Interesting info about Bhutan you may not know:

1. In Bhutan, Gross National Happiness is more important than Gross National Product.

2. Bhutan has the largest proportion of land designated as protected areas in the world.

3. Archery is the national sport.

4. There are few beggars, few thefts and little violent crime.

5. They have never been colonized and have no desire for cultural assimilation.

6. The national flower is the Himalayan blue poppy and the national bird is the raven.

7. Though Bhutan is about the size of Switzerland, the population as of October 5, 2024 was only 792,876. Almost one-third of the population is under the age of 15 and the median age is 29.9 years.

8. The word "Bhutan" translates to "Land of the Thunder Dragon." It earned the nickname because of the fierce storms that often roll in from the Himalayas.

9. Bhutan is one of the last countries in the world to introduce television and the internet to its people in 1999. Currently governed by Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the fifth king of Bhutan, more than 87 percent of its people have a cell phone, even though 70 percent are subsistence farmers.

10. *Travellers and Magicians* is the first ever, major motion picture made entirely in Bhutan in 2003. It was written and directed by Khyentse Norbu, a reincarnate lama of Tibetan Buddhism, who is also known as Dzongsar Jamyang Khyentse Rinpoche. And it's a beautiful film!

11. Bhutan is one of only three carbon negative countries in the world. The other two are Suriname and Panama. This means they absorb more carbon dioxide than they produce. In Bhutan this is due to its extensive forest cover as more than 70% of the country in covered in trees. Bhutan also offsets its emissions by exporting renewable energy.

12. Mountaineering is now banned, as the highest peaks are considered sacred. Bhutan has a law wherein mountaineers are prohibited from climbing a mountain higher than 6,000m as they are considered a home for gods and spirits. *Gangkhar Puensum* is the highest mountain in Bhutan and the highest unclimbed mountain in the world, with an elevation of 7,570m (24,836 ft).

13. There are no traffic lights in Bhutan. Instead, they have police who are at major intersections and direct traffic.

14. Bhutan implemented a nationwide ban on plastic bags in 1999, becoming one of the first countries in the world to do so.