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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF-01/2023/695

Dated: 19th January, 2023

NOTIFICATION

Bye-Elections and Post Vacant election in the Local Government.

The Election Commission of Bhutan, in pursuance of Sections 197, 577 and 579 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, hereby calls Bye-Elections and Post Vacant elections for the following positions.

1. Gup in Maedtsho Gewog under Lhuentse Dzongkhag due to resignation of the incumbent;
2. Mangmi in Kazhi Gewog under Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag due to resignation of the incumbent;
3. Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa of Gaupel Chiwog of Hoongrel Gewog under Paro Dzongkhag due to resignation of the incumbent; and
4. Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa of Pangthang Chiwog of Chhimmong Gewog under Pema Gatshel Dzongkhag. The position remained vacant due to unavailability of eligible candidates.

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
19-January-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Issuance of Notification- Eligible postal voters to start submitting postal ballot registration form, available in ECB website www.ecb.bt- The forms may be emailed to srinzin@ecb.bt
23-January-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Commencement of <i>Dhamngoi Zomdu</i> to select nominees for the post of Gup and Mangmi- Signature process by eligible candidates for the post of Tshogpa
30-January-2023	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- 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

31-January-2023	- Scrutiny of nomination of candidates & commencement of the election campaign - Last date of registration for postal ballot
2-February-2023	- Last date for withdrawal of candidature - Returning Officer to commence sending postal ballot to registered postal voters
15-February-2023	- End of election campaign
16-February-2023	- Last day for receiving Postal Ballots
17-February-2023	- Poll Day and Counting of Results
18-February-2023	- Declaration of Results & Submission of the Result to the Druk Gyalpo
24-February-2023	- Issuance of the Certificate of Election
8-March-2023	- End of election Petition Period

(B) Selection/Signature process by 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 *Dhamngoi Zomdu* shall be held in each Chiwog of the concerned Gewog by the Dzongkhag Election Authority for the purpose of selecting not more than one nominee from every Chiwog of the Gewog for the post of Gup and Mangmi.
4. The EVM and authorized E-Roll must be used in the Chiwog Zomdu.
5. In the absence of any Registered Voter interested to contest, the meeting shall submit to the Dzongkhag Election Authority a statement (Nomination Form No. 6B) to that effect.
6. A registered voter aspiring to contest *Gewog 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.
7. 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 **30th January, 1998** but not before **30th January, 1958**.

(C) **Electoral Roll**

8. The qualifying date for the Electoral Roll shall be **1st January, 2023**. All those who are not younger than **eighteen years of age as on 1st January, 2023 or born on or before 1st January, 2005** shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter.
9. The Final Electoral Roll for the election shall be published and provided to the Returning Officer on **31st January, 2023**.

(D) **Postal Ballots**

10. Eligible postal voters wishing to exercise their franchise through postal ballot for this election must register with ECB latest by **31st January, 2023**.

(E) **Electronic Voting Machines**

11. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for polling in the polling station.
12. 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**

13. No Minister, Member of Parliament, official or member of a political party or elected person shall campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate.
14. 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.
15. 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.
16. 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.
17. A civil servant, except in the capacity of an election official mandated to fulfil a required electoral function, should not attend campaign meetings.

18. 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*.
19. A door-to-door election campaign shall not be conducted before **6 a.m.** and after **6 p.m.**
20. 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.
21. 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.
22. A candidate during the election shall carry out all election campaign activities only upon obtaining permit from the Returning Officer.
23. 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

24. 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/-.
25. 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

26. The Dzongdags of the concerned Dzongkhag shall be appointed as the Chief Election Coordinator and the *Gewog* Administrative Officers as the *Gewog* Election Coordinator.
27. The Dzongkhag Electoral Officers of the concerned Dzongkhag shall be appointed as the Returning Officer for conduct of the election.
28. The appointment of Presiding Officers and Polling Officers for the elections shall be as per the appointment orders issued by the Returning Officer.
29. 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.

30. 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

31. The Election Code of Conduct shall continue to be in force until the completion of the Election Period i.e. from **19th January to 17th February, 2023**.
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.

(J) Remaining Above Politics and Apolitical

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

(K) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)

35. 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

36. The Poll Day, **17 February, 2023** shall be declared a Public Holiday in the concerned *Demkhong*.
37. 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**.
38. The Election Commission of Bhutan 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.

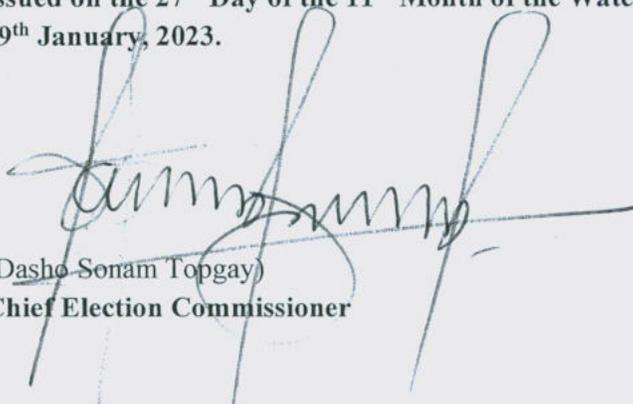
(M) No Candidate or Only One Candidate

39. 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.
40. 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 27th Day of the 11th Month of the Water Male Tiger Year corresponding to 19th January, 2023.


(Dasho Sonam Topgay)
Chief Election Commissioner

Copy to:

1. Hon'ble Prime Minister, Royal Government of Bhutan, Kingdom of Bhutan
2. Hon'ble Chief Justice, Royal Court of Justice, Supreme Court of Bhutan, Thimphu
3. Hon'ble Speaker, National Assembly, Parliament of Bhutan, Thimphu
4. Hon'ble Chairperson, National Council, Parliament of Bhutan, Thimphu
5. Hon'ble Opposition Leader, National Assembly, Parliament of Bhutan, Thimphu
6. Hon'ble Gyalpoi Zimpon, His Majesty's Secretariat, Tashichhoedzong, Thimphu
7. Hon'ble Secretary to His Majesty the King of Bhutan, His Majesty's Secretariat, Tashichhoedzong, Thimphu
8. Hon'ble Secretary to His Majesty the Druk Gyal Zhipa, Thimphu
9. Hon'ble Chief Justice, Royal Court of Justice, High Court of Bhutan, Thimphu
10. Hon'ble Chief Operation Officer, Royal Bhutan Army, Thimphu
11. Hon'ble Chief of Police, Royal Bhutan Police, Thimphu
12. Hon'ble Commandant, Royal Body Guards, Dechencholing, Thimphu
13. Hon'ble Chairperson, Anti-Corruption Commission, Thimphu
14. Hon'ble Chairperson, Royal Civil Service Commission, Thimphu
15. Hon'ble Auditor General, Royal Audit Authority, Thimphu
16. Hon'ble Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet, Royal Government of Bhutan, Thimphu
17. All Hon'ble Secretaries to the Royal Government of Bhutan
18. Election Security Coordinator, Royal Bhutan Police, Thimphu

19. Drangpon, Royal Court of Justice, concerned Dzongkhag
20. Dzongdag, Dzongkhag Administration, concerned Dzongkhag
21. Dzongkhag Electoral Officer, concerned Dzongkhag