



OBSERVATION REPORT

NA-260 Quetta-cum-Nushki-cum-Chagai

Lack of Resources Hinders Use of RTS in NA-260 By-Election

ISLAMABAD, July 15, 2017: Low turnout and procedural irregularities were observed in the by-election held in Pakistan's second largest National Assembly constituency NA-260 (Quetta-cum-Chagai-cum-Nushki), says Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its report on Saturday.

The NA-260 by-election registered a marked improvement in terms of greater access of observers to polling stations and the ballot paper processing, indicating at improved training of election and security officials. The seat had fallen vacant due to the death of Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Abdul Rahim Mandokhail on May 20, 2017. Mandokhail had won the General Elections (GE) 2013 on the ticket of Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP)

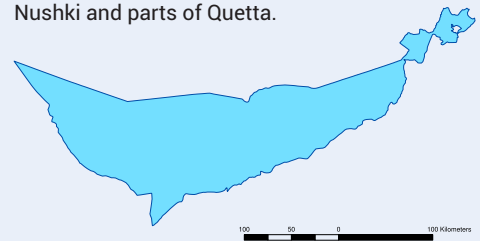
FAFEN deployed 25 trained observers to cover the entire constituency comprising of 407 polling stations. Using detailed standardized checklists, FAFEN observed the voting, counting and consolidation of results processes at 85 polling stations (52 men, 22 women and 11 combined) and 93 polling booths (62 men and 31 women). The ECP had set up 407 polling stations – 168 male, 131 female and 108 combined for the by-election. Overall, 993 polling booths – 571 male and 422 female – were set up in NA-260. The multi-district constituency spanning Chagai, Nushki and parts of Quetta has a total of 460,202 registered voters including 185,835 (40%) women.

FAFEN observers reported a total of 224 violations from 85 polling stations, averaging at 2.6 violations per polling station. While, no irregularities were observed in ballot processing at all 93 polling booths observed throughout the polling day, suspicious voting patterns were recorded at 24 polling booths in as many polling stations. In these polling booths, the reported votes were higher than 45 per hour at the time the turnout data was documented. In following the voting procedure as prescribed by the law, polling staff at one polling booth can process up to 45 votes at one booth in an hour. The highest number of voting rate was recorded at one polling booth of a polling station in Quetta – 87 per hour. Higher than usual voting rate was reported from 11 polling stations in Quetta, seven in Nushki and six in Chagai.

The ECP also could not deploy its Result Transmission

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...

NA-260 Quetta-cum-Nushki-cum-Chagai is second largest constituency of Pakistan after NA-270. It spans over districts Chagai, Nushki and parts of Quetta.



REGISTERED VOTERS

There are 4,60,202 registered voters in the NA-260 Quetta-cum-Chagai-cum-Mastung constituency. Among them, 274,367 are male and 185,835 are female voters.

BY-ELECTION 2017

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
274,367	185,835	460,202

GENERAL ELECTION 2013

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
255,630	168,369	423,999

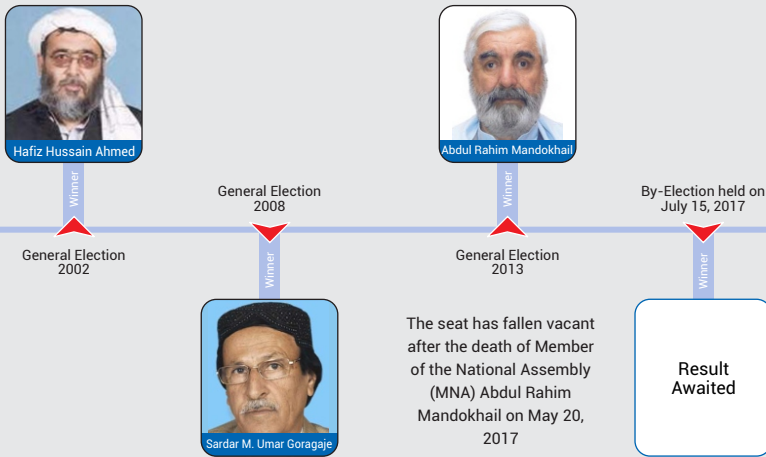
POLLING STATIONS (PS)

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has set up 407 polling stations – 168 male, 131 female and 108 combined for the by-election. There are seven more polling stations than the previous election in the constituency. Two additional polling stations have been allocated to females and five to the combined category. Overall, 993 polling booths – 571 male and 422 female – were established.

MALE PS	FEMALE PS	COMBINED PS
168	131	108
993 POLLING BOOTHS		

System (RTS) in the by-election for NA-260, an innovative solution for efficient and transparent management of election results. Under this system, the Presiding Officers are required to send a picture of Statement of Count (Form-XIV) as soon as the result at a polling station is finalized directly to the ECP through a dedicated mobile application, which also records the time and location of the result transmission. Developed by ECP, the system was successfully used in the recently held by-election for PS-114 in Karachi and some earlier elections.

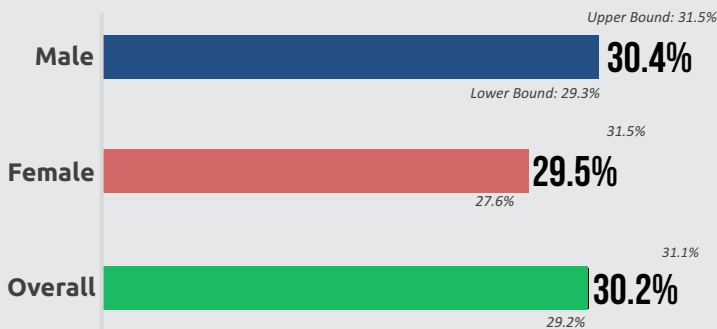
TIMELINE OF ELECTIONS



According to ECP officials, the RTS could not be used in NA-260 due to lack of resources. The federal government has yet to allocate funds that the ECP has requested for the conduct of next general elections, impeding its preparations particularly the use of technology that has been planned to improve the quality of elections as well as the result management.

According to FAFEN estimates, the overall turnout of NA-260 by-election remained 30.2 percent – 30.4 percent male turnout and 29.5 percent for women. During the 2013 GE, NA-260 registered a record turnout of 41 percent, while was observed to have drastically decreased during this by-election. The following figure illustrates the estimated turnout by gender:

ESTIMATED TURNOUT BY GENDER



FAFEN observers reported of an accord between the local tribes to bar women from voting at two polling stations in Zangiabad, Nushki. Polling agents stationed at polling stations No. 391 and 392 located in the premises of government

CONSTITUENCY HIGHLIGHTS ...

MAJOR POLITICAL PARTIES

As many as 17 candidates – nine having party tickets of JUI-F, JUI-N, PTI, BNP, ANP, PPPP, JUI-S, HDP and MP and eight independents contested the by-poll.



TOTAL CONTESTING CANDIDATES

MALE	FEMALE	Total
17	0	17

POLLING PERSONNEL

PRESIDING OFFICERS	407
ASSISTANT PRESIDING OFFICERS	993
POLLING OFFICERS	993

ELECTION HISTORY

GENERAL ELECTION 2013

The seat has fallen vacant after the death of Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Abdul Rahim Mandokhail on May 20, 2017

GENERAL ELECTION 2013

VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
169,393	7,032	41%

GENERAL ELECTION 2008

VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
100,597	4,175	26.3%

GENERAL ELECTION 2002

VALID VOTES	REJECTED VOTES	VOTER TURNOUT
100,421	5,073	28.6%

MARGIN OF VICTORY

2002	2008	2013
12,323	11,330	4,319

ELECTION OBSERVERS DEPLOYED

MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
25	0	25

primary schools in Zangiabad told FAFEN observers that local elders had years-old agreement of not allowing women to vote in the area. Attempts are being made to acquire the results forms from these polling stations to confirm the observation.

The observers also reported 150 incidents of illegal canvassing and campaigning inside and outside polling stations. At 52 polling booths, voters were observed to have been carrying voter chits with election symbols of contesting candidates. The observers reported the presence of candidates' promotional material inside three polling stations, and on the walls outside 11 polling stations. Reports of candidates providing transport to voters were also received from 51 polling stations, whereas party camps were seen inside the 400-yards limit around 33 polling stations. However, no attempts by candidates or their supporters to influence the voters inside the polling stations was observed.

The security personnel were present inside and outside every polling station observed on the polling day. However, at 15 polling stations, security staff said they did not receive any training on election security. The ECP had sought help from the Army and Frontier Constabulary (FC) and Quick Response Force to ensure the polling day security. As many as 320 polling stations were declared highly sensitive and 50 sensitive.

The presiding officers at five polling stations told observers that they had not received ECP's training. As many as 58 out of 85 presiding officers interviewed reported to have performed election duties in the past. According to observers, ECP monitoring teams and designated officials visited at least 36 polling stations and checked various aspects of the polling process including election security, voting and others.

Other irregularities include presence of unauthorized persons inside one polling station who were accompanying voters behind the secrecy screen. Similarly, the polling staff was observed asking voters of their voting choice at one polling station. FAFEN observers were not allowed to observe the voting and counting processes at four polling stations in Quetta and Chagai.

FAFEN observed the opening processes at 24 polling stations. The election staff was present and prepared to start the polling process by 8:00am except at one place where ballot books were not available at 8:00 am. The critical election forms i.e. copies of Form XIV and Ballot Paper Account (Form XV) did not match the number of candidates at 10 and 17 polling stations, respectively. The observers also reported absence of female staff at eight polling booths designated for women voters while at six such polling booths, male staff were also observed present alongside female staff.

FAFEN observers also observed the poll-closing and counting processes at 11 polling stations. A total of 57 procedural irregularities were observed during closing and counting. Observers reported that three polling booths were not closed at the ECP's announced time of 5:00 pm. Similarly, voters already in queue inside the polling station area at the time of closing were not allowed to vote at three polling stations, while at three other polling stations the queued up voters were allowed to vote after the announced 5.00 pm time. The polling staff did not close the doors of two polling stations during the counting process.

Polling agents were observed to be handling the ballot papers at one polling station. The presiding officers did not provide a copy of Form XIV at four polling stations to FAFEN observers and a copy of Form XV at eight polling stations. Observers also reported that the four presiding officers did not paste the Form XIV outside the polling stations.