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Dorjilung Hydropower Project — 1,125 MW, Bhutan, Tata Power, World Bank Financing

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**Bharat Choudhary**

UPSC Educator & Content Creator

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WHY IN NEWS

Bhutan and the **World Bank** signed financing agreements worth **USD 515 million** for the **1,125 MW Dorjilung Hydroelectric Power Project** on the **Kurichhu River**, eastern Bhutan. The project will generate over **4,500 GWh annually**, with approximately **80% to be supplied to India**. Commissioning: **September 2031**. This is Bhutan's **largest Public-Private Partnership (PPP) hydropower project** and its **second-largest hydropower project overall**.

DORJILUNG PROJECT — KEY SPECIFICATIONS

FEATURE	DETAIL
Location	Kurichhu River, eastern Bhutan
Installed capacity	1,125 MW
Annual generation	Over 4,500 GWh
Power supply to India	~ 80% of annual generation
Total project cost	₹13,100 crore (~USD 1.7 billion)
Dam type	Concrete-gravity dam
Dam height	~139.5 metres
Powerhouse	Underground
Turbines	Six Francis turbines
Developer	Dorjilung Hydro Power Limited (DHPL)
Equity structure	Druk Green Power Corporation (DGPC): 60% + Tata Power: 40%
World Bank financing	USD 515 million
Commissioning	September 2031
Significance	Bhutan's largest PPP hydro; second-largest hydro project overall

INDIA–BHUTAN HYDROPOWER RELATIONSHIP

India is Bhutan's largest buyer of hydroelectric power — a cornerstone of the bilateral relationship:

PARAMETER	VALUE
Bhutan's total installed hydro capacity	~2,400 MW (existing; Dorjilung adds 1,125 MW)
Share of electricity in Bhutan's total exports	~63% of Bhutan's total exports
India's electricity import from Bhutan	~6–8 billion units/year
Framework	India-Bhutan Friendship Treaty 1949 (and 2007 revision); DGPC–NTPC partnerships
Major existing projects	Tala (1,020 MW), Chukha (336 MW), Kurichhu (60 MW), Mangdechhu (720 MW), Punatsangchhu I & II (under construction)
India's financing model	India provides grants + loans for Bhutanese hydro; Bhutan repays through electricity exports

KURICHHU RIVER — GEOGRAPHY

FEATURE	DETAIL
River name	Kurichhu (also Kuri Chhu)
Origin	Southern slopes of Tibet; flows through eastern Bhutan
Basin	Flows into Brahmaputra system in Assam
Existing project	Kurichhu HEP (60 MW) — already operational
New project	Dorjilung HEP (1,125 MW) — upstream of existing

TATA POWER — INDIA'S LARGEST INTEGRATED POWER COMPANY

FEATURE	DETAIL
Parent	Tata Group
Total capacity	~14+ GW (thermal + renewable + hydro)
Renewables	India's largest renewable energy developer
Bhutan presence	40% equity in Dorjilung (first major Bhutan investment by Tata Power)
Other major projects	Mundra UMPP (3,960 MW), Maithon HEP (1,000 MW)

WORLD BANK — ROLE IN SOUTH ASIA ENERGY

The World Bank (IBRD/IDA) finances infrastructure in member countries:

- Bhutan is a **World Bank member** (IDA-eligible — lower-income country)
- USD 515 million for Dorjilung is a **concessional IDA credit + IBRD loan mix**
- Complements India's contribution to regional hydro development

UPSC RELEVANCE

PAPER	ANGLE
GS2 — International Relations	India-Bhutan hydropower ties, Neighbourhood First Policy, power export diplomacy
GS3 — Economy	Hydropower economics, PPP model, World Bank financing
GS1 — Geography	Kurichhu River, Brahmaputra system, Bhutan geography

Mains Keywords: Dorjilung Hydropower, Kurichhu River, Bhutan India hydropower, Tata Power, Druk Green Power Corporation, World Bank IDA, PPP hydropower, Brahmaputra basin, Neighbourhood First Policy, energy diplomacy

Prelims Facts Corner

ITEM	FACT
Dorjilung capacity	1,125 MW
Location	Kurichhu River, eastern Bhutan
Annual generation	4,500+ GWh
Power to India	~ 80% of annual generation
Project cost	₹13,100 crore (~USD 1.7 billion)
World Bank financing	USD 515 million
Developer	Druk Green Power Corporation (60%) + Tata Power (40%)
Dam type	Concrete-gravity; 139.5 m height; underground powerhouse
Turbines	6 Francis turbines
Commissioning	September 2031
Significance	Bhutan's largest PPP hydro; 2nd largest hydro project overall
Kurichhu flows into	Brahmaputra system (Assam)

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