



འབྲུག་གི་བཅའ་གཙུག་ལྷན་ཚོགས།
ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF-01/2022/5760

Dated: 11th April 2022

NOTIFICATION

Local government elections in remaining 24 vacant *Demkhongs*

The Election Commission of Bhutan, in pursuance of Section 197 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008, hereby calls for Local Government Elections in the following remaining vacant *Demkhongs*:

SN	Dzongkhag	Gewog	Demkhong
1	Haa	Kartshog	Ingo_Pharikha
2	Lhuenste	Tsaenkhar	Dekiling_Tshochen
3	Monggar	Chagsakhar	Doongsingma_Pam
4	Paro	Dopshari	Duezhi_Jipa
		Loongnyi	Jieu_Woochhu
		Sharpa	Bara_Zhunggar
5	Pema Gatshel	Dechhenling	Bidoongri_Yangmalashing
	Pema Gatshel	Chhimoong	Pangthang_Redingla
	Pema Gatshel	Chhoekhorling	Yargyewoong
	Pema Gatshel	Dungmaed	Wongborang
	Pema Gatshel	Khar	Khengzor_Laber
6	Samdrup Jongkhar	Orong	Nabar_Philooma
	Samdrup Jongkhar	Samrang	Damsagang Teod
	Samdrup Jongkhar	<i>Thromde</i>	Samdrup Jongkhar Bar
7	Sarpang	<i>Thromde</i>	Tashiling
8	Thimphu	Kawang	Chhangdagang_Chhoekhortse_ Phajoding

Post Box No.: 2008, Democracy House, Kawajangsa, Thimphu: Bhutan

334851, 334852 (PABX), 334762 (EA to CEC), Fax: 334763

Website: www.ecb.bt E-mail: cec@ecb.bt

	Thimphu	Lingzhi	Chakphu
	Thimphu	Naro	Tagsidthang
	Thimphu	Naro	Pagoed
	Thimphu	Soe	Jomphu
	Thimphu	Thromde	Motithang
9	Trongsa	Langthil	Langthil
10	Wangdue phodrang	Bjednag	Garzhikha_Omchheygang
	Wangdue phodrang	Ruebisa	Bjagphu

The Election Schedule and the details concerning *Demkhongs*, 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

Date and Time	Remarks
11 th of April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issuance of Notification - Registration for Postal Ballot (Interested registered voters residing outside their <i>Chiwog</i> to start registering for postal ballot online at: https://berms.ecb.bt/postal/registration)
12 th of April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Signature process by eligible candidates
18 th of April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last date for filing of nominations of candidates
19 th of April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Scrutiny of nomination of candidates - Last date of registration for postal ballot

21 st of April 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last date for withdrawal of candidature - Commencement of the election campaign - Returning Officer to commence sending postal ballot to registered postal voters
3 rd of May 2022 8 a.m.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End of election campaign
4 th of May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last day for receiving postal ballots by Returning Officer
5th of May 2022 9.a.m to 5.p.m	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poll Day and Counting of Results
6 th of May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Declaration of Results & Submission of the Results to the Druk Gyalpo - Start of Election Petition Period
16 th of May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Issuance of the certificate of election
20 th of May 2022	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - End of election petition period

(B) Selection process of the *Tshogpa* candidates

1. 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.
2. A registered voter aspiring to contest *Chiwog/Thromde Tshogpa* elections shall produce signatures of at least 5 percent of the registered voters from the *Demkhong* supporting his/her nomination, provided no voter has supported more than one nominee.
3. Aspiring candidates, while seeking support of 5 percent of the registered voters of his/her *Demkhong* via signature drive, must ensure strict compliance to Covid-19 Health Safety Protocols while engaging with the voters.

(C) Filing of Nomination Papers by Candidates

4. The candidates contesting elections shall submit the following nomination papers to concerned Returning officer on or before 18th of April 2022.

- i. Nomination forms;
- ii. Affidavit from Court;
- iii. Asset Declaration;
- iv. Security clearance certificate for election (online);
- v. Audit clearance certificate for election (online);
- vi. Tax clearance certificate for election;
- vii. Certificate of Functional Literacy and Possession of required skills (FLT);
- viii. Marriage certificate and copy of CID, (if applicable);
- ix. Relieving order issued by Head of Ministry/Department/Agency (if applicable);
- x. A declaration by the candidate in the prescribed form declaring that he/she is not a member of a Political Party, or has resigned from his/her membership at least a year ago in the manner specified in Section 206 (d) of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 and
- xi. Undertaking by candidates on Office of Profit.

5. For the purpose of ascertaining the age eligibility of a candidate which as per the electoral laws must be a minimum of 25 years and a maximum of 65 years, a candidate for this election must be born on or before 18th of April 1997 but not before 18th of April 1957.

(D) Electoral Rolls

6. The qualifying date for the electoral roll for the vacant *Demkhong* elections shall be 1st April 2022. Therefore, all those who are not younger than eighteen years of age as of 1st of April 2022 or born on or before 1st of April 2004 shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter.
7. No changes shall be made to the Electoral Roll of after 5th of April 2022 i.e., thirty days before the date of poll.

(E) Election Campaign

8. No Minister, Member of Parliament, official or member of a political party and an elected Local Government functionary shall campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate.
9. No travels or official tours shall be undertaken by a Minister or Member of Parliament particularly to his/her *Demkhong* during the election period, except to cast their votes on the Poll Day should they wish not to avail the postal ballot facility. If such travel to a *Demkhong* becomes unavoidable, he/she shall first report to the ECB/concerned Returning Officer.
10. All banks or financial institutions shall report to the ECB any abnormal transaction of money, including in the account of a candidate contesting the elections.

Election Campaign Expenditure

11. A Candidate for this elections cannot exceed his/her election campaign expense beyond the ceiling fixed by Election Commission of Bhutan i.e., total of Nu. 75,000/-.

Election Campaign Returns

12. A Candidate must submit accounts of campaign to the concerned Returning Officer for his/her scrutiny and must file his/ her returns of election expenses to the concerned Dzongkhag Electoral Office within thirty days of declaration of the election result.

Common Forum for Public Address by all Candidates

13. The Returning Officer, in consultation with the respective Gewog Election Coordinator and Security Coordinator shall arrange a Common Forum in concerned *Demkhong*.
14. The Returning Officer shall facilitate the gathering of the electorate at an appropriate venue (open air such as football ground, futsal ground, stadium, assembly ground/spacious hall such as auditorium, MPH of schools) and time in the *Demkhong* to hear the candidates. However, all individuals attending

Common Forum (CF) shall ensure full compliance of latest COVID-19 health safety protocols issued by Ministry of Health.

(F) Postal Ballots

15. In the light of the prevailing COVID-19 situation in the country, the ECB is extending the Postal Ballot Facility to all the interested registered voters residing outside their *Demkhongs*, in addition to those included under Section 331 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

(G) Electronic Voting Machines

16. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for polling in all *Demkhongs*.

(H) Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC)

17. The ECB shall accept either the Citizenship Identity Card (CID) or Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC) for the purpose of identification of the voter on the poll day so as to mitigate the risk of transmission and spread of COVID-19 at the VPIC issuance centers.

(I) Indelible Ink

18. Indelible ink shall be used during the vacant *Demkhong* elections and mark from top of the nail to the bottom of the first joint of the RIGHT THUMB.

(J) Polling Stations

19. There shall be at least one polling station in every *Demkhong*, so that managing a polling station would be simple and also convenient for voters.

(K) Election Officials

Election Coordinators

20. The *Dzongdag* of the respective Dzongkhag shall be appointed as the Chief Election Coordinator, *Dzongrab* of the respective Dzongkhag, Executive Secretary of the respective *Thromde* and *Dungpa* as the Deputy Chief Election

Coordinators responsible for carrying out the roles, responsibilities and duties as provided in the Electoral Laws and Appointment Orders.

Returning Officers

21. The Election Commission shall appoint a respective Dzongkhag Election officer as a Returning Officer for each of the vacant *Demkhong* elections 2022.
22. A Returning Officer shall be vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Returning Officers and the Appointment Order.

Presiding Officers and Polling Officers

23. Returning Officers shall appoint the Presiding and Polling Officers from the list of government officials working in the same Dzongkhag, provided by Dzongkhag Election Office. The appointment shall not be earlier than one day before the Poll day, unless otherwise authorized.
24. Presiding Officers are vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Presiding Officers.

Counting Supervisors & Counting Assistants

25. The Returning Officers shall authorize the Presiding Officer and Polling Officer I in a polling station to function as the Counting Supervisor and the Counting Assistant to count the results after the close of Poll.
26. Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants shall be vested with the authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Counting Supervisor and Counting Assistant.

Assignment of Duty Stations

27. Returning Officers, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers, Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants shall ensure that he/she is not being placed in the

Dzongkhag where his/her *Gung* or *Mitsi* is registered, unless authorized otherwise.

(L) Law and Order & Deployment of Forces

28. The Royal Bhutan Police shall be responsible for deploying security personnel at every polling station as per the *Election Security Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan*.
29. Security personnel shall ensure that he/she is not being placed in the Dzongkhag where his/her *Gung* or *Mitsi* is registered, unless authorized otherwise.
30. The Election Security Focal Officers shall work in close coordination and cooperation with the election officers as a team towards conducting the elections smoothly.

(M) Election Code of Conduct

31. The Election Code of Conduct shall come into force from the date of the notification calling for elections issued by the ECB and shall continue to be in force until the completion of the election period in the vacant *Demkhongs* i.e., 11th April 2022 to 5th of May 2022.
32. All election officers, political parties, candidates and voters must comply with the Election Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations and Guidelines.

(N) Remaining Above Politics and Apolitical

33. No religious events, involving public gatherings, shall be organized or conducted during the entire election period.
34. Religious personalities shall neither vote in the elections nor participate directly or indirectly in the elections.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

35. CSOs shall not participate, directly or indirectly, or give grounds to reasonably construe support, opposition or dislike of any candidate contesting the elections.

(O) Poll Day

36. The Poll Day for the vacant *Demkhong* Elections shall be on 5th of May 2022.

37. The polling hours shall be from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

38. The Poll Day shall be declared as a public holiday in all the vacant *Demkhongs*.

39. All employers are required, by law, to grant the required numbers of days as leave of absence for a reasonable period as is necessary to enable him/her to vote at the election, subject to the exceptions made in Sections 339 and 341. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all voters residing outside the *Demkhongs* are encouraged to register and vote through postal ballots.

40. The officials and voters shall ensure full compliance with all COVID-19 health safety protocols at the polling station.

(P) *Demkhong* with No Candidate or Only One Candidate

41. 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.

42. The *Demkhong* with only one candidate after the last date of filing of nomination of Candidates announced herein will be conducted as ‘Uncontested Election’ in accordance with Sections 575 and 576 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

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 vacant *Demkhong* elections 2022 and all matters relating to it.

Issued on the 10th day of the 2nd Month of the Water Male Tiger Year corresponding to 11th of April 2022.

Officiating Chief Election Commissioner