

# India Releases Nu 2.15 Billion for Bhutan's Development under the 13th FYP

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From Thimphu

India has released financial support worth Nu 2.15 billion to assist Bhutan in implementing key development projects under its 13th Five Year Plan (FYP). This was undertaken during the 14th Monthly Coordination Meeting between the Embassy of India (EoI), Thimphu, and the Royal Government of Bhutan (RGOb).

The funding package reflects the continued close partnership between India and Bhutan and is aimed at supporting Bhutan's national development priorities. The assistance will be directed toward projects in education, infrastructure, healthcare, digital technology, governance, and sustainable development, all of which are central to improving the quality of life of Bhutanese citizens.

During the meeting, India handed over cheques to Bhutan's Ministry of Finance (MoF), marking a significant milestone in the implementation of India-supported projects under the 13th FYP. Officials from both sides reviewed progress on ongoing initiatives and discussed future areas of cooperation.

## Strengthening Development through Targeted Support

The Nu 2.15 billion support package will fund several important projects designed to address critical development needs across Bhutan. These initiatives focus on strengthening human capital, improving infrastructure, enhancing public services, and promoting innovation and sustainability.

According to officials, the projects supported under this funding are aligned with Bhutan's long-term development vision and aim to ensure inclusive growth while maintaining the country's commitment to environmental protection and good governance.

## Key Projects Funded by India

### Development of Central Schools (Nu 1.35 Billion)

The largest share of India's support—Nu 1.35 billion—has been allocated to the development of central schools across Bhutan. This project aims to upgrade a total of 37 schools, comprising 20 central schools and 17 cluster schools.

The focus of the project is to improve overall school infrastructure and create a modern learning environment. Planned upgrades include better classroom facilities, hostels, laboratories, and administrative buildings. The project also emphasizes the introduction of new technologies in teaching and learning, including digital classrooms and e-learning tools.

In addition, the project promotes

the use of green energy solutions, such as solar power, to make schools more environmentally sustainable. Safety and security measures, along with upgraded sports and recreational facilities, are also key components.

The total cost of the central schools development project is estimated at INR 6 billion. India's contribution under the 13th FYP will play a crucial role in strengthening Bhutan's education system and improving access to quality education, particularly for students from remote areas.

### Infrastructure Development for the Royal Bhutan Police (Nu 250 Million)

India has allocated Nu 250 million to support infrastructure development for the Royal Bhutan Police (RBP). This project focuses on strengthening law enforcement capabilities by improving physical infrastructure and enhancing professional skills.

The project includes the construction and upgrading of police stations, office buildings, and housing facilities for police personnel. It also supports training programs for police officers, conducted both in Bhutan and in India, to improve capacity in areas such as investigation, public safety, disaster response, and community policing.

In addition, the project provides for the procurement of firefighting and rescue vehicles, which will enhance Bhutan's emergency response capabilities. The total cost of this project is INR 900 million, with India's support contributing significantly to improving public safety and security across the country.

### Improvement of the Samtse–Norbugang Highway (Nu 239 Million)

Road connectivity is a critical factor for regional development and economic growth. To this end, India is supporting the improvement of the Samtse–Norbugang highway with funding of Nu 239 million.

The project aims to widen the existing road and improve its safety and overall quality. The Samtse–Norbugang highway is a primary route in southwestern Bhutan and plays a vital role in connecting communities, facilitating trade, and improving access to markets, healthcare, and education.

The total cost of the highway improvement project is INR 478 million. Once completed, the upgraded road is expected to reduce travel time, enhance road safety, and support economic activities in the region.

### Infrastructure for Legal Education (Nu 165 Million)

India continues to support Bhutan's efforts to strengthen legal education through funding of Nu 165 million for Phase II construction at the Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law.

This phase of the project includes the construction of additional classrooms, academic offices, student and staff residences, and recreational facilities. The improved infrastructure will support the growing number of students and faculty at the institution and enhance the overall quality of legal education in Bhutan.

The project also promotes academic and institutional collaboration between Bhutan and India through exchange programs, joint research, and capacity-building initiatives. The total cost of the project is INR 548 million and reflects India's commitment to supporting governance, rule of law, and institutional development in Bhutan.

### Digital Technology for Bhutanese Universities (Nu 146 Million)

To support higher education and innovation, India has committed Nu 146 million for the development of digital infrastructure in eight colleges under the Royal University of Bhutan.

This project aims to equip colleges with modern digital tools, including e-learning platforms, digital libraries, learning management systems, and improved information and data management systems. These upgrades are expected to enhance teaching, research, and administrative efficiency across the institutions.

By strengthening digital capacity, the project will help Bhutanese universities adapt to evolving educational needs, promote innovation, and improve access to knowledge. The total project cost is INR 331 million.

### Review of Ongoing and Strategic Projects

In addition to announcing new funding, the coordination meeting reviewed the progress of several ongoing and strategic projects supported by India under the 13th Five Year Plan.

### Advanced Healthcare Infrastructure

One of the flagship projects is the Multi-Disciplinary Super Speciality Hospital in Thimphu. The hospital will provide advanced healthcare services, including a national cancer center and specialized units for cardiology, nephrology, and neurology. This facility is expected to significantly improve Bhutan's healthcare capacity and reduce the need for patients to seek treatment abroad.

### Medical Education and Faculty Exchange

India is also supporting the construction of a new campus for the Khesar Gyalo University of Medical Sciences. In addition, collaboration with India's All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) includes faculty exchange programs and training for medical professionals, helping build a strong and skilled healthcare workforce in Bhutan.

### Space Cooperation

Space cooperation is an emerging area of partnership between the two countries.

Capacity-building programs in space science and technology are underway, along with plans to construct a space technology and innovation facility in Thimphu. These initiatives aim to support Bhutan's ambitions in satellite technology, data applications, and scientific research.

### Governance, Research, and Civil Society Support

India continues to support governance and socio-economic development through training programs, research collaboration, and institutional strengthening. Support is also being provided to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) to enhance their role in development and community empowerment.

### Disaster Preparedness and Environmental Management

Projects such as the establishment of a Weather and Flood Warning Center in Thimphu will strengthen Bhutan's disaster preparedness and early warning systems. Waste management initiatives, including material recovery facilities and waste incinerators, are being implemented to manage hazardous waste more effectively and protect the environment.

### Power Sector and Public Service Delivery

India is supporting upgrades at the Jigme Wangchuck Power Training Institute to strengthen skills in the energy sector. In public service delivery, efforts are underway to improve digital government services and establish integrated service centers to make government services more accessible to citizens.

### EMobility and Economic Support

India is also supporting Bhutan's transition to green transport through e-mobility initiatives. These include developing an electric vehicle (EV) strategy, deploying electric buses and charging infrastructure, and training transport officials. Additionally, concessional credit lines under India's Economic Stimulus Program are being monitored to support Bhutan's economic recovery and growth.

### A Strong Partnership for the Future

India's Nu 2.15 billion support under Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan underscores the deep-rooted friendship and strategic partnership between the two countries. By investing in education, healthcare, infrastructure, digital technology, and sustainable development, India is supporting Bhutan's efforts to achieve inclusive growth and long-term prosperity.

As these projects are implemented, Bhutan is expected to see significant improvements in key sectors, leading to better services, stronger institutions, and enhanced opportunities for its people. The collaboration reflects a shared commitment to development, stability, and mutual prosperity in the region.