

**Election Commission of Bhutan**

འབྲུག་གི་བཅག་འཇུ་ལྷན་ཚོགས།



**Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2026**

*Jelri*

Publisher : **Election Commission of Bhutan,**  
Post Box 2008, Thimphu:  
Bhutan.  
E-mail : [cec@ecb.bt](mailto:cec@ecb.bt)  
Visit us at : [www.ecb.bt](http://www.ecb.bt)  
Phone : (00975) 2 334851/2  
Copyright : © ECB, 2026

Anybody wishing to use the name, cover, photo, cover design, material part or whole thereof in any form in any book or publication may do so with due acknowledgement.

Date of Publication : June, 2026



## Contents

1. Title, Extent, Application and Commencement .....	1
2. Definition .....	1
3. Postal Voters .....	2
4. Registration of Postal Voters .....	3
5. Notice of issuance of Postal Ballot .....	4
6. Postal Ballot Papers .....	4
7. Applications for Change of Postal Addresses .....	4
8. Issuing of Postal Ballot and Documents .....	4
9. Ballot Box for Postal Ballots .....	6
10. Instructions to Postal Voters .....	6
11. A Physically Challenged Postal Voter .....	7
12. Prisoners .....	7
13. Handling of Postal Ballot .....	8
14. Receipt of Postal Ballot .....	8
15. Postal Ballot Box A .....	8
The Returning Officer shall: .....	8
16. Opening of Envelope A .....	9
17. Sealing of Rejected Envelopes and Certificates .....	10
18. Acceptance of Envelope B .....	10
19. Opening of Postal Ballot Box B .....	10
20. Opening of Envelope B .....	11
The Counting Supervisor shall: .....	11
21. Counting .....	11
22. Procedure on Discovery of More than One Ballot Paper .....	13
23. Recording of Results .....	13
24. Representatives .....	14
25. Functions of Representatives .....	14
26. Contesting Candidate or his/her Election Representative .....	14
27. Media .....	14
28. Disposal of Postal Ballots .....	15
29. Archival of Postal Ballot Records .....	15
30. Offences in Relation to Postal Votes .....	15
31. Power of the Commission to Issue Instructions and Directions 32.1 .....	15
32. Authority of Interpretation and Amendment .....	16

## Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2026

In keeping with the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008, and with the of providing equal opportunity to voters who cannot be present at the polling station in-person to cast their vote, the Election Commission of Bhutan hereby adopts and promulgates the *Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2026*

### 1. Title, Extent, Application and Commencement

1.1. These Rules shall:

1.1.1. Be called the *Postal Ballots Rules and Regulations of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2026*

1.1.2. Extend to the whole of the Kingdom of Bhutan;

1.1.3. Apply to voters specified under Section 331 of the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan 2008 and Section 2.1.6 of these Rules and Regulations; and

1.1.4. Come into force with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> of May 2026 corresponding to 24<sup>th</sup> Day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Month of the Fire Male Horse of the Bhutanese Calendar.

### 2. Definition

2.1. In these Rules, unless the context otherwise requires:

2.1.1. "Commission" means the Election Commission of Bhutan;

2.1.2. "Competent Witness" means a Bhutanese citizen known to the postal voter and who is an eligible voter registered in any *Demkhong*;

2.1.3. "Election Act" means the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, 2008;

2.1.4. "Identity Declaration Certificate (IDC)" means Postal Ballot Form No. 4 & 5 issued by the Returning Officer soliciting details of the postal voter, attested by a competent witness;

2.1.5. "Postal Ballot Paper" means a ballot paper prepared and issued by the Returning Officer to a postal voter;

1  


- 2.1.6. "Postal Voter" means any person entitled to vote through Postal Ballot under Section 3.1 of these Rules and Regulations;
- 2.1.7. "Representative" means the election representative and counting representative appointed by a Political Party or a Candidate in accordance with the Election Act;
- 2.1.8. "Returning Officer" means an Official appointed by the Commission as per the Election Act, for conduct of elections or National Referendum;
- 2.1.9. "Students and trainees" mean students and trainees enrolled in schools, colleges, or institutes within the country recognized by the Royal Government of Bhutan, and those pursuing higher education or training outside Bhutan under the sponsorship of the Royal Government;
- 2.1.10. "Dependents" means the spouse, parents, children inclusive of adopted children, grandparents, and the parents of the spouse, provided they are living with the postal voter; and
- 2.1.11. Words importing the singular number shall include the plural number and *vice-versa*.

### 3. Postal Voters

- 3.1. The category of registered voters who shall be entitled to the privilege to vote as a Postal Voter at any election, under these Rules, are:
- 3.1.1. Diplomats and persons working in the Embassies of the Kingdom of Bhutan;
- 3.1.2. Persons residing outside Bhutan for the performance of a special government duty;
- 3.1.3. Members of the Armed Forces as defined in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan;
- 3.1.4. Civil servants;
- 3.1.5. Students and trainees;

3.1.6. Spouse or dependent of a person referred to in Sections 3.1.1 to 3.1.4, if the spouse or dependent is residing with him/her; and

3.1.7. Any other group of voters as specified by the Commission in consultation with the Government.

#### **4. Registration of Postal Voters**

4.1. The registration of postal voters shall be carried out through the Postal Ballot Registration System, following the issuance of a notification by the Election Commission of Bhutan, inviting eligible voters to register as postal voters. Application made through any other means shall not be accepted.

4.2. Eligible Postal Voters shall be required to submit the necessary documents through the Postal Ballot Registration System to establish their identity and eligibility for Postal Ballot.

4.3. Registration shall be carried out during the pre-election period. Any application for registration submitted after the issuance of the election notification shall be considered by the Commission on a case-by-case basis

4.4. The Department/Division responsible for administration of postal ballot shall, at the time of publishing the draft Electoral Roll, also prepare and issue the draft Postal Voters List for Claims and Objections.

4.5. No names shall be added after the final Postal Voters' List is published on the last date of Registration for Postal Ballots, which shall be the same as the last date for withdrawal of candidature, as specified in the notified election schedule.

4.6. The Postal Voters' List shall be handed over to the Returning Officer by the concerned Department/Division responsible for postal ballot administration.

4.7. The Postal Voters' List shall be segregated into the following categories for providing customized Postal Ballot Facility;

4.5.1. In-Country Postal Voters

4.5.2. Overseas Postal Voters

4.5.5. Voters' requiring special assistance - Special Early Voting

## **5. Notice of issuance of Postal Ballot**

- 5.1. The Returning Officer shall give Political Parties, Candidates or their election representatives not less than forty-eight hours' notice, in writing, of the time and place for issuance of Postal Ballot at which time any objections on the eligibility of a Postal Voter or Postal Ballot may be raised or recorded.

Provided that non-attendance by any Political Party, Candidate or election representative shall not be a reason enough to delay the issue of Postal Ballot.

## **6. Postal Ballot Papers**

- 6.1. The Postal Ballot Paper shall contain the symbol and name of the Candidates, Political Parties or specific issue in the case of National Referendum in the same order as provided in Ballot Paper to be used for the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM), except for the provision of check boxes for marking their preferences.
- 6.2. The Postal Ballot Papers shall contain instructions to the voters to place a mark in the check box indicating clearly their preference of the Candidates, Political Parties or "Yes" or "No" in the case of National Referendum, and uncontested election.

## **7. Applications for Change of Postal Addresses**

- 7.1. An eligible Postal Voter registered as per Section 4.1 shall submit an application for change of postal address in the prescribed Postal Ballot Form No. 3 or notify the concerned official of the ECB of the change in postal address. Such application or notification shall be made only where the voter intends to cast the vote in person at the designated Polling Station and, therefore, seeks exclusion from the Postal Voters' List or wishes to update the postal address. The application or notification shall be submitted before the last date for withdrawal of candidates as specified in the notified Election Schedule.

## **8. Issuing of Postal Ballot and Documents**

- 8.1. No person shall be present at the proceedings on the issue of Postal Ballot other than:
- 8.1.1. The Returning Officer;
  - 8.1.2. The Candidates or;
  - 8.1.3. An election representative of the Candidate or a Political Party; and
  - 8.1.4. Any person authorized by the Election Commission.



- 8.2. The Returning Officer shall issue a Postal Ballot only to the Registered Postal Voters based on the Postal Voters' List provided by the Department of Electoral Registration and Information Technology or Authorised Postal Ballot Administration.
- 8.3. The Returning Officer shall ensure that the Postal Ballot Package to be sent to the Postal Voter contains:
  - 8.3.1. Envelope A, as in **Annexure-1**, with the address of the Returning Officer of the concerned *Demkhong* for the return mail;
  - 8.3.2. Envelope B, as in **Annexure-2**, for enclosing the marked Postal Ballot Paper which is to be placed in Envelope A;
  - 8.3.3. Unmarked Postal Ballot Paper referred to in Section 6;
  - 8.3.4. Identity Declaration Certificate (IDC) as prescribed in **Postal Ballot Form No.5**, duly completed, should be placed inside the Envelope A along with sealed Envelope B, and mailed or delivered to the pre-stamped address of the Returning Officer; and
  - 8.3.4. A clear Instructions to the Postal Voters, as prescribed in Postal Ballot Form No.7A (In-Country Postal Voter) and Postal Ballot Form No.7B (Overseas Postal Voter).
- 8.4. The Returning Officer shall, after effectively closing the Package, deliver it through the designated Post Office/agency for dispatch or hand over to the applicant Postal Voter in person upon obtaining a receipt from him/her.
- 8.5. The Returning Officer shall ensure that the soft copies of the Postal Ballot Package referred to under Section 8.3 of these Rules are sent to the registered email address of overseas postal voters.
- 8.6. The overseas postal voter, upon receipt of the soft copies of the Postal Package from the Returning Officer, shall download, print, cast his/her vote. Thereafter, the marked ballot must be properly sealed and dispatched to the concerned Returning Officer at the earliest possible time, ensuring that the Postal Ballot reaches within the prescribed date and time specified in the notified Election Schedule.
- 8.7. The Returning Officer shall enter and mark upon the Postal Voters' List the IDC number issued to the applicant.
- 8.8. A corresponding number of Postal Ballots enclosed in respective Envelope B for each elective post, in case of an election for multiple posts, shall be placed in a single Envelope A to be issued for each Postal Voter.

- 8.9. The Bhutan Post shall ensure that barcodes are affixed on the package and the enclosed Envelope A for proper record, monitoring and tracking of the Postal Ballot Packages at various stages of the Bhutan Post delivery process.
- 8.10. The Returning Officer shall issue yellow Envelope Bs for female Postal voters and white Envelope Bs for male Postal voters. There shall be no markings on envelope A, except for the address of the Returning Officer, to ensure secrecy as well as to assure public perception thereof.

### 9. Ballot Box for Postal Ballots

- 9.1. The Returning Officer shall ensure that there are separate ballot boxes marked "A"/ "B" for the purposes of receipt of Envelopes A and B.
- 9.2. The Returning Officer shall, at the time and place notified, in the presence of Candidates or the representatives of the Candidates or Political Parties, demonstrate that the Postal Ballot Box is empty and sealed with the seal of the Commission and that of the Candidates and representatives if they wish to do so.
- 9.3. The Returning Officer shall number and mark every Postal Ballot Box with the name of the *Demkhong*, for which the poll is held, on all four sides of the box.
- 9.4. The Returning Officer shall make arrangements for the safe custody and movement of every such Ballot Box, as deemed necessary.

### 10. Instructions to Postal Voters

- 10.1. Every Postal Voter to whom a Postal Ballot has been issued shall follow the instructions for voting by post as laid down under these Rules as in **Postal Ballot Forms No.7A and 7B**.
- 10.2. A Postal Voter shall, before marking the Postal Ballot Paper, show the unmarked ballot paper, the IDC (**Postal Ballot Forms No.5B**) and the Envelope B before a competent witness.
- 10.3. In the case of in-country postal voters, the Postal Voter shall first complete the Identity Declaration Certificate (IDC) in the presence of a Competent Witness, who shall, if satisfied, counter-sign the same. In the case of overseas postal voters, the Postal Voter shall duly sign the IDC; however, counter-signature by a Competent Witness shall not be required.

- 10.4. Next, the Postal Voter shall mark the Postal Ballot Paper to cast his/her vote, in complete secrecy.
- 10.5. The competent witness shall be responsible to ensure that the voter marks the Postal Ballot Paper in total secrecy.
- 10.6. The Postal Voter shall, immediately upon marking the Postal Ballot Paper place it in Envelope B and seal securely.
- 10.7. The sealed Envelope B together with the filled IDC shall be placed in Envelope A. Care must be taken to ensure that the filled IDC is NOT placed INSIDE Envelope B.
- 10.8. The Postal Voter shall thereafter dispatch Postal Ballot Envelope A by post without delay, or alternatively deliver it in person to the Returning Officer, who shall issue an acknowledgment of receipt thereof.

#### **11. A Physically Challenged Postal Voter**

- 11.1. A physically challenged Postal Voter may engage a person of his/her choice, who is eligible to vote under the Election Act of the Kingdom of Bhutan, to assist him/her in marking the Postal Ballot Paper in the manner directed by him/her.
- 11.2. A person who has assisted a physically challenged Postal Voter shall ensure that a written statement specifying the nature of the inability or incapacity suffered by the voter is enclosed in Envelope A.
- 11.3. The Commission shall make available Postal Ballots in Braille for Braille-literate Postal Voters. Similarly, a Special Early Voting facility shall be established to facilitate persons with disabilities, as may be identified and deemed necessary.

#### **12. Prisoners**

- 12.1. The Royal Bhutan Police shall provide a list of prisoners eligible to vote in an election for inclusion in the Postal Voters list.
- 12.2. Special Early Voting shall be put in place to facilitate to these Voters' where found necessary.

### **13. Handling of Postal Ballot**

- 13.1. Postal Ballots shall be handled in a transparent and efficient manner.
- 13.2. The Returning Officer shall prohibit handling of Postal Ballots by any Political Party representative, Candidate or their representatives.
- 13.3. The personnel of the Bhutan Post/designated agency shall be specifically trained to handle Postal Ballot packages to provide total confidence of the voters in the Postal Ballot System.
- 13.4. No mail package or envelope which is clearly labeled as POSTAL BALLOT shall be opened by any person other than the concerned Returning Officer.
- 13.5. The Bhutan Post shall strictly follow the Standard Operating Procedures (SoP) developed for this purpose.

### **14. Receipt of Postal Ballot**

- 14.1. Upon receipt of the Envelope A, the Returning Officer shall sign on the envelope indicating the date and time of receipt.
- 14.2. The Returning Officer shall then insert the Envelope A in the Postal Ballot Box A provided for this purpose.

### **15. Postal Ballot Box A**

#### **The Returning Officer shall:**

- 15.1. Conduct the Opening of the Postal Ballot Box containing Envelope A on the notified dates and time.
- 15.2. Place the Envelope A received after such opening in another Postal Ballot Box A provided for this purpose.
- 15.3. Seal this second Postal Ballot Box on the day before the day of poll in the presence of the Candidates or the representatives of Candidates or Political Parties.
- 15.4. Take the Postal Ballot Box to the designated counting center under his/her direct supervision on the day fixed by him/her, after obtaining prior approval of the Commission.

- 15.5. At the notified time and place, open the Ballot Box for the purpose of sorting the Envelopes A in accordance with the established procedure, prior to counting.

## **16. Opening of Envelope A**

16.1 The Returning Officer shall:

- 16.1. Give Candidates or representatives of Candidates or political parties at least twenty-four hours' notice in writing of the time and place of opening the Ballot Box containing the Envelope A.
- 16.2. Where Envelope A does not contain an Envelope B, or is not returned by the voter in the official envelope sent to him/her for this purpose, mark on the envelope "Empty".
- 16.3. Upon opening Envelope A, verify that the Identification Declaration Certificate (IDC) has been duly completed and signed by the postal voter and authenticated by a competent witness.
- 16.4. Verify that the postal voter is a registered postal voter and that the competent witness is a registered voter. Where the Returning Officer is not satisfied that the requirements of this Rule have been complied with, he or she shall endorse the certificate with the words "Declaration Rejected" and attach it to Envelope B or, where there is no such envelope, place it in the receptacle designated for rejected ballots.
- 16.4. Where the Identification Declaration Certificate (IDC) is found enclosed within Envelope B, open Envelope B in the presence of the candidates, their representatives, and observers, solely for the purpose of retrieving and verifying the IDC. The ballot shall not be examined or disclosed during this process, and no postal ballot shall be rejected on this ground alone. The Returning Officer shall ensure that the secrecy of the ballot is maintained at all times while retrieving and verifying the IDC.
- 16.5. Before placing the Envelope B along with the rejected IDC in the receptacle for rejected Ballots, exhibit the same for scrutiny by the representatives and if any objection is made, write the words "Rejection Objected" on the IDC and thereafter seal and sign.
- 16.6. Put the envelopes marked "Empty" and the Ballots Papers marked "Rejected" into separate packets by affixing security tape on the packets.
- 16..7. No envelope containing or purporting to contain a Postal Ballot which has been received after the date and time notified by the Commission for counting of the Postal Ballots shall be opened or its contents taken for scrutiny.

16.8. The ballot box and the seals of the Envelope B shall be opened only at the time of counting and at the designated counting centre.

### **17. Sealing of Rejected Envelopes and Certificates**

17.1. The Returning Officer shall, on the conclusion of the opening of Envelope A, put the contents of the receptacle for votes rejected and the contents of the receptacle for IDC, into two separate packets and affix security tape on the packets.

### **18. Acceptance of Envelope B**

The Returning Officer shall:

18.1. Endorse on Envelope B the word "Accepted" and stamp a seal thereon.

18.2. Verify from the color of the envelopes i.e., yellow for female and white for male, maintain female/male data in the prescribed form for post poll reports.

18.3. In case the gender specified in the IDC does not match with the color of the Envelope, base the gender as indicated in the IDC and accordingly mark it on the Envelope B.

18.4. Place the unopened and sealed Envelope B in the Postal Ballot Box marked B.

### **19. Opening of Postal Ballot Box B**

19.1. The Returning Officer shall give Candidate or representative of Candidates or political parties with at least twenty-four hours' written notice of the time, and place on the poll day for the opening of Postal Ballot Box B and the Envelopes B contained therein.

19.2. The Counting Supervisors shall permit the counting representatives to examine the seal on the ballot box before it is opened.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Sahr', is written over a horizontal line.

## **20. Opening of Envelope B**

### **The Counting Supervisor shall:**

- 20.1. Open Envelope B, under the superintendence and direction of the Returning Officer, at a designated place, date and time.
- 20.2. When a Ballot Box has been opened, count and note the number of Envelopes B, and shall then open each envelope separately by elective position.
- 20.3. Mark as "Rejected" on the Envelope B if it does not contain a Postal Ballot Paper.
- 20.4. Place Envelope B marked "Rejected" together with its contents, if any, in a separate receptacle.
- 20.5. Before placing the Postal Ballot Paper in the receptacle for votes rejected, exhibit the Postal Ballot Paper to the representatives and if any objection is made, write the words "Rejection Objected" and seal and sign on the Postal Ballot Paper.
- 20.6. If the Envelope B is not duly verified as per Section 18.1 of these Rules, not open it and instead mark as "Rejected".
- 20.7. Keep all rejected Envelopes B, separate from all other documents.

## **21. Counting**

- 21.1. The Returning Officer shall ensure that an adequate number of counting centers and counting teams are arranged for error free and timely counting of the Postal Ballots. The candidates and Political Parties shall be notified in advance on the number of counting centers and the need for appointment of their representatives.

Provided that non-attendance by any Political Party, Candidate or election representative shall not be a reason enough to delay the counting process.

- 21.2. The counting of Postal Ballot Papers will precede counting of votes on the EVMs on Poll Day.
- 21.3. The Counting Supervisor shall:
  - 21.3.1. In the presence of the counting representative, open each ballot box and count and record the number of ballot papers in it; and
  - 21.3.2. Count such Postal Ballot Papers as have been duly verified by the Returning Officer.

21.4. The Counting Supervisor shall treat a Postal Ballot Paper as valid if it has:

- 21.4.1 A clear mark such as a dot/ cross/ tick/ any mark against a candidate/ political party/question in case of a referendum on the Ballot;
- 21.4.3. A thumb impression/ signature instead of other marks;
- 21.4.5. Marked on the face of the candidate or symbol of the political party/question in the case of referendum;
- 21.4.6. Clearly marked for the second time after erasing the first, against the same candidate or symbol of the political party or issue in the case of referendum;
- 21.4.7. Marked within or near the specified space/box against a candidate/political party/question in case of a referendum;
- 21.4.8. Double mark for the same candidate/political party/question in case of a referendum;
- 21.4.9. Marked tick for one candidate/political party or question in case of national referendum and a cross against all others, the tick mark shall be considered in accordance with the voting instructions.

21.5 The Counting Supervisor shall treat the Ballot Paper as **invalid** if it has:

- 21.5.1 Any mark/thumb impression/signature for more than one candidate/political party/question in case of a referendum;
- 21.5.2 No mark is made at all;
- 21.5.3. Marked outside the specified space/box/between two boxes making it difficult to determine as to whom the vote is cast for; and
- 21.5.4 Been tampered with or is so damaged or mutilated that its identity as a genuine Ballot Paper cannot be established or there is any ground to believe it is not a genuine Ballot. Any objections by the representative present shall be recorded and filed.

21. 6. The Counting Supervisor shall, before rejecting any Postal Ballot as invalid, allow the counting representatives a reasonable opportunity to inspect the Postal Ballot, but without allowing them to handle it or any other postal ballot, and to be heard.

21.7. The Counting Supervisor shall, if a counting representative objects to a Postal Ballot being declared invalid, decide by judicious application of mind whether the Postal Ballot is invalid or not.

Provided that nothing in this Section shall prevent the Counting Supervisor from rejecting any Postal Ballot as being invalid although it is not objected to by any counting representative.

21.8. Every Postal Ballot which is not rejected as invalid shall be counted as one valid vote for the Candidate, Political Party or the issue in case of a National Referendum.

- 21.9. The Counting Supervisor shall verify the Ballot Paper account by comparing the number of Ballot Papers recorded by him/her, and the total rejected ballots against the total number of Ballots issued by the RO and draw up a statement as to the result of the verification, which any representative may copy.

## **22. Procedure on Discovery of More than One Ballot Paper**

The Counting Supervisor:

- 22.1. While opening Envelope B, if the Counting Supervisor discovers more than one ballot paper therein and is able, through visual verification, to ascertain the valid ballot paper, such ballot paper shall be accepted for the purpose of counting.
- 22.2. The Counting Supervisor shall retain all other Ballot Papers or Papers discovered under Section 23.1 and then make a statement of facts as discovered and witnessed by the Candidates or representatives present.

## **23. Recording of Results**

- 23.1. The Counting Supervisor shall, after the counting of all Postal Ballots, record in a prescribed Result Sheet Postal Ballot Forms No:3 A to 3 G respectively, the total number of Postal Ballots cast in the *Demkhong*, the number of Postal Ballots rejected as invalid and valid votes secured by each of the Candidates or Political Parties or the number of "Yes" and "No" votes cast in the case of National Referendum.
- 23.2. The Counting Supervisor shall, after the completion of counting, seal and secure the Postal Ballot Papers into one packet and affix security tape on it such that the contents of the Papers are not visible and/or all the Papers would be secured.  
Provided that Candidates and their representatives present at the place of counting shall be permitted to affix their seals thereon, if they wish to do so.
- 23.3. The Counting Supervisor shall transmit to the Returning Officer all the Postal Ballot Papers sealed and secured along-with the result sheet prepared in respect of the counting, for consolidation and announcement of result, after submission to the Commission in the manner prescribed.
- 23.4. No person, including any election official, Candidate, Representative, or any other individual present at the counting center shall, before the close of poll and the official announcement of results by the Election Commission, disclose, publish, or share through any media or platform, including social media, any partial or final result, trend, or information relating to the counting of Postal Ballots. Failure to abide by this provision shall constitute an offence under Section 343 of the Election Act.

## **24. Representatives**

- 24.1. The Counting Supervisor shall admit only one election representative or counting representative of each Candidate or Political Party at the closing, sealing, or counting of Postal Ballots at any point of time.
- 24.2. The Candidate or the registered Political Party shall be liable for all acts of commission and omission of their election representative and incur civil or criminal liability in respect of any act done by the election representative in connection with the election.
- 24.3. Any appointment, resignation, death, revocation of representatives of the Candidates or Political Parties shall be governed by the Election Act.

## **25. Functions of Representatives**

- 25.1. The main duty of the election representative is to observe the process of Postal Ballot verification by the Returning Officer.
- 25.2. The main duty of the counting representative is to observe the process of counting carried out by the Counting Supervisor.

## **26. Contesting Candidate or his/her Election Representative**

- 26.1. A contesting Candidate or his/her election representative or the election representative of the registered political party shall have the right to be present at any place fixed for the counting of votes at every election where a poll is conducted.
- 26.2. A contesting Candidate, registered Political Party or their election representative may perform any act which their counting representative would have been authorized under the Election Act or may assist the counting representative in the performance of their functions.

## **27. Media**

- 27.1. Counting Centre shall be open to the media, but the Returning Officer shall take care to ensure that the process is not disrupted by frequent movement between multiple centres and procedure requirements are made clear to the media.
- 27.2. The security personnel shall ensure that no communication or recording gadgets or mobile phones are allowed in the Counting Centres, except for the election officials authorized by the Returning Officers to use such gadgets or phones for official purposes only.

## **28. Disposal of Postal Ballots**

- 28.1. The Dzongkhag Electoral Officer shall be responsible for the Disposal of Postal Ballots.
- 28.2. Postal Ballots received for an election shall be stored safely and destroyed only after 3 months of the Poll Day unless in the case of an Election Petition in which case these shall be destroyed after the conclusion of the case and the subsequent appeal period.

## **29. Archival of Postal Ballot Records**

- 29.1. All records pertaining to Postal Ballots, except for the Ballots itself, may be archived or disposed of as per the procedure governing disposal of public property by the concerned Dzongkhag Election Office.

## **30. Offences in Relation to Postal Votes**

- 30.1. A person who attempts to induce any other person to obtain a Postal Ballot Paper with the intention of influencing him/her by bribery or intimidation to record his/her vote in favour of a particular Candidate or a Political Party shall be guilty of an offence punishable under the Election Act.
- 30.2. Any person who makes or induces any other person to make a false statement in an application for postal ballot registration or fails to deliver or post forthwith an envelope containing or purporting to contain a ballot paper entrusted to him/her by a voter for the purpose of delivering or posting it to the Returning Officer shall be guilty of an offence punishable under the Election Act.
- 30.3. A postal voter shall maintain complete secrecy of his vote while voting through postal ballot and shall not disclose or share, on any platform including social media, any image, copy, or information revealing the manner in which he or she has voted. Failure to abide by this provision shall constitute an offence punishable under the Election Act.
- 30.4. Any person guilty of violation of any provision of these Rules and Regulation shall be dealt in accordance with the Election Act and other laws.

## **31. Power of the Commission to Issue Instructions and Directions 32.1.**

The Commission may issue instructions and directions:

- 31.1. For the clarification of any of the provisions of these Rules and Regulations;
- 31.2. For the removal of any difficulty which may arise in relation to the implementation of any such provisions; and

- 31.3. In relation to any matter with respect to Postal Ballot, for which these Rules make insufficient provision, and clarification is necessary in the opinion of the Commission.

### **32. Authority of Interpretation and Amendment**

- 32.1. The Commission shall, in case of differences in meaning, be the final authority on interpretation of these Rules.
- 32.2. The Commission shall have the power to amend by way of addition, variation, or repeal the provisions of these Rules.

**Done under the seal of the Election Commission of Bhutan on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2026, corresponding to the 24<sup>th</sup> Day of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Month of the Fire Male Horse Year in the Bhutanese Calendar.**



**Election Commissioner**



**Election Commissioner**



**Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan**