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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF-01/2022/85

Dated: 28th July, 2022

NOTIFICATION

Bye-Election for the post of *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa* and Vacant *Demkhong* election in Local Government, 2022

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 and Vacant *Demkhong* Election for the post of *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpas* and *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* in the following *Demkhongs*.

Dzongkhag	Gewog	Chiwog	Election type	Remarks
Dagana	Nichula	Dramze_Kesa	Bye-Election	Incumbent removed from office
Samdrup Jongkhar	Pemathang	Kathoobdang_Shiling Gye	Bye-Election	Incumbent passed away
Samdrup Jongkhar	Thromde	Samdrup Jongkhar Bar	Vacant <i>Demkhong</i>	Vacant

The Election Schedule and the details concerning *Demkhongs*, 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
	- Issuance of Notification
28-07-2022	- Eligible postal voters to start registering for postal ballot online at: https://berms.ecb.bt/postal/registration
29-07-2022	- Signature process by eligible candidates
3-08-2022	- Last date for filing of Nominations of candidates

Post Box No.: 2008, *Democracy House*, Kawangjansa, Thimphu: Bhutan

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

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

4-08-2022	- Scrutiny of nomination of candidates & commencement of the election campaign - Last date of registration for postal ballot - Returning Officer to commence sending postal ballot to registered postal voters
6-08-2022	- Last date for withdrawal of candidature
15-08-2022	- End of election campaign
16-08-2022	- Last day for receiving Postal Ballots
17-08-2022	- Poll Day and Counting of Results
18-08-2022	- Declaration of Results & Submission of the Results to the Druk Gyalpo
23-08-2022	- Issuance of the Certificate of Election
31-08-2022	- End of election Petition Period

(B) Signature Process by the Candidates

2. A registered voter aspiring to contest *Gewog/Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* election 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.
3. For the purpose of ascertaining the age eligibility of candidate 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 **3rd August 1997** but not before **3rd August 1957**

(C) Electoral Roll

4. The qualifying date for the Electoral Roll shall be **1st April 2022**. All those who are not younger than **eighteen years of age as on 1st April 2022 or born on or before 1st April 2004** shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter.
5. The Final Electoral Roll for the Election shall be published and provided to the Returning Officer on **30th July 2022**.

(D) Postal Ballots

6. Eligible postal voters wishing to exercise their franchise through postal ballot for this election must register latest by **4th August, 2022**.

(E) Electronic Voting Machines

7. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for polling in all the polling stations.
8. Quality indelible ink shall be used during the elections and care must be taken in applying the indelible ink on the **Right Index Finger**.

(F) Election Campaign

9. No Minister, Member of Parliament, official or member of a political party or elected person shall campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate.
10. No visits 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 spouses under Section 331 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.
11. The other elected Local Government officials i.e. *Thrompon, Gup, Mangmi, Tshogpa, Thromde Tshogpa* and Dzongkhag *Thromde Ngotshab* shall not campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate and shall only participate as a voter on the Poll Day.
12. No candidate shall use the title, designation, rank, *Kabney/Rachu, Pata/Geyntag*, or any other sign, insignia or symbol of an office held earlier, on person, car or any personal effects as may be used during the campaign period by the candidate, representatives or supporters.
13. A civil servant, except in the capacity of an election official mandated to fulfil a required electoral function, should not attend campaign meetings.
14. All banks or financial institutions shall report to the ECB of any abnormal transaction of money, including in the account of a candidate contesting the election in the respective *Demkhong*.
15. A door-to-door election campaign shall not be conducted before 6 a.m. and after 6 p.m.
16. Any unauthorized person carrying out election campaign activities must be reported to an election officer or election security personnel on duty to be prosecuted for violation of Electoral Laws.
17. A candidate shall be liable for all acts of commission and omission of their election representatives which may include any interference in the conduct of lawful electoral works and/or disturbing peace and order, undermining free and fair election.

18. A candidate during the election shall carry out all election campaign activities only upon obtaining permit from the Returning Officer.

19. A candidate and all concerned shall neither serve meals and refreshments nor pay money, give gifts and reward the general public or voters for attendance of election campaigns or produce, wear and distribute T-shirts and caps for campaigning.

(G) Election Campaign Finance & Election Campaign Returns

20. 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. 75,000/-.

21. A candidate must submit accounts of campaign to the Returning Officer for his/her scrutiny and file Election Returns within thirty days of declaration of the Election Result as per the prescribed procedures, failing which punitive action shall be taken as per the electoral laws.

(H) Election Officials

22. The Dzongdag of concerned Dzongkhag shall be appointed as the Chief Election Coordinator, concerned Dzongrab/Dungpa/Executive Secretary of Thromde as the Deputy Chief Election Coordinator and the concerned *Gewog* Administrative Officer as *Gewog* Election Coordinator.

23. The Election Commission shall appoint the Dzongkhag Electoral Officer of concerned Dzongkhag as the Returning Officer for conduct of the Election.

24. The appointment of Presiding Officers and Polling Officers for the Elections shall be as per the appointment orders issued by the Returning Officer two days before the day of poll, unless otherwise authorized.

25. 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.

26. The Election Officials shall not be posted to the *Chiwog* where his/her Gung or Mitsi is registered.

27. The Election officials shall declare/disclose any relationship that could lead to a conflict of interest with his/her duties as an Election Official for the conduct of Election.

(I) Election Code of Conduct

28. The Election Code of Conduct shall continue to be in force until the completion of the Election Period i.e. from **28th July to 17th August, 2022.**

29. 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.

(J) Remaining Above Politics and Apolitical

30. No religious events, involving public gatherings, shall be organized or conducted during the entire election period in the concerned *Demkhongs*.

31. Religious personalities shall neither vote in the elections nor participate directly or indirectly in the election.

(K) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

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

(L) Poll Day & Polling Hours

33. The Poll Day, **17th August, 2022** shall be declared a Public Holiday in concerned *Demkhong*.

34. 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 at the polling station. The polling hours shall be from **9 am to 5 pm**.

35. The ECB shall accept either the Citizenship Identity Card (CID) or Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC), in original, for the purpose of identification of the voter on the Poll Day.

(M) No Candidate or Only One Candidate

36. 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.

37. If there is only one candidate after the last date of filing of nomination of Candidates announced herein, an uncontested election, will be conducted 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 Election and all matters relating to it.

Issued on the 30th Day of the Fifth Month of the Water Male Tiger Year corresponding to 28th July 2022.

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan