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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF-01/2025-2026/2410

Date: February 17, 2026

## NOTIFICATION

### Local Government Bye-Election

Pursuant to Sections 577 and 579 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, the Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), hereby calls Bye-Election to fill up the *Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa* post at Dhangkhar\_Trong *Chiwog* under Zhemgang *Dzongkhag* due to the demise of the incumbent member.

The Election Schedule and the details concerning *Dzongkhag/Demkhong*, Nomination of Candidates, Electoral Rolls, EVMs, Polling Stations, Election Officials, and other arrangements are hereby being notified as follows:

#### (A) Election Schedule

1. The election schedule shall be as follows:

Date	Remarks
17/02/2026	Issuance of Notification
24/02/2026	Signature process by eligible candidates for the post of <i>Gewog Tshogde Tshogpa</i> of Dhangkhar_Trong <i>Demkhong</i>
25/02/2026	Filing of nominations by candidates 12:00 PM
27/02/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Scrutiny of nomination</li><li>• Withdrawal of candidature</li><li>• Returning Officer to initiate sending postal ballots to registered postal voters</li><li>• Commencement of election campaign</li></ul>
10/03/2026	End of election campaign
12/03/2026	Last day for receiving postal ballots till 12 noon
<b>12/03/2026</b>	<b>Poll Day and Counting of Postal Ballots</b>
13/03/2026	Declaration of Result & submission of the Result to the <i>Druk Gyalpo</i>
17/03/2026	Issuance of Certificate of Election
22/03/2026	End of election petition period

#### (B) Selection/Signature process by the Candidates

2. A registered voter who fulfills the criteria laid down under Section 178 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 is eligible to be nominated as a candidate for election.

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3. 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.
4. For ascertaining the age eligibility of candidates, 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 **25<sup>th</sup> February 2001** but not before **25<sup>th</sup> February 1961**.

### **(C) Filling of Nomination Papers**

5. The nomination papers must be complete, signed and countersigned as required and include the following prescribed forms:
  - 5.1. Nomination form;
  - 5.2. Notice of Nomination;
  - 5.3. Original Functional Literacy & Possession of Skill Test (FLT) Certificate;
  - 5.4. Integrity Vetting Report (IVR) from Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC);
  - 5.5. Asset Declaration;
  - 5.6. Tax Clearance Certificate for Election;
  - 5.7. Audit Clearance Certificate for Election;
  - 5.8. Security Clearance Certificate for Election;
  - 5.9. Marriage Certificate, if married;
  - 5.10. CID copy of the candidate;
  - 5.11. CID copy of the spouse, if married;
  - 5.12. Relieving order issued by Head of the Ministry/Department/Agency (if relevant);
  - 5.13. A declaration form by a candidate, declaring that he/she is not a member of a political party, or has resigned 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
  - 5.14. Affidavit including non-criminal conviction record and clearance from the respective court of law that he/she has not been accused of felony in a pending case, taken cognizance by a court of law.

### **(D) Electoral Roll**

6. The qualifying date for the Electoral Roll shall be **1<sup>st</sup> January 2026**. All those who are not younger than eighteen years of age as on **1<sup>st</sup> January 2026** or who are born on or before **1<sup>st</sup> January 2008** shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter.
7. The Final Electoral Roll for the election shall be published and provided to the Returning Officer on **20<sup>th</sup> February 2026**.

### **(E) Electronic Voting Machines**

8. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for polling at the polling station.

9. Indelible ink shall be used during the elections, and indelible ink must be applied on the **Left Thumb**.

**(F) Postal Ballot**

10. Postal ballot shall be facilitated to all eligible postal voters.

11. All eligible postal voters shall reconfirm their enrolment and their current address in the postal voter list with the *Dzongkhag* Election Office.

**(G) Election Campaign**

12. No Minister, Member of Parliament, official or member of a political party or elected person shall campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate.

13. 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.

14. The other elected Local Government officials, i.e., *Thrompon, Gup, Mangmi, Tshogpa* of other *Chiwogs, 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.

15. No candidate shall use the title, designation, rank, *Kabney/Rachu, Pata/Gyentag*, 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.

16. A civil servant shall be permitted to attend electoral events like common forums organized by the ECB. However, no civil servant shall campaign directly or indirectly or participate in the electoral forums organized by the candidates or give grounds to reasonably construe support, opposition or dislike of any candidate contesting the elections.

17. 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*.

18. The Common Forum shall be conducted in accordance with the schedule determined by the *Dzongkhag* Election Authority.

19. The smaller group meetings shall not be conducted before **7 a.m. and after 5 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/approval from the Returning Officer.

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

**(H) Prohibition of Election Campaign prior to 48 hours before poll**

24. Election campaigns must stop 48 hours before the hour fixed for commencement of poll.

**(I) Election Campaign Finance & Election Campaign Returns**

25. A candidate cannot exceed his/her election campaign expenses beyond the ceiling fixed in Section 59 of the Public Election Fund Act, 2008 i.e., total of Nu.75,000/-.

26. 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.

**(J) Election Officials**

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

28. The Deputy Chief Election Officer of the Election Operation Division (EOD) under the Department of Election & Civic Education (DoECE) shall be appointed as the Returning Officer for conduct of the Bye-Election.

29. The appointment of Presiding and Polling Officers for this Bye-election shall be done by the Returning Officer from amongst government officials working in the same *Dzongkhag*, from the list provided by *Dzongkhag Election Office*.

30. The Presiding Officers shall serve as the Counting Supervisors, and the Polling Officer I shall serve as the Counting Assistant at the respective polling stations, as authorized in the appointment orders issued by the Returning Officer concerned.

31. 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.

**(K) Election Code of Conduct**

32. The Election Code of Conduct shall continue to be in force until the completion of the Election Period i.e., from **17<sup>th</sup> February 2026** to **12<sup>th</sup> March 2026**.

33. All election officers, candidates, and voters must comply with the Election Code of Conduct and the provisions of the Electoral Laws, Rules and Regulations and Guidelines.

**(L) Remaining Apolitical and Above Politics**

34. No religious events, involving public gatherings, shall be organized or conducted during the entire election period in the concerned *Demkhong*, in particular, by the candidates and their supporters.

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

**(M) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)**

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

**(N) Poll Day & Polling Hours**

37. The Poll Day on **12<sup>th</sup> March 2026** shall be declared a Public Holiday in the concerned *Demkhong* (*Dhangkhar\_Trong Chiwog* of *Trong Gewog*, *Zhemgang Dzongkhag*).

38. All employers are required by law to grant the required number of days as election leave for any registered voter from *Demkhong* wishing to go to vote in person at the polling station.

39. The polling hours shall be from **8 am to 5 pm**. However, those voters already in the queue at **5 pm** shall be allowed to vote with issuance of tokens to those in the queue with the last voter present at that time in the queue being given token No. 1.

40. The Election Commission of Bhutan shall accept either the original valid Citizenship Identity Card (CID) or original Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC), for the purpose of identification of the voter on the Poll Day.

**(O) 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. If there is only one candidate after the last date for 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.

**(P) Election Dispute Settlement Body**

43. The quasi-judicial role of the Election Commission during the Election Period shall be fulfilled through the Election Dispute Settlement System which includes three levels of decision-making and appeal;

43.1 *Dzongkhag* Election Dispute Settlement Body (DEDSB);

43.2 Central Election Dispute Settlement Body (CEDSB); and

43.3 Full Election Commission.

44. For the purpose of Section 43, a *Dzongkhag* Election Dispute Settlement Body shall be constituted;

45. Election Complaints shall be received by Chief Election Commissioner, Chief Election Coordinator, and Returning Officer but must contain all details as in Election Dispute Settlement Body Form No.1;

46. The adjudication of election disputes shall be guided generally by the principles and provisions of the laws of the land and in particular the electoral laws, Election Dispute Settlement Rules and Regulations; and

47. A complaint related to an election shall be dealt with only by an Election Dispute Settlement Body or the Election Commission.

Now, thereof, from the day of issuance of this Notification, the Election Commission of Bhutan notifies the general public on the election schedule of the Bye-Election and all matters relating to it.

**Issued on the 30<sup>th</sup> Day of the 12<sup>th</sup> Month of the Wood Female Snake Year corresponding to 17<sup>th</sup> February 2026.**

**Chief Election Commissioner**