



## MHPA accorded the Brunel Medal 2020

Sonam Penjor & Sherub Dorji

To celebrate the success of Bhutan – India cooperation in hydropower, the Brunel Medal 2020 for Excellence in Civil Engineering was presented to the Minister for Ministry of Economic Affairs and Chairman of Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project Authority (MHPA), Lyonpo Loknath Sharma, by the Indian Ambassador on 5 August.

The Brunel Medal is an award given by Institution of Civil Engineers (ICE), London to recognize excellence in civil engineering and valuable service or achievement, which has been rendered to or within the civil engineering industry and is awarded every year to recognize excellence in civil engineering by the Institution.

Indian Ambassador Ruchira Kamboj said, "I think it has been received with a great deal of joy. It's an engineering marvel as I see it and a wonderful example of a win-win partnership between any two countries, and certainly in this context between India and Bhutan."

In receiving the award, Lyonpo Loknath Sharma congratulated the team of MHPA, engineers and contractors who worked for day and night to complete the project on time.

Lyonpo said, "If not for them we would not have received this award. This is for the entire team of MHPA including the management, engineers, contractors and all the workers involved in it."

Lyonpo Loknath Sharma also congratulated the two governments for initiating hydropower project starting from Chhukha and IT model of hydropower a project which has gone well so far. "We will continue to cooperate in this field," he said.



**Indian Ambassador to Bhutan Ruchira Kamboj handed over the award to MHPA chairman (Economic Affairs Minister) Loknath Sharma in presence of heads of the project and Druk Green Power Corporation, and other guests during a ceremony**

The President of ICE, Paul Scheffield, through a video message congratulated the project officials for showcasing excellence in research and innovation. Named in honour of famed engineer Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the prize is awarded to recognize excellence in civil engineering and is open to all teams, persons or organizations operating within the built environment.

The press release from the Indian Embassy states that the Brunel Medal is historically won by projects and organizations from across the world and the 2020 edition of the prize went to the Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project – collaboration between Bhutan and the government of India to accelerate hydropower development in the region.

During the State Visit of PM Modi to Bhutan in August 2019, the Prime Ministers of Bhutan and India had formally inaugurated the 720 mega-

watt (MW) Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project.

"They had appreciated the timely completion of the project, and had congratulated the Project Authority and Management for their dedication and competence," the press release stated.

During the visit, both sides had noted that with the coming on stream of the Mangdechhu Project, the jointly created generation capacity in Bhutan had crossed 2000-MW. Both sides had also emphasized the importance of hydro-power development as one of the most important areas of mutually beneficial bilateral co-operation.

The press release further stated that its swift timeframe and low per MW cost led authorities to describe it as a "benchmark project" in the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation area.

The ICE awards panels were also impressed by the project's social and

environmental credentials. From a strong field of entries, the green credentials of this mega project stood out.

Conceived and delivered as a joint deal between India and Bhutan, this project produces 720-MW of clean electricity for millions and provides an additional 44 percent of electrical power generation on hydro generation capacity of Bhutan. Since its commissioning till 30 June this year, Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project has generated and billed 5047-million (M) units of electricity, which has helped the project earn Nu 21,932.2 million.

The commissioning of Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Power Project in 2019 took Bhutan's electricity generation capacity to 2,326-MW. In 2020, Bhutan's hydropower generation increased by 31 percent, which helped Bhutan, offset the Covid-19 induced slowdown.

The project created 500 new jobs in the coun-

try, and it facilitated improved commercial opportunities for local firms. In addition, schools and health facilities benefited from upgraded infrastructures such as drinking water facilities and irrigation channels.

Meanwhile, Bhutan and India share a stellar hydropower cooperation which started from the construction of Chhukha Hydroelectric Power Project and is now spread over seven hydropower projects completed and under construction.

Further, clean and green development of hydro sector has become one of the key pillars of a unique relationship based on the bonds of trust and mutual understanding.

Mangdechhu hydroelectric power project is one of the ten hydroelectric projects being developed by the government with the support from the Government of India with an initiative to produce 10GW of hydro power by 2020.