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HOME

About BBS

TV

Radio

Sales and Ads

Announcements

News Archives

Feedback

Download

Zakar

March 5, 108

Quick Links

- Other Bhutanese Media
- Bhutan Portal
- Druknet
- ABU
- AIBD

Weather Forecast

- My Photo on BBS TV

15 member EU mission to observe National Assembly elections

February 23: A 15 member European Union mission will arrive in the kingdom to observe Bhutan's first National Assembly elections.

A press statement on the EU website says the election observation mission will be led by Mr. Jose Javier Pomes Ruiz, member of the EU parliament.

It adds that the EU attaches great importance to the process of democratic transition in Bhutan including the elections and the adoption of the Constitution.

Ms. Benita Ferrero Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy said the elections for the National Assembly of Bhutan are a milestone in the country's history. She added that the new Parliament will have to enact the Constitution, and continue the path of democratic transition, paying special attention to preserving the national cultural identity and values of Bhutan.

The Election Observation Mission will consist of a Core Team of six election experts including the Chief Observer to be deployed on February 22, 2008 to co-ordinate the assessment of the entire election process and nine Long Term Observers to be deployed one week later to assess the campaign period, the pre-election preparations around the country and to observe voting, counting and the tabulation of results.

It is planned that the mission will remain in the country for up to 10 days after Election Day to observe the post-election period.



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