

Completion of Tenure of the 3rd Election Commission

The Election Commission of Bhutan bade farewell to the Chief Election Commissioner Dasho Sonam Topgay, Commissioner Ugyen Chewang and Commissioner Dawa Tenzin upon successfully completing the 3rd Election Commission's five-year tenure on 13th October 2025.



Dasho Sonam Topgay, the Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan, had been a seasoned civil servant and a distinguished leader with over 38 years of dedicated service to the nation. He holds a Bachelor's degree with Honours in Political Science (1982–1985) and a Master of Public Administration (1992–1994), and has consistently advanced his professional capabilities through prestigious international training and fellowships. His academic pursuits include a Diploma in French Language from the University of Clermont-Ferrand, France (1992), and a Diploma in Human Rights Reporting from the United Nations Centre for Human Rights and the ILO, Turin, Italy (1995). As part of Bhutan's elite civil service, he also completed the IAS Probationers' Training at the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration in Mussoorie, India (1987–1989), and was awarded the esteemed Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship at the University of Minnesota, USA (2005–2006).

Throughout his illustrious career in the then Ministry of Home and Cultural Affairs (1986–2020), Dasho Sonam Topgay held several high-level leadership positions that shaped public administration and governance in Bhutan. He served as Home Secretary (2016–2020), Director General of the Department of Law and Order (2014–2016), and Director General of the Departments of Civil Registration and Census and Local Governance (2005–2014). His earlier roles as Joint Director and Officer in the Bureau of Law and Order (1986–2005) reflected his enduring commitment to legal, administrative, and institutional reforms.

Dasho's leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic was particularly noteworthy. As Chairperson of the Southern COVID-19 Task Force in 2020 and later to the Eastern COVID-19 Task Force in 2022, he played a crucial role in safeguarding national public health and coordinating multi-sectoral emergency responses.

He was formally appointed as the Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan on 13th October 2020. In appreciation of his exceptional service to the nation, His Majesty The King conferred upon him the Red Scarf and the honorific title of "Dasho" during the 113th National Day celebrations at Punakha Dzong on 17th December 2020.

Under his stewardship, the landmark achievements of the ECB were, firstly, the successful conduct of major elections amid the COVID-19 pandemic, flawlessly executed without a single case of

transmission, showcasing exceptional planning and commitment.

Secondly, the introduction of the New Rules 2022 laid a visionary foundation for a modern, future-ready electoral system.

Thirdly, in alignment with the RGoB's national transformation agenda, the 3rd Commission spearheaded bold and forward-looking reforms with strong emphasis on leveraging cutting-edge technology, demonstrating the ECB's innovation, resilience, and readiness for the future.

Lastly, the ECB's expanded civic outreach, through a Comprehensive Civic and Voter Education Module tailored to six key population groups, continues to ensure inclusive, informed, and meaningful citizen participation in the democratic process.



Starting his career in 1994 as Assistant Engineer and Project Coordinator, **Commissioner Ugyen Chewang** brought a wealth of technical expertise, strategic leadership, and a deep commitment to public service. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering and a Master's degree in Engineering from the University of Southampton, United Kingdom, credentials that laid a solid foundation for his career in national development. With over two decades of experience in the civil and public infrastructure sector, He has served in various high-impact roles, including as the Chief Executive Officer of the National Housing Development Corporation Limited, where he spearheaded major initiatives to improve affordable housing and urban development in Bhutan. In 2015, he was appointed as Election Commissioner and reappointed in 2020 for a second term to serve as Third Commission.

Commissioner Ugyen Chewang has played a pivotal role in strengthening Bhutan's democratic institutions. His tenure has been marked by forward-looking electoral reforms, institutional strengthening, and regional cooperation. A strong advocate for innovation and professional development, he continues to engage in international electoral exchange and learning. He exemplifies integrity, technical excellence, and a results-oriented approach to governance, making him a key pillar in Bhutan's electoral leadership.



Commissioner Dawa Tenzin, holding Bachelor's of Commerce degree from Sherubtse College & certifications in numerous fields, commenced his service in 1988, and carried enormous institutional experiences specifically in the financial and administrative domain. Appointed on 14th October 2020, his position reflected a career grounded in integrity, continuity, and a deep understanding of Bhutan's electoral system. Prior to this appointment, he served as the Secretary of the ECB, where he played a pivotal role in strengthening the electoral processes and internal systems of the ECB.

With decades of service in Bhutan's public sector, Commissioner Dawa Tenzin had been closely involved in the financial & budget planning and delivery of major electoral events, including Parliamentary and Local Government (LG) Elections.

His long-standing tenure in key administrative roles within the Royal Audit Authority and the ECB speaks volumes of his technical competence, institutional memory, and strong grounding in electoral laws, operations, and civic engagement. He contributed meaningfully to the Commission's reform agenda, including the digital transformation efforts, regional collaborations, and enhancement of civic education programs. He exemplifies the core values of public service, duty, discretion, and dedication.

As the 3rd Commission concludes its tenure, the ECB is pleased to reflect with immense pride and deep gratitude on their legacies, whose transformative leadership from 2020 to 2025 marked a defining chapter in our institutional journey.

The milestones achieved during their tenure, most notably the successful conduct of the 3rd Local Government Elections in 2021 amid the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 4th Parliamentary Elections in 2023-24, and several bye-elections for both Local Government and Parliament, stand as enduring testaments to their unwavering commitment to service, trust, and transformation. These accomplishments highlight not only operational excellence but also the resilience and dedication that characterize their leadership.

Each of the three Commission members brought distinct leadership strengths that significantly shaped the ECB's culture and morale. Their integrity, vision, approachability, decisiveness, and compassion elevated the institution to new heights.

Guided by the noble vision of His Majesty The King, the 3rd Commission led the ECB with an exceptional fusion of wisdom, integrity, and collaboration setting a new standard through its triangulated approach to leadership. This exemplary model of collective governance not only shaped the institution's trajectory but also left a lasting legacy that continues to inspire us to uphold and advance the ECB's core values with unwavering dedication.