



PM Modi with Bhutan PM Lotay Tshering. Prem Nath Pandey

## India to provide Bhutan Rs 4,500-crore assistance

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PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi announced Friday Rs 4,500-crore financial assistance to Bhutan for the Himalayan nation's 12th Five Year Plan. After talks with his Bhutanese counterpart Lotay Tshering, Modi said India will play the "role of a trusted partner and friend in the development of Bhutan".

The Bhutanese PM, who arrived here Thursday, is on a three-day visit to India. It is his first foreign visit after taking charge as PM of the Himalayan nation last month. Modi, too, had chosen Bhutan to be his first foreign port of call after being elected India's Prime Minister in 2014.

"This is a symbol of our shared commitment towards strengthening our cooperation with each other to move forward on the path of development," Modi said.

Mentioning it was the 50th year of Indo-Bhutan diplomatic relations, Modi identified hydro-power projects as an "important component in the long history of our cooperation".

Modi said India and Bhutan will also cooperate in the area of space science. He said ISRO will complete building a ground station in Bhutan for the South Asian Satellite that will help the Himalayan nation in weather information, tele-medicine and disaster relief in the far-flung areas.

Bhutan will also launch the RuPay cards soon, Modi said.