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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN

(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)



ECB/NOTIF(01)/2026-2027/2038

Date: 16 July 2026

Press Release

First Phase of the Fourth Local Government Elections: *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde* Elections, 2026

The polls held on 15 July 2026 in the two *Dzongkhag Thromdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu pertain to the first phase of the **Fourth Local Government Elections**. The details of the elections and the polls are as follows:

1. Registered Voters

Upon the freezing of the Electoral Roll on 14 June 2026, a total of **10,309** voters were registered in the two *Thromde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu. Subsequently, the ECB issued a *Supplementary Electoral Roll* following the inclusion of **57** voters who had received citizenship through naturalization and regularization. On the poll day, 4 voters were facilitated as their names were erroneously missed out in the Voters' List provided to Dechencholing and Loselling Polling Stations. As a result, the total number of registered voters increased from **10,309** to **10,370**. The details of the total registered voters are as presented in the table below.

Sl. No.	<i>Dzongkhag Thromde</i>	Total Registered Voter				
		Male	Female	Total	% Male	% Female
1	Phuentshogling	570	598	1,168	48.80	51.20
2	Thimphu	4,271	4,931	9,202	46.41	53.59

2. Postal Ballots

A total of **95** voters (**27** male & **68** female) had registered for availing the postal ballot facility. The details were as follows:

Sl No	<i>Dzongkhag Thromde</i>	Issued		Received			
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Accepted	Rejected
1	Phuentshogling	14	13	13	13	25	1
2	Thimphu	56	12	45	11	52	4

Of the **82** postal ballots received by the Returning Officers, 5 postal ballots were rejected, resulting in a rejection rate of **6.09%**. The rejected ballots included 3 without the Identification Declaration Certificate (IDC), and 2 with no witness and wrong Citizenship Identity (CID) number of the witness.

3. Voter turn-out

A total of **3,426** voters (**1,513** male & **1,913** female) cast their votes in the Fourth *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde* Elections, 2026. Of this, **3,339** had voted in person on EVM, while **77** voted through postal ballot and **10** through early voting counted along with the postal ballots.

The voter turnout was **33.92%**, where **44.16%** were male and **55.83%** female.

The age-wise distribution of voter turnout is as presented below:

Sl No	Dzongkhag Thromde	18 to 24	25 to 45	46 to 60	61 and Above
1	Phuentshogling	63	220	153	113
2	Thimphu	217	1032	934	694

4. Special Early Voting

A total of **8** voters (**6** male & **2** female) voted through special early voting in Phuentshogling Thromde while **2** female voters voted through special early voting in Thimphu Thromde.

5. Dhamngoi Zomdu

The turnout at the **13 Dhamngoi Zomdus** conducted in each of the *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa Demkhongs* of Phuensthogling and Thimphu Thromdes is as follows:

Sl No	Dzongkhag Thromde	No. of Dhamngoi Zomdus Conducted	Male	Female	Total Turnout
1	Phuentshogling	6	91	78	169
2	Thimphu	7	72	74	146

6. Candidates

a. Thrompon

A total of **4** candidates, **3** male & **1** female, contested elections to the post of *Thrompon* and a total of **14** candidates, **8** male & **6** female, contested elections to the post of *Thromde Tshogpa*. The details are as follows:

Sl No	Dzongkhag Thromde	Thrompon			Thromde Tshogpa		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Phuentshogling	2	0	2	2	4	6
2	Thimphu	1	1	2	6	2	8

b. *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa*

i. *Phuentshogling Thromde*

Phuentshogling Maed Demkhong had two candidates contesting (1 male & 1 female) and the remaining four *Demkhongs* (*Nyedrag, Pasakha, Pekarzhing & Phuentshogling Toed*) each had a single candidate and were declared elected. As *Rinchending Demkhong* had no candidate, the seat will remain vacant for now.

ii. *Thimphu Thromde*

Jungshina_Kawajangsa Demkhong had 2 candidates contesting (1 male & 1 female) and the other *Demkhongs*, *Babesa, Changbangdu_Olakha, Changangkha, Dechenchhoeling_Taba, Motithang & Norzin*, had 1 candidate each.

7. *Elected Candidates*

A total of 2 male candidates are elected to the post of Thrompon in the two *Thromdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu. A total of 12 candidates (8 male & 4 female) are elected to the post of *Thromde Tshogde Tshogpa* in the two *Thromdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu.

8. *Polling Stations*

The polls in the two *Thromdes* were held on 15 July 2026 in 6 polling stations in Phuentshogling *Thromde* and 7 polling stations, with 2 booths each in 4 Polling Stations, in Thimphu *Thromde*. The polls were conducted using a total of 33 Electronic Voting Machines.

9. *Common Forums*

The voter turnout in the 13 Common Forums conducted, from 29 June to 3 July 2026, in the *Thromdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu *Thromdes* are as follows:

Sl No	Dzongkhag <i>Thromde</i>	No. of Common Forums	Male	Female	Total Turnout
1	Phuentshogling	6	50	24	74
2	Thimphu	7	43	18	61

In order to encourage more voter participation, a supplementary Common Forums each in Thimphu and Phuentshogling *Thromdes* were also organized.

10. *Deployment of Polling Officials*

A total of 182 Election Officials were deployed during the *Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde* elections in Phuentshogling and Thimphu, including on the Poll Day, as follows:

1. Chief Election Coordinators: 2

2. Deputy Chief Election Coordinators: **6**
3. Returning Officers: **2**
4. National Observers: **2**
5. Assistant Returning Officer: **1**
6. Presiding Officers: **13**
7. Polling Officers: **34**
8. Office of Media Arbitrator: **4**
9. Thromde Social Media Monitors: **2**
10. Dzongkhag Dispute Settlement Bodies Members: **10**
11. Security Personnel: **46** (Phuentshogling: 18 and Thimphu: 28)

To provide firsthand field experience for the ECB officials while strengthening the Commission's in-house capacity for election management, the Returning Officers (ROs) and National Observers (NOs) were appointed from among officials of the ECB.

11. Election Dispute and Incidents

While no election disputes arose during the *Thromde Elections 2026* in either of the two *Thromdes*, the Dzongkhag Election Dispute Settlement Body of Chhukha Dzongkhag had to ask an incumbent National Assembly Member to immediately depart and postpone his constituency visit and issued a warning.

In a separate incident in Thimphu *Thromde*, the Returning Officer called for an explanation from a Tshogpa candidate for failing to participate in the supplementary Common Forum but the explanation was found satisfactory.

12. Campaign expenditure

Candidates contesting the Fourth Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Elections, 2026 were permitted to incur campaign expenditure of up to Nu. 75,000 from their own accounts. The expenditure ceiling was prescribed as provided under Sections 7 & 59 of the Public Election Fund Act to ensure a level playing field and promote transparency and fairness in election campaigns. Except for the Phuentshogling Thrompon candidates, no campaign expenditure was incurred by the Thimphu Thrompon candidate or any Tshogpa candidates during these elections.

13. Eligible Postal Ballots

The ECB provided postal ballot facilities strictly in accordance with the provisions of the law. While there were requests for an expansion of postal ballot facilities, the ECB's position

remains guided by the need to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process. Postal ballots are comparatively more susceptible to rejection due to errors in completion and delays in delivery. Further, it is difficult to fully guarantee the secrecy of the vote or prevent undue influence outside the environment of a polling station. Voting in person provides a more secure, reliable, and transparent voting process while strengthening voters' direct participation in their constituency and the democratic process. Therefore, the ECB has consistently encouraged voters to exercise their franchise in person rather than through postal ballot, wherever possible.

14. Election petition period

The general public is hereby informed that the Election Petition period starts from **16 July 2026** and shall end on **29 July 2026** at 5.00 p.m.

15. Notable Features of the Thromde Elections 2026

1. **Thrompon Experience Requirement:** A 5-year work experience requirement for aspiring Thrompon candidates was implemented in local government elections.
2. **Revised Functional Literacy Test (FLT)** was restructured to include basic digital competency and a validity date, split evenly between a written functional competency component and an functional competency engagement assessment rolled out for aspiring Thromde Tshogpa candidates.
3. **Extended Manifesto Review:** The Independent Evaluation Committee's review of candidate manifestos, first introduced for the 2023–24 Parliamentary Elections, was extended to Local Government elections, applying scrutiny to the Thrompon candidate pledges.
4. **Technology adoption (ERA System Pilot):** The ECB piloted its new Election Results and Administration (ERA) system for candidate information and results management.
5. **International Election Visitors' Programme (IEVP) 2026:** Introduced as a new initiative by the Election Commission of Bhutan, the IEVP welcomed a delegation from the Election Commission of India led by the Senior Dy Election Commissioner to observe the Fourth Local Government Elections, fostering the exchange of electoral experiences and good practices between the two Election Management Bodies.

16. Participation of our Key Population Group

1. **Women's Participation** — A total of **1,913 women** (55.83%) exercised their franchise in the Fourth Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Elections, reaffirming the vital role of women in Bhutan's democratic process. The Election Commission was also heartened to witness the first-ever woman candidate contest the Thimphu Thrompon election. In addition, 6 of the 14 Tshogpa candidates were women, of whom 4 were successfully elected.
2. **Youth Participation** — The Fourth Dzongkhag Thromde Tshogde Elections witnessed the enthusiastic participation of many first-time voters, including the youngest eligible voter, **Jimmy Norbu Dorji (18)** from **Jungshina–Kawajangsa**, reflecting the growing engagement of young citizens in shaping Bhutan's democratic future.

3. **Senior Citizen Participation** — Senior citizens continued to inspire the nation through their unwavering commitment to democracy, with the oldest voter, Phurba, 95, Jungshina_Kawajangsa exercising their franchise alongside many other senior citizen voters.
4. **Participation of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)** — The Election Commission remained committed to ensuring that persons with disabilities could participate in the electoral process with dignity and ease. Through early voting arrangements and assisted voting services, eligible PwD voters were able to exercise their democratic right. In Thimphu, for example, election officials provided **doorstep voting services to two female PwD voters** in **YHS** and **Simtokha**, ensuring that no eligible voter was left behind.

The Election Commission of Bhutan attributes the success of the two *Dzongkhag Thomde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu to the voters who turned out to vote, the entire team of dedicated election officials, security personnel and polling officers who worked with commitment and enthusiasm. We would also like to acknowledge the support rendered by various Ministries, Departments, *Dzongkhags*, Corporations, *Thromde* Administrations and the Media Agencies to the Election Commission in the discharge of its functions. Special appreciation to all the candidates who stepped forward to participate and serve.

Above all, the Election Commission of Bhutan offers its deepest gratitude to His Majesty The King, His Majesty the *Druk Gyal Zhipa* and His Holiness the *Je Khenpo* for their Benevolence and Blessings for the successful conduct of the Elections in two *Dzongkhag Thomde Tshogdes* of Phuentshogling and Thimphu.

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