

Pakistan
Local Government Election 2005
Fact Sheet

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Prepared by

PILDAT
Pakistan Institute of
Legislative Development
And Transparency

House No. 7, 9th Avenue, F-8/1, Islamabad
Ph: (+92-51) 111 123 345 Fax: (+92-51) 226 3078
E-mail: info@pildat.org; URL: www.pildat.org

1. Background

Following the announcement of the Devolution Plan by the Government of Pakistan, the first Local Government Election was held in July/August 2001 and the Local Government System was installed on August 14, 2001. The second Local Government Election is now taking place from August to October 2005. Both these elections are conducted by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) unlike the previous such elections which used to be conducted by the provincial election authorities.

The Local Government Election 2005 was to be held in three phases. In Phase-I, election to the seats of Councilors, Nazims and Naib Nazims of Union Councils in 53 Districts took place on Thursday, August 18, 2005. (In fact, the election was to be held in 54 districts but had to be postponed in one district – Ghotki – in Sindh province due to a last minute decision of the Supreme Court of Pakistan).

In Phase-II, election to the seats of Councilors, Nazims and Naib Nazims of Union Councils in 54 districts in all the four provinces of the country was held on Thursday, August 25, 2005 (The election was to be held in 56 districts, but the Election Commission of Pakistan postponed elections in Qila Abdullah at the request of the Balochistan Government while all candidates were returned unopposed in Dera Bugti).

Election in both the phases, i.e., Phase-I and Phase-II, had persons of age 18 or above as the electorate.

In Phase III, election, which was earlier planned to be held by the ECP on September 29, 2005, has now been postponed to be held on Thursday, October 6, 2005 for the following positions:

- Nazims of Zillas (Districts and City Districts)
- Nazims of Tehsils, Taulkas and Towns
- Members of Zilla Councils and Tehsil/Taluka Council or Town Councils against the seats reserved for women, peasants/workers and minority communities.

The Local Government Election 2005 is being held under the Local Government Ordinances 2001, promulgated by the four provincial governments, and later amended in June-July 2005 by the provincial assemblies.

Certain areas and territories were excluded from the Local Government Election 2001 and the same practice continued in 2005. Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Islamabad Capital Territory and the cantonments remained out of the scope of Local Government Election 2005.

Like Local Government Elections 2001, the 2005 election was also held without any formal participation of political parties. However, in reality, participation of political parties was very active and almost open.

2. Registered Voters in Phase-I and Phase-II

Total number of registered voters in Phase-I was 32.8 million and in Phase-II it was 30.5 million. The combined total number of registered voters in the two phases and all the

four provinces therefore stands at 63.4 million while there were a total of 61.90 million voters for the local government election of 2000-2001.

3. Number of Local Governments

The province-wise number of Districts, City Districts, Tehsils, Towns and Union Councils is given in the table below:

Local Area Province	Districts	City Districts	Tehsils	Towns in City Districts	Union Councils
Punjab	30	5	105	38	3464
Sindh	22	1	103	18	1110
NWFP	23	1	49	4	986
Balochistan	27	1	74	2	567
Total	102	8	331	62	6127

The Local Government Election 2005 was held in a total of 6048 Union Councils with 3074 Union Councils in Phase-I and in 2974 Union Councils in Phase-II. In 2001, local government election was held in 6,022 Union Councils.

4. Candidates in Phase-I and Phase-II

Total number of candidates in Local Government Election 2005 was 222,441 against 72,576 seats. This shows that on average there were 3 candidates per seat in the race. Phase-I had 114,154 candidates while in Phase-II the number of candidates was 108,287. The number of seats in 2001 election was 120,440.

5. Candidates Returned Un-Opposed

A total of 4,039 candidates were returned unopposed in Phase-I while 3,174 candidates were returned unopposed in Phase-II of the Local Government Election 2005 thereby making a total number of unopposed candidates in 2005 election as 7,213 which constitutes 10% of the total number of positions. In Local Government Election 2001, a total of 15,438 candidates were returned unopposed which constituted 13% of the total seats in 2001 election.

6. Voter Turn-out in Phase-I and Phase-II

According to press statements by the ECP, voters' turnout in Phase-I stood at 46.97% and at 48.75% in Phase-II. The average voters' turnout in Local Government Election 2005 therefore stands at 47.86%. However, official announcement of voter turnout by the ECP is yet to be made in the official declaration of results. In the previous Local Government Election in 2000-2001, the voter turnout was 40%.

7. Declaration of Results

According to the official schedule of Local Government Election 2005 on the ECP website, the dates set for the Declaration of Results by the ECP were Saturday, August 20, 2005 and Saturday, August 27, 2005 for Phase-I and Phase-II respectively. The date for declaration of consolidated official results of both phases was later moved ahead to

August 30, 2005 as announced by the Secretary Election Commission in a Press Conference on August 28, 2005. However, the ECP officially declared election results are not available in the form of an official Gazette to-date. The schedule available on the ECP website continues to display the dates of August 20, and August 27, 2005 for the declaration of official results.

8. Local and International Observers

The Election Commission of Pakistan was requested to provide a list of authorised Local and International Observers. Unfortunately, till the compiling of the fact sheet, it was not made available by the ECP. However, on the basis of PILDAT's own observations, following local and international organisations/groups monitored the elections:

a. Local Observers

- i. Aurat Foundation
- ii. Human Rights Commission of Pakistan - HRCP
- iii. Individu Land
- iv. Pattan Development Organisation

b. International Observers

- i. Commonwealth Election Observation Mission
- ii. A number of diplomatic missions in Pakistan also monitored elections including European and North American Countries

9. Reaction of Political Parties to the Conduct of Local Government Election 2005

Although the Local Government Election 2005 was held on non-party basis, political parties were actively involved in the elections at every stage - selecting candidates, campaigning and polling. After the elections all parties have also expressed their views to the conduct of election. The ruling PML and MQM described the local government elections as a genuine democratic exercise which will strengthen participatory governance and the federal cabinet described election as 90 per cent free, fair and transparent with only 8-10 per cent complaints about irregularities. The leading opposition parties disputed these claims and accused the government of using its state power and resources to tilt the balance in favour of the candidates of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League (PML). Some government allies like Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari, MNA, Firdous Ashiq Awan, MNA/Parliamentary Secretary, Dr. Sher Afgan Khan Niazi, MNA/Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Riaz Hussain Pirzada, MNA also spoke against what they termed as officially sponsored rigging to defeat rivals in polls. The Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarian (PPPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML-N), two major components of the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD), announced that owing to an unfair conduct of the Local Government Election 2005, they would not take part in the general election if it is held while Gen. President Pervez Musharraf is President of Pakistan. The ARD leaders also demanded polls to be held under United Nation supervision. Similarly, the Jama'at-e-Islami Amir and President MMA Qazi Hussain Ahmad condemned government for rigging election and said free and fair polls could not be held under the rule of an individual who has usurped power by illegal and constitutional means. The opposition also demanded for resignation of the government for rigging in the Local Government Election 2005.

Note: Since despite numerous attempts, certain facts have not been made available by the ECP, the data included in this fact sheet relies mostly on information in newspapers.