

ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN



Summary Report on the State Funding and Election Returns of the Bye-Election for Nubi_Tangsibji Demkhong, Trongsa Dzongkhag, 2025

Legal Provisions

1. Sections 7,8, 54, 55, 56, 57, 113, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120 and 121 of the Public Election Fund Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008 specifically provides that:
 7. The Election Commission shall fix the maximum spending limits for Political Parties and candidates in an election to Parliament and Local Government from time to time.
 8. The Election Commission shall submit to parliament an annual estimate of fund required for financing of election campaigns.
 54. The Election Commission shall, disburse funds to a Party for the Primary Round which shall be calculated at an amount equal to or less than Ngultrum 100,000/- per constituency or as may be fixed by the Election Commission from time to time and having regard to the provisions of sections 19 to 23 and the total number of constituencies.
 55. A candidate in each constituency for the purposes of General Elections and National Council elections shall be eligible to receive an amount equal to or less than Ngultrum 100,000/- or as may be fixed by the Election Commission from time to time.
 56. Each party, in addition to the base amount received from the Fund, can incur expenditure from its own funds for elections in the Primary Round and General Elections, up to an amount not exceeding the fund provided by the Election Commission.
 57. Each candidate, in addition to the base amount received from the Fund, can incur expenditure from funds received from his/her party for elections to the General Election up to an amount not exceeding the fund provided by the Election Commission.
 113. Every Party and Candidate shall file before the Division, their returns of election expenses in the prescribed forms, exhibiting details of all contributions received by the Candidate or Party and all expenditure incurred or authorized by them in relation to elections within thirty days of the declaration of results.
 115. A copy of the account under sections 110 and 113 shall be made available by the Division for public scrutiny in the prescribed form.

116. The party in the case of Primary Round and candidates in the case of General Elections and National Council or Local Government Elections shall make available for public inspection details of all bank accounts and campaign finance records in the manner and place specified by the Election Commission.
117. Any request to inspect the parties' or candidates' records shall be sent to the treasurer of the political party and in the case of candidates to the person designated by the candidate concerned with a copy to the Election Commission at least ten days before the proposed day of inspection.
118. The treasurer or the person designated by the candidate shall provide such document not later than five working days after receipt of the request made under section 117.
119. The requesting party may, if a request made under section 118 is not complied with, notify the Election Commission.
120. The Election Commission may, on receipt of notice under section 117, enforce the public inspection of record by requisitioning the production of such records or items specified in the request in such time as may be stipulated by the Election Commission.
121. The Election Commission shall not permit public inspection of records if it determines that the inspection is for harassment purposes.

Purpose

2. The purpose of State financing of elections to Parliament, is to:
 - a. Ensure equal and wide participation of all interested and qualified Candidates and registered Political Parties;
 - b. Serve as neutral source of funds to all interested Candidates and Political Parties, providing them opportunity to communicate their views and positions to voters and compete on an equal footing on a level playing field;
 - c. Curb undue influence of money on elections;
 - d. Prevent unregulated and non-permissible flow of funds, from any source, into political contest; and

- e. Ensure clean, free and fair Elections and National Referendums.

Eligibility for Campaign Fund

3. A Political Party or Candidate in the National Assembly Elections is eligible to receive an amount equal to the base amount to be received by the eligible Party/Candidate, if the Party's Letter of Intent/Candidate's nomination has been duly accepted.
4. A Party/Candidate cannot exceed election campaign expenses beyond the ceiling of Nu.300,000/- fixed by the Election Commission and notified to the public vide Notification No. ECB/NOTIF-01/2020/2927 dated 18th July 2025 i.e., Nu. 150,000/- being provided by the State and up to Nu.150,000/- from the Party's Fund raised through the permitted sources of income.
5. A total amount of Nu. 150,000/- each to the candidate of Bhutan Tendrel Party (BTP) and People's Democratic Party (PDP) was disbursed after their nominations was accepted by the Returning Officer to contest the Bye-Election of Nubi_Tangsibji Demkhong.

Permissible use of Campaign Funds

6. Campaign Expenditure from the State Campaign Fund and the Party's own fund are required to be limited to financing or reimbursement for the election campaign expenses indicated in the Public Election Fund Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008, including:
 - (1) Rental of campaign office spaces;
 - (2) Utility Bills;
 - (3) Goods and services for direct campaign purpose;
 - (4) Hire and rent of office automation equipment during elections;
 - (5) Stationery;
 - (6) Rent for facilities for a specific campaign-related event;
 - (7) Communication expenses;
 - (8) Production of Manifesto;
 - (9) Canvassing and election rallies;
 - (10) Hire of motor vehicles for campaign purposes;
 - (11) Display of Party name, election symbols, logo, poster or flags on vehicles;
and
 - (12) DSA for Candidates and duly appointed representatives of the Political Parties and Candidates.

State Sponsorship

7. A Candidate under the Electoral Laws, enjoys State sponsorship for the following campaign activities:
 - (1) Public Debates;
 - (2) Common Forum;
 - (3) Election Broadcast;
 - (4) Brochures and Pamphlets;
 - (5) Posters;
 - (6) Media Advertisement and Postage; and
 - (7) Campaign Fund Management Training.

Election Campaign Returns

8. The Election Commission received the Election Returns, besides the fortnightly expenditure reports counter signed by Observers, for the Bye-Election from the two candidates on the following dates:
 - (1) Bhutan Tendrel Party – 10th September, 2025
 - (2) People's Democratic Party - 10th September, 2025
9. The deadline for the submission of Election Returns was on 5th of October 2025. Both the candidates submitted the Election Returns before the deadline.

Fortnightly Campaign Expenditure

10. The Fortnightly campaign expenditure submitted by the candidates were as per the permissible expenditure under PEFRR 2025.
11. There were no unspent funds from the Bye-Election returned by the candidates. Additionally, both candidates incurred expenses of Nu. 22,272/- for print media advertising, which was covered through their respective party funds.

Summary of Candidate wise Election Returns

12. The summary of the actual expenditure is as shown in the table below

Party Name	Candidate DSA	Representative DSA	Companions DSA	Transportation	Rent	Communication	Total
BTP	39,750.00		22,952.00	68,900.00	15,000.00	3,398.00	150,000.00
PDP	41,250.00	7,550.00	17,000.00	74,200.00	10,000.00		150,000.00

Election Campaign Expenditure

13. Besides the campaign fund provided to the candidates in direct transfer to their respective election bank account, the State also sponsored the following campaign materials and provided each candidate equal broadcasting time and space in the print media for the transmission of their political messages and manifesto as shown in **Table 5**.

Table 5: Details of Campaign Expenditure Categories and Total Actual Expenditure incurred

Sl.No	State Provisions for Election Campaign	Amount (Nu)
1	Campaign Fund (Fund Disbursed –Fund Refunded)	300,000.00
2	Audio Visual advertisement (Radio and TV)	85,800.00
3	Supplement Page (Print media)	35,000.00
4	Printing of Banners	1,815.00
5	Printing of Posters	
6	Printing of Placards	
Total Cost		422,615.00
7	Average cost per Party/Candidate	211,307.50

14. The overall expenditure incurred on campaign fund and sponsored activities for the candidates of the Bye-Election is Nu. 422,615/-. On average, a total amount of Nu. 211,307.50 was spent by each candidate.

Campaign Expenditure Review and Audit

15. Sections 122 and 123 of the Public Election Fund Act states that:

122. The Division may conduct an examination and audit of parties and candidate's campaign finances."

123. The Division may examine and audit receipts, disbursements, debts and obligation of each party and candidate and in addition the Division may conduct any other examination and audits as it deems necessary to carry out the provisions of this Act."

16. As part of the review and examination of Election Returns received from the candidates by the Public Election Fund Division of ECB, the necessary examination of the expenditures incurred was carried out to establish if:

- (1) The expenditures were incurred for campaign purposes specified in Section 77 of the Public Election Fund Act;
- (2) The expenditures incurred were within the fund limit;
- (3) All required bills or supporting documents were submitted and in case of any missing documents, were asked to submit such documents;
- (4) All expenditure bills or supporting documents were verified and endorsed by the National/Micro Observers;
- (5) Any non-permissible expenses were made;
- (6) Bank statement for the campaign account was submitted;
- (7) Approval from Returning Officer (RO) for use of vehicle and maintenance of log book and also filling up of TA/DA form for Candidates' TA/DA claims, etc.

17. The findings of the Public Election Fund Division on the Election Returns submitted by the candidates as well as crosschecking with the fortnightly expenditure reports and Observers reports are as follows:

- (1) Around 48% of the total campaign fund was spent on hiring of vehicles, 43% on daily subsistence allowance for candidates and their representatives and about 9% in other miscellaneous expenditures.
- (2) While campaign materials were also provided in-kind, candidates have incurred additional expenditure on advertisement, especially on print media.
- (3) Variations were noted in the expenditure patterns and amounts incurred by the two candidates to meet their campaign expenses. However, all expenditures were within

the permissible categories as specified under Section 77 of the Public Election Fund Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

- (4) The Election Returns were cross-verified with the fortnightly expenditure reports submitted by the candidates to the National Observers and were found to be consistent.

Audit

The Royal Audit Authority issued the audited report of the Election Returns of the Bye-Election on 30th October 2025. As the election campaign expenses were scrutinized and verified as per the Electoral Laws and any inconsistencies found were resolved during the fortnightly submission of election expenses, there were no significant findings during the course of the audit.
