



# OBSERVATION REPORT

PP-168 Lahore-XXV

## LOW TURNOUT, HIGHER RATIO OF EXCLUDED BALLOTS MARK PP-168 BY-ELECTION

The declining voter turnout and low incidence of electoral irregularities marked the by-election in PP-168 Lahore-XXV which witnessed a shrinking margin of victory and a slight increase in ballots excluded from the count.

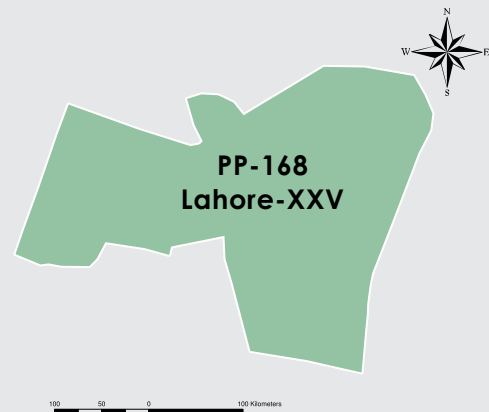
Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) deployed 23 trained, non-partisan and duly accredited observers including eight women for observation of the by-election in the constituency. This report is based on the reports received from 64 (77%) out of 83 polling stations.

FAFEN observers reported 59 incidents of violations of voters' secrecy, 34 incidents of illegal campaigning, 34 violations in voting process, and three violations in the counting process. The percentage of the ballots excluded from the count registered a slight increase from 1.7% in General Election (GE) 2018 to 1.85% in the recent by-election. The margin of victory also shrank from 19,174 in GE-2018 to a paltry 687 in the by-election.

Though many political parties showed little interest in running for the constituency, two major contenders Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Pakistan Muslim-League Nawaz (PML-N) proactively campaigned and were observed using oversized materials across the constituency. Unlike the previous by-elections, the mainstream leadership of major parties avoided visiting the constituency for the campaign. The PML-N and an independent candidate interviewed prior to the polling day accused PTI candidate of using money and government's influence for his election campaign.

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) made strict security arrangements for the by-election deploying Pakistan Rangers inside and outside polling stations along with the

## CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...



### REGISTERED VOTERS

There are 126,912 registered voters in the PP-168 Lahore-XXV. Among them, 73,724 are men and 53,188 are women .

### BY-ELECTION 2018

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
73,724	53,188	126,912

### GENERAL ELECTION 2018

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
73,701	53,161	126,862

### CHANGE

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
23	27	50

### POLLING STATIONS (PS)

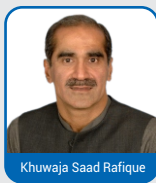
Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up 83 polling stations – 27 male, 24 female and 32 combined for the by-election. Overall, 262 polling booths – 145 male and 117 female – were established.

MALE PS	FEMALE PS	COMBINED PS
27	24	32
262		
POLLING BOOTHS		

Punjab Police. Moreover, a contingent of Pakistan Army was also put on stand-by to handle any untoward incident in the constituency which fortunately did not take place.

PML-N leader Khawaja Saad Rafique had earlier won this seat in the General Elections 2018, and later vacated it after being elected to the National Assembly (NA) in the by-election held on October 14, 2018. Mr Rafique had secured 34,119, or 53% of the total polled votes in GE-2018 while PTI's candidate Fiaz Hussain Bhatti received 14,950 (23%) votes. Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) had won around 15% of the polled votes in GE-2018.

### TIMELINE OF ELECTIONS



Khawaja Saad Rafique

Winner

General Election 2018



Malik Asad Khokhar

Winner

By Election 2018

### Voter Turnout

The voter turnout in the by-election dropped to 29.18% from 50.31% in GE-2018. The male turnout decreased from 56.42% to 32.21%, while the female turnout from 41.83% to 24.97% between two elections. A total of 37,027 voters – 23,744 male and 13,283 female – exercised their right to vote in the provincial constituency on December 13. As mentioned earlier, the percentage of the ballots excluded from the count registered a slight increase from 1.7% in GE-2018 to 1.85% in recent elections.

PTI's candidate won the by-election securing 47.4% of the polled votes, who was followed by PML-N's candidate with 45.6% votes, and TLP with 2.8% votes. PML-N had won 53.4% of the polled votes in the constituency during GE-2018, while PTI and TLP followed with 23.4% and 14.7% of the polled votes.

### Registered Voters

PP-168 Lahore-XXV is predominately rural constituency comprising of Kamahan, Atari Saroba, Chungi Amar Sadhu, and Kot Lakhphat areas. The constituency witnessed a slight increase in number of registered voters in by-elections as compared to GE-2018. As many as 50 voters (23 male and 27 female) were added to the electoral rolls of the constituency. The total number of registered voters during the by-election was 126,912 including 73,724 male and 53,188 female voters in comparison with 126,862 voters during GE-2018 (including 73,701 male and 53,161 female voters). ECP also carried out a third pilot-test of the i-voting system developed to enable

## CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS

### MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

As many as 11 candidates – 4 representing political parties including PTI, PTI-N, PML-N & TLP and 7 independent candidate contested the by-poll.



PTI



PML-N



PTI-N



TLP



IND

### TOTAL CONTESTING CANDIDATES

MEN	WOMEN	TOTAL
11	0	11

### POLLING PERSONNEL

PRESIDING OFFICERS	83
ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICERS	262
POLLING OFFICERS	262

### ELECTION HISTORY

#### BY ELECTION 2018

The seat is vacated by Khawaja Saad Rafique (PML-N).

#### BY ELECTION 2018

VALID VOTES	INVALID VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
36,343	684	29.18%

#### GENERAL ELECTION 2018

VALID VOTES	INVALID VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
62,737	1,085	50.31%

### MARGIN OF VICTORY

2018	By Election
19,174	687

### ELECTION OBSERVERS TRAINED

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
15	8	23

overseas Pakistanis to exercise their right to vote from abroad. As many as 4,667 overseas Pakistanis spread across more than ten countries were eligible to register themselves for voting in PP-168 by-election.

### Contesting Parties and Candidates

A total of 11 candidates contested the by-election in PP-168, four less than the number of candidates contesting this seat in GE-2018. No woman contested the by-election unlike the GE-2018 during which Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal Pakistan (MMAP) had nominated a woman to run from this constituency. Furthermore, four political parties – PTI, PML-N, PTI-Nazriati and TLP - nominated their candidates for these by-elections, in comparison to seven parties – PTI, PML-N, Pakistan Peoples' Party Parliamentarian, TLP, MMAP, Allah-o-Akbar Tehreek, and National Party who contested this constituency in GE-2018.

### Campaigning and Canvassing

FAFEN observers noted the presence of party camps in 53 or 83% of the observed polling stations' surroundings, whereas no party camp was seen near 11 or 17% polling stations. None of the party camps exhibited any campaign material, nor any armed persons in camps. The ECP's Code of Conduct for Contesting Candidates and Political Parties prohibits the candidates or their supporters from providing transport services to the voters on election day. However, FAFEN observers witnessed the contesting candidates providing transportation to voters in the surroundings of 34 or 53% of the observed polling stations.

During the pre-election campaign-period, FAFEN observers also witnessed violations of the ECP's Code of Conduct with campaign materials of larger than prescribed sizes witnessed across the constituency. Moreover, at least at two polling stations' buildings, campaign materials were pasted on the walls even on the Election Day.

### Voting Process

The voting process continued uninterrupted at all of the observed polling stations; however, at one polling station a break was observed by the polling officials. None of the observers reported any person influencing voters throughout the Election Day.

FAFEN's Election Day observation suggests that the secrecy screens were properly placed to protect the privacy of the voters at 180 (90%) of the observed polling booths, whereas the placement of these

screens at the remaining 21 (10%) polling booths allowed the persons present inside the booths to see the voters marking their ballot papers. Moreover, the direction of Close Circuit Television (CCTV) cameras at 38 polling stations compromised the voters' secrecy.

Authorized polling agents, candidates' representatives who are allowed to witness the polling process and object any irregularity as defined under the law, were seated appropriately at most (168 or 84%) polling stations, and they were able to see the entire polling process first-hand. However, the seating arrangement for the polling agents at the remaining 33 (16%) polling stations did not enable them to see the polling process clearly.

### Counting Process

Similar to the voting process, the counting process was also smooth across the 16 observed polling stations. With the exception of one Presiding Officer (PrO), all the remaining PrOs conducted two counts of the votes for each candidate. Legally, the PrOs may recount the votes on their own motion or on a request by candidates or their agents present during the counting process. None of the polling agents refused to sign the Result of The Count (Form-45). Moreover, all of the PrOs pasted the Form-45 outside their respective polling stations. However, the Ballot Paper Account (Form-46) were pasted outside 14 of the 16 polling stations. It was also observed that all the PrOs transmitted the election result through Result Transmission System (RTS). However, 14 of them had to seek security personnel's assistance in the use of RTS.

Nearly a quarter (16 out of 64) PrOs interviewed on the Election Day shared that they were given mobile phones by ECP to electronically transmit the election result after completion of counting. The remaining 48 PrOs said they would use their own phones to transmit the result. A total of four (6%) PrOs expressed dissatisfaction with the training provided by the ECP on use of RTS.

### Conduct of Security Staff

The security personnel were observed present outside all of the observed polling stations on the Election Day. However, the early-day observation suggests that no security staff was present at two polling stations prior to the start of polling process. The security personnel were also deployed inside the polling booths as well. Of 201 polling booths

observed on polling day, security personnel were present inside 165 or 82% polling booths.

Security personnel present outside polling stations were seen checking voters' National Identity Cards (NICs) as well as voter chits (perches) on 64 (100%) and 62 (97%) polling stations, respectively. The vot chits containing the serial number of the voter on the electoral roll are usually issued from parties' or candidates' camps outside the polling stations. These chits are helpful for the election staff to find the voters on the electoral rolls. However, the Elections Act and the Elections' Rules do not permit denying any voter entry to a polling station if they do not have a chit. Similarly, the Code of Conduct for Security Officials issued during GE-2018 also prohibited security officials from barring any voter for not carrying NIC or vote-chit as it is the duty of the polling staff to ascertain the identity of the voter and process his credentials.

The security personnel were seen frisking the voters before letting them inside the polling stations in 61 (95) instances while they were allowing persons without any search at the remaining three (5%) polling stations. Moreover, the security personnel were observed allowing voters to carry mobile phones with them at four (6%) polling stations.

FAFEN interviewed 16 presiding officers after the completion of the counting process. All of the interviewed officers expressed satisfaction with the conduct of the security staff and their cooperation for effective management of the polling day processes.

### Setting up of Polling Stations

ECP set up 83 polling stations – 27 male, 24 female, and 32 combined - for bye-elections in the constituency. The total number of the polling stations was same as the number of polling stations established during GE-2018; however, one female polling station was converted to combined polling stations. These polling stations comprised 145 male and 117 female polling booths.

The Elections Act, 2017 stipulates a limit of 1,200 voters per polling station and 300 per polling booth to be followed as far as practicable. On an average, 1,529

voters were assigned to each polling station in the recent election. A closer look at the List of Polling Stations reveals a higher degree of variation among polling stations. Only 20 out of 83 polling stations were assigned 1,200 or less voters while remaining three quarters (63) were assigned above 1,200 voters each. As many as 49 polling stations had voters between 1,201 and 2,000 while remaining 14 polling stations were assigned above 2,000 voters each.

Registered Voters Assigned to Polling Stations	Number of Polling Stations
Up to 200	1
201 to 400	3
401 to 600	2
601 to 800	3
801 to 1000	3
1001 to 1200	8
1201 to 1400	12
1401 to 1600	13
1601 to 1800	14
1801 to 2000	10
2001 to 2200	3
2201 to 2400	7
2401 to 2600	2
2601 to 2800	1
2801 to 3000	1
<b>Overall</b>	<b>83</b>

### Independent Observation

Section 238 of the Elections Act, 2017 permits duly verified and accredited election observers to observe the proceedings including the voting and counting processes. In compliance with the legal provision, FAFEN's trained, nonpartisan and accredited observers were allowed to observe the polling process at 48 polling stations without any restrictions while they had to persuade the election staff at 16 polling stations. Similarly, FAFEN observers were allowed to observe the counting process at 16 polling stations, though they had to convince the election staff at two polling stations that they were legally accredited observers allowed to remain present in the counting process.