



དཔལ་ལྷན་འབྲུག་གཞུང་། ཕྱི་འབྲེལ་ལྷན་ཁག།

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN  
THIMPHU, BHUTAN



## PRESS RELEASE

### **Clarifications on the recent news articles published in India alleging that Bhutan has stopped the supply of irrigation water to farmers in areas in Assam adjoining Samdrup Jongkhar District**

1. Since 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, there have been several news articles published in India alleging that Bhutan has blocked water channels that supply irrigation water to Indian farmers in Baksa and Udalguri Districts in Assam adjoining Samdrup Jongkhar District.
2. This is a distressing allegation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to clarify that the news articles are totally baseless as there is no reason why the flow of water should be stopped at this time. It is a deliberate attempt by vested interests to spread misinformation and cause misunderstanding between the friendly people of Bhutan and Assam.
3. Baksa and Udalguri Districts in Assam have been benefitting from the water sources in Bhutan for many decades and they continue to do so even during the present difficult times when we are faced with the COVID-19 pandemic.
4. Since the lockdown in India and closure of Bhutan's borders due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Assamese farmers are unable to enter Bhutan to maintain the irrigation channels as was done in the past. However, understanding the difficulty that would be faced by the farmers in Assam, the Samdrup Jongkhar District Officials and the general public have taken the initiative to repair the irrigation channels whenever there are problems to ensure the smooth flow of water to Assam.
5. The heavy monsoon rains and sudden rise in the water levels is posing serious challenges, but the Bhutanese authorities, including with heavy machinery, are on standby to clear any blockage and channel the water whenever there is a problem.
6. Bhutan would like to assure the people of Assam that the Royal Government of Bhutan, particularly the Samdrup Jongkhar District authorities, will make every effort to ensure that the disruptions caused by the monsoon rains to the irrigation channels are addressed without delay and there is water available for the farmers in Assam. Bhutan would like to request for the understanding of the farmers in Assam as sometimes there could be few delays in the flow of water due to disruptions caused by the heavy monsoon rains and the operational difficulties arising from the restrictions put in place by both the countries due to COVID-19.



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7. The Samdrup Jongkhar authorities maintain close contact with their counterparts in Baksa and Udalguri. The challenges faced during these difficult times have been explained to them and they have expressed understanding of the situation.
8. The people of Bhutan, especially those living along the borders of India, deeply value their age-old ties of friendship and cooperation with the people of India, particularly their close neighbors across the borders in Assam and West Bengal. The people of Bhutan feel that such ties of friendship, cooperation and support must continue and be reinforced during these difficult times.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
26 June 2020

