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ELECTION COMMISSION OF BHUTAN
(Ensuring Free, Fair & Democratic Elections & Referendums)

ECB/NOTIF-01/2025-2026/2486 **Date: 19th March 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 for the post of *Gup* of Lingmukha *Gewog* under Punakha *Dzongkhag*, following the voluntary resignation by the incumbent.

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

(A) Election Schedule

1.The election schedule shall be as follows:

Date	**Remarks**
19/03/2026	Issuance of Notification
23/03/2026	Commencement of *Dhamngoi Zomdu* to select nominees for the post of *Gup*
28/03/2026	Filing of nominations by candidates
30/03/2016	● Scrutiny of nomination ● Last date for withdrawal of candidature ● Returning Officer to initiate sending postal ballots to registered postal voters ● Commencement of election campaign
14/04/2026	End of election campaign
16/04/2026	Last day for receiving postal ballots till 12 noon
16/04/2026	**Poll Day and Counting of Postal Ballots**
17/04/2026	Declaration of Result & Submission of the Result to His Majesty the *Druk Gyalpo*
20/04/2026	Issuance of Certificate of Election
26/04/2026	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.
3. A *Dhamngoi Zomdu* shall be conducted in each *Chiwog* of the concerned *Gewog* by the *Dzongkhag* Election Authority to select not more than one nominee from each *Chiwog* for the post of *Gup*.
4. The EVM and authorized E-Roll must be used in the *Dhamngoi Zomdu*.

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5. In the absence of any Registered Voter interested in contesting, the meeting shall submit to the *Dzongkhag* Election Authority a statement (**Nomination Form No. 6B)** to that effect.
6. 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 **28th March 2001** but not before **28th March 1961.**

(C) Filling of Nomination Papers

7. The nomination papers must be complete, signed and countersigned as required and include the following prescribed forms:

7.1 Nomination form;

7.2 Notice of Nomination;

7.3 Original Functional Literacy & Possession of Skill Test (FLT) Certificate;

7.4 Integrity Vetting Report (IVR) from Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC);

7.5 Asset Declaration;

7.6 Tax Clearance Certificate for Election;

7.7 Audit Clearance Certificate for Election;

7.8 Security Clearance Certificate for Election;

7.9 Marriage Certificate, if married;

7.10 CID copy of the candidate;

7.11 CID copy of the spouse, if married;

7.12 Relieving order issued by Head of the Ministry/Department/Agency (if relevant);

7.13 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

7.14 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

8. The qualifying date for the Electoral Roll shall be **1st January 2026.** All those who are not younger than eighteen years of age as on **1st January 2026** or who are born on or before **1st January 2008** shall be deemed to meet the minimum age requirement to be a voter.
9. The Final Electoral Roll for the election shall be published and provided to the Returning Officer on **30th March 2026.**

(E) Electronic Voting Machines

10. The Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) shall be used for polling at the polling station.
11. Indelible ink shall be used during the elections, and indelible ink must be applied on the **Left Thumb.**

(F) 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., *Gup, Mangmi*, *Tshogpa, & Dzongkhag Thromde Ngotshab,* shall not campaign directly or indirectly for any candidate and shall only participate as voters 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 about 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.

(G) Prohibition on Election Campaign 48 hours before poll

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

(H) 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 campaign account 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.

(I) Election Officials

27. The *Dzongdag* of the concerned *Dzongkhag* shall be appointed as the Chief Election Coordinator, *Dzongrab* as the Deputy Chief Election Coordinator, and the *Gewog* Administrative Officer as the *Gewog* Election Coordinator.
28. The *Dzongkhag* Electoral Officer of the concerned *Dzongkhag* shall be appointed as the Returning Officer for conduct of the Bye-Election.
29. The appointment of Presiding Officers and Polling Officers for the election shall be as per the appointment orders issued by the Returning Officer.
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 concerned Returning Officer.
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.

(J) 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 **19th March 2026** to **16th April 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.

(K) 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.

(L) 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.

(M) Poll Day & Polling Hours

37. The Poll Day on **16th April 2026** shall be declared a Public Holiday in the concerned *Demkhong* (Lingmukha *Gewog)*.

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.

(N) 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.

(O) 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 the 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 First Day of the Second Month of the Fire Male Horse Year, corresponding to 19th March 2026.

Officiating Chief Election Commissioner of Bhutan