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[Home](#) > Bhutan: Post Election Developments:

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On 19th October, the Election Commission of Bhutan formally declared the election results with the DNT acquiring 30 seats and the DPT the rest in the 47 seat assembly. The DNT was thus officially declared as the third elected Government in Bhutan and the DPT as the Opposition.

It is interesting to see that all the 47 elected Parliamentarians are graduates and some post graduates. Of these one is a PhD, 26 are Post graduates and the rest are graduates.

A total number of 313,473 voters turned out and of these 113,920 voted through Postal ballots- a high figure indeed!

Only 7 women candidates won but still it is the highest representation for them in the National Elections so far.

Soon after the elections results were announced, Dr Lotay Tshering the incumbent Prime Minister made very generous remarks about the opposition and emphasized on the ideal of “one country and one People”.

He said that there is no winner or loser in this election as the mission is to serve the people. In empathising with those who lost, he said that those not elected have equally contributed in nation building and is thankful for their participation.

If the idea was to put an end to divisive politics and move with the whole-hearted cooperation of the Opposition he made the mistake of electing both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker from his party thus following what his predecessors did. When the configuration of the

Parliament was overwhelmingly in favour of his party, he need not have invited the opposition to contest the posts of both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker. From his earlier remarks soon after the election, it was thought that he would be acceptable to give the post of Deputy Speaker to the Opposition. In theory both the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker are supposed to be neutral in conducting the proceedings in the Parliament.

A large number of articles have appeared in the Bhutan Media analyzing the election results. One interesting theme was the 'Nyamchung factor'- the role of being victim that helped DNT and the DPT in their performance as opposed to that of the then Ruling Party- the PDP. What is clear is that the final election showed that the East is no longer the fortress of the DPT as was believed before. Otherwise the general pattern has been of North and Central being swept by the DNT, the East dominated by the DPT and the West by the PDP.

One other significant result was the loss of two of the founders of the DNT in the election- Karma Dorji and Tenzin Lekphell.

On 31st October, the Parliament elected Nangchuk Namgyal as Speaker and Tshancho Wangdi as the Deputy Speaker to the Assembly. The Speaker is a Post Graduate in History from the University of Madras, India.

On 5th of November, the appointment to the cabinet posts were announced. Of the ten Ministers, three each were from East, West and South and one from Central Bhutan thus ensuring an even spread across all regions.

On the Cabinet Posts, important appointments were-

Dr. Tandi Dorji- Foreign Affairs

Dechen Wangmo Minister of Health

Loknath Sharma- Economic Affairs

Dasho Sherub Gyelshen- Home, Religion and Culture

Namgyal Tshering- Finance

Dasho Sherub Gyeltsen (63) is the oldest member in the cabinet and perhaps the oldest member in the Parliament itself.

On 7th November, Dr. Lotang Tshering formally took over the Government with the King granting 'Dakyen' to him for the post of Prime Minister.

Dr. Tshering made a definite departure from the past by giving up the Presidentship of the Party after becoming the Prime Minister- this was done in order to have proper checks and balances in running the Government.

The first and immediate task of the New Government would be to fix the economy. Both the IMF and the ADB have pointed out the deceleration in economic growth to four percent this year due to sharp decline in public investment. The position may improve to six percent with the Mongdechu Project coming on stream in the course of this year.

It is a pity, that the GDP of the country has to solely depend on its hydro-electric projects. The Hydro Power Committee has already suggested a go slow in the projects and approach them more strategically. Emphasis on quality rather than on quantity makes sense. Employment opportunities for the increasing number of youths will have to be found on an urgent basis. More emphasis on agricultural projects may help. Above all, the over ambitious investments in the 12th Plan may have to be reviewed. Funds will have to be found for the election promises made particularly to the civil servants who have been promised two hikes!

From the Indian point of view, nothing could be more pleasing than to see a smooth changeover for a close neighbour that has remained stable and peaceful since its transition to democracy. Bhutan owes a great deal to Druk 4 and 5 for this achievement.

Tags:

[bhutan](#) [1]

[Lotang Tsheing](#) [2]

[Naional Elections](#) [3]

Category:

[Papers](#) [4]

Countries:

[Bhutan](#) [5]

Topics:

[Political](#) [6]

[Economy](#) [7]

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Links

- [1] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/5>
- [2] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/1971>
- [3] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/taxonomy/term/1972>
- [4] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/papers>
- [5] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/bhutan>
- [6] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/political>
- [7] <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/economy>