

Press Release on The Druk Gyalpo's Relief Kidu

30 April 2020

The Druk Gyalpo's Relief Kidu has granted Nu. 150 million as the first disbursement of the Relief Kidu to 13,006 people. The Relief Kidu will be at Nu. 12,000 per person per month for recipients of the full amount of the Kidu and Nu. 8,000 per month for recipients of the partial amount of the Kidu. Additional support of Nu.800 per child per month will be granted to eligible beneficiaries with children. The Kidu will be provided for three months – April, May and June 2020

The Druk Gyalpo's Relief Kidu was commanded by His Majesty The King in a Royal Address to the nation on 10th April 2020 for people directly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. A committee, headed by the Prime Minister, was established to oversee the implementation process. The Prime Minister launched the application process on 14th April 2020.

Announcing the disbursement of the Relief Kidu on 30 April 2020, the Prime Minister, Lyonchhen Dr. Lotay Tshering, said that the first batch of 13,006 recipients were screened from among 18,880 people who applied for the Kidu between 14th and 23rd April 2020. He said that the verification team established and supervised by the committee was assessing the remaining applications.

More than 20,000 people from all 20 dzongkhags have applied for the Relief Kidu between 14th and 29th April 2020.

As the Relief Kidu is granted to an individual for a period of three months, it will be critical for the recipient to actively seek employment opportunities. To this end, the government, in partnership with the private sector, will also facilitate the creation of employment opportunities for affected people by expediting and accelerating the implementation of the reprioritized activities of the 12th plan through frontloading of budgetary outlays. The government will actively match the individuals with job openings. This will allow affected individuals to find employment, thereby enabling them to transition out of the Kidu. It will be of utmost importance for all Bhutanese to participate in the nation building process to support their livelihoods and sustain national economic activities.

The continuation of the Relief Kidu will depend on the evolving nature of the pandemic and the government's COVID-19 containment measures. If the situation worsens over time, more individuals will have to be supported and the Kidu amount will be determined on a downward sliding scale to ensure wider coverage.

Background

His Majesty The King in the address to the nation on 10 April 2020 commanded that:

“Many of our people working in the tourism and hospitality sector, including small restaurants, entertainment centers, truck drivers, taxi drivers, etc., have suffered loss of jobs and income, and are finding it difficult even to pay house rents. It is of utmost importance to extend immediate relief to the vulnerable people before the situation deteriorates. Therefore, the Druk Gyalpo’s Relief Kidu will be granted to support the people, provide relief, and enable them to withstand their ordeals through this period.”

Bhutanese people across generations have been blessed with monarchs who have placed paramount importance on the welfare of the people, with particular concern for the most vulnerable sections of our society. The grant of Royal Kidu, a uniquely Bhutanese institution, has enabled people on the margins of subsistence to enhance their economic security and uphold their dignity.

In accordance with the Royal Command, a committee headed by the Prime Minister was established to oversee the implementation process. On 14 April 2020, the Prime Minister launched the Druk Gyalpo’s Relief Kidu application process for people directly affected by the COVID 19 pandemic.

The Relief Kidu granted by His Majesty The King during these difficult times will provide immediate financial support to distressed individuals for their sustenance. Besides defraying living expenses and sustaining demand for goods and services, the Royal Kidu would also boost morale and provide assurance and hope despite the current hardships.

Application Process

The Relief Kidu application process is designed to ensure accessibility and transparency with simultaneous application through online processes as well as through walk-in centers across the 20 Dzongkhags and a toll free line (1188) to respond to queries from the people. Furthermore, the committee also ensured widespread publicity through television, radio, newsprint and social media. Government officials in the Dzongkhags also provided valuable support to spread the message as well as assist applicants.

The committee is assisted by over 100 officials who have been engaged in responding to telephone calls, verifying data and information and providing detailed analysis of the application process.

Eligibility

The Committee has considered the following eligible categories of applicants for the first round of assessments:

- A. Employees who have been laid off, or placed on unpaid leave or reduced salary from businesses affected by COVID-19 such as tourism and tourism-dependent sectors, businesses mandated to close by Government order and activities affected to a greater degree by physical distancing and curfew;
- B. Bhutanese who were working abroad and have returned home and do not have any other source of income;
- C. Self-employed individuals who have lost their earnings either partially or completely.

The Kidu will be provided for three months – April, May and June 2020

Amount of the Relief Kidu

The amount of Relief Kidu granted to individuals is as follows:

Full amount:	Nu. 12,000 per month
Partial amount:	Nu. 8,000 per month

The following groups have been assessed for the full amount of the Relief Kidu:

- Employees of affected businesses who have been laid off, or placed on unpaid leave or reduced pay
- Self-employed individuals in the tourism sector who have lost their earnings
- Bhutanese workers who have returned home from abroad because of the pandemic and have no other sources of income

Self-employed individuals in tourism-linked businesses and other businesses affected by social distancing, mandatory closures and curfews have been assessed partial amount of the Relief Kidu.

In addition to the above, child support of Nu.800 per child per month has also been granted. The additional child support will be disbursed within the first half of May 2020 following additional verification.

Data on Applications and Assessment Outcomes

A total of 20,335 applications were received between 14th and 28th April 2020.

Assessments were carried out for 18,880 applications that were received between 14th and 23rd April 2020 with the following outcomes:

- 13,006 applications were assessed as being eligible for the Relief Kidu
- 310 applicants have withdrawn their applications
- The remaining 5,564 applications are being reviewed.

All applicants will be notified through sms message on their status, including those applications that are under review.

The Relief Kidu for the 13,006 recipients will be disbursed directly into the recipients' bank accounts. Recipients who do not have a bank account will receive the Relief Kidu in cash from the Dzongkhag Kidu Officers.

The following numbers can be contacted between 9am and 7pm for any clarifications:

- 77359783
- 77359784
- 77359795
- 17342162
- 17467860
- 17517356