



FAFEN NEWS ALERT

A FORTNIGHTLY NEWSLETTER

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Our Vision

A democratic and just society that guarantees rights, respect and dignity of all individuals.

Our Mission

TDEA-FAFEN strives to strengthen public accountabilitys by enhancing capability of citizens' associations to work for civil liberties, improved governance, democracy and peace in Pakistan.



Upcoming Activity

FAFEN to observe upcoming by-election in **PS-67 Mirpurkhas-IV** on **November 12, 2015**. The seat fell vacant due to the death of **Mr. Jameel Ahmed Bhurgari**, Member of Sindh Assembly.

Male Voters	68,025
Female Voters	61,190
Total	1,29,215

All set to launch public petitions on MPs attendance



Staff Report

The Free and Fair Election Network, which is governed by the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability, has launched a series of public petitions that call for improvements in the electoral as well as legislative businesses of the elected Houses. The public petition on opening up Parliamentary Committee on Electoral Reforms got much attention of the public as well as media, besides the largest media group in collaboration with FAFEN also broadcast a campaign on its TV channel on much-needed electoral reforms in the country.

Likewise, three more public petitions are set to be launched shortly. These petitions will seek attention of the Secretaries, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, Sindh Assembly and Balochistan Assembly to make the attendance of the elected representatives public for greater transparency and robust accountability. The petitions will be copied to the respective Speakers and Deputy Speakers as well.

The petition on behalf of the citizens of Pakistan strongly demands that the

respective Provincial Assemblies make public the attendance record of their Members in line with the principles of openness, transparency and public accountability. This is also in line with the spirit of the available constitutional and legal provisions that seek to protect the right to information.

FAFEN believes that the citizens have a right to know the performance of their representatives, including their attendance in the House as well as the Standing Committees of the Provincial Assemblies in order to make rational political and electoral decisions. Such information helps develop a culture of accountability, which is a cornerstone of democratic governance.

It's a good omen that the Senate, the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab have already set a good example of providing the citizens the attendance record of the parliamentarians on daily basis. The rest of the Provincial Assemblies should also follow the suit and immediately make the attendance record of its Members public through its website and other public communication mechanisms as a step towards improved transparency.

NA-122 (Lahore-V), NA-144 (Okara-II), PP-147 (Lahore-XI)

Observers face difficulty in by-elections observation

Staff Report

FAFEN observed the much-trumpeted by-elections in NA-122 (Lahore-V) on October 11, 2015, which was won by the PML-N candidate and former Speaker National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq with a thin margin. The main feature of the election was the presence of Army and Rangers personnel inside and outside polling stations for managing security as well as regulating entry of the voters inside polling stations.

However, due to unexplainable reasons, the District Returning Officer in NA-144 (Okara-II) refused to accredit 32 FAFEN observers despite getting permission from the ECP Secretariat, Islamabad.

As many as 29 observers in NA-122 faced restrictions on observing the voting process. Despite, getting clearance in NA-144, our observers reported interference of security officials in their work and in some cases they were not allowed to freely observe the voting process.

According to FAFEN's initial findings, some weaknesses were observed in the administrative measures while some cases of procedural violence were also reported from few polling stations in NA-122 (Lahore V), NA-144 (Okara-II) and PP-147 (Lahore-XI).



A number of voters also complained about last minute changes in the voters list while in some cases few voters were found complaining about not being allowed to cast their votes despite having valid NADRA receipts for renewal of Computerized National Identity Cards.

FAFEN released preliminary report of the elections within five hours after the end of polling that was based on the observation of 42% polling stations in NA-122(PP-147) and 24% polling stations in NA-144.

A total of 60 (48 male and 12 female) trained and non-partisan observers were deployed in NA-122, thirty (23 male and seven female) in PP-147 and 29 in NA-144 (16 male and 13 female), to observe by-elections.

Number of voters increases in PP-16 Attock II

Staff Report

FAFEN observed the by-election in PP-16 Attock on October 6, 2015. The seat fell vacant after the assassination of Mr. Shuja Khanzada, a PML-N MPA (Punjab's Interior Minister). Mr. Khanzada had won the seat by securing 38,791 votes while an independent candidate, Raza Khan, remained the runner up, bagging 25,931 votes in 2013 general elections.

The number of registered voters were increased 8.8% from 189,894 (105,748 male and 84,146 female) in 2013 to 206,669 (114,027 male and 92,642 female) in the recent by-election, however, the number of polling stations was the same. FAFEN deployed a total 33 trained, non-partisan observers to observe 117 polling stations (45 male, 36 female and 36 combined).

According to FAFEN's initial findings, the police officials and army personnel were present inside most of the

polling stations, which is contradictory to the electoral rules. According to these rules, police officials and other security personnel are only authorized to maintain order outside the polling stations but they can enter the polling stations on the directions of the presiding officer. Luckily, the incidents of violence were reported less during this by-election, however, presence of armed civilians were observed in few camps.

FAFEN observers also reported 12 instances where the election staff had filled the counterfoils of the ballot books with voter information in advance. At another two polling stations, polling staff was seen issuing ballot without filling the counterfoil with the required information. FAFEN recommended that ECP must ensure all unauthorized personnel, campaign material and party camps should be avoided inside and around the polling stations. The polling staff should also be sensitized about the processes such as filling counterfoils, which are vital to deciding quality and fairness of the election.

TDEA arranges reception in honour of new Trustees

Kazim Hamdani

The changing of the old guard and the remodeling of the prevailing Board of Trustees, notwithstanding the exemplary industry of the preceding Board of Trustees, was a welcome change, unanimously undertaken to usher in a new era of progress for our institution. The change was aimed at replacing the previous members with a different set of individuals who have been uniquely instrumental in propagating education and fostering social work in Pakistan. After meticulous deliberation, a consensus as to the suitability of a new set of individuals was reached; and the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability appointed seven-member new Board of Trustees, which is headed by a veteran journalist and analyst Muhammad Ziauddin.

The TDEA management provided an opportunity for the distinguished members of the International community, donors, Media persons, representatives of civil society and the TDEA staff to have interaction with the new Board Members and get to know more about them. The Chief Executive Officer, Shahid Fiaz, introduced the new Trustees to the participants and briefly talked about their expertise in various walks of life. Ms Mossarat Qadeem, on behalf of 15-member outgoing Trustees, welcomed the new Board and looked forward to working with them in future. She recalled the achievements of the former Board members in helping TDEA/FAFEN reach new heights of glory.

The very next day, the 21st meeting of the Board of Trustees was held and the members unanimously elected

Muhammad Ziauddin as the Chairperson of the Trust. Muhammad Ziauddin is one of the senior most journalists. He has held high profile editorships of Daily Dawn, The News International and The Express Tribune.

Dr. Mohammad Waseem is a Professor of Social Sciences at the much acclaimed Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), while Dr. Syed Jaffar Ahmed is a Professor of Politics, History, Research Methodology and Director of Pakistan Study Centre at the University of Karachi.

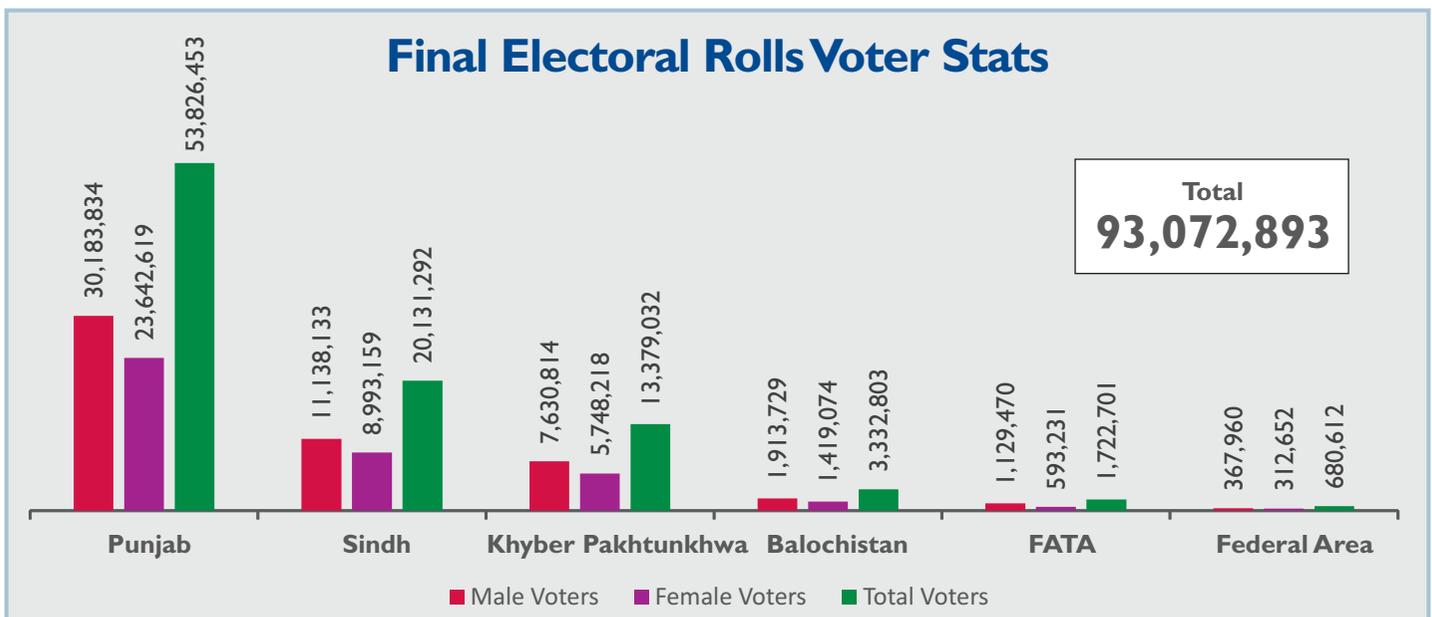
Professor Afiya S. Zia is an independent scholar and a feminist activist. She has been an active member of Women's Action Forum. Dr.

Kahoor Baloch is working as Director General, Social Welfare Department, Government of Balochistan. He is a prolific writer and a Human Rights activist.

Shamim Shahid is an accomplished journalist and associated with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), South Asia Free Media Association (SAFMA) and Liberal Forum Pakistan. Professor Ali Baba Taj is a writer, intellectual and a human rights activist. He is currently working as a Lecturer at the General Musa College, Quetta.



**Muhammad Ziauddin,
Chairperson**



Election Commission of Pakistan (As on 22.09.2015)

Deputy Speaker's slot empty in KP Assembly since long

Mahpara Farrukh

The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly is without a Deputy Speaker for the past one year despite the majority of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)'s provincial legislators in the House.

The sitting government in the province is ignoring the constitutional requirement of electing a new Deputy Speaker after it was left vacant by Mr. Imtiaz Shahid Qureshi who took over as Minister for Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Human Rights after joining the cabinet.

According to KP Assembly Procedure and Conduct of Business 1988, rule 9 and sub-rule 1, read in conjunction with article 53, clause 3 of the Constitution of Pakistan, a vacated post of Deputy Speaker or Speaker must be filled during the running session or in the following session.

FAFEN parliamentary observers noticed that the lawmakers have apparently lost their interest in the continuous session. Due to the delay in electing a new Deputy Speaker, the Assembly Secretariat is continuously adjourning the sitting and is unable to prorogue the session because of constitutional constraints where they will be bound to elect a new Deputy Speaker in the next session. Even the lawmakers

have apparently lost interest in continuous adjournment of session.

It is not the first time that KP Assembly is facing this situation. In March 2006 under Muttahida Majlis-e-Ammal (MMA) regime (2002-2008), the then Deputy Speaker resigned which left the seat vacant for rest of the tenure.

According to the Rule of Procedure of KP Assembly, secret balloting is required to elect the Speaker and Deputy Speaker. But the process

seems to get more delayed as the government is totally indecisive and paying less attention to elect new Deputy Speaker. It is high time that the government sets its priority to fill the vacant position and smoothen the function of the House for openness and transparency.



First phase of LG polls in Sindh, Punjab on Oct 31

Staff Report

The first phase of Local Government elections in Punjab and Sindh is scheduled on October 31, 2015. FAFEN and its partner organizations under Citizens' Action for Democratic Governance (CADG) have strategized their planning for bringing reforms in the electoral, legislative and local governance. In this regard, candidates' facilitation camps have been set up in various districts of Punjab and Sindh to facilitate candidates in filling the forms and selecting them for trainings on electoral processes.

The first phase elections in Punjab are going to be held in Gujrat, Lahore, Okara, Faisalabad, Bhakkar, Kasur, Nankana Shahib, Lodhran, Pakpattan, Vehari, Chakwal and Bhawalnagar. In Sindh, the first phase of Local Government elections are scheduled in Khairpur, Sukkur, Ghotki,

Shikarpur, Larkana, Qambar Shahdadkot, Jacobabad and Kashmore.

FAFEN and its partner organizations are identifying those polling stations in various areas of Sindh and Punjab where women voter turnout is very low. A number of training sessions are also planned for social mobilizers to educate the voters especially women to make them realize about the power of vote and the election process.

FAFEN in collaboration with the Pakistan's largest media group Geo News is all set to launch a campaign on women voters' mobilization and voter education. FAFEN is also planning to have collaborations with FM and other media groups to mobilize people to take active part in the upcoming Local Government elections in a bid to strengthen democratic institutions in the country.

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