

# NEWS

Article Search

## Bhutan Closes Borders for Two Weeks After Reporting First Coronavirus Case

By Craig Lewis

Buddhistdoor Global | 2020-03-06 | 94



The office of Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering confirmed the country's first COVID-19 infection this morning. From Prime Minister's Office - PMO, Bhutan Facebook

The remote Himalayan Kingdom of Bhutan has reported its first confirmed case of the COVID-19 novel coronavirus after a tourist visiting the country from the US tested positive, the office of Prime Minister Lotay Tshering announced on Friday morning.

In a statement posted to social media, the prime minister's office added that there would be "two weeks' restriction on all incoming tourists with immediate effect" in a bit to limit the impact of the disease. (*Straits Times*)

The prime minister also addressed the nation in a live telecast this morning. According to the announcement, the 76-year-old American tourist entered Bhutan from India on 2 March. Eight Indian passengers who traveled with the American on the same aircraft, from Guwahati in the northeast Indian state of Assam to Bhutan's international airport in Paro, have also been quarantined. The American was admitted to hospital on 5 March with a fever and tested positive for COVID-19.

A separate statement from Bhutan's Ministry of Health said that one positive case of COVID-19 had been confirmed at 11pm on 5 March. The health authorities have stated that some 90 people with whom the patient came into contact in Bhutan have been traced. The patient's 59-year-old partner, and his Bhutanese guide and driver, all now under isolated observation, have so far not exhibited symptoms.

"The patient was touring India from February 21 to March 1. He had started his travel from Washington, DC, on 18 February. The patient was traveling with his partner, aged 59. There were 10 passengers on board, of which eight others were Indian nationals. At the Paro International Airport, the patient's health declaration form was assessed. He had indicated 'negative' against all

Special Issue 2019:  
Buddhism and Tech

Special Issues

Buddhism in the  
People's Republic

Tea House Blog

Long Reads

Wisdom  
for Today

RSS FEEDS   
Get desktop updates!

BUDDHIST  
DICTIONARY  
Easy referencing 


### OUR SPONSORS



### RELATED ORGANIZATIONS



conditions. He did not have a sign of fever,” the prime minister’s office said in the statement posted on Facebook.

 **Prime Minister's Office - PMO, Bhutan**  
giovedi

Press Release  
First confirmed COVID-19 case in Bhutan

We would like to inform the general public that one positive case of COVID-19 was confirmed at 11pm on March 5. The result was validated at 12.30 am today. ... [Altro...](#)

---

1097      814      5817

At the time of writing, global coronavirus infections were reported to total 98,441, with 3,387 deaths so far confirmed. The majority of coronavirus infections and fatalities have occurred in mainland China, which has reported a death toll of 3,042 people, and a total of 80,555 infections, according to official data from the Chinese health authorities. COVID-19 is believed to have first spread from an illegal wildlife market in the Chinese city of Wuhan, in central Hubei Province. The World Health Organization has estimated the mortality rate from the virus at 2–5 per cent, with infants, the elderly, and people with underlying health conditions considered most at risk.

Bhutan shares borders with two political and economic heavy-hitters China and India, which has so far reported just 30 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Separately, a German couple, who were under observation at Phuentsholing Hospital in southern Bhutan as potential coronavirus cases, have tested negative, *The Bhutanese* newspaper reported on Friday. According to media reports, the hospital had sent throat and nasal swabs from the couple for gene sequencing tests at the Royal Center for Diseases Control in the capital Thimphu. The German couple were released after the tests returned negative results.

Earlier a female Chinese tourist and a group of Bhutanese traveling from Bengaluru (also known as Bangalore) in southern India all tested negative.

*The Bhutanese* has reported that following advice from the health authorities in Bhutan, there has been a significant increase in the number of people coming forward to be tested for COVID-19 after traveling outside of the country or experiencing common flu symptoms.



A health worker conducts temperature checks at the India-Bhutan border. From Prime Minister's Office - PMO, Bhutan Facebook

Remote, landlocked, and perched in the rarified air of the eastern Himalaya, Bhutan is the world’s last remaining Vajrayana Buddhist country. The ancient spiritual tradition is embedded in the very consciousness and culture of this remote land, where it has flourished with an unbroken history that dates back to its introduction from Tibet by Padmasambhava, also known as Guru Rinpoche, in the eighth century.

Almost 75 per cent of Bhutan's population of some 770,000 people identify as Buddhists, according to data for 2010 from the Washington, DC-based Pew Research Center, with Hinduism accounting for the majority of the remaining 25 per cent. Most of Bhutan's Buddhists follow either the Drukpa Kagyu or the Nyingma schools of Vajrayana Buddhism.

**See more**

[Bhutan gets first COVID-19 case](#) (*The Bhutanese*)

[German couple in Phuentsholing test negative for COVID-19](#) (*The Bhutanese*)

[No plans to ban tourists amid heightened COVID-19 scare](#) (*Kuensel*)

[Bhutan confirms first coronavirus case](#) (*Straits Times*)

[American tests positive for coronavirus in Bhutan, 8 fellow Indian passengers quarantined](#) (*Hindustan Times*)

#### Related news from Buddhistdoor Global

[Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village in France Temporarily Closes Due to Coronavirus](#)

[Buddhist Temple Stays Suspended in Korea as Coronavirus Spreads; Religious Gatherings Under Scrutiny](#)

[Buddhists in Sri Lanka Lead Multi-faith Show of Support for China's Coronavirus Battle](#)

[Losar Festivities Canceled in Lhasa amid Coronavirus Alert](#)

[Thailand Prepares for Makha Bucha Day Celebrations Amid Air Pollution and Coronavirus Concerns](#)

[Audiences with Dalai Lama Halted Over Coronavirus Risk](#)

[Buddhist Monasteries in Tibet Closed; Coronavirus Infections Confirmed in Tibetan Regions of China](#)

#### Related features from Buddhistdoor Global

[Ten Years of Empowering Female Monastics: Bhutan Nuns Foundation Extends Reach with New Training Center](#)

[Bhutan, the World's Only Carbon-negative Nation, an Example of Environmental Stewardship for a Planet Grappling with Climate Change](#)

[Happiness Before Profit: Bhutan Seeks to Redefine Business Using Buddhist Values](#)



Like 94

Tags:

asia Bhutan buddhism Covid-19 guru rinpoche himalaya Himalayan mountains Hubei india

Lotay Tshering mainland China novel coronavirus padmasambhava paro Phuentsholing south asia thimphu

travel and tourism united states USA vajrayana washington dc Wuhan

Categories:

South Asia Tibet / Himalayas / Mongolia Travel / Pilgrimage

Comments:

Share your thoughts:

Name: \*

Content: \*

Email :

You can fill in your email to receive a new reply

Captcha: \*



[Reset Captcha Code](#)

I have read the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) of the buddhistdoor global website.

Accept  Reject

Submit

[Back to Top](#) ▲

**FEATURES**

**VEHICLES**

Theravada  
Mahayana  
Vajrayana

**REGIONS**

Africa / Middle East  
Asia  
Australia / New Zealand  
Central / South America  
Europe / Russia  
North America

**THEMES**

Art and Archaeology  
Books and Literature  
Commentary  
Environment and Wildlife  
Exhibitions and Conferences  
Essays and Interviews

**COLUMNS**

Academic Reflections  
Ancient Dances  
Art of Living  
Bodhisattva 4.0  
Bringing Mindfulness to Life  
Buddhist Art

**NEWS**

**MEDIA**

Audio Channel  
Video Channel  
Photo Gallery

**SUBSCRIBE**

**SUPPORT US**

**ABOUT US**

**BUDDHISTDOOR APP**

iOS - iPhone/iPad



Android

