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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF/(01)/2025-2026/2769

Date: 11 June 2026

NOTIFICATION

FOURTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT ELECTIONS: *DZONGKHAG THROMDE*
TSHOGDE ELECTIONS, 2026

The Election Commission of Bhutan (ECB), pursuant to Section 202 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 under the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan, calls the Local Government Elections: *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde* Elections, 2026 (*Thromde Elections 2026*) in the following *Dzongkhag Thromdes*:

1. Phuentshogling *Thromde* under Chhukha *Dzongkhag*; and
2. Thimphu *Thromde* under Thimphu *Dzongkhag*.

The Election Schedule and the details concerning *Demkhongs*, Selection Procedure for Nomination of Candidates, Electoral Roll, EVMs, Polling Stations, Polling Officials, Polling Management, Security and other arrangements are hereby being notified as follows:

A. Election Schedule

Sl. No.	Dates	Events
1	11/6/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Issuance of Notification calling elections to <i>Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde</i>● Appointment of Election Officials
2	13/6/2026	Scheduling of <i>Dhamngoi Zomdu</i> by <i>Dzongkhag</i> Election Authority
3	14/6/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Freezing of Electoral Roll (Section 125 of the Election Act)● Finalization of Electoral Roll
4	15/6/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Commencement of selection procedure (<i>Dhamngoi Zomdu</i> for <i>Thrompon</i> candidates)● Signature process by aspiring candidates for the post of <i>Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa</i>
5	18/6/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Last day for registration of Postal Ballots● Finalization of Postal Voter list
6	20/6/2026	Last day for filing of nominations by candidates
7	21/6/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Scrutiny of nomination● Commencement of election campaign

8	23/6/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Last date for withdrawal of candidature (5:00 pm) ● Returning Officer to initiate sending postal ballots to registered postal voters
9	25/6/2026	Public Debate for <i>Thrompon</i> candidates of Phuentshogling
10	27/6/2026	Public Debate for <i>Thrompon</i> candidates of Thimphu
11	7 - 8/7/2026	Operation of Early Voting
12	13/7/2026	No Campaign Period commences
13	14/7/2026	Last day for receiving Postal Ballots (till 5:00 PM)
14	15/7/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poll Day ● Counting of Postal Ballots ● Counting EVM Results upon close of Poll
15	16/7/2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Declaration of Result and Submission of the Result to His Majesty The Druk Gyalpo ● Start of Election Petition Period
16	20/7/2026	Issuance of the Certificate of Election
17	29/7/2026	End of election petition period

B. Selection/Signature process by the Candidates

1. 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 to the post of *Thrompon* or *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa*; and
2. The selection process for the *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* candidates shall be as follows:

2.1 For the Post of *Thrompon*

3. A registered voter of every *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhong* who fulfills the criteria laid down in Section 178 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 is entitled to nominate one candidate each to contest the election for the post of *Thrompon*;
4. A *Dhamngoi Zomdu* shall be conducted in each *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhong* by the *Dzongkhag* Election Authority to select not more than one nominee from each *Thromde Tshogde Demkhong* for the post of *Thrompon*;
5. In the absence of any registered voter interested in contesting the election for the post of *Thrompon*, the team shall submit to *Dzongkhag* Election Authority, a statement (**Nomination Form No. 5C (TT)**) to that effect; and
6. The EVM and authorized Electoral Roll (E-Roll) shall be used in the *Dhamngoi Zomdu*.

2.2 For the Post of *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa*

7. A registered voter wishing to contest election for the post of *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* shall produce signatures of at least 5 percent of the registered voters from the respective *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhong* supporting his/her nomination to contest election for the post of *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa*,

provided no voter has supported more than one nominee.

C. Filing of Nomination Papers

8. The last date for filing the nominations by the candidates contesting for the post of *Thrompon* and *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* is **20 June 2026**;
9. The nomination papers must be complete, signed and counter signed as required and include the following prescribed forms:
 - 9.1 Nomination form;
 - 9.2 Notice of Nomination;
 - 9.3 Selection (Signature) Process Form by the *Thromde Tshogpa* candidates;
 - 9.4 Original Functional Literacy & Possession of Skill Test (FLT) Certificate by *Thromde Tshogpa* candidates;
 - 9.5 Letter of Attestation issued by ECB; (For *Thrompon* candidates);
 - 9.6 Five Years' Work Experience; (For *Thrompon* candidates)
 - 9.7 Integrity Vetting Report (IVR) from Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC);
 - 9.8 Asset Declaration;
 - 9.9 No Non-Performing Loan (No NPL) from the Credit Information Bureau (CIB);
 - 9.10 Tax Clearance Certificate for Election;
 - 9.11 Audit Clearance Certificate for Election;
 - 9.12 Security Clearance Certificate for Election;
 - 9.13 Marriage Certificate, if married;
 - 9.14 CID copy of the candidate;
 - 9.15 CID copy of the spouse, if married;
 - 9.16 Relieving order issued by Head of the Ministry/Department/Agency (if relevant);
 - 9.17 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;
 - 9.18 Undertaking by candidates for the Office of Profit; and
 - 9.19 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. Scrutiny of Nominations

10. The Returning Officer shall undertake the scrutiny of the nomination papers filed by the candidates following the last date for making nominations announced by the Election Commission under Section 198 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

E. Last date for Withdrawal of Candidature

11. The last date for withdrawal of candidature shall be 5 p.m. on **23 June 2026** as per Section 225 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

F. Demkhong

12. The *Dzongkhag Thomde* and *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhong* boundary shall be based in accordance with the Final Delimitation Order No. DC/CHAIR/2010/697 dated 16th October 2010, and the 4th *Dzongkhag Thomde Tshogde* elections, 2026 shall be conducted in the same manner as the Second and Third *Dzongkhag Thomde* elections, in obedience to the directives issued by the Hon'ble Supreme Court of Bhutan vide order No. མངོན་མཐོ་སི་ཇེ་བོད་ ༢༡ ་༢༠༢༠/1608 dated 3 December 2020.

G. Electoral Roll

13. The qualifying date, in relation to the Electoral Roll for the Fourth *Dzongkhag Thomde Tshogde* Elections, 2026 in the two *Dzongkhag Thomde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu shall be on **1 April 2026**;
14. The Electoral Roll shall be frozen as on **14 June 2026**, providing temporary embargo on entries in the Electoral Rolls for a period of thirty days before the date of poll for an election as required by Section 125 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008;
15. All those who are not younger than eighteen years of age as on **1 April 2026** or who are born on or before **1 April 2008** shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter; and
16. For ascertaining the age eligibility of candidates (*Thrompon* and *Thromde Tshogpa*), 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 **20 June 2001** but not before **20 June 1961**.

H. Election Code of Conduct

17. The Election Code of Conduct shall continue to be in force until the completion of the election period in the two *Dzongkhag Thomde Tshogde Demkhongs* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu, i.e. from **11 June 2026 to 15 July 2026**; and
18. 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.

I. Election Campaign

19. The election campaign period for the two *Dzongkhag Thomdes* shall commence from **21 June 2026** onwards and must end at 8 a.m. of **13 July 2026** i.e., 48 hours prior to the hour fixed for the commencement of poll for the election;
20. No Minister, Member of Parliament, official or member of a political party or elected person shall campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate;
21. 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;
22. Elected Local Government officials, namely *Gup*, *Mangmi*, *Tshogpa*, and *Dzongkhag*

Thromde Ngotshab of other *Dzongkhags*, shall not campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate;

23. 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 candidates or representatives;
24. 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;
25. All banks or financial institutions shall report to the ECB, any abnormal transaction of money, including in the account of a candidate contesting the election in the two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu *Demkhongs*;
26. The smaller group meetings, which replaces the door-to-door visits, shall not be conducted before **6 a.m. and after 6 p.m.;**
27. 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;
28. 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;
29. A candidate, during the election, shall carry out all election campaign activities only upon obtaining permit/approval from the Returning Officer; and
30. 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.

J. Prohibition on Election Campaign 48 hours before poll

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

K. Election Campaign Finance

32. A Candidate for the *Thromde* elections cannot exceed his/her election campaign expense beyond the ceiling fixed by the Election Commission i.e., total of Nu. 75,000/-

L. Election Campaign Returns

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

M. Public Debate for *Thrompon* Candidates

34. Public debate shall be arranged and conducted in collaboration with the BBSC for the candidates whose nominations for the post of *Thrompon* have been duly accepted by the

Returning Officer concerned; and

35. The public debate shall be conducted as per the Strategy for the Conduct of Public Debate for the *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde* elections, 2026 in two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu.

N. Common Forum

36. The Returning Officer, in consultation with the respective Chief Election Coordinator, Deputy Chief Election Coordinators, *Dzongkhag* Electoral Officer and Security Coordinator shall arrange Common Forums in the *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhong* for information of voters; and
37. The Returning Officer shall facilitate the gathering of the electorates at convenient locations.

O. Election Officials

a) Election Coordinators

38. The *Dzongdag* of the concerned *Dzongkhag* shall be appointed as the Chief Election Coordinator and *Dzongrab/Dungpa/Executive Secretary of Thromde* as the Deputy Chief Election Coordinator.

b) National Observer

39. Election officials shall be appointed as National Observers (NO) for each of the two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu; and
40. The National Observer shall be vested with authority, roles, and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations and in particular the relevant provisions contained in the Guidelines for National and International Observers and the Appointment Order.

c) Returning Officer

41. Election officials shall be appointed as Returning Officer (RO) for each of two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu; and
42. The Returning Officer shall be vested with full authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations and Handbook for Returning Officers and the Appointment Order.

d) Presiding and Polling Officers

43. Returning Officer shall appoint the Presiding and Polling Officers from the list of government officials provided by *Dzongkhag* Election Office; and
44. Presiding and Polling Officers are vested with authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral laws, Rules, Regulations, Handbook for Presiding Officers and Appointment Order.

e) Counting Supervisors & Counting Assistants

45. The Presiding Officers shall serve as the Counting Supervisors, and the Polling Officer – I as the Counting Assistant at the respective polling stations, as authorized in the appointment orders issued by the concerned Returning Officer; and
46. Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants shall be vested with authority, roles and responsibilities as per the provisions in the Electoral Laws, Rules, Regulations, Handbook for Counting Supervisor and Counting Assistant.

f) Media Arbitrator

47. The Director, BICMA shall be appointed as the Media Arbitrator for two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogdes* and shall be vested with the authority and responsibility to fulfil the roles and responsibilities as provided in the Media Coverage of Elections Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2021 and in the Appointment Order.

g) Assignment of Duty Stations

48. National Observer, Returning Officer, Presiding Officers, Polling Officers, Counting Supervisors and Counting Assistants shall ensure that he/she is not placed where his/her *Gung* or *Mitsi* is registered, unless authorized otherwise; and
49. 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.

P. Law and Order & Deployment of Security Forces

50. The Royal Bhutan Police (RBP) and Royal Bhutan Army (RBA) shall be responsible for deploying security personnel at every polling station as per the *Election Security Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan*;
51. The Royal Bhutan Police and the Royal Bhutan Army shall ensure appropriate coverage and deploy adequate number of Security Personnel so that there is no possibility of any security threat and incidences affecting the electoral process in their respective jurisdictions;
52. Security personnel shall ensure that he/she is not being placed in the *Dzongkhag* where his/her *Gung* or *Mitsi* is registered, unless authorized otherwise;
53. The Election Security Focal Officers of the concerned *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde* shall work in close coordination and cooperation with the election officers as a team towards conducting the elections smoothly;
54. Election Security personnel shall be fully empowered and authorized, under Section 38 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008 to detain a person for a specified period of time if there is sufficient ground that free and fair election is likely to be undermined;
55. The Royal Bhutan Police and Royal Bhutan Army shall be responsible for sealing the international borders prior to the conduct of poll as per the country's laws; and
56. *Desuups* shall be mobilized as per requirements to supplement and complement the efforts of the RBP, if required.

Q. Remaining Apolitical and Above Politics

57. No religious events involving public gatherings, wrathful practices and rituals shall be performed during the entire election period in the concerned *Demkhong* by the candidates, families, and their representatives or any others except with prior permission of the Election Commission; and
58. Religious personalities shall neither vote nor participate directly or indirectly give grounds to reasonably construe support, opposition or dislike of any candidate contesting the elections.

R. Postal Ballots

59. A person who applied for Postal Ballot shall not be allowed to vote in person as his/her name will be included in the postal voters' list and marked as 'PB' in the list sent to the polling station by the Returning Officer.

S. Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs)

60. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for all polling stations in the two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu; and
61. A set comprising two EVMs, namely, for the posts of *Thrompon* and *Thromde Tshogpa* shall be set up at the polling station. A second set comprising two EVMs shall be marked as "Standby" and kept ready for use in the event of malfunctioning of any of the EVMs of the first set.

T. Indelible Ink

62. Indelible ink shall be used during the two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde* elections and mark from the top of the nail to the bottom of the first joint of the **RIGHT** index finger.

U. Polling Stations

63. There shall be at least one polling station in every *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhong* for the convenience of the voters; and
64. A polling station shall have two separate voting compartments for the posts of *Thrompon* and *Thromde Tshogpa*.

V. Poll Day and Polling Hours

65. The Poll Day on **15 July 2026** shall be declared a Public Holiday in the two *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu *Demkhongs*;
66. The polling hours shall be from **8 a.m. to 5 p.m.** However, those voters already in the queue at **5 p.m.** 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.;
67. The ECB shall accept either the valid Citizenship Identity Card (CID) or Voter Photo Identity Card (VPIC) for the purpose of identification of the voter on the poll day; and

68. All employers are required, by law, to grant the required number of days as leave of absence for a reasonable period as is necessary to enable him/her to vote at the election, subject to the exceptions made in Sections 339 and 341.

W. No Candidate or Only One Candidate (Uncontested Election)

69. 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; and
70. The election in *Demkhong* with only one candidate after the last date of filing of nomination of Candidates announced herein will be conducted as ‘Uncontested Election’ in accordance with Sections 575 and 576 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008.

X. Election Control Rooms

71. For the purpose of monitoring, supervision and direction of the conduct of elections, election Control Rooms shall be set up in the Office of the Returning Officers at the *Thromde* level and at the Election Commission headquarters for the national level.

Y. Election Result, Counting, Consolidation and Declaration

72. After the close of polls, the polling stations shall become the Counting Centers where the EVM results shall be counted immediately, as per the set procedure, and relayed to the Returning Officer and the ECB Head Office. The *Election and Result Administration System* (ERAS) shall be piloted for polling, result and reporting requirements alongside the existing mechanism and procedure in place.
73. Candidates or their representatives can witness and observe all stages of the polling and counting procedures but shall not make public statements on estimates and guesses before the results of the election are officially declared.

Z. Election Dispute Settlement Body System

74. The quasi-judicial role of the Election Commission during the Election Period shall be fulfilled through the Election Dispute Settlement Body System which includes three levels of decision-making and appeal;
- a. *Dzongkhag* Election Dispute Settlement Body (DEDSB);
 - b. Central Election Dispute Settlement Body (CEDSB); and
 - c. Full Election Commission.
75. Election Complaints shall be received by Chief Election Commissioner, Chief Election Coordinator, National Observer and Returning Officer but must contain all details as in Election Dispute Settlement Body Form No.1;
76. 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
77. 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 two *Dzongkhag Thromdes* and all matters relating to it.

Issued on the 26th Day of the 4th Month of the Fire Male Horse Year corresponding to 11 June 2026.

Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan