



# **Enduring Friendship Mountain Bike Challenge**

**11<sup>th</sup> Edition**

**A BOC AND DANTAK INITIATIVE**

## **ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS FOR INDIAN/ INTERNATIONAL PARTICIPANTS**

### **Welcome to the Enduring Friendship Mountain Bike Challenge!**

We are excited to welcome all participants to the Kingdom of Bhutan for this exciting event. The event will be conducted in Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, on 04<sup>th</sup> May 2025. This event not only promises a thrilling competition but also offers an opportunity to experience Bhutan's breathtaking beauty and unique culture.

Please read the following instructions carefully to ensure a smooth and enjoyable experience:

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### **1. Brief History of the Race**

The **Enduring Friendship Mountain Bike Challenge** is an annual event that brings together cyclists from Bhutan, India, and other parts of the world, aiming to foster friendship, cooperation, and mutual understanding through a challenging mountain bike race. It was started to celebrate the deep ties of friendship between Bhutan and India, particularly the contribution of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) Project DANTAK, in developing Bhutan's infrastructure since 1961.

- **Origins:** The challenge began in 2011 as part of the commemoration of the long-standing friendship between Bhutan and India on completion of 50 years of raising of Dantak, particularly through the collaborative efforts of the Bhutan Olympic Committee & BRO Project Dantak that has been working in Bhutan for decades to help build and maintain infrastructure in the country's rugged terrain.
- **Purpose:** The event was created not only to promote cycling as a sport but also to highlight the strength of the diplomatic and cooperative relationship between Bhutan and India. It serves as a reminder of the infrastructure development brought by DANTAK in Bhutan's mountain regions, making areas more accessible and fostering connectivity.
- **Format:** The race is set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Himalayas, challenging participants with steep ascents, rough terrains, and the unpredictable weather conditions of the region. It has various categories to accommodate a wide range of cyclists, from competitive athletes to enthusiasts.
- **Enduring Friendship:** Over the years, the event has grown in popularity and has evolved into a platform where cyclists not only challenge their physical endurance but also build lasting friendships with participants from diverse backgrounds. It has become an iconic event in the cycling community of the region, symbolizing the enduring bond between Bhutan and India.



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The **Enduring Friendship Mountain Bike Challenge** continues to inspire cyclists and foster a spirit of camaraderie, making it a memorable occasion each year.

## **2. How to Reach Thimphu**

Thimphu is well-connected to the rest of the world through the Paro International Airport (PBH).

- **By Air:** The most common way to reach Thimphu is to fly into Paro International Airport. There are direct flights to Paro from cities like New Delhi, Kolkata, Bagdogra, and Kathmandu.
  - **From India (Delhi/Kolkata/Bagdogra):** Druk Air and Bhutan Airlines operate direct flights to Paro from major cities in India.
  - **From Nepal:** There are also direct flights from Kathmandu to Paro.
- **By Road:** You can drive from India to Bhutan via the Phuentsholing border (near Jaigaon, West Bengal). From Phuentsholing, Thimphu is about a 4-5 hour drive. Please ensure you have the required documents for crossing the border (Valid Passport/ Voter ID in case of Indians and a Passport & Visa in case of other nationalities). **We have a presence in Jaigaon & Phuentsholing and will facilitate your entry/ immigration formalities at the India Gate. Lt Col Ajay Bhadouria (+91 9971365795) can be contacted for the same.**

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## **3. Where to Stay**

Thimphu offers a variety of accommodation options ranging from budget guesthouses to luxury hotels. Here are some options:

- **Luxury Hotels:** Taj Tashi, Le Meridien, and Bhutan Suites offer premium services.
- **Mid-range Hotels:** Hotel Druk, Hotel Norbuling, and Khamsum Inn are popular choices.
- **Budget Accommodation:** You will also find budget guesthouses and hostels in Thimphu offering basic amenities at affordable rates.

**Booking Accommodation:** It's highly recommended to book your accommodation in advance, especially during race season. The details of a recommended hotel offering special rates to participants is mentioned below:

**Lemon Tree: Single occupancy- INR 4000/- inclusive of all taxes and complimentary breakfast and dinner.**

**Twin bed occupancy- INR 4500/- inclusive of all taxes and complimentary breakfast and dinner.**



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## **4. What to Carry**

Please ensure you have the following essential items for the race:

- **Bike Equipment:** Helmet, gloves, padded shorts, water bottle, repair kit (spare tubes, tire pump, etc.), and appropriate cycling gear. A local bike shop can also provide cycles on hire for the race. Mr Madu can be contacted on +975-17931155.
  - **Weather-appropriate Clothing:** The weather in Thimphu in April/may can be cool with temperatures ranging from 10°C to 20°C. Bring light layers and a waterproof jacket in case of rain.
  - **Personal Identification:** Passport, visa (if applicable), and any other travel documents.
  - **Medical Kit:** Basic first aid kit (band-aids, antiseptic, painkillers, etc.).
  - **Cash:** While credit cards are accepted in many places, it's advisable to carry cash (Bhutanese Ngultrum or Indian Rupees) for small purchases or emergencies. **Recently all merchants in Bhutan can now accept payments from Indians using BHIM UPI, PhonePe and Google Pay.**
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## **5. Weather Details**

In late April/May, Thimphu experiences spring weather with mild temperatures. Here's what to expect:

- **Daytime Temperatures:** 15°C to 20°C.
  - **Night-time Temperatures:** 5°C to 10°C.
  - **Rain:** Although April/May is generally dry, it is still possible to have short rain showers, so it's recommended to carry a light rain jacket.
  - **Sun Protection:** The sun can be strong, so don't forget to carry sunscreen, sunglasses, and a cap/ hat.
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## **6. General Formalities and Expenditure**

- **SDF (Sustainable Development Fee):** All international tourists (except citizens of India) must pay a Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) of USD 100 per person per day. Indian nationals are required to pay INR 1200 per day.
  - **Visa:** Indian nationals do not require a visa to enter Bhutan. However, please carry a valid passport or voter ID card for identification purposes when crossing the border.
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## **7. Guide Hiring Charges**

- **Guide Services:** If you would like to hire a local guide for the event or during your stay, charges are typically around BTN 1500 to BTN 3000 per day, depending on the guide's experience and service.
  - **Booking Guides:** It is recommended to book guides in advance through your hotel or race organizers to ensure availability.
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## **8. Transportation and Taxi Charges**

- **Local Taxis:** In Thimphu, taxis are the most convenient mode of transport. Taxi fares typically start at BTN 200-300 for short distances within the city. For longer distances or trips outside the city, the fare can range from BTN 500 to BTN 1000.
  - **Private Transport:** For those wishing to explore outside Thimphu, private vehicles can be arranged for day trips. Rates can vary depending on the vehicle and distance, generally ranging from BTN 3000 to BTN 5000 for a full-day rental.
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## **9. Important Notes**

- **Currency:** Bhutan's local currency is the Bhutanese Ngultrum (BTN). Indian Rupees are also widely accepted. One Rupee is equal to 1 Ngultrum.
  - **Time Zone:** Bhutan operates on Bhutan Time (BTT), which is 30 minutes ahead of Indian Standard Time (IST).
  - **Language:** The official language is Dzongkha, but English is widely spoken, especially in Thimphu.
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## **10. Contact Information**

For any further queries or assistance before or during the event, please feel free to contact the race organizers at:

- **Website:** <https://dantakbikerace.com>
  - **E Mail:** [dantakbikerace@gmail.com](mailto:dantakbikerace@gmail.com)
  - **Nodal Officer:** +975-1765-1360 (Capt Yatin Kumar)
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We wish you the best of luck with your preparations and look forward to welcoming you to Bhutan! Let the race begin.