



Bhutan



Background After Britain's victory in the 1865 Duar War, Britain and Bhutan signed the Treaty of Sinchulu, under which Bhutan would receive an annual subsidy in exchange for ceding land to British India. Ugyen WANGCHUCK -- who had served as the de facto ruler of an increasingly unified Bhutan and had improved relations with the British toward the end of the 19th century -- was named King in 1907. Three years later, a treaty was signed whereby the British agreed not to interfere in Bhutanese internal affairs, and Bhutan allowed Britain to direct its foreign affairs. Bhutan negotiated a similar arrangement with independent India in 1949. The Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of Friendship returned to Bhutan a small piece of the territory annexed by the British, formalized the annual subsidies the country received, and defined India's responsibilities in defense and foreign relations. Under a succession of modernizing monarchs beginning in the 1950s, Bhutan joined the UN in 1971 and slowly continued its engagement beyond its borders.

In 2005, King Jigme Singye WANGCHUCK unveiled the draft of Bhutan's first constitution -- which introduced major democratic reforms -- and held a national referendum for its approval. The King abdicated the throne in 2006 in favor of his son, Jigme Khesar Namgyel WANGCHUCK. In 2007, India and Bhutan renegotiated their treaty, eliminating the clause that stated that Bhutan would be "guided by" India in conducting its foreign policy, although Thimphu continues to coordinate closely with New Delhi. In 2008, Bhutan held its first parliamentary election in accordance with the constitution. Bhutan experienced a peaceful turnover of power following a parliamentary election in 2013, which resulted in the defeat of the incumbent party. In 2018, the incumbent party again lost the parliamentary election. In 2024, of the more than 100,000 ethnic Nepali -- predominantly Lhotshampa -- refugees who fled or were forced out of Bhutan in the 1990s, about 6,500 remain displaced in Nepal.

Capital name: Thimphu

Government type constitutional monarchy

Area total : 38,394 sq km

land: 38,394 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Climate varies; tropical in southern plains; cool winters and hot summers in central valleys; severe winters and cool summers in Himalayas

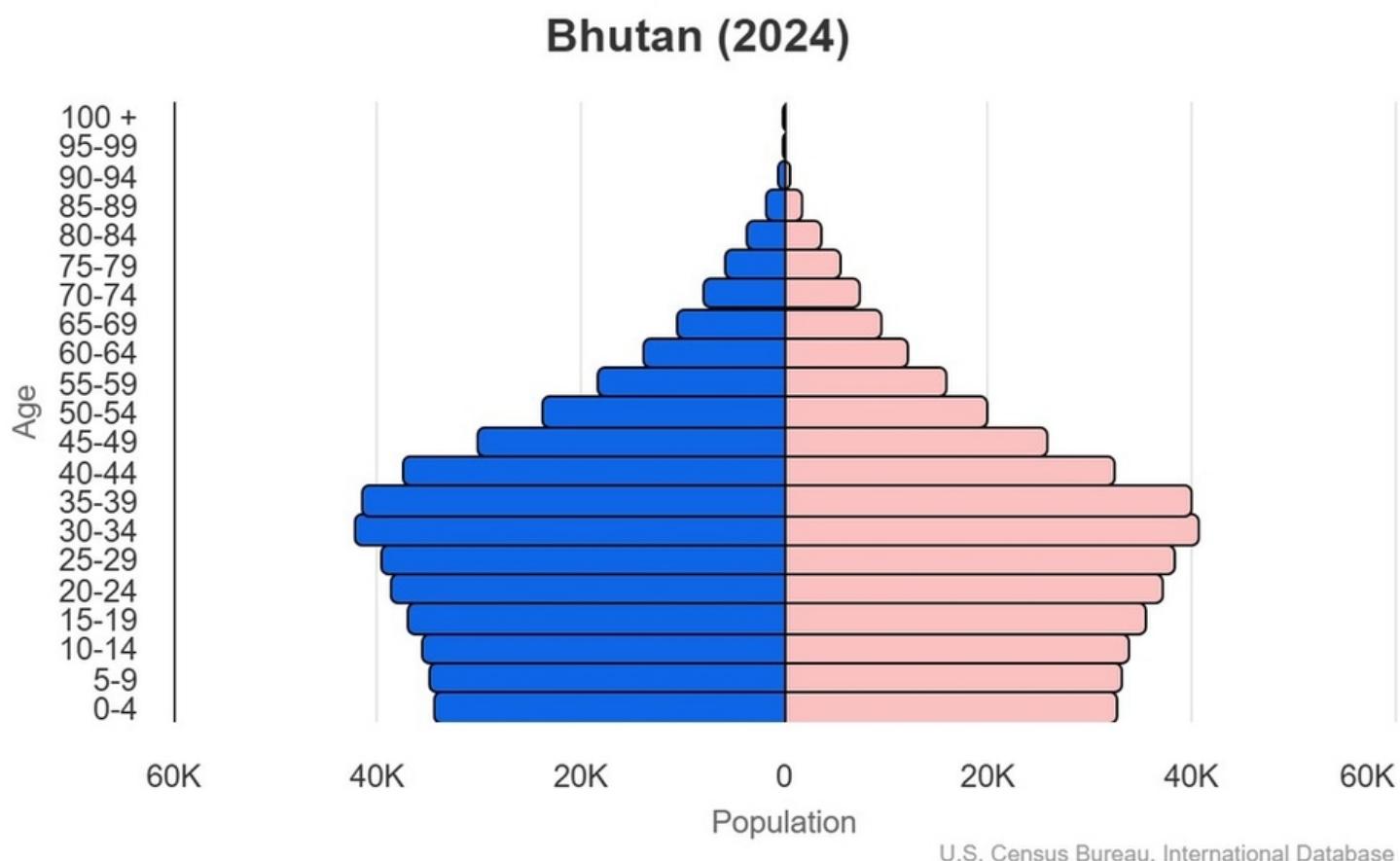
Natural resources timber, hydropower, gypsum, calcium carbonate

Population total: 884,546 (2024 est.)

Population growth rate 0.95% (2024 est.)

Ethnic groups	Ngalop (also known as Bhote) 50%, ethnic Nepali 35% (predominantly Lhotshampas), indigenous or migrant tribes 15%
Religions	Lamaistic Buddhist 75.3%, Indian- and Nepali-influenced Hinduism 22.1%, other 2.6% (2005 est.)
Languages	Sharchopkha 28%, Dzongkha (official) 24%, Lhotshamkha 22%, other 26% (includes foreign languages) (2005 est.)
Executive branch	chief of state: King Jigme Khesar Namgyel WANGCHUCK (since 14 December 2006) head of government: Prime Minister Tshering TOBGAY (since 28 January 2024)
Legislative branch	legislature name: Parliament (Chi Tshog)
Diplomatic representation in the US	consulate(s) general: 343 East, 43rd Street, New York, NY 10017 telephone: [1] (212) 682-2371 FAX: [1] (212) 661-0551 email address and website: consulate.pmbny@mfa.gov.bt https://www.mfa.gov.bt/pmbny/
Diplomatic representation from the US	note: Although Bhutan and the United States have never established formal diplomatic relations, the two countries maintain informal relations via the U.S. Embassy in New Delhi, India, and Bhutan's Mission to the United Nations in New York
Economic overview	hydropower investments spurring economic development; Gross National Happiness economy; sharp poverty declines; low inflation; strong monetary and fiscal policies; stable currency; fairly resilient response to COVID-19; key economic and strategic relations with India; climate vulnerabilities
Real GDP (purchasing power parity)	\$11.517 billion (2023 est.) \$10.981 billion (2022 est.) \$10.437 billion (2021 est.)
Real GDP per capita	\$14,600 (2023 est.) \$14,100 (2022 est.) \$13,500 (2021 est.)
Exports	\$944.391 million (2024 est.) \$867.871 million (2023 est.) \$791.342 million (2022 est.)
Exports - partners	India 92%, Italy 4%, Indonesia 1%, China 1%, Singapore 0% (2023)
Exports - commodities	iron alloys, aircraft, dolomite, semi-finished iron, cement (2023)
Imports	\$1.513 billion (2024 est.) \$1.77 billion (2023 est.) \$1.581 billion (2022 est.)
Imports - partners	India 82%, Singapore 8%, China 5%, Thailand 2%, Indonesia 1% (2023)
Imports - commodities	refined petroleum, gold, plastics, broadcasting equipment, iron reductions (2023)

Population Pyramid



U.S. Census Bureau, International Database