

**Embassy of India
Thimphu**

Press Release: India@75 virtual conference on the Contribution of Assam in India's Freedom Struggle, Connectivities and Synergies between Assam and Bhutan

As a part of the Government of India's '**Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav**' (India@75) celebrations to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of India's Independence, the Embassy organised a conference today on the contribution of Assam in India's freedom struggle, connectivities and synergies between Assam and Bhutan in hybrid format.

2. The event was graced by **H.E. Lyonpo Loknath Sharma, Minister of Economic Affairs of Bhutan**, senior government officials, heads of educational institutions and think tanks, members of the business and tourism sectors, journalists, and students and academicians from across Bhutan. A large number of high school students as well as students from various colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan including Sherubtse College – one of the oldest and largest colleges in Bhutan – and Royal Thimphu College – the first private college in Bhutan – participated in the conference virtually.

3. Speaking at the conference, **Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj** highlighted that Assam is a key Indian state with whom Bhutan shares close ties from the historical, trade, and tourism perspectives. Ambassador Kamboj remarked on the dynamic leadership role played by the Chief Minister of Assam Shri Himanta Biswa Sarma in connecting India's north east region with neighbouring countries, including Bhutan, under Government of India's 'Act East' policy.

4. The two keynote speakers from India were **Mr. Samudra Gupta Kashyap** and **Dr. Nani Gopal Mahanta**. Mr. Kashyap is a veteran journalist and author, currently serving as State Information Commissioner in the Government of Assam. At the conference, Mr. Kashyap spoke about the contribution of freedom fighters from Assam in India's freedom struggle, such as Gomdhar Konwar and Gopinath Bardoloi. He also touched upon tourist sites associated with the freedom movement, in order to promote the visit of Bhutanese tourists to Assam once the Covid situation improves.

5. Dr. Nani Gopal Mahanta is currently serving as Advisor, Education, to the Government of Assam and Senior Professor in the Department of Political Science, Gauhati University, Assam. Dr. Mahanta spoke in detail about the contemporary connectivities and synergies between Assam and Bhutan, and the immense potential for expanding cooperation. The talk by the two speakers was followed by an interactive session with the participants from Bhutan.

6. Bhutan shares a land border with the Indian State of Assam and has close historical and commercial links with Assam. Bhutan recently opened a Consulate in Guwahati, the capital of Assam, which has contributed to further strengthening the regional economy and connectivity between Bhutan and India, in particular, with the north-eastern states of India.

The poster features the Indian national emblem and the text 'Embassy of India Thimphu, Bhutan' on the left, and the 'Bharat Ka Amrit Mahotsav' logo with '75 Years of India's Independence' on the right. The central text reads 'India@75 Virtual Conference on the contribution of Assam in India's Freedom Struggle, Connectivities and Synergies between Assam and Bhutan'. Below this, the 'Chief Guest' is identified as H.E. Lyonpo Loknath Sharma, Minister of Economic Affairs of Bhutan, with his portrait and social media handle @BhutanMoea. The 'Speakers' section includes three individuals: Mr. Samudra Gupta Kashyap (@samudragkashyap), Dr. Nani Gopal Mahanta (@ngmahanta), and Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj. At the bottom, the event is scheduled for 6 August 2021 at 11:30 hrs (Bhutan Time) / 11:00 hrs (IST), with a weblink provided: <https://bit.ly/3BwihM>.

**Thimphu
06 August 2021**