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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/CEC/NOTIF-01/2019/1547

Dated: 2nd of April 2019

NOTIFICATION

**Bye-Election for the post of *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpas* and Local Government Election
in the two Vacant *Demkhongs***

The Election Commission of Bhutan, in pursuance of Sections 577, 579 & 197 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008, hereby calls Bye-Election for the post of *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa* in Narphung *Chiwog* under Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag resulted upon the demise of the incumbent *Tshogpa* and Goomsom *Chiwog* under Tsirang Dzongkhag resulted upon the resignation of the incumbent *Tshogpa* and Local Government election in two vacant *demkhongs* of Tshothang *Chiwog* under Samdrup Jongkhar Dzongkhag and Wangdrog *Chiwog* under Thimphu Dzongkhag.

The Election Schedule and the details concerning *Demkhong*, Selection Procedure for Nomination of Candidates, Electoral Rolls, EVMs, Polling Stations, Polling Officials, Polling Management, Security and other arrangements are hereby being notified as follows:

(A) Election Schedule

1. The Schedule shall be as follows:

Date and Time	Remarks
2 nd of April 2019	- Issuance of Notification - Commencement of Signature process by Eligible candidates for the post of <i>Gewog Tshogpa</i>
7 th of April 2019	- Last Date for filing of Nominations of Candidates
8 th of April 2019	- Scrutiny of Nomination of Candidates & Commencement of the Election Campaign - Last date of receipt of Application by Returning Officer in case voter wants to change Postal Address or be removed from Postal Voter List to voter at the Polling Station in person.

10 th of April 2019	- Last date for withdrawal of Candidature - Returning Officer to commence sending Postal Ballot to registered Postal Voters
20 th of April 2019	- End of Election Campaign (9.00 AM)
21 st of April 2019	- Last day/ time for receiving Postal Ballots
22 nd of April 2019	Poll Day and Counting of Results (9:00 am to 5:00 pm)
23 rd of April 2019	- Declaration of Results & Submission of the Results to the Druk Gyalpo - Start of Election Petition Period
26 th of April 2019	- Issuance of the Certificate of Election
10 th of May 2019	- End of Election Petition Period (5:00pm)

(B) Selection Process of the Candidates

2. A registered voter who fulfills the criteria laid down in Section 178 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008 is eligible to be nominated as a Candidate for Election.
3. A Registered Voter aspiring to contest *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa* Election in shall produce signatures of at least 5 percent of the Registered Voters from the *Chiwog* supporting his/her nomination provided no voter has supported more than one Nominee.
4. For the purposes of ascertaining the age eligibility of Candidates which as per the Electoral Laws must be minimum of 25 years and maximum of 65 years, a Candidate for this Election must be born on or before 7th of April 1994 but not before 7th of April 1954.

(C) Electoral Roll

5. The Electoral Roll used for the National Assembly Election 2018 shall be used as the base with further revision as per the qualifying date which shall be the 1st of April 2019. All those who are not younger than eighteen years of age as on 1st of April 2019 or born on or before 1st of April 2001 shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter.

6. The Final Electoral Roll for the Election shall be published and provided to the Returning Officer by 3rd of April 2019.

(D) Election Campaign

7. A Candidate shall have up to **13 days** for campaigning, which must stop **48 hours** before the start of Poll.
8. No Minister, Member of Parliament, official or member of a political party or elected shall campaign directly or indirectly for any Candidate. No trips or official tours shall be undertaken by a Minister or Member of Parliament to a *Demkhong* during the Election Period except to cast their votes on the Poll Day should they wish not to use the Postal Ballot facility extended to them and their spouse under Section 331 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008.
9. The other elected Local Government officials i.e. the *Gup, Mangmi, Gewog Tshogpas* and *Thromde Ngotshab* shall not campaign directly or indirectly for any Candidate and shall only participate as a voter on the Poll day.

(E) Election Campaign Finance & Election Campaign Returns

10. A Candidate cannot exceed his/her election campaign expense beyond the ceiling fixed in Section 59 of the Public Election Fund Act 2008 i.e. total of Nu. 50,000/-.
11. All Candidates must submit accounts of campaign to the National Observer for his/her scrutiny and file Election Returns within thirty days of declaration of the Election Result as per the prescribed procedures. Those who fail to lodge accounts of election expenses within the time and manner required under Section 179 (d) of the Election Act will result in being barred from participation in future elections.

(F) Common Forum for Public Address by All Candidates

12. The Returning Officer, in consultation with the respective Election Coordinator and Security Coordinator shall arrange a Common Forum in the *Chiwogs* to provide the Candidates of the concerned *Demkhong* equal opportunity to address the electorate eliminating the necessity to call for public meetings by each Candidate separately and thereby avoiding inconvenience to voters of attending multiple sessions as per the *Guidelines for the Conduct of the Common Forum for Election Campaign, 2018*.

(G) Postal Ballots

13. The Postal Voter List shall be based on Postal Voters Registration for the National Assembly 2018.

(H) Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC)

14. Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC) issued by the Election Commission shall be the valid document for identification of voters at the Polling Stations during the Elections.

(I) Electronic Voting Machines & Indelible Ink

15. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for polling in the Polling Station.
16. Quality indelible ink shall be used during the elections and care must be taken in applying the indelible ink on the **Right Thumb**.

(J) Election Officials

17. The Dzongdag of concerned dzongkhag shall be appointed as the Chief Election Coordinator, concerned Dzongrab and Dungpa as the Deputy Chief Election Coordinator and the concerned *Gewog* Administrative Officer as the Assistant Chief Election Coordinator.
18. The Election Commission shall appoint the Dzongkhag Electoral Officer as the Returning Officer for conduct of the bye-election & *vacant* demkhong election.
19. The appointment of Presiding Officers and Polling Officers for the Elections shall be as per the Appointment Orders issued by the Returning Officer on or before 20th of April 2019 i.e. two days before the day of Poll, unless otherwise authorised.
20. The Presiding Officers shall serve as the Counting Supervisors and a Polling Officer as the Counting Assistant, authorized as such in the Appointment Orders issued by the concerned Returning Officer.
21. The Election Officials shall not be posted to the *Chiwog* where his/her *Gung* or *Mitsi* is registered.

(K) Election Code of Conduct

22. The Election Code of Conduct shall continue to be in force until the completion of the Election Period i.e. from 2nd of April to 10th of May 2019
23. All Election Officers, Candidates and Voters must comply with the Election Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations, Guidelines & the Appointment Orders.

(L) Poll Day & Polling Hours

24. **The Poll Day, 22nd of April 2019, shall be declared a Public Holiday in concerned *demkhongs*.** All employers are required by law to grant required number of days as election leave for any registered voter from the *Demkhong* wishing to go to vote in person in polling station. The polling hours shall be from 9am to 5pm.

(M) No or Only One Candidate

25. If there is no Candidate after the last date for filing of nomination of Candidates notified herein, the election will be postponed till further notice.
26. If there is only one Candidate after the last date of filing of nomination of Candidates announced herein, an uncontested election, in accordance with Sections 575 and 576 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008, will be conducted.

Now, thereof, from the day of issue of this Notification, the Election Commission of Bhutan notifies the general public on the Election Schedule of the aforementioned bye-election & vacant *demkhong* election and all matters relating to it.

Issued on the 27th Day of the Second Month of the Female Earth Pig Year corresponding to 2nd of April 2019.

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan