International Airport was also built with Indian support. And this relation continues!

*(Press release from Embassy of India, Thimphu with additional inputs from The Journalist).*