

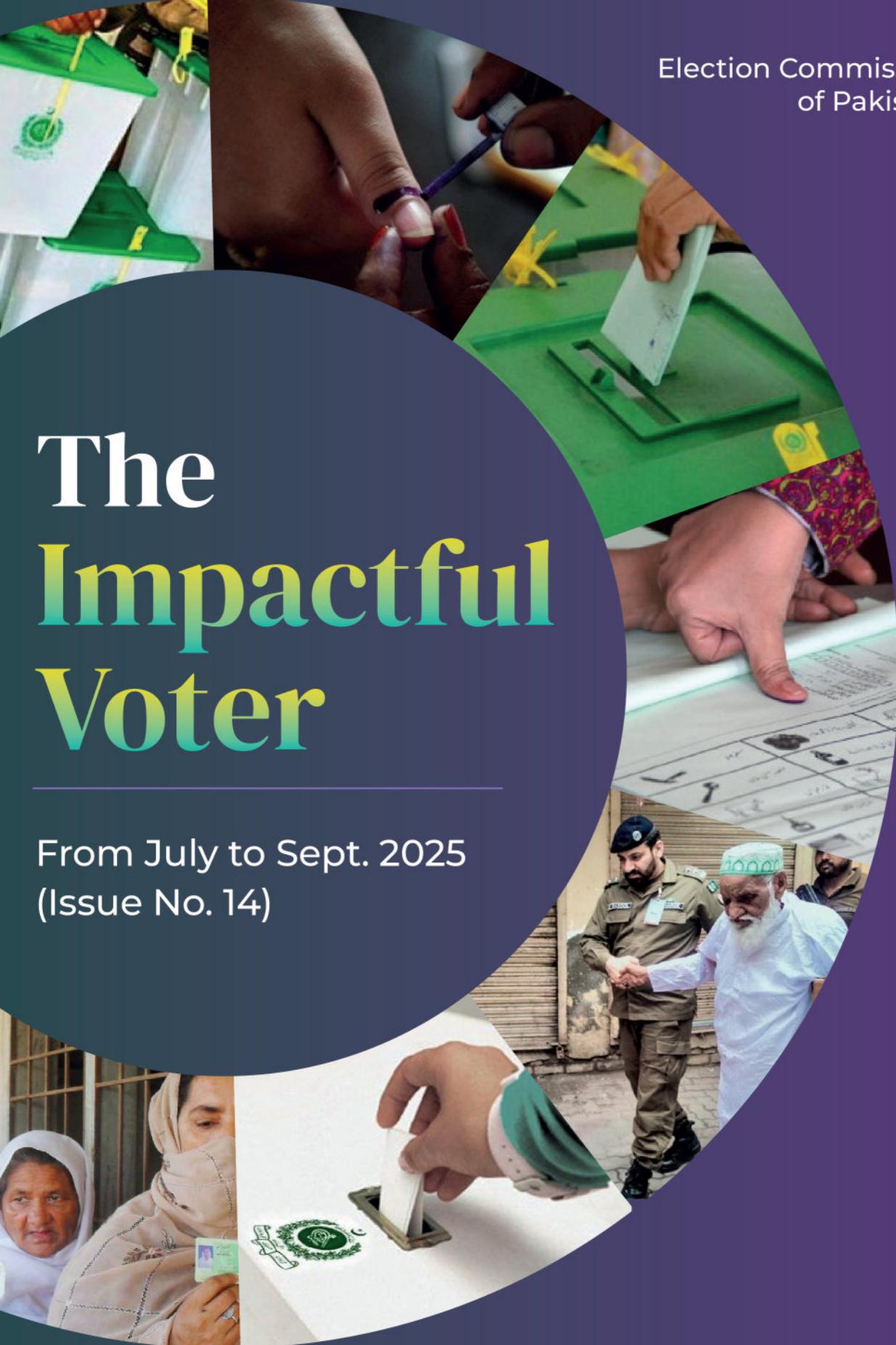


Election Commission
of Pakistan

The Impactful Voter

From July to Sept. 2025
(Issue No. 14)

ECP'S Newsletter





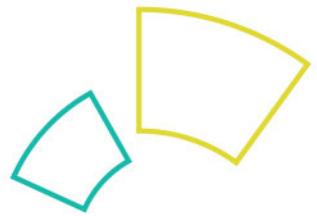
On the occasion of Pakistan's 78th Independence Day, I extend my heartfelt greetings to all citizens of our beloved country. This day is not only a celebration of our nation's hard-won freedom but also a reminder of our collective responsibility to uphold democratic values, integrity, and justice in all spheres of national life.

The Election Commission of Pakistan remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring free, fair, and inclusive elections across the country. Our dedicated officers, Provincial Voter Education Committees (PVECs), District Voter Education Committees (DVECs), and civil society engage citizens to raise awareness about their electoral rights and natural responsibilities. Each DVEC, comprising District Election Commissioners, local administration, religious leaders, minority representatives, and NGOs, play a pivotal role in engaging communities, facilitating voter registration, and promoting gender equity and social inclusion in electoral participation.

We are proud of our achievements in reducing the gender gap in voter registration, increasing political participation of women in electoral process, and ensuring accessibility for marginalized communities. Initiatives taken time to time like, run awareness campaigns for vulnerable segments reflect our commitment to leaving no citizen behind.

As we move forward, I urge every citizen to exercise their right to vote and support the electoral process. Together, let us continue to uphold the spirit of independence and civic responsibility for a stronger Pakistan.

Editorial



The Election Commission of Pakistan remains committed to promoting inclusive, transparent, and participatory electoral processes across the country

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This edition highlights the Election Commission of Pakistan's efforts in promoting inclusive, transparent, and participatory electoral processes across the country. On the occasion of celebrations of the 78th Independence Day, including a spirited "Milli Naghma Competition," to capacity-building workshops, digital training, and youth internship programs, the ECP continued to engage citizens at every level.

A particular focus has been on empowering women and marginalized groups, addressing gender gaps in voter registration, and facilitating accessibility through innovative campaigns and community engagement. The work of District Voter Education Committees, with diverse membership including local administrators, religious leaders, minorities, and NGOs, exemplifies the Commission's commitment to grassroots outreach and civic education.

In addition to administrative achievements, this issue covers international collaborations, such as the Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy and the Australian Federal Election Virtual Visitors Program, reflecting the ECP's proactive approach to adopting global best practices in electoral management.

Through these initiatives, the Commission continues to nurture a culture of participation, awareness, ensuring that Pakistan's electoral strengthened not just in law but in practice. This edition celebrates those achievements while reaffirming the ongoing mission to empower every citizen register vote and to participate in Electoral Process for the prosperity of democracy and evolved country.

Nazar Abbas ADG (MCO)

Editorial Team

Overall Hon'ble CEC Mr. Sikandar
Supervision: Sultan Raja
Supervised by: Special Secretary, Mr.
Zafar Iqbal Hussain

Editor in Chief: Mr. Nazar Abbas
Editors: Ms. Duriya Aamir
Ms. Bibi Sughra

Technical Ms. Tooba Qureshi
Staff: Mr. Naveed Anjum
Mr. Farhan Asim



Hon'ble Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan Mr. Sikandar Sultan Raja held Meeting with Wings' heads to review daily important activities and upcoming events on 06-08-2025.



Election Commission of Pakistan commemorates the 78th Independence Day with patriotic fervor on 13-08-2025.

“Milli Naghma Competition” at the event of 78th Independence Day of Pakistan

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) celebrated the 78th Independence Day of Pakistan with great zeal and patriotic enthusiasm at its Secretariat in Islamabad. The premises were adorned with national flags and vibrant decorations, reflecting the spirit of unity and devotion to the country.

As part of the celebrations, a “Milli Naghma Competition” was organized among ECP employees, showcasing their talent and love for the homeland through melodious national songs. Participants from various wings and departments of the Commission enthusiastically took part in the event, making it a lively and memorable occasion.

The event also featured speeches by senior ECP officials, who highlighted the importance of upholding democratic values and strengthening electoral integrity as a true reflection of independence. They emphasized that patriotism is not only expressed through songs and celebrations but also through sincere efforts to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections in the country. The ceremony ended with a collective prayer for Pakistan’s prosperity, stability, and continued progress, reaffirming the Election Commission’s resolve to play its vital role in safeguarding the democratic future of the nation.

At the conclusion of the competition, the top three performers were awarded prizes in recognition of their outstanding performance. The runner-ups were also appreciated and presented with Certificates of Participation for their spirited contribution to the event. The celebration concluded with renewed commitment among all participants to work with dedication, integrity, and a deep sense of national pride in service of Pakistan.



Mr. Hasan Ishtiaq, Junior Assistant (Protocol Wing) won 1st Prize.



Miss. Sadaf Zahra, Assistant Director (Electoral Rolls Wing) won 2nd Prize.



Mr. Sheheryar Ahmed, Assistant Director (MCO Wing) won 3rd Prize.

ECP Organizes Mehfil-e-Milad in Commemoration of 12th Rabi-ul-Awal

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) organized a Mehfil-e-Milad on 8th September 2025 in connection with the blessed occasion of 12th Rabi-ul-Awal, marking the birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him).

The event was attended by officers and staff of the Commission, who gathered to express their love and reverence for the Holy Prophet (PBUH). The program featured recitation of the Holy Quran, Naats, and addresses highlighting the life, teachings, and exemplary character of the Prophet (PBUH). Speaking

at the occasion, participants reflected on the importance of following the Prophet's (PBUH) teachings in both personal and professional life, promoting integrity, fairness, and service to humanity — values deeply aligned with the mandate of the Election Commission.

The Mehfil-e-Milad concluded with duas for the progress and prosperity of Pakistan, and for continued guidance in upholding truth and justice in all national endeavors.



Hon'ble Member ECP Balochistan Reviews Development Projects in Quetta, Mastung, and Hub

The Hon'ble Member of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) from Balochistan, Mr. Shah Muhammad Jatoi, undertook a series of visits and meetings to review the progress of ongoing construction and development projects of the Commission across the province.

On September 3, 2025, Mr. Jatoi visited the Provincial Election Commissioner's (PEC) Office in Quetta, where he was warmly received by Mr. Ali Asghar Sial, PEC Balochistan, along with senior officers of the ECP Headquarters. During the visit, Mr. Jatoi chaired a detailed meeting with PEC officials and was comprehensively briefed on the status of ECP building projects throughout Balochistan, along with other administrative and electoral matters.

Continuing his review activities, on September 4, 2025, Mr. Shah Muhammad Jatoi chaired a meeting on the

construction progress of the District Election Commissioner (DEC) Mastung Office. The meeting was held at the PEC Office, Quetta, and attended by relevant project and engineering staff. Detailed discussions were held on the pace of work, adherence to standards, and measures to address logistical challenges. Mr. Jatoi emphasized the need to expedite the project's completion while maintaining high construction quality and transparency.

Subsequently, on September 9, 2025, the Hon'ble Member visited the under-construction building of the District Election Commissioner (DEC) Office, Hub, to personally inspect the site and assess the progress. He appreciated the efforts and reiterated the ECP's commitment to enhancing institutional infrastructure at the district level for improved service delivery and operational readiness.



Mr. Shah Muhammad Jatoi, Hon'ble Member Balochistan Reviews Electoral Progress in Balochistan during Visit to Quetta on 03-09-2025.



Mr. Shah Muhammad Jatoi, Hon'ble Member Balochistan, held a Meeting on Construction Progress of DEC Mastung Office Held at PEC office, Quetta on 04-09-2025.



The visit was conducted by Mr. Shah Muhammad Jatoi, Hon'ble Member Balochistan on 09-09-2025 to review progress on the Election Commission of Pakistan's project for the construction of the Office Building of the District Election Commissioner (DEC) Hub.



Mr. Shah Muhammad Jatoi, Hon'ble Member Balochistan, visited the under-construction office of the District Election Commissioner (DEC) Gwadar to review the progress of the project on 11-09-2025.

Launching of 4th Strategic Plan 2025-2029

The Election Commission of Pakistan has launched its fourth strategic plan for 2025-2029, a comprehensive framework built on 11 Strategic Pillars, 41 detailed Goals, and fixed limitations for achieving its targets. This structured approach demonstrates the ECP's deepened commitment to delivering free, fair, transparent, and inclusive elections. The plan incorporates a range of technologies and aligns with tools and standards of international electoral best practices, ensuring that every aspect of the electoral process is enhanced for greater credibility and public trust.

Key initiatives within the plan focus on leveraging digital systems like the Election Management System (EMS) and exploring Artificial Intelligence (AI) to streamline operations and improve transparency. With a clear implementation framework involving dedicated monitoring committees and annual operational plans, the ECP is poised to address emerging challenges, strengthen institutional capacity, and systematically achieve its measurable objectives in the coming five years.



Mr. Omar Hamid Khan, Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan, chaired a meeting on 30-07-2025, to review and deliberate upon the formulation of ECP's Fourth Strategic Plan 2025-2025.

2nd Annual Conference of Accounts / Internal Audit Cadre Officers under Political Finance Wing for Capacity Building on Internal Audit from 28th July, 2025 to 1st September, 2025

ECP believes in self-accountability and continues to strengthen its internal oversight mechanisms. In this regard, experienced human resources are conducting internal audits of the Secretariat and field offices. To further enhance the professional capacity of officers

engaged in this process, the 2nd Annual Conference of Accounts/Internal Audit Cadre Officers was organized by the Political Finance Wing for Capacity Building on Internal Audit at the ECP Training Academy from 28th July to 1st September 2025.



Mr. Omar Hamid Khan, Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan during 2nd Annual Conference of Accounts / Audit.



Mr. Masood Akhtar Sherwanee, Director General (Political Finance) and Mr. Zafar Masood, Additional Director General (Political Finance) during 2nd Annual Conference of Accounts / Audit.

Regular Deliberations on Administrative and Operational Matters

To ensure the timely completion of all official assignments and to maintain smooth administrative and operational functioning, regular meetings are convened at the ECP Secretariat. These deliberations

provide a platform for reviewing progress, addressing bottlenecks, improving coordination among departments, and reinforcing accountability mechanisms across various wings of the Commission.



Mr. Omar Hamid Khan, Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan chaired a meeting on 05-08-2025, to deliberate on various official matters including key administrative and operational issues.



Mr. Zafar Iqbal Hussain, Special Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan, chaired a comprehensive meeting with all Wings of the Commission on 26-08-2025 to deliberate on key electoral matters.

Secretary ECP Meets Women Parliamentary Caucus to Discuss Women's Electoral Participation and Gender Inclusion

Mr. Omar Hamid Khan, Secretary, Election Commission of Pakistan, met with the Women Parliamentary Caucus on August 7, 2025, led by Secretary Caucus Ms. Shahida Rehmani, with MPs Ms. Tahira Aurangzeb, Ms. Rana Ansar, and Ms. Shahida Begum in attendance. Mr. Khan shared that under the Chief Election Commissioner's vision, the gender gap in voter registration has reduced to 7.4%, with women's registration now surpassing men's due to collaboration with NADRA. He noted an increase in women candidates to 923 during the 2024 General Elections and highlighted the launch of the Gender Mainstreaming and Social Inclusion Framework (GMSIF). He highlighted that these ECP's initiatives

have been appreciated by the EU, Commonwealth, and FAFEN.

Ms. Rehmani praised ECP's initiatives, reaffirming the Caucus's support for enhancing women's political participation and voter registration. Director General Gender and Social Inclusion, Ms. Nighat Siddique, briefed on initiatives like the INVR-5 project, coordination with Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, and "One Window Operations" for disability certificates. Both sides agreed to continue close collaboration to boost women voter registration and ensure their active electoral participation.



Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy (01st Online - Seminar Series) on 18th July, 2025

The Cambridge Malaysian Education and Development Trust (CMEDT) and Malaysian Commonwealth Studies Centre (MCSC), host of the Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy convened its 01st online seminar of the 2025-2026 series titled "Combating False and Misleading Information: Practical Tools and Partnerships for Electoral Authorities" on 18th July, 2025. This international virtual event brought together electoral experts and officials from across the globe to discuss rising threats to electoral integrity in the digital age. Three senior officers from ECP participated in the online program.

The seminar series highlighted the challenges posed by the influence of social media on electoral integrity. Participants discussed how advances in AI have enabled sophisticated disinformation campaigns, making it challenging for Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) to detect and respond effectively with limited resources and outdated regulations. Peer support and collaboration are crucial, as EMBs can learn from each other and share tools, expertise, and best practices to combat digital disinformation.



Participants from EMBs in "Cambridge Conference on Electoral Democracy, 01st Online Seminar Series" held on 18-07-2025.

Virtual Election Visitors Program for the 2025 Australian Federal Election on 29th July, 2025

On an invitation from the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC), four Senior officers of Election Commission of Pakistan participated in the "Virtual Election Visitor Program for the 2025 Australian Federal Elections" held on 29th July, 2025. The objective of the Virtual Election Visitors Program was to provide international observers with a comprehensive overview of Australia's electoral system and the May 3, 2025, federal election.

The program began with introductory remarks by Mr. Jeff Pope, Acting Electoral Commissioner of Australian Electoral Commission, who explained the fundamental principles of Australia's electoral system, shared that federal elections occur at least every three years and voting is compulsory for citizens aged 18 and over. Mr.

Pope also highlighted the logistical challenge of staffing, where the AEC filled over 100,000 positions in the 33 days following the elections announcement and recruited 89,000 temporary employees with new employment system "EmployMe".

The program covered the 2025 Federal Election Review, challenges and achievements of election delivery, voter engagement and education. Key insights included the AEC's proactive approach to media relations and preemptive addressing of misinformation, which built public trust and solidified its authority. The AEC's co-designed community outreach approach, including partnerships with community leaders, ensured culturally safe and effective communication for diverse voter populations.

Make your vote count – House of Representatives

How to vote in a federal election

On the **green ballot paper** number every box in the order of your choice. Don't worry if you make a mistake – just ask for another ballot paper.

Voters casting vote at Polling Stations during Australia's Federal Elections.

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A Two-Day Workshop on “Digital Enhancement for Electoral Integrity” was conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on 21st and 22nd August, 2025.

The workshop aimed to build the capacity of Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) officers in utilizing advanced Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital tools to strengthen electoral systems, enhance transparency, and promote institutional efficiency.

During the sessions, participants were introduced to innovative digital technologies designed to support data-driven decision-making, improve electoral

management, and safeguard the integrity of democratic processes. The training also highlighted global best practices in adopting digital solutions for electoral governance.

The initiative reflects the ECP's continued commitment to empowering a digital democracy through modernization, innovation, and collaboration with international partners.



A group photo of the participants of the workshop with Mr. Zafar Iqbal Hussain, Special Secretary Election Commission of Pakistan

ECP Concludes Two-Month Internship Program for University Students

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) successfully concluded its two-month Internship Program designed for university students, aimed at providing them with practical exposure to the workings of one of Pakistan's key constitutional institutions. Under this initiative, students from various universities were placed in different branches and wings of the Commission, where they gained hands-on experience in electoral management, administration, information technology, media, law, and public outreach.

Throughout the program, the interns had the opportunity to observe institutional procedures, participate in departmental activities, and contribute to short-term research and analytical assignments. The

program was structured to help them understand the electoral processes, policy formulation, and operational framework of the Commission.

At the closing ceremony held in October 2025, the interns presented their reports and recommendations summarizing their learning outcomes and experiences. Senior officers of the ECP appreciated the enthusiasm and performance of the participants and encouraged them to continue contributing. The ECP's Internship Program reflects the institution's commitment to youth engagement, capacity building, and promoting transparency and civic awareness through academic collaboration and experiential learning.



Orientation of the interns on opening day at ECP Secretariat, Islamabad.



Closing ceremony of the internship program at ECP Secretariat, Islamabad.

14TH EDITION

**JULY - SEPTEMBER
2025**



Taking Oath of the Election Officials



The Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab, Mr. Sharifullah, administered the oath to the District Returning Officers (DROs) appointed for the conduct of bye-elections in NA-66 (Wazirabad), NA-129 (Lahore), and PP-87 (Mianwali).

Senate Bye-Elections, Punjab

Senate bye-elections were held on 9th September 2025 at the Punjab Assembly Hall to fill one vacant general seat. The electoral process was conducted under the supervision of the Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab, Mr. Sharifullah, who served as the Returning Officer. The polling was carried out in an orderly and transparent manner, ensuring compliance with

electoral procedures and regulations. Following the counting of votes, Rana Sanaullah emerged victorious, securing the Senate seat. The successful conduct of the bye-election demonstrated the Election Commission's commitment to maintaining transparency, fairness, and credibility in the democratic process.



Local Government Bye-Elections for the reserved seats in the 7 Districts of the Balochistan

The Local Government Bye-elections for the reserved seats in the 7 Districts of the Balochistan were successfully conducted on 3rd August, 2025. The polling process began at 8:00 a.m. and continued smoothly until 4:00 p.m. without any interruptions, disorder, or unpleasant incidents. The district administration, police, and polling staff played a vital role in maintaining order, security, and efficiency throughout the day, which contributed greatly to the success of the elections. Their coordinated efforts ensured that voters were able to cast their votes without facing any

obstacles. The Provincial Election Commissioner, Balochistan acknowledged the cooperation of all stakeholders and emphasized its commitment to free, fair, and impartial electoral processes across the province. The peaceful completion of the polling process reflects the determination of the Election Commission and the support of local authorities in strengthening democratic practices and upholding the trust of the people in the electoral system.



Pre-poll preparations for the bye-elections on the reserved seats of women, peasants, workers and minorities at Quetta on 02-08-2025.



The Local Government By-Elections Poll Day for the reserved seats in the seven (07) districts of Balochistan province namely Zhob, Sherani, Loralai, Barkhan, Kalat, Khuzdar, and Surab on 03-08-2025.

Establishment and Functioning of Provincial Monitoring Control Room, Sindh

A dedicated Provincial Monitoring Control Room (PMCR) was established at the office of the Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh on 13 September to oversee and manage all operational aspects of the upcoming local-government by-elections scheduled for 24 September in 14 districts of the province. The

PMCR remained fully functional from its inception through to the conclusion of the process, continuously coordinating with district returning officers, law-enforcement agencies and monitoring teams to ensure the peaceful, transparent and timely execution of polling and result-consolidation activities.



Provincial Monitoring Control Room (PMCR) established at the office of PEC, Sindh on 13-09-2025 to monitor the ongoing Local Government Bye-Elections on 24-09-2025. The PMCR worked till culmination of the process.

Senate Elections Successfully Conducted in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) successfully conducted the Senate Elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on 21st July 2025 in a transparent, peaceful, and orderly manner. Mr. Saeed Gul, Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar, was appointed as the Returning Officer to oversee the nomination, scrutiny, and overall electoral process for the province. The election aimed to fill seats in the Upper House of Parliament, ensuring representation from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in the national legislative framework.

Throughout the process, strict adherence to the Election Commission's code of conduct and electoral procedures was maintained, reflecting the institution's continued commitment to strengthening democratic norms. Effective coordination with provincial authorities, law enforcement agencies, and election staff ensured a smooth and credible electoral exercise, further reinforcing public trust in the ECP's capacity to manage free and fair elections across the country.



Mr. Saeed Gul, Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar appointed as Returning Officer receiving nominations regarding senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) scheduled for 21-07-2025.



The Election Commission of Pakistan successfully conducted the elections in an orderly manner to elect representatives to the Upper House of Parliament in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) on 21-07-2025.

Field Visits of Provincial Election Commissioner, Punjab



The PEC Punjab visited the office of District Election Commissioner Mianiwali to inspect and oversee office working and functioning on 15-09-2025.



The Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab visited the offices of the Regional and District Election Commissioners, Sargodha on 16-09-2025 to review the operations and functioning to improve administrative efficiency and services delivery.



Provincial Election Commissioner Punjab, Mr. Sharifullah, visited the Regional and District Election Commissioner Office Khushab on 15-9-2025. Mr. Ibrar Ahmed Jatoi (REC), briefed him on regional activities, while Syed Ghulam Mohiuddin Shah (DEC), shared updates on technical matters and office performance. Mr. Ali Raza (AEC), presented a summary of the office's one-year achievements and ongoing initiatives.

Fortnightly Meeting of Provincial Election Commissioner, Sindh



Provincial Election Commissioner Sindh Mr. Aijaz Anwer Chohan presided over the fortnightly meeting with RECs of Sindh Province on 01-07-2025.

Training of ECP's and NADRA Officers



*One Day Training for
ECP & NADRA Officers*

"INCLUSIVE NIC VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN PHASE-V"

3rd July, 2025

Conference Room Provincial Election Commissioner, Sindh Karachi

One-day training to the officers of Election Commission of Pakistan and NADRA from 16-selected districts was held in three phases from 3rd to 8th July, 2025 at office of the Provincial Election Commissioner, Sindh, Karachi.

Conducting and Monitoring of Recruitment Tests in PEC Office Sindh

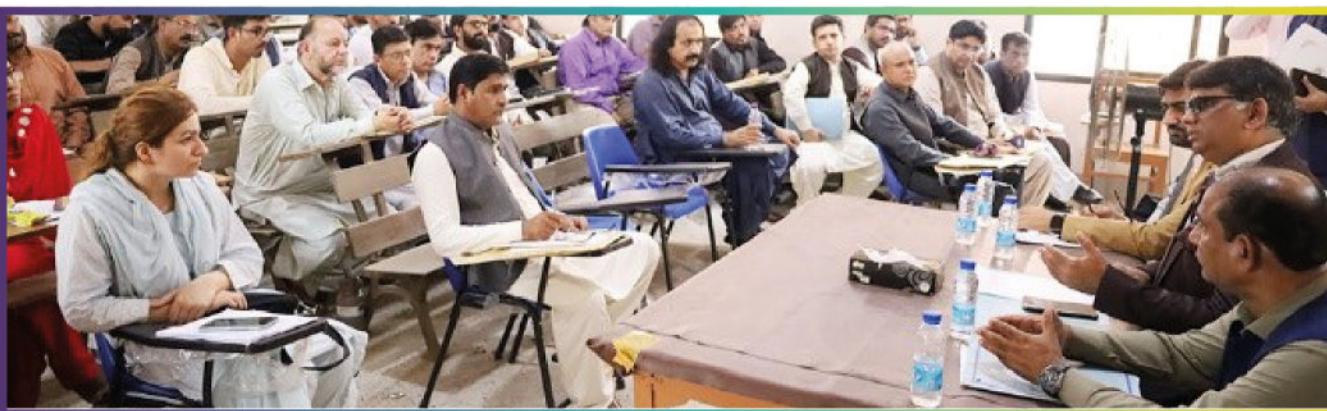


Office of the (PEC) Sindh conducted the recruitment test for various vacant posts including Naib Qasid, Drivers, And Sub-Assistants in July, 2025.



Director General (HR) Mr. Muhammad Khalid Siddiq, visited the Centre of Departmental Promotion Exam (DPE) for the post of Assistant Election Commissioners along with PEC (Sindh) Mr. Aijaz Anwar Chohan at the office of PEC Sindh, Karachi on 17-08-2025 to monitor the conduct of written test.

PEC Sindh, Mr. Aijaz Anwer Chohan along with JPEC (Admn), visited the Government Commerce College Karachi to review the preparations for the test of Junior Assistant



PEC Sindh, Mr. Aijaz Anwer Chohan along with JPEC (Admn), Mr. Tahir Mansoor Ali Khan visited the government commerce college to review arrangements for junior assistant written test on 19-07-25 .

3rd Quarterly GD&E Working Group Meeting Focuses on Inclusive Elections in Sindh on 25-09-2025

The 3rd Quarterly Meeting of the Gender, Disability & Electoral Working Group was held at the office of the Provincial Election Commissioner, Sindh, Karachi. The meeting was attended by representatives of various Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) who actively participated.

Meeting was chaired by the Provincial Election Commissioner Mr. Aijaz Anwar Chohan along with JPEC (Admn) Mr. Tahir Mansoor Khan and JPEC (Elections) Mr.

Sain Bakhsh Channar. During the session, participants reviewed the progress achieved in ongoing initiatives and shared valuable inputs aimed at further strengthening efforts for inclusive, accessible, and participatory elections. Mr. Sain Bakhsh Channar highlighted the importance of role of religious scholars and said that religious scholars of all sects may be taken on board to raise awareness about Transgender community being human beings who are also protected by the constitution under Article 25 of the constitution.



A One-Day Training Session Organized at Provincial Election Commissioner's Office, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for Officers of NADRA and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) under the Inclusive NIC/Voter Registration Strategy -Phase V (INVR-5)

A one-day training session was organized for officers of NADRA and the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) under the Inclusive NIC/Voter Registration Strategy - Phase V (INVR-5), on 3rd July, 2025 at the office of Provincial Election Commissioner, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The training aimed to strengthen coordination between both institutions to enhance the

registration of marginalized groups, including women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), the transgender community, and other underrepresented populations. Participants were briefed on the objectives and framework of INVR-5, with a focus on field-level collaboration, data sharing mechanisms, and effective outreach strategies.



ECP Emphasizes Awareness on Postal Ballot Facility for Persons with Disabilities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

Awareness about the facility of postal ballot papers for persons with disabilities is essential, emphasized Joint Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, JPEC (Els), while chairing a meeting of the Gender and Disability Electoral Working Group. The session was attended by representatives from Blue Veins, SPDA, Enlight Lab, URDO, Paiman, Pak Women, as well as Director (ELS.) and DD (MCO). JPEC (Els) highlighted that the Election Commission is committed to ensuring the participation of women and all

marginalized groups in the electoral process. He stressed the need to collect accurate data on persons with disabilities in each district and to raise awareness about their right to postal ballots. He added that polling stations are preferably established on ground floors for accessibility. Earlier, Director Elections briefed participants on the legal status and procedure of postal ballots, noting that polling staff also receive special training to assist such groups.



Participants of the session discussing accessibility, legal procedures, and awareness on postal ballots for persons with disabilities and a group photo of the attendees.



Joint Provincial Election Commissioner Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (JPEC-ELS) chairing the Gender and Disability Electoral Working Group meeting, emphasizing awareness on postal ballot facilities for persons with disabilities and inclusive electoral participation.

Awareness Session on Workplace Harassment Held at ECP Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Office

An awareness session on workplace harassment was held at the PEC Khyber Pakhtunkhwa office, organized by FOSPAH. JPEC (Admn) Shahid Iqbal emphasized collective efforts to prevent harassment and ensure a respectful work environment. Ms. Amina Rafiq, Assistant Registrar FOSPAH, briefed participants on the

relevant Act. Director Elections Muhammad Nadeem Khan, spokesperson Sohail Ahmad, and ECP staff attended. Shields were presented in appreciation, and the session concluded with an interactive discussion and vote of thanks.



ECP Reviews Semi-Annual District Voter Education Activities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

JPEC (Els) Muhammad Farid Afridi presided over a review meeting on the Election Commission's District Voter Education semi-annual calendar (Feb-July 2025), emphasizing the vital role of District Voter Education Committees in promoting voter awareness. All District Election Commissioners attended. Ms. Durya Amir,

Director Media Coordination, briefed participants, while Ms. Sadaf, Assistant Director Electoral Rolls, was also present. Afridi noted that the planned activities by the Media Coordination & Outreach Wing were fully implemented across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Provincial Election Commissioner, Balochistan Conducts Training to Address Gender Gap in Voter

A training session was held at the Provincial Election Commission Office in Quetta on July 3rd, 2025, aimed at addressing the gender gap in voter registration across eight districts of Balochistan. Officials from the Election Commission and NADRA attended the session. Provincial Election Commissioner Mr. Ali Asghar Sial emphasized the need for increasing CNIC registration among women to reduce the disparity in voter registration. The ECP's GIS Wing has developed a targeted strategy called INVR-5 focusing on these districts to bridge the gap. Mr. Sial urged collaboration

among ECP, NADRA, local CSOs, and political parties for effective implementation of the strategy. Special instructions were given to the District Election Commissioners of Chaman and Killa Abdullah for strategic execution at the local level. The overall aim is to bridge the gender gap in voter registration through focused efforts in these districts. By enhancing CNIC registration among women and through collaborative efforts, the ECP seeks to improve voter registration inclusivity in Balochistan.



Fortnightly Meeting of the Provincial Election Commissioner, Balochistan with Regional Election Commissioner of the Provinces



Provincial Election Commissioner Balochistan, Mr. Ali Asghar Sial presided over the online fortnightly meeting with the RECs of Balochistan province.

PEC Balochistan Conducts IT Capacity Building Trainings to Enhance Administrative Efficiency

The Provincial Election Commissioner (PEC) Balochistan successfully conducted a series of IT Capacity Building Trainings aimed at enhancing the technical and administrative skills of its officials. The program was divided into three batches, held between 8th and 16th July 2025, and focused on improving digital literacy, office productivity, and efficient workflow management across various cadres of staff.

The first batch, held on 8th and 9th July, included Senior Personal Assistants (SPAs), Draughtsman, Senior Assistants, and Junior Personal Assistants (JPAs). The two-days training emphasized practical applications such as file and folder organization, advanced MS Word formatting with Urdu integration, inserting graphics, email drafting, Excel basics for data management, and the use of Google Drive and Docs for collaboration. The sessions aimed to strengthen administrative proficiency and document management for smoother office operations.



Batch#1: SPAs, Draughtsman, Senior Assistants, JPA

The training of second batch, conducted on 10th and 11th July, comprised District Election Officers (DEOs). The training covered advanced MS Word features, data handling through Excel, effective email management, software installation basics, file organization, and the use of online collaboration tools like Google Drive, Zoom, and Google Meet. These sessions were tailored to support DEOs in handling electoral data efficiently and promoting digital collaboration within their respective districts.

The third and final batch training, held on 15th and 16th July, included Junior Assistants and Sub-Assistants. Participants received hands-on training in file organization, professional document formatting with Urdu integration, email communication, and Excel fundamentals. The goal was to empower supporting staff with essential IT skills for efficient communication, data management, and workflow enhancement.



Batch#2: Data Entry Operators



Batch#3: Junior Assistants, Sub Assistants

Provincial Election Commissioner Balochistan Celebrates Independence Day with Patriotic Zeal and Renewed Commitment to National Duties

On the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day August 14, a simple yet dignified ceremony was organized at the office of the Provincial Election Commissioner Balochistan, Quetta, which was attended by all officers and staff members of the office. The event was presided over by the Provincial Election Commissioner Balochistan, Mr. Ali Asghar Sayal. While addressing, Mr. Ali Asghar Sial highlighted the historical importance of 14th August, stating that the day is not only a reminder of the great blessing of independence but also a call to fulfill our national duties, democratic

values, and constitutional responsibilities with utmost sincerity. He emphasized that Pakistan is the fruit of our collective sacrifices and that the role of every citizen is crucial for the country's progress and stability. On this occasion, Mr. Ali Asghar Sial also appreciated the efforts of the concerned staff for the successful organization of the ceremony and paid tribute to their dedication. The ceremony concluded with the traditional cake-cutting, followed by prayers for the peace, prosperity, and development of Pakistan.



PEC Balochistan Introduces “Best Performing Staff Member” Award to Recognize Excellence

In line with the vision of the PEC Balochistan to promote a productive and performance-driven environment, the office introduced the “Best Performing Staff Member” award, announced after every two months. The initiative encourages healthy competition based on punctuality, professional conduct, task completion, and discipline. Branch in-charges nominated candidates,

and a Scrutiny Committee finalized the selections. In the latest evaluation, four staff members—Ms. Ramsha Mir, Mr. Abdul Haq, Mr. Muhammad Imran, and Mr. Khawar Naveed—were recognized for outstanding performance. Certificates and appreciation letters were distributed on August 13, 2025, with Mr. Abdul Haq selected as the overall best performer through a draw.



Mr. Abdul Haq,
Senior Assistant



Ms. Ramsha Mir,
Sub Assistant



Mr. Khawar Naveed,
Senior Assistant



Mr. Muhammad Imran,
Senior Assistant

Provincial Election Commissioner Balochistan's Visit of Under Construction Office of DEC, Hub



PEC Balochistan, Mr. Ali Asghar Sial, Reviews Progress of DEC Hub Office Construction on 19-08-2025.

Consultative Meeting of the Gender and Disability Electoral Working Group (GDEWG)



A consultative meeting of the Gender and Disability Electoral Working Group (GDEWG) was held at the REC Office Quetta on August 25, 2025. Senior officials of the PEC Balochistan, including JPEC Mr. Waseem Ahmed Jafri, Director Elections Mr. Abdullah, REC Quetta Mr. Tahir Hassan, and AD (Admin) Mr. Mehmood Rahim, attended alongside representatives from CSOs and

NADRA. The meeting provided a platform to discuss gender equality and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the electoral process. Participants shared insights, reviewed ongoing initiatives, and explored joint measures to promote accessible voter registration and inclusive electoral practices.

PEC Balochistan Reviews Six-Month District Voter Education Calendar, Highlights Women and Marginalized Outreach

A review meeting on the District Voters Education' Six-Monthly Calendar (February–July 2025) was held at the office of the Provincial Election Commissioner, Balochistan on September 15, 2025. The meeting was chaired by Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Elections), Mr. Waseem Ahmed Jafri, Additional Director General (MCO), ECP Secretariat Islamabad, Mr. Nazar Abbas, along with senior officials including Director Elections, Mr. Abdullah, Director Administration, Mr. Naeem Ahmed and Assistant Director (MCO), Mr. Jahanzaib Shah. District Election

Commissioners (DECs) from all the districts of province also participated. The DECs presented their reports highlighting achievements, key challenges and practical recommendations for strengthening voter education efforts. Mr. Nazar Abbas assured that constructive suggestions would be incorporated into upcoming strategies. While addressing the meeting, Mr. Waseem Ahmed Jafri appreciated the continuous efforts of the District Voter Education Committees (DVECs), especially their initiatives to enhance voter awareness among women and marginalized groups.



Voter Awareness Session Held at Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta

On 1st September, 2025, the Provincial Election Commission office, Balochistan, conducted a voter awareness session at Sardar Bahadur Khan Women's University, Quetta. The Provincial Election Commissioner, Mr. Ali Asghar Sial, appreciated the university's cooperation and the arrangement of the program, highlighting the importance of women's participation in the electoral process. The Vice Chancellor, Dr. Rubina Mushtaq advised students to actively engage in democratic practices and promote

voter registration. Mr. Abdullah (Director Elections) spoke about the ECP's constitutional framework and its legal obligations. Mr. Naeem Ahmed (Director Administration) discussed initiatives taken by the ECP to make the electoral process more inclusive. Ms. Aliya Nazar (Deputy Director Elections) highlighted gender equality and women's empowerment in the context of the Elections Act-2017 and Elections Rules-2017. Commemorative shields were exchanged to mark the event.



14TH EDITION

JULY - SEPTEMBER 2025

The Election Commission of Pakistan provides a platform of District Voter Education Committees (DVECs) at grassroots level to address voter-related affairs and educate citizens about the electoral process. These committees play a vital role in informing voters about their rights, responsibilities, and the importance of participating in elections, by engaging directly with communities, including students of schools, colleges, and local organizations, DVECs ensure that citizens receive accurate and accessible information about voter registration and electoral procedures.

Each DVEC is composed of key stakeholders, including District Election Commissioners, representatives of local administration, religious leaders, minority representatives, and NGOs, ensuring diverse and inclusive outreach. As an essential initiative, DVECs facilitate voters in navigating administrative processes, such as obtaining CNICs and registering to vote. They act as a bridge between the Election Commission and the electorate, communicating key messages on inclusive participation, gender equity, and civic responsibility. By raising awareness at the grassroots level, DVECs play a crucial role in creating an informed electorate, empowering citizens to participate responsibly in election process.



Punjab



Mr. Touseef , District Election Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Conducts Voter Awareness Session to Promote Electoral Literacy Among Youth at Govt Graduate College Toba Tek Singh.



ECP-NADRA Conducts One-Day Orientation led by Mr. Imran Zafar, DEC, Gujrat and Mrs. Huda Ali Gohar, Deputy Director (Media Coordination & Outreach) Lahore.



A consultative meeting with NADRA held at the office of Ms. Maham Qadir, District Election Commissioner, Sheikhupura.



An Orientation Session on the Inclusive NIC Registration Campaign, Faisalabad,



Mr. Muhammad Ali, District Election Commissioner Sialkot held coordination meeting regarding Phase V of the Inclusive NIC & Voter Registration (INVR) Campaign.



Mr. Imran Zafar , District Election Commissioner Gujrat held Inclusive District Coordination Committee (IDCC) Consultative meeting on "Inclusive NIC / Voter Registration Campaign Phase-V" (INVR-V) on 22-07-2025 in DEC office Gujrat.



Mr. Shahid Islam, Regional Election Commissioner, Gujranwala chaired meeting on Inclusive NIC & Voter Registration (Phase V).



Mr. Roy Sultan Batty, District Election commissioner Nankana Sahib held awareness seminar on the importance of voter registration on 24-07-2025 at industrial home Sanatzar, Mangtanwala Road Nankana Sahib.



Mr. Touseef, District Election Commissioner Toba Tek Singh conducted A consultative session at office to promote voter education among diverse groups.



Mr. Shakeel Ahmed, Regional Election Commissioner, Dera Ghazi Khan held a meeting regarding INVR-V on 28-07-2025.



Mr. Sarfraz Habib DEC-I, Gujranwala conducted a follow-up meeting meeting with the Inter-Departmental coordination committee (IDCC) on 29-07-2025.



In July 2025, a DVEC Six-Month Review Meeting held in Lahore lead by Mr. Nazar Abbas (ADG) and Mr. Aleem Shahab (ADG).



Meeting of Inclusive District Coordination Committee (IDCC) for implementation of INVR-5 held at the office of DEC Sargodha.



The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), in partnership with NADRA, is implementing an Inclusive National Identity Card (CNIC) and Voter Registration Campaign across 25 districts of Punjab.



Ms. Maham Qadir, District Election Commissioner, Sheikhupura led an event organized by PODA Pakistan in connection with World Democracy Day on



Mr. Sarfraz Habib, District Election Commissioner (DEC) held a meeting with Religious Scholars and Ulema at Tehsil Kamoke, Gujranwala, to promote the importance of National Identity Card (NIC) and voter registration on 17-09-2025.



Mr. Sajid Hussain Rathore, District Election Commissioner-II, Faisalabad conducted an INVR-V meeting at ASPIRE College for Girls, Faisalabad on 17-09-2025.



Mr. Hamad Badal, DEC-II, Lahore arranged a Mobile Registration Vehicle (MRV) at Yohanabad, Lahore, to facilitate members of the Christian community in obtaining their National Identity Cards (NICs) and registering as voters on 03-09-2025.



Regional Review Meeting was held in Multan on 10-09-2025 with the District Election Commissioners of South Punjab, to review activities conducted in line with the six-month DVEC Calendar issued by the MCO Wing at ECP.



Mr. Hamad Badal, DEC-II, Lahore conducted a coordination meeting with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), particularly representatives from minority groups, the KhawajaSra Society, and organizations working for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).



Mr. Arshad Ali, District Election Commissioner, Sargodha held a monthly meeting of Inclusive District Coordination Committee (IDCC) on the agenda of Inclusive NIC and Voter Registration was convened on 23-09-2025.



Mr. Muhammad Adnan Zafar, District Election Commissioner-II, Multan, in collaboration with the NADRA Regional Office, organized a DVEC Session at Govt. Graduate College for Women on 22-09-2025.



A delegation of students from the Political Finance Department of GIFT University, Gujranwala, visited the office of Mr. Nadeem DEC-I, Gujranwala.



The Potohar Organisation for Development Advocacy (PODA), in collaboration with the PEC in Punjab, organised a Political Rights Awareness Session and a Mock Poll Exercise on 20-09-2025, at Government Technical College, Lytton Road, Lahore.

Sindh



A UN delegation, led by Dr. Ali Al-Bayati and Mr. Qasim Janjua, met with DEC Khairpur Mr. Naeem ur Rehman on 02-07-2025, at office of the DEC Khairpur to discuss the Pakistan Women Leaders Project.



The District Election Commissioner Khairpur, Mr. Naeem ur Rehman along with Mr. Awais Ahmed, zonal head NADRA visited awareness campaign program with ladies at Gymkhana Khairpur, in connection with the implementation of INVR-V on 13-08-2025.



Mr. Sohail Hussain Memon Assistant Election Commissioner, Sukkur visited NADRA's MRV deputed at UC, Akbarpur, village Bakhsh-katpar, Town Committee, Kandra, at District Sukkur, to monitor the CNIC registration.



Ms. Azara Mahesar District Election Commissioner Karachi, (South) visited NADRA's MRV deputed at UC No, 09 Hingorabad, TMC Liyari at District South to monitor the CNIC registration.



Mr. Muhammad Yousuf Majeedano District Election Commissioner, Shaheed Banizarabad and Director NADRA, Mr. Rafiq Ahmed Bular monitored the CNIC registration campaign and implementation of ECP's Strategy INVR-V in UC-9 Taj Colony on 25-09-2025.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa



A voter awareness review session conducted on 31-07-2025 at the Office of Mr. Shahid Ali District Education Officer, Khyber (Jamrud).



An orientation session was held at the office of Mr. Anwar Iqbal, DEC, Kohat, with the participation of members from the Inclusive District Coordination Committee (IDCC) and the District Voter Education Committee (DVEC) on 17-07-2025.



Mr. Hamid Nawaz, District Election Commissioner, Battagram held a Review sessions with key community groups including students, women, and youth on 15th and 22-07-2025.



Mr. Muhammad Zahir Khan, District Election Commissioner (DEC) Bajaur, conducted a comprehensive review activity with Youth, Students, Women, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), and the Transgender community on 23-07-2025.



The Regional Election Commissioner, Swat, Mr. Fazal Hakim held an awareness Session in Swat on 18-07-2025.



The District Election Commissioner Buner Mr. Amir Ishfaq Qureshi organized a voter education event on 24-07-2025 to emphasize the importance of inclusive electoral participation.



Meeting held by Mr. Jhanzeb Khan, District Election Commissioner (DEC) Swat, Focusing on Bridging Gender Gap in Voter Registration under ECP INVR-V Plan on 26-08-2025.

Balochistan



A voter awareness session held on 07-10-2025, at Government Girls High School, Mominabad, Quetta.



A voter awareness session organized in the office of DEC Quetta, Syed Nazeer Ahmed with the participation of students and social activists on 29-08-2025.



Mr. Wadood Ahmed, the DEC Killa Abdullah conducted a voter education and awareness program with government officials at the office of the District Election Commissioner, Killa Abdullah on 29-08-2025.



Mr. Abdul Saboor Khan, District Election Commissioner (DEC) Pishin conducted a voter education and awareness program with government officials at Government Girls Degree College, Pishin on 29-08-2025.



Mr. Naeem Shahzad, DEC, Sibi on 28-08-2025 held a District Voter Education Committee (DVEC) meeting. The session was attended by representatives from prominent civil society organizations, including PODA and Aurat Foundation, as well as officials from government departments and local institutions.



Mr. Tufail Ahmed, DEC , Awaran in August 2025 held a District Voter Education Committee (DVEC) meeting in Awaran district with the objective of raising awareness about the significance of voting and voter registration.



Mr. Muhammad Akram, District Election Commissioner,
Ustad Muhammad in August, 2025



The District Election Commissioner (DEC) Hub, Abdul Muqtadir Ghazali organized a voter education session under the framework of the District Voter Education Committee (DVEC) with students of a local madrassa in September, 2025.



The District Election Commissioner (DEC) Quetta, syed Nazeer Ahmed organized a voter awareness session with madrassa students under the District Voter Education Committee (DVEC) framework in September, 2025.



A voter awareness session was conducted by DEC Kalat, Syed Ehsan Ullah Shah at Government Girls Degree College, Kalat in September, 2025 in collaboration with the Potohar Organisation for Development Advocacy (PODA).

PEN & PAGES

**A COLLECTION OF ENGAGING STORIES
AND EXPERIENCES**



Fiction Favorites

By the Editor

THE INKED THUMB



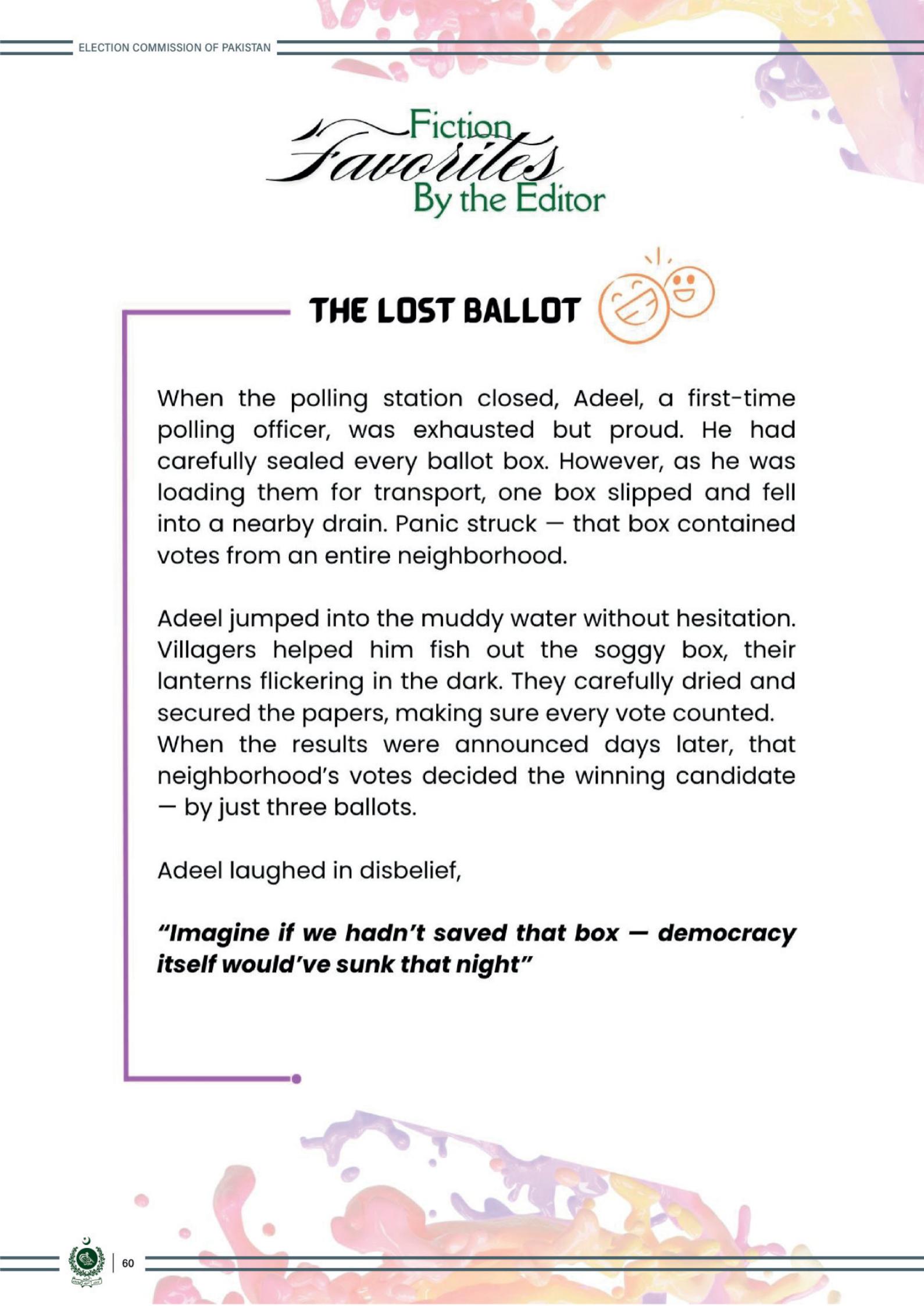
In a small mountain village, 82-year-old Bibi Noor woke up before sunrise on election day. Her grandchildren told her she was too old to walk to the polling station two kilometers away, but she smiled and said,

"If I can walk to vote, maybe they'll walk to build the country"

The road was rough, but every step reminded her of the days when she had no right to vote. When she finally reached the polling station, the presiding officer helped her press her thumb into the indelible ink. As the blue mark appeared, Bibi Noor whispered,

"Now, I've done my duty"

That single ink mark on her wrinkled thumb became the most powerful symbol in the village — a reminder that democracy is not about age, power, or wealth, but about the courage to participate.



Fiction Favorites By the Editor

THE LOST BALLOT



When the polling station closed, Adeel, a first-time polling officer, was exhausted but proud. He had carefully sealed every ballot box. However, as he was loading them for transport, one box slipped and fell into a nearby drain. Panic struck – that box contained votes from an entire neighborhood.

Adeel jumped into the muddy water without hesitation. Villagers helped him fish out the soggy box, their lanterns flickering in the dark. They carefully dried and secured the papers, making sure every vote counted. When the results were announced days later, that neighborhood's votes decided the winning candidate – by just three ballots.

Adeel laughed in disbelief,

"Imagine if we hadn't saved that box – democracy itself would've sunk that night"

قصيدة رسول صلی اللہ علیہ وآلہ وسلم

شمس و قمر، ارض و سماں، کون و مکان
کوثر و فردوسِ بربیں سب ہی کچھ محمد ﷺ کا ہے

آسناؤں ہم نشیں تجھ کو افسانہ محمد ﷺ کا
کہ میں ہوں مہدِ مادر ہی سے دیوانہ محمد ﷺ کا

جان لے تو عرش و فرش پر مقام و مرتبہ اپنے پیغمبر ﷺ کا
لا الہ الا اللہ سے ہو کر پاک زبان لیتی ہے نام محمد ﷺ کا

نمیں آتا ہے ڈھب سلاطین کی خوشنام کا
خوش آتا ہے مجھے اب مشغله نعتِ محمد ﷺ کا

ملا بندوں کو یوں رستہ حق تعالیٰ کی عنایت کا
دعا قبولیٰ کیلیے شرط ہے اسم گرامی محمد ﷺ کا

جو آنکھیں ہوں تو نام پاک ﷺ سے پیدا ہے یکتاںی
کہ آغوشِ احمد میں جلوہ گر بے سیمِ احمد ﷺ کا

فرشته درود پڑھتے ہیں، زمین گواہ ہے رحمت کی
فلک بھی جھومتا ہے سن کے تذکرہ محمد ﷺ کا

الہی! مقدر کر دے بسیرا حرم ﷺ و بزم مولا ﷺ میں
جھکے ایسا کہ شکل دال (د) بن جائے الف قدر کا

حقیقت یہ ہے نعتِ نبی ﷺ میرا زیور و سربایہ ہے
زنگی میری صدقہ، طرزِ سخن ہے ترانہ محمد ﷺ کا

جو اپنے دوست کا ہو دوست سب کو دوست ہوتا ہے
خدا کا کیوں نہ عاشق ہو، جو عاشق ہو محمد ﷺ کا

چاہ اگر ہے دو جہاں میں سرخرو و بیڑا پار ہو جائے
عشق و محبت دل میں ہو پھر والانہ محمد ﷺ کا

رسول اللہ ﷺ کا محبوب مقرب مقبول الہی ہے
وہ ہی پیارا خدا کا ہے، جو ہے پیارا محمد ﷺ کا

کیوں شاعروں میں نام نہ میرا بلند ہو، یا رب
غلام تیرا حللہ ہے مدحِ خواں محمد ﷺ کا

کہاں ہے عالم میں کوئی ثانی احمدِ مرسل ﷺ کا
پر جلتے ہیں جہاں فرشتوں کے، ہے گزرگاہِ محمد ﷺ کا

فکر کیوں کر ہو کسی حاسد، مخالف، دشمن کا
بے دستگیری زہرا کو کافی گھرانہِ محمد ﷺ کا

زہرا تنسیم (زہراناٹش)

"خوشبو پھیل جانے تک"

اور سارے پھول کھل اٹھیں،
یاد رکھو کہ بھول نہ جانا،
کہ تمھارا یہی تو وعدہ ہے ،
بھاروں کے شہزادے سے ،
کہ آبیاری کرتا رہوں گا،
میں پھولوں کی، کلیوں کی ،
شبیم کی اور بلبل کی ،
تادم مرگ ہی کرتا رہوں گا،
تادم کہ گلشن کھل اٹھے ،
تادم کہ خوشبو پھیل جائے ،
تادم بھار کے آنے تک،
تادم بلبل کے گانے تک،
یہی تیرا وعدہ ہے ،
بھاروں کے شہزادے سے ،
اپنا وعدہ نسبھاتا ہے ،
بھول کجھی نہیں جانا ہے ،
بھول کجھی نہیں جانا ہے --- !!!

تم نے چلتے رہنا ہے ،
کجھی نہ رکنا ،
اور نہ ہی کجھی تھک جانا ،
ایک مالی کی مانند،
مسلسل پھول اگاتا جا ،
اپنے قدموں کی دھول سے ،
مٹی کو اڑاتا جا ،
اور ،
منزلیں ابھاتا جا ،
جاو نہ رکو ،
نہ پیچھے تم نے دیکھنا ہے ،
نہ رکنا ہے نہ تمھنا ہے ،
بس آگے بڑھتے رہنا ہے ،
خوشبو پھیل جانے تک ،
روشنی آجائے تک ،
اپنے عزم اور جذبہ سے ،
دھول کو اڑاتا جا ،
حتیٰ کہ منزلیں ابھر آئیں ،

حارون شنواری
ایڈیشنل ڈائیریکٹر جزل

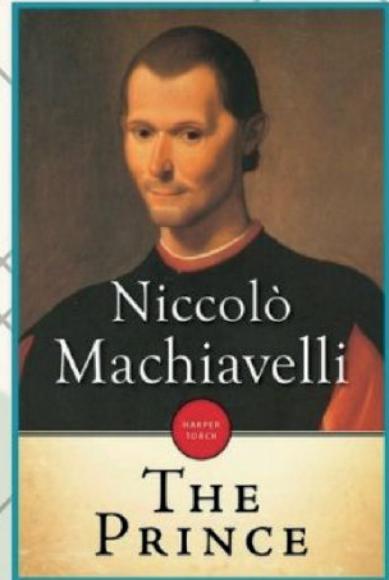
یقین کا سفر

حق کا استعمال کرنا سیکھو
 مشکلوں سے تم نکنا سیکھو
 بدلتے حالات نہیں ہیں ایسے
 ہاتھ پہ ہاتھ دھرے ہوں جیسے
 نکنا تجھ کو پڑے گا اک دن
 حق کو سمجھنا پڑے گا اک دن
 پھر نکلے گا جس دن تو
 امید کی خوشی ہوگی چار سو
 پھر بد لے گا ہمارا بھی معاشرہ
 امید کا ہوگا ہمیں آسرا
 دوٹ کی طاقت سے بد لے گا یہ نظام
 خاموشی ٹوٹے گی، بولے گی ہماری عوام
 ہماری بھی قوم بد لے گی شیری ایسے
 امید سے یقین کا سفر ہو جیسے

شہریار احمد
 اسٹاٹس ڈائئریکٹر

QUARTERLY
Reader's Club
Series BY BIBI SUGHRA (DEPUTY DIRECTOR)

**5 ideas from *The Prince*
by Niccolò Machiavelli**



1 "men forget the death of a father
more quickly than the loss of a
patrimony"
(Introduction)

2 "he who lets go of what is done
for what should be done learns
his ruin rather than his
preservation" (Chapter XV)

3 "...prudence consists in knowing
how to recognize the qualities of
inconveniences"
(Chapter XXI)

4 "Nothing makes a prince so
much esteemed as to carry on
great enterprises and to give
rare examples of himself"
(Chapter XXI)

5 "For there is no other way to
guard oneself from flattery unless
men understand that they do not
offend you in telling you the truth"
(Chapter XXIII)

Women's Participation in Democracy & Elections in Pakistan

Introduction: Women, Democracy, and Political Inclusion

A strong democratic society depends on the active participation of all its members. In Pakistan, women make up almost half of the population, yet their involvement in politics remains significantly limited. The country has witnessed notable milestones, such as Benazir Bhutto becoming the first female Prime Minister of a Muslim-majority nation. However, progress has been inconsistent. Despite constitutional protections and quota systems, women continue to face numerous barriers that hinder their full participation in the electoral process.

This article examines the historical background, persistent challenges, and emerging opportunities for women in Pakistan's democratic and electoral systems. It situates Pakistan's experience within both a global and regional context and offers specific recommendations to enhance inclusivity and strengthen democracy.

Global Context of Women in Politics

Globally, the journey toward political empowerment for women has been long and challenging. From the suffragette movements in the West to the development of gender-sensitive legislation across various democracies—particularly in the United States and Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries—progress has been marked by both significant achievements and persistent opposition.

Comparative Insights from South Asia

In South Asia, several countries have produced influential female leaders. India has had both female presidents and prime ministers and has a law that requires 33% of local government leaders to be women, which has helped many female leaders emerge at the community level. Nepal has made notable strides in increasing women's representation. In Nepal, a system of proportional representation has increased the number of women in parliament to over 32%.

Bangladesh has seen women serve as prime ministers and opposition leaders for many years, in addition to having reserved seats for them in government. Sri Lanka elected the world's first female prime minister in 1960.

These cases demonstrate that consistent legal reforms, strong political support, and community engagement can lead to significant improvements. Pakistan should learn from these regional successes and adapt them to its own political and social context. This approach can ensure that reforms are not only introduced but also become a permanent part of the system. Despite these milestones, women across South Asia remain underrepresented in decision-making bodies. Cultural, religious, and institutional barriers continue to hinder their full participation. In Pakistan, a paradox exists: while symbolic female leadership has been visible, substantive representation and active participation remain far below optimal levels.

Historical Development of Women's Political Rights in Pakistan

Women's involvement in Pakistan's political development began during the independence movement, with prominent figures like Fatima Jinnah advocating for national freedom. However, post-independence, female political engagement remained minimal due to structural and societal resistance. Between 1947 and 1958, female representation in legislative assemblies was notably insignificant.

The first Constitution of Pakistan, adopted in 1956, included Article 44(2)(1), which provided for ten reserved seats for women in the 156-member unicameral parliament for a period of ten years. The second Constitution, adopted in 1962, allocated six reserved seats for women—three each from East and West Pakistan. This constitution also altered the electoral procedure for these seats, shifting to an indirect election method.

The Constitution of 1973 introduced significant provisions to uphold gender equality and prohibited gender-based discrimination. In 1985, under General Zia-ul-Haq's regime, the number of reserved seats for women in the National Assembly was increased from ten to twenty. However, this expansion fostered symbolic representation rather than substantive empowerment. A major shift occurred during General Pervez Musharraf's rule, with the introduction of a 33% quota for women at the local government level and a 17% quota at the national and provincial levels. These reforms significantly boosted women's representation in legislative bodies. In the 2013 general elections, over 100 women contested seats in the National Assembly-more than ever before. Despite this progress, many of these women remained sidelined from leadership roles within their political parties.

In 2017, the Parliament of Pakistan enacted the Elections Act, 2017, a landmark piece of legislation that reformed and unified the country's election laws. While several laws have aimed to promote women's political inclusion, this act played a particularly crucial role in increasing the number of female candidates contesting elections for national and provincial assemblies. A record 183 women contested general seats in the 2018 elections, with 8 women successfully elected.

Statistical Overview

The 2024 General Elections in Pakistan highlighted a significant decrease in the gender gap in voter registration and an increase in women's participation. Across the country, women constituted **46.13%** of the total registered voters. A closer look at the provinces shows a similar trend:

In Punjab, 34 million women were registered to vote, compared to 39.1 million men, making up **46.5%** of the electorate.

Sindh saw women represent **45.8%** of registered voters.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and **Balochistan** followed with women voter percentages of **45.5%** and **43.8%**, respectively.

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), in collaboration with NADRA and civil society organizations, launched the Female NIC and Voter Registration Campaign in 2017. This campaign was a

monumental success, resulting in a substantial reduction of the gender gap in voter registration from 12.9% in 2013 to 11.3% in 2018 and an even more significant drop to 7.3% by 2025. This achievement demonstrates the colossal efforts made by the ECP and its stakeholders to promote gender inclusivity in the electoral process.

Legal and Constitutional Protections

Pakistan's Constitution establishes a foundation for gender equality and outlines specific measures aimed at empowering women. **Article 25** explicitly ensures equality for all citizens and prohibits discrimination based on sex. Furthermore, **Article 34** mandates the state to facilitate the full participation of women in all areas of life. Additionally, **Articles 51** and **106** provide for reserved seats for women in both the National and Provincial Assemblies, respectively.

Internationally, Pakistan's commitments under conventions like the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) obligate the country to promote gender equity in governance.

Despite these robust legal frameworks, the implementation of gender-based reforms has been inconsistent. Challenges such as weak institutional capacities, political resistance, and a lack of accountability have significantly hampered the effective enforcement of these measures.

Gender Quotas: Symbolic or Substantive Representation?

While gender quotas have increased the number of women in Pakistan's assemblies, they have not guaranteed meaningful participation. Many women elected through these quotas are dependent on male party leaders and lack their own political power. Consequently, their role in legislative activities is often limited. For quotas to genuinely empower women, they must be supported by reforms that encourage women to run for general seats, increase their presence in party leadership, and provide them with training and financial support. Without these changes, quotas may become mere symbolic gestures rather than tools for real change.

Barriers to Electoral Participation

Women face numerous obstacles that limit their participation in elections. These barriers are social, structural, and institutional in nature.

Socio-Cultural Constraints: Traditional gender roles and attitudes often limit women to domestic work, suggesting that political participation is unacceptable for them. These limitations are especially strong in conservative areas like Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and the erstwhile Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), where gender discrimination and social taboos are common. People sometimes misinterpret religious teachings to exclude women from leadership positions, even though Islam supports justice and equality. Family expectations, community stigma, and honor-based restrictions also make it harder for women to be active in public and political life.

Structural and Institutional Barriers: Despite legal provisions, millions of women remain disenfranchised because they lack CNICS, which are essential for voter registration. For instance, the 2013 elections revealed an 11-million-person gender gap in voter registration. Political parties are also hesitant to nominate women for general seats, instead relying on reserved quotas. Women elected to these seats often lack real constituencies and influence within their parties. Furthermore, political violence and security concerns disproportionately deter women from participating in electoral campaigns and public debates. Section 206 of the Election Act, 2017, mandates that all political parties allocate at least 5 percent of their tickets to women for general seats in the National and Provincial Assemblies. However, parties typically award these tickets to women in less competitive constituencies.

Capacity and Resource Gaps: Campaign financing is a significant barrier for women candidates. They often lack the financial independence or the necessary resources for campaigning, and many depend on male family members for financial support. Additionally, a lack of training, political education, and mentorship limits how effectively female representatives can perform their legislative duties. Without ongoing investment in leadership development and institutional support, their roles often remain limited.

Role of the Election Commission of Pakistan and Civil Society

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has taken several initiatives to improve women's electoral inclusion. The ECP established a dedicated **Gender and Social Inclusion Wing** to ensure and enhance the participation of women, transgender persons, people with special abilities, and religious minorities in Pakistan's electoral process. The ECP also launched a nationwide Women NIC/Voter Registration Campaign in 2017 across 116 districts, which is still being implemented. The Gender and Disability Electoral Working Group (GDEWG) is a platform provided to civil society organizations working on the political rights of women, people with disabilities, transgender people, and minorities. This forum is established at the ECP Secretariat and four provincial headquarters, with a membership of around 100 organizations. The GDEWG plans, discusses, and analyses issues and challenges, and recommends strategies to enhance the electoral participation of these groups. The ECP regularly conducts gender-sensitive voter information campaigns with grassroots communities through the District Voter Education Committees (DVEC), Provincial Project Coordination Committees (PPC), and the GDEWG.

The ECP holds consultations with various stakeholders, including political parties, election experts, academic researchers, and forums representing women's rights. Consultations with Women's Parliamentary Caucuses are held to understand the challenges women face in their political participation. Appropriate strategies are then planned and implemented to enhance women's participation in electoral processes.

Civil society organizations play a crucial role in bridging institutional gaps through advocacy, legal support, and community mobilization. However, the impact of these efforts depends heavily on sustained funding, political cooperation, and grassroots outreach. Without consistent state support and broad societal acceptance, such interventions may remain limited in scope.

Recommendations for Reform

Women's political participation in Pakistan has improved, but it is still not equitable. Societal attitudes, especially those rooted in male dominance and

misinterpretations of religious teachings, continue to limit women's roles in public life. While some institutional support exists, it is often superficial and not genuinely effective. Despite these challenges, women have demonstrated strong leadership in sectors such as education, health, and welfare. Political parties and policymakers must recognize this potential and work to remove the existing barriers.

To create a fair and inclusive democracy, Pakistan needs to follow a clear plan. First, electoral reforms should require political parties to allocate at least 10% of their general election tickets to female candidates. Parties must also ensure that women hold 33% of leadership positions and participate in decision-making processes.

The process of obtaining CNICs must be simplified to facilitate voter registration, especially in remote areas. Polling stations should be easily accessible and safe for women, particularly in conservative regions. Additionally, civic education campaigns should challenge gender stereotypes and encourage men to support women's participation in democracy.

Providing financial assistance is crucial for including women in political activities. Here are a few international examples:

Canada: The Liberal Party established the Judy LaMarsh Fund to raise money for women candidates through various methods, including fundraising events, direct mail, and the Internet.

Ghana: Following a multi-party meeting in 2011, it was proposed to directly allocate 10% of public funds to political parties for women candidates and to significantly reduce their candidacy fees.

Cambodia: The government provides women candidates with basic materials for their campaigns.

Capacity-building initiatives must provide leadership training, financial assistance, and mentorship opportunities for aspiring female politicians. Civil society must be empowered to advocate for policy reforms, while parliamentary oversight should ensure the effective implementation of gender-based legislation.

Conclusion: Towards an Inclusive Democracy

Women's participation in politics is not just about their rights; it is essential for a healthy democracy. Pakistan cannot strengthen its democratic system if half of its population is excluded. We need legal reforms, civic education, support for women in politics, and a strong commitment from institutions to ensure that women are not only present in legislatures but are also listened to, respected, and encouraged to lead.

The way forward is to transform symbolic representation into genuine participation. Only then can Pakistan achieve a truly inclusive democracy.

Abdul Qayyum Shinwari
Joint Provincial Election Commissioner (Punjab)

Obituary



Mr. Muhammad Akbar (Late)



Mr. Masood Ahmed Faraz (Late)

The Election Commission of Pakistan deeply mourns the sad demise of Mr. Muhammad Akbar (Late), a devoted and respected member of the ECP family.

Late Muhammad Akbar, former District Election Commissioner (BS-18), Surab was born on 5th April, 1974. He joined ECP on 24th June, 1996 and passed away on 11th July, 2025. He has 29 years and 16 days service with ECP.

Late Masood Ahmad Faraz, former Data Entry Operator (BS-14), Surab was born on 31st May, 1994. He joined ECP on 8th November, 2024 and passed away on 11th July, 2025. He has about 8 months and 4 days of service with ECP.

Both served the institution with sincerity, dedication, and professionalism, leaving behind a legacy of commitment to public service. Their contributions will always be remembered with respect and gratitude.

The Election Commission of Pakistan extends heartfelt condolences to their families and prays that Allah Almighty grants the departed souls eternal peace.

إِنَّا لِلّٰهِ وَإِنَّا إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ



Election Commission of Pakistan

complaints@ecp.gov.pk

cms.ecp.gov.pk



Fax: 051-9204404

Telephone: 051-111-327-000

Constitution Avenue, G-5/2,
Islamabad

Whatsapp
Channel



ecp.gov.pk



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