



Pakistan

Election 2002

Report of International Observation Missions
1st September - 15th October 2002

Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL)
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM - ASIA)

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Published by
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and
Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development
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Photos courtesy of mission observers and staffs.
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ISBN 974-91189-9-5
Printed in Bangkok, Thailand
April 2003

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Map of Pakistan



Abbreviations

ECP	Election Commission of Pakistan
{PRIVATE}CEC	Chief Election Commissioner
DRO	District Returning Officer
FATA	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
N.A.	National Assembly
P.A.	Provincial Assembly
NWFP	North-Western Frontier Province
PPC	Pakistan Penal Code
R.O.	Returning Officer
RPA	Representation of the People Act
PCO	Provisional Constitutional Order
PPO	Political Parties Order
MPO	Maintenance of Public Order
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz
PML-QA	Pakistan Muslim League-Quaid-e-Azam
PML-J	Pakistan Muslim League-Junejo
PML-F	Pakistan Muslim League-Functional
PML-Z	Pakistan Muslim League-Zia
PPP-P	Pakistan Peoples Party-Parliamentarians
PPP-S	Pakistan Peoples Party -Sherpao
MMA	Muttahida Majilis-e-Amal
MQM	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
ANP	Awami National Party
BNP	Balochistan National Party
PKMAP	Paktoon Khawa Milli Awami Party
BNP	Balochistan National Party
NAB	National Accountability Bureau
SDA	Sindh Democratic Alliance
ARD	Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy
LFP	Liberal Forum Pakistan
NADRA	National Database and Registration Authority
UNDP	The United Nations Development Program
EU	The European Union
SAARC	The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
HRCP	Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
ANFREL	Asian Network for Free Elections
JICA	Japanese International Co-operation Agency

Acknowledgement

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) deeply appreciates the cordial cooperation and generous support extended by the following local organizations, international organizations and individuals, which contributed to the successful observation missions of the elections in Pakistan.

- H.E. President General Pervez Musharraf welcomed the deployment of ANFREL and all international observers in Pakistan and granted an audience to ANFREL Chairperson and Executive Director in Islamabad.

- Chief Election Commissioner H.E. Irshad Hasan Khan and officials of the Election Commission, particularly Mr. Hasan Muhammad (Secretary), Mr. K.M. Dilshad (Joint Secretary) and Mr. R.B. Jan Wahidi (Deputy Secretary), as well as other election staffs in the field provided good cooperation and ensured good facilitation for the deployment of ANFREL observers.

- All ANFREL long-term and short-term observers, including members of INTERBAND, as well as program coordinators, liaison staffs and volunteers from ANFREL Secretariat and the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (FORUM-ASIA) contributed to the success of ANFREL observation missions in Pakistan.

- International and local organizations, including the Human Rights Commission for Pakistan (HRCP), the Democratic Commission for Human Development, the European Union, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) provided valuable cooperation with ANFREL observers.

- Mr. I.A.Rehman and Mr. Husain Naqi of HRCP gave assistance to every step of the missions in Pakistan and rendered the most valuable information during the briefing for ANFREL observers.

- Special thanks go to all coordinators and interpreters in Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi, Hyderabad, Quetta, Peshawar and Multan. In particular, ANFREL wishes to thank Mr. Arshid Mehmood for his tireless spirit.

- ANFREL appreciates the ambassadors and officials at the Thai Embassy, the Japanese Embassy and the Bangladesh Embassy in Islamabad for receiving the courtesy visits of ANFREL delegation and for arranging an informal briefing on pre-election situation. Mr. Zia Haider Rizvi, Honorary Thai Consular in Lahore organized a press conference and welcomed the arrival of ANFREL Chairperson.

- ANFREL observation missions in Pakistan were under the leadership of General Saiyud Kerdphol, Mr. Hassan Ariff, Mr. Somchai Homlaor, Mr. Kingsley Rodrigo and Dr. Gothom Arya.

- Special arrangement for visa application of ANFREL observers were kindly provided by H.E. Major General Muhammad Hasan Aqeel, ambassador of the Pakistani Embassy in Bangkok, and Mr. M. Nafees Lakaria, counselor.

- Mr. Sunai Phasuk and Mr. Sher Zaman wrote this report.

- Forum Asia staffs, especially Ms. Anothai Soma, assisted all financial and administrative work of the missions in voluntary spirit.

- Most important, the missions were possible with financial support from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD).

REPORT

ELECTION OBSERVATION MISSIONS IN PAKISTAN

1. Background

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) was formed in 1997 as the first regional network of civil society organizations in Asia with a principal mandate to promote and support democratization initiatives at national and regional levels. Based in Bangkok, ANFREL is now the biggest regional network of election observation, democracy advocacy and human rights organization. Members of ANFREL include 21 regional and national civil society organizations from 11 Asian countries, including Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nepal, Pakistan, the Philippines, Southeast Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand.

ANFREL has been active in representing international efforts to promote and support democratization in Asia. ANFREL observers were deployed to ensure the integrity, credibility and transparency of electoral process in Bangladesh, Cambodia, East Timor, the Philippines, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Japan, Hong Kong and Thailand.

Pakistan has been highlighted as one of the "priority" countries by ANFREL after a major political incident in 1999 when the elected civilian government of Prime Minister Mian Nawaz Sharif was overthrown in a coup led by Army Chief of Staff General Pervez Musharraf on 12 October. General Musharraf designated himself Chief

In addition to election observation activities, ANFREL also engages in research, training and advocacy activities as well as information dissemination on issues related to elections, electoral reform, democratization and good governance with a focus on people's representation and participation.

Executive and suspended the Constitution, the Parliament and the national and provincial assemblies on 15 October 1999. On 20 June 1999, General Musharraf was sworn in as the country's President, after the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO) was amended. The PCO functions in place of the country's suspended Constitution.



President Pervez Musharraf

Exercising the powers of the head of the government, President Musharraf appointed an eight-member National Security Council to function as Pakistan's supreme governing body. President Mohammad Rafiq Tarar remained the ceremonial chief of state. President Musharraf appointed an advisory National Security Council, which included military and civilian advisers, a civilian cabinet and new governors to all four provinces. The functioning of the state machinery after the coup had been "monitored" by military commanders. The Supreme Court demonstrated a limited degree of independence. President Musharraf had also taken measures to control the judiciary and to remove his government from judicial oversight.

Seeing that the amended constitutional framework would constitute an essential part of the electoral framework, there existed shared concerns among political parties and civil society organizations in Pakistan as well as within the network of ANFREL members across Asia. There was a clear tendency of a limited transfer of power from the military government to a civilian rule. General Musharraf was the President, Chief of Army Staff, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee and Head of the National Security Council. Even if he stepped down as Chief of Army Staff, he would still wield enormous power and could easily control the future government through the threat of dismissal and dissolution.

On 12 May 2000, the Supreme Court unanimously validated the October 1999 coup and granted President Musharraf executive and legislative authority. His authority was, however, bound with a condition to complete Pakistan's transition to a democratic civilian rule within 3-year, starting from 12 October 1999. On 14 August 2001, the government initially announced that elections are scheduled to take place between 1 and 11 October 2002 with a confirmation that political parties were to be permitted to participate.

In ANFREL's analysis, there were much optimism and trauma surrounding the plan to hold elections in Pakistan.



Projecting an image of stern rectitude, President Musharraf claimed that elections could restore democracy and lead country toward new politics free from corruption, political misconduct and violence.

On 21 January 2001, following talks with the United Nations

Secretary General Kofi Annan, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar announced that the government would work hard on logistics for the upcoming elections on 12 October 2002. To appeal the international community with a system with an image of better political representation and participation, the government also mentioned that the National Assembly would be increased to 350 seats (from 217 seats), of which 60 would be reserved for women. Members of the National Assembly would serve five-year terms. The leader of the majority party or leader of a majority coalition is usually voted to become the Prime Minister by the National Assembly.²

² Pakistan's bicameral Parliament or Majlis-e-Shoora also consists of the Senate (87 members indirectly elected by the Provincial Assemblies to serve six-year terms and one-third of the members up for election every two years).

At the same time, however, the hope for democracy to be fully restored in Pakistan had been threatened by the perception that President Musharraf demonstrated an intention to create a system of "controlled or guided democracy" through electoral process to allow the military to continue to hold state power. President Musharraf openly indicated on several occasions that he would seek to remain in office after the elections are held.

Local elections were called to expand the political base of President Musharraf at grassroots levels. Political parties were banned from taking part these elections.

For the general elections, seats previously reserved for non-Muslim minorities were cancelled. This would mean that people belonging to religious minorities, mainly Christian and Hindu, had to contest elections within the same system as the majority Muslim. Put differently, this new environment would significantly reduce the chance for religious minorities to have adequate political representation through electoral contests.



Benazir Bhutto



Nawaz Sharif



Gen Pervez Musharraf

A number of political parties criticized the appointment of Irshad Hasan Khan, former chief justice of Pakistan's Supreme Court that supported and upheld the 1999 coup, as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) because they saw it as another political maneuvering by President Musharraf to ensure that his allies would win in the general elections.

In the run-up to the general elections, the government restricted freedom of assembly. It prevented protests and arrested organizers for security reasons. In March 2000, the government imposed a country-wide ban on strikes, processions and outdoor political demonstrations. Several opposition leaders have been arrested. The government suppressed political activity by conducting raids on party offices, banning political rallies and lodging criminal cases against rally organizers under laws governing sedition and the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) ordinance.

The government also maintained limits on freedom of expression. The broadcast media is a closely controlled government monopoly. Provincial and local governments occasionally arrested journalists and closed newspapers accused of printing material on sensitive issues related to the military. Journalists critical of the government were often targets of harassment and violence by individuals and groups.

On 31 March 2002, President Musharraf announced a plan to hold a countrywide referendum whether he should stay in power for another five years after the general elections. The last referendum on a similar question was called by General Mohammad Zia ul Haq in December 1984, seven years after he ousted Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (who was executed in 1979). All major political parties opposed this plan for it was unconstitutional and they feared that it would derail the upcoming general elections and justify the continuation of a de facto military rule under President Musharraf. Nevertheless, on 28 April 2002, the Supreme Court of Pakistan rejected the plea of opposition parties and validated the referendum.

It was the referendum on 30 April 2002 that exposed serious problems in electoral system. Amid the outcry of opposition parties and

democracy groups about the integrity and impartiality of the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), the country's electoral administration body ruled that there would be no code of conduct for the referendum as it usually happened in other previous elections. Government machinery, personnel and resources were mobilized to involve in President Musharraf's rigorous campaign to stay on in power. As ECP did not specify regulations on expenditures of the referendum campaign, huge public meetings were held in different towns throughout the country on the cost of public money. With its control of the media, the government also worked to ensure that reports on TV and radio would be unilaterally in the favor of referendum while critical journalists that commented against the referendum were harassed and threatened.

On the referendum day, serious electoral abuses were obvious. The vast majority of voters fell in the category of "captive voters" as people were hustled into balloting. Government employees, factory workers were transported in government vehicles to the polling booths in controlled batches. The rules of voter identification were not respected as those marshaled to vote by government officials enjoyed the freedom to vote as many times as they wished. Secrecy of ballot was rarely in evidence. Many voters were seen stamping the ballots in front of polling staffs. At several places, polling staffs even stamped ballots by themselves.

President Musharraf won overwhelming approval to extend his rule for five more years regardless of domestic and international criticisms about an environment ridden with electoral abuses.

In such a political environment filled with controversies, it became clear to ANFREL that the general elections in Pakistan needed international support to form an independent observation mechanism that would work to ensure the integrity of the polls. With this support, there might be a possibility for the general elections to genuinely become an exercise of democracy for Pakistan's people both in terms of participation and representation. The presence of an independent observation mechanism could also increase the fairness in electoral contests by creating the condition in which nobody was able to manipulate electoral process without setting off outcry and disapproval from the people of Pakistan

and the international community. In other word, the use of election observers could provide an effective means of verifying the integrity and fairness of electoral process and its outcomes. Moreover, the presence of observers would create an atmosphere that could reduce the likelihood of intimidation, violence or fraud. Well-planned observation missions could significantly instill confidence in voters and increase not only their willingness to seriously participate in electoral process but also their ability to freely express political wills.

2. Objectives and Strategies

ANFREL had three main objectives in initiating observation missions in Pakistan, including:

- 1) To enhance the capacity of civil society organizations to ensure an environment conducive for the conduct of free and fair elections as well as for the realization of people's aspiration for democracy, reconciliation and peace.
- 2) To minimize irregularities, electoral abuses, violence and election-related human rights violations.
- 3) To provide reliable information and analysis on issues related to the general elections in particular and prospects for democratic development in general.

As a rule, ANFREL observation missions never operate against the will of the host country. In this case, the presence of ANFREL was welcomed by the government of Pakistan, civil society organizations and the general public. It must be noted that the mandate of ANFREL observation missions ruled out any kind of interference.³ The missions

³ *There is a clear distinction in the mandate of a supervisory mission, a monitoring mission and an observation mission. A supervisory mission is in control of electoral process and has administrative and executive power, while monitoring gives a mission the mandate to interfere in case electoral process*

had no authority to change, improve or correct any shortcomings during the election process. ANFREL only had the mandate to collect, verify and analyze information concerning election-related issues. After the conclusion of observation activities, preliminary and final reports would be produced and disseminated. These reports would include an assessment of electoral process based on international standards for free and fair democratic elections as well as recommendations.

ANFREL cooperated with civil society organizations in Pakistan to ensure that the general elections on 12 October 2002 would comply with the spirit of Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 21) that: "The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures." Among local civil society organizations, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) is a member of ANFREL. HRCP had been in close cooperation with ANFREL in observing, investigating and documenting political situations that affect the creation of a neutral political climate necessary for the conduct of free and fair elections in Pakistan. During the preparation and the actual implementation of observation missions, ANFREL also coordinated with ECP, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the European Union (EU), the Commonwealth Observation Group, the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the National Democratic Institute (NDI), the Transparency International-Pakistan (TI-Pakistan) and foreign embassies, which involved in providing electoral assistance and deploying observers to Pakistan.

derails. Contrary to that, the mandate of an observation mission rules out any kind of interference. The mission has no authority to change, improve or correct any shortcomings in electoral process during the election period. The observation mission only has the mandate to collect and verify information concerning election-related issues, to analyze the observations and to publish its observations including assessing the findings against international standards for free and fair democratic elections and make recommendations.

Balloting and vote counting process were the focal point of election observation activities of ANFREL. But apart from that, ANFREL election observers were also active in examining other aspects of electoral process, such as the upholding of law and order to ensure a political environment conducive to the peaceful conduct of democratic elections; the appointment of electoral officers; the registration of voters; the verification and designation of candidates; the enforcement of election laws and campaign regulations; the performance of ECP, state agencies and government officials; the performance of candidates, political parties and party supporters; the role of the media; the role of independent observation groups and other civil society organizations; the review of complaints; and the installation of winners.

Observation activities of ANFREL in Pakistan were divided into two parts: long-term observation and short-term observation. Altogether ANFREL deployed a strong team of 42 international observers from 11 countries in electoral constituencies across Islamabad, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh, Balochistan and Tribal Areas.



Long Term Observer presented his experiences in the briefing

A group of six long-term observers deployed in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and Quetta for a period of six weeks, one month before the Election Day on 12 October 2002 and two weeks after the balloting for post-election observation. They worked together with ANFREL coordinators and staffs of HRCP in assessing, with accuracy and on a

continuous basis, the extent to which Pakistan's general elections were held in accordance with the internationally recognized standards of democratic elections. These long-term observers were also assigned to document and report human rights-related incidents, which affected the integrity and fairness of the general elections, such as killing, armed attack, political harassment, arbitrary arrest, abduction and detention.

During the mission, ANFREL long-term observers met and exchanged views with representatives of ECP, candidates, political parties, government officials, the media, community leaders, civil society organizations and the electorate about situations surrounding the general elections as well as prospects for democratic development in the future.

In-depth information and the pre-election findings of long-term observers constituted a foundation for strategies and activities of ANFREL short-term observers deployed one week before the polling day. By preparing and strengthening the capacity and readiness of ANFREL local networks in all aspects, long-term observers helped significantly to ensure the best quality of observation activities of short-term observers.

3. Pre-Mission Activities (1 July – 30 September 2002)

ANFREL Mission Coordinator, Somsri H. Berger, together with ANFREL Country Coordinator for Pakistan, Sher Zaman, traveled to Lahore and Islamabad twice in July and August 2002 to discuss with HRCP about the logistical preparation for ANFREL observation activities in Pakistan. In consultation and collaboration with I.A. Rehman, HRCP Director, and Husain Naqi, HRCP

Workshop and Training Director, ANFREL established a network of local facilitators for international observers throughout the country. Two field offices were set up for ANFREL observation activities at HRCP Headquarter in Lahore and at Margala Hotel in Islamabad. By the last



Mr. I.A.Rehman presentation

week of August 2002, the preparation for the deployment of six long-term observers was ready in terms of visa clearance, accreditation, security, insurance, transportation, accommodation, interpreters and training/briefing. The schedule for meetings and courtesy visits were also finalized.



*Mr. I.A. Rehman, HRCP Director &
Mr. Husain Naqi, Workshop Director*



*LTOs briefing by HRCP seniors
at Lahore Head Office*

Long-term observers were deployed from Lahore after receiving a briefing by HRCP. In Punjab province, three long-term observers were sent to Islamabad, Multan and Lahore. In Sindh province, one long-term observer was sent to Karachi. In Balochistan province, ANFREL had one long-term observer in Quetta. There was one long-term observer in Peshawar of North-West Frontier province.

Long-term observers were assigned to submit four reports, covering pre-election situation in their deployment areas. They were also responsible for preparing logistical arrangement and background information for short-term observers. Activities of all long-term observers went interrupted, except a long-term observer in Karachi. Due to a mistake in the issuing of visa by the Pakistani embassy in Malaysia, he had to go back to Thailand get a new visa from the Pakistani embassy. Nevertheless, General Saiyud Kerdphol ANFREL Chairperson personally coordinated for a one-stop visa application for him and his new visa was ready within a day.

A special visa clearance was made for ANFREL observers by the Pakistani embassy in Thailand after several observers complained that they experienced difficulties in getting "election observer" status

approved by the consular section of the Pakistani embassies in their home countries. ANFREL Chairperson made a courtesy visit to the Pakistani Ambassador to Thailand and requested for full cooperation. After that, all ANFREL observers could have their visa applications approved within one day. The Pakistani embassy in Thailand also communicated with the government of Pakistan on a regular basis to facilitate the deployment of ANFREL observers until the missions were over.

In the meantime, ANFREL Mission Coordinator and ANFREL Country Coordinator for Pakistan had regular meetings with ECP to facilitate the issuing of accreditation cards for all ANFREL observers. CEC also agreed to give a briefing to a group of ANFREL observers and ensured that all ECP staffs to be fully cooperative with ANFREL by providing all necessary election-related documents and materials, giving clarification of electoral regulations, allowing for regular meetings/visits and updating about the preparation of electoral process.

Regarding the security arrangement for ANFREL observers, ANFREL Mission Coordinator and ANFREL Country Coordinator for Pakistan had several meetings with senior officials from the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Information. At the end, the government of Pakistan changed the longstanding position. After insisting that it could not guarantee the safety of international observers, the government of Pakistan decided to provide security guards to escort all international observers on the Election Day. Every team of ANFREL observers received full protection from this arrangement.

ANFREL Executive Director, Sunai Phasuk, ANFREL Mission Coordinator and ANFREL Country Coordinator for Pakistan



Militaries accompanied all observer teams. (Dr.Gothom Arya and H.E. Hassan Ariff in Rawalpindi)

held meetings with local and international media to brief them about ANFREL activities in Pakistan. The profile of ANFREL observation missions was remarkably high giving the coverage of newspaper, radio and TV. This was especially the case after ANFREL Chairperson and ANFREL Executive Director were invited to meet President Musharraf together with leaders of other international observation groups.

Regarding cooperation with other international organizations, ANFREL Mission Coordinator and ANFREL Country Coordinator for Pakistan had regular contacts with EU and established a channel of communication to exchange deployment details and election-related information. TI-Pakistan requested to have a briefing for ANFREL observers regarding the implication of the general elections to anti-corruption and good governance programs. UNDP agreed to meet with ANFREL observers to discuss about voter education campaigns as well as fairness in media coverage of the general elections.

The embassies of Thailand, Japan and Bangladesh were also contacted for courtesy visits by senior ANFREL observers. The Thai Consulate in Lahore played an important role in facilitating all incoming ANFREL observers. The Honorary Consular personally arranged a special lunch meeting between ANFREL observers led by General Saiyud Kerdphol and local media, community leaders and political figures in Lahore.

4. Pre-Election Observation (1 September – 9 October 2002)

ANFREL deployed six long-term observers in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and Quetta one month before the Election Day on 12 October 2002. In cooperation with the nation-wide network of HRCP observers, they made the following preliminary report of pre-election situation.

4.1 Electoral System and Electoral Regulations

On 21 August 2002, General Musharraf revised the electoral system for the Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies. With that, the Legal Framework Order (LFO) 2002 was introduced. The date for elections to

the National and Provincial Assemblies was scheduled on 10 October 2002, while elections to the Senate were re-scheduled for 12 November 2002.

New features in the electoral system to appeal the international community with an image of better political representation and participation were:

- Number of seats in the National Assembly increased
- Number of seats in the Senate increased
- Number of seats in the Provincial Assemblies increased
- Set aside seats for women were introduced in both houses of the Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies
- Separate electorate for the minority seats was abolished and a joint electorate introduced⁴
- Voting age was reduced from 21 years of age to 18

Both the Parliament and the Provincial Assemblies had a mix of directly and indirectly elected representatives. A vast majority of the members of the two houses were directly elected, 79 percent and 78 percent respectively.

The National Assembly had three categories of seats: 1) general seats; 2) women seats; and (3) non-Muslim seats. Only the general seats were directly elected through the First-Past-The-Post system (by simple majority in single member districts). The women seats, on the other hand, were indirectly elected using a proportional system based on the

⁴ Previously, non-Muslims voters constituted a separate electorate and cast their vote in direct elections for the non-Muslim seats.

number of general seats won by the each political party from the province concerned in the National Assembly. The non-Muslim seats were indirectly elected via the same proportional electoral system as used for the women seats, except that the entire country constitutes the constituency. Both women and non-Muslims were picked from the respective closed party list. As a result, independent candidates could only contest for general seats and not for any of the reserved seats in the National Assembly.



Chief Election Commissioner, H.E. Irshad Hasan Khan welcome ANFREL observers at ECP head office in Islamabad

Originally contesting political parties had to hand in their respective list of candidates for the two categories of set aside seats to ECP at the same time as all other candidates were registered in August 2002. Candidates included in those lists were ranked in preferential order if a political party received any of the reserved seats. However, only a couple of days prior to polling day changes were made to the electoral system. ECP announced that political parties could now alter the ranking of the candidates even after the Election Day.

This changed was strongly criticized by local and international observation organizations because it was not a good practice to change the rules so close to Election Day. In addition, two days before the polls, the government amended LFO 2002 allowing independent candidates to

join political parties after the elections. By doing so, they too would be included in the allocation of reserved seats for contesting political parties. In practice, independent candidates had no possibility to clarify their status to the voters as the moratorium on campaign activities came into force only hours after the amendment was announced. Moreover basing the allocation of reserved seats on the number of seats won instead of votes in the National Assembly, would create the “majoritarian character” of the system and downplay the representative nature of democracy.

LFO 2002 introduced the “5 percent threshold” to prevent small political parties from getting access to the reserved seats for women and non-Muslims. If a political party did not receive at least 5 percent of the general seats in the National Assembly, it would not be allotted any of these reserved seats to the National Assembly. This made it more difficult for regional political parties to obtain reserved seats, and as a result only major political parties gained access to the set aside seats.

The number of seats in the National Assembly increased significantly. In 1997 elections 217 members of the NA were elected directly and indirectly, while this time around the figure had risen to 342. One of the main reasons for this increase was the introduction of dedicated 60 seats for women (60), but also the general seats increased by 65 new seats. Also after the increase in the number of seats in the National Assembly, Punjab was still the key province since it holds more than 50 percent of the seats.

National Assembly Composition: 1997 and 2002

General Seats	207 (1997)	272 (2002)
Women Seats	0 (1997)	60 (2002)
Non-Muslim Seats	10 (1997)	10 (2002)
Total	217 (1997)	342 (2002)

National Assembly Seats by Administrative Areas (2002)

Administrative Areas	General Seats	Women Seats	Non-Muslim Seats	Total Seats and Percentage
Punjab	148	35	-	183 (53.50)
Sindh	61	14	-	75 (22.00)
Balochistan	14	3	-	17 (5.00)
NWFP	35	8	-	43 (12.50)
FATA	12	-	-	12 (3.50)
Federal Capital	2	-	-	2 (0.50)
Nation-Wide	-	-	10	10 (3.00)

The number of seats in the Provincial Assemblies was also changed under LFO 2002. Similar to the National Assembly, Provincial Assemblies were made to have both more seats and three categories of general seats, women seats and non-Muslim seats.

Provincial Assembly Seats

Administrative Areas	General Seats	Women Seats	Non-Muslim Seats
Punjab	297	66	8
Sindh	130	29	9
Balochistan	51	11	3
NWFP	99	22	3



Candidates running for the general seats were elected through a simple majority in single member districts (the First-Pass-The-Post system). The reserved seats were allocated based on the proportion of general seats that the various political parties obtain in each Provincial Assembly. If a

political party won less than 5 percent of the general seats in that Provincial Assembly, they would not receive any reserved seats. Candidates were picked from the closed list filed by the political parties to ECP in August 2002. There were criticisms similar to the electoral system for the National Assembly that, by basing the allocation of reserved seats on the number of seats won instead of votes in each Provincial Assembly, it would create the “majoritarian character” of the system and downplay the representative nature of democracy.

4.2 Major Political Parties and Political Landscape

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was deprived of the leadership of former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who did not take part in the elections. PML-N had his brother Shahbaz Sharif elected as a new party chairman shortly before the deadline for registration. However, Shahbaz Sharif was disqualified as well and PML-N conducted its campaign under the leadership of Acting Chairman Zafarul Haq. It also suffered from the massive defection of members and prospective candidates, approximately as high as 50 percent, to the pro-government coalition.



The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) also had to contest the elections without its leader, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. On the final day prior to the date set by ECP for registration), PPP decided to “transform” into a new political party called the Pakistan Peoples Party-Parliamentarians (PPP-P),

with Makhdoom Amin Fahim as its Chairman. Notably, one of PPP-P’s slogans was the disqualification of Benazir Bhutto. It was also the most vocal in complaining against what it perceived as extensive “pre-poll rigging” in many forms, including a electoral environment created by the electoral law and the constitutional amendments.

Led by Mian Mohammad Azhar, the Pakistan Muslim League Quaid-e-Azam (PML-QA) was carved out of PML-N soon after the 1999 coup. As a result, it was inevitably seen as a creation of the military. A number of influential politicians across the country joined PML (QA), including those from PML (N), presumably in the hope that they would draw benefits from links with the government.⁵ PML (QA) targeted voters tired of PPP and PML (N), whose governments had been heavily discredited for corruption and power abuses.

The Muttahida Majilis-e-Amal (MMA) coalition was formed by six religious parties: Jamaat-i-Islami; Jamiat-Ulema-e-Pakistan (Noorani); Jamiat-Ulema-e-Pakistan (F); Jamiat-Ulema-e-Pakistan (S); Islami-Tehreek-e-Pakistan; and Markazi Jamiat Al-Hadith. Although MMA appeared to lack consistency, given the personal animosity between party leaders and considerable doctrinal disputes, the most disciplined faction from Jamaat-i-Islami could dominate the party and made it a prominent contestant in the elections. MMP captured significant supports by cashing in on the anti-West sentiment in Pakistan.

Another pro-government coalition was the Grand National Alliance (GNA). It was led by the Millat Party of former President of Pakistan Farooq Leghari.

At regional levels, there were a large number of political parties from various political spectrums.



LTO in Karachi interviewed District Nazim of Hyderabad (PPP-P)

In urban Sindh, the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) was seen as the biggest political force. It has traditionally stood up for the rights of the Urdu-speaking Indian Muslims, who fled to Pakistan in the wake of

⁵ This created a surplus of prospective candidates for PML (QA) in many constituencies and over time drove many politicians to run as independent candidates with a pro-government stance.

the 1947 partition of British India. MQM's manifesto was often anti-Punjabi and in support of substantial decentralization. MQM contested against its own splinter Haqiqi faction, headed by Afaq Ahmed and Badar Iqbal.

The Awami National Party (ANP) had traditionally been strong in the North-West Frontier province.

Another well-established regional political party taking part in the elections was the Pakhtoon Khawa Milli Awami Party (PKMAP) of Mehmood Khan Achakzai. It supported Pashtun rights and the incorporation of Pashtun areas in Balochistan into North-West Frontier province.

With electoral manifestos centered on Baloch tribes, the Balochistan National Party (BNP) of Sardar Akhter Jan Mengal and the Balochistan National Movement (BNM) had traditional strongholds in Balochistan.

There were a number of "one-man shows" political parties such as the Pakistan People's Party-S (PPP-S) of Aftab Ahmed Khan Sherpao in North West Frontier province; the Pakistan Muslim League-Junejo (PML-J) of Hamid Chattha in north Punjab; the Pakistan Muslim League-Functional (PML-F) of Pir Pagara and the Sindh Democratic Alliance (SDA) of Imtiaz Sheikh in north Sindh, the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf (PTI) of Imran Khan; the Pakistan Awami Tehrik of Tahir-ul Qadri and the Pakistan Muslim League-Zia (PML-Z) of Ijaz-ul Haq.

Given the number of political parties and independent candidates running in the general elections, the fragmentation of the political landscape was one of the most pronounced features of Pakistan's politics. But at the same time, there was also political "marriages of convenience" that would have seemed unthinkable until recently.

In many cases political parties agreed to support joint candidates, but only ad hoc rather than on the basis of general agreement. Furthermore, two bitter enemies, PPP-P and PML (N) managed to a certain extent to get over the personal confrontation of their leaders, former Prime

Ministers Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, and co-existed at least under the umbrella of the 15-party Alliance for the Restoration of Democracy (ARD), against President Musharraf. The pro-government camp was often referred to as the King's parties, including PML (QA), GNA, SDA and PPP (S). Most regional parties, such as MQM, ANP, BNP, BNM and PKMAP stayed out of alliance.

By and large, the atmosphere in the pre-election period was marked by the lack of enthusiasm. There was a universal feeling that the pre-election period had nothing in common with the lively political campaigns held by parties in the past. As regards the platforms of political parties, they were rather vague and centered on single issues.



*Japanese observers interviewed
people in Peshawar*

On 5 August 2002 ECP started receiving applications for registration and other documents from the political parties, as mandated by the Political Parties Order 2002 (PPO). Initially 129 political parties submitted their applications, but considerably less made it through the registration process. According to the provisions of the PPO, the applicants were expected to submit their party constitutions, manifestos, audit reports and lists of office-holders on the basis of internal party elections. A number of small political parties were disqualified for having failed to submit their financial audits. At the end of this process, ECP allotted symbols to 78 contestants, both political parties and alliances of political parties.⁶ Taken as a whole, ECP clearly display positive gestures and attempted to make the process of party registration

⁶ *The Sindh Democratic Alliance and the National Awami Party Pakistan relinquished their symbols to join alliances, thus bringing the actual number of symbols down to 71.*

and symbol allotment as smooth as possible for all applicants. It appeared that most political parties were given the symbols they claimed. PPP-P obtained the “Arrow”, its symbol in previous elections and PML (N) was given the “tiger”. GDA was the only applicant not allotted the symbol it wanted to obtain and, as a result, the component political parties were allotted separate symbols.



A more controversial issue in the pre-election political landscape was created after the introduction of a new set of qualification criteria for the nomination of candidates, including the requirement for candidates to have BA degrees; and the provision that candidates could be disqualified for outstanding or written-off debts as well as for unpaid utility bills. There were criticisms from local and international observation groups as well as political parties that some of these criteria were clearly targeting specific prominent politicians.

While President Musharraf publicly stated on 9 October 2002 that almost 41 percent of old faces in Pakistan’s politics vanished due to the graduation condition, there were solid arguments against the introduction of the BA degrees requirement.

For example, there was a high level of illiteracy in Pakistan. This regulation could deprive almost 95 percent of the population of the right to run for office and diluting the representation in electoral process.⁷ There was also a high degree of inconsistency. Imran Khan submitted

⁷ *There were rumors that a number of candidates got through the nomination process with fake degrees.*

identical sets of nomination papers in several constituencies and faced totally different treatment by returning officers in each constituency. Meanwhile, religious diplomas were accepted as equivalent to university BA degrees. This significantly benefited candidates of MMA.



Another novelty was the obligation of candidates to prove that they (as well as their relatives or business associates) had not previously defaulted on bank loans, had not had bank loans written off or did not have unpaid utility bills up to a rather small amount (about 150 US Dollar). These requirements could be seen as extremely contentious, especially when there was already a long list of other legal remedies to be enforced in case of failure of candidates to meet their financial liabilities.

There were many indications that the disqualification of prominent politicians from the elections came about as a result of a government strategy, in certain cases through the enforcement of person-specific provisions on questionable legal grounds. Although the provision that candidates previously convicted for criminal offences could be disqualified under certain conditions was not unreasonable, but there were highly debatable and even person-specific provisions.

Benazir Bhutto and the Sharif family were kept out of electoral contests by what could be seen as President Musharraf's strategy of disqualifying prominent opponents. This was further enhanced by the expediency of introducing a provision in the Chief Executive's Order on Qualification for Holding Public Offices Order to the effect that politicians who held the position of Prime Minister or Chief Minister of a province twice in the past would not be qualified to hold an identical position for a third term. More serious was the controversy created by provisions of PPO for the disqualification of an entire political party, unless its disqualified leader or even a member resigned from that political party.

In addition to a new set of qualification criteria for the nomination of candidates, PPP-P and PML (N) were specifically put in a difficult situation as a result of undue pressure from the government.

There were reasons to suspect that charges raised by the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) were used by the government, especially when ANFREL long-term observers found that charges were dropped in cases where politicians decided to join pro-government parties. Unjustified arrests of candidates and supporters of PPP-P were also reported.

Despite efforts of the government and ECP to ensure political parties, candidates and voters as well as local and international observation groups about the preparedness of security and law enforcement agencies to maintain a peaceful electoral environment, there were many cases of attack against party offices, with activists being beaten up. Most of the incidents also involved burning or tearing down of party banners or flags. There were at least six confirmed election-related deaths; two in North West Frontier province; one in Punjab; and three in Sindh.

4.3 Campaign of Political Parties and Candidates

Freedom of speech and freedom assembly constituted a key element in democratic electoral contests. For the elections on 10 October 2002, political parties and candidates were given 38 days, as the government



Political party campaign



did not lift the ban on public political activities until 1 September 2002.⁸ Combined with other factors, it was clear that the chance for political parties to campaign effectively was seriously limited. For example, no public political gatherings were allowed after the 1999 coup. The three-years of silence that followed created an "information deficit" among voters. The situation became much worsen for voters to make an informed choice given the mushrooming of political parties in the elections this time. Moreover, the government introduced additional restrictions on election campaign by banning political parties and candidates from organizing processions.⁹ Processions had a long and important tradition in the political life of Pakistan, as they are one of the most important conveyers of information for parties to voters. Instead only political rallies were allowed. Local authorities were tasked to identify places where rallies could take place.

Islamabad candidates experienced very strict rules, which effectively prevented them from freely organizing campaigns. Chaudhry Asghar, ECP Coordinator for Islamabad, informed political parties on 14 September 2002 that no rally would take place in Islamabad for the duration of election campaign. Only small corner meetings would be allowed. Anti-government speeches were not allowed either. In addition, the magistrate of Islamabad issued six orders under Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code banning the playing of objectionable cassettes, making provocative speeches and staging demonstrations. The magistrate also banned the use of loudspeakers, use of posters and distribution of objectionable material. This decision was with immediate effect and for a period of two months.

On 21 August 2002 ECP issued the Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates, which contained several constraining regulations preventing political parties and candidates from freely

⁸ Although political parties were allowed to start campaigning on 1 September 2002 it was not until 15 September 2002 that they knew whom of their candidates ECP accepted.

⁹ The Law Minister claimed that processions were a nuisance to the public as they interrupted traffic.

expressing their views. One of the most salient restrictions was the prohibition to criticize or ridicule the military.



It could be said that many restrictions imposed by the government and ECP seriously hampered the abilities of political parties and candidates to campaign and contributed to the lifeless campaign, which did little to help voters make an informed choice.

4.4 Voter Registration

The number of voters on this year's voters' register has increased significantly since the 1997 elections (from 56 million to 72 million). However, the registration of voters was largely based on the 2001 local election roll. The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) also had to amalgamate three different sources of information under time pressure. As a result, there were serious doubts regarding the quality of the voter register prior polling day as reports of names of deceased appearing in the lists while names that should have been on the list were missing.

It's not enough to be on the voters' register to cast a ballot. Voters also had to present a National Identity Card (NIC) in order to cast their ballot. The program to issue new computerized NICs ran into problems due to shortage of materials, among other things, which contributed to

the limited availability of the new NICs. Throughout the country approximately less than 50 percent of application forms were processed before the Election Day. In order to overcome this situation, NADRA had to issue manual ID cards to voters.

4.5 Voter Education

Many changes were made to the electoral system, which necessitated comprehensive voter education activities to enable voters to utilize their franchise in an informed matter. No concrete efforts were made by ECP to inform voters about those changes. Only a limited “get-out-to-vote” campaign was organized by ECP and the government of Pakistan using the electronic media.



Poster for Voter Education by ECP

There were more than 17 million new voters registered for the elections, of which more than five million had the opportunity to cast their ballots for the very first time as a result of the lowered voting age from 21 years to 18 years. And with approximately 17 percent of the total number of seats in each of provincial assemblies allocated to women, the participation of women in electoral process as candidates and voters appeared to be improved from previous elections. ECP's cooperation with UNDP and civil society organizations in implementing a project to increase the number of women's political awareness seemed to be successful, except in some parts of North-West Frontier province, Balochistan

and Tribal Areas where ANFREL observers reported that a large number of women were systematically “discouraged” by candidates and community councils from participating in electoral process. These problematic areas included, but not limited to, Kyber Agency, Peshawar, Noshera, Mardan, Kohat, Malakhand (Swat) and Swabi.

There was an interesting cooperation between ECP and the Ministry of Information to carry out voter education activities through the media. With supports from the Japanese International Co-operation Agency (JICA), three weeks before the Election Day ECP launched public information programs urging voters through advertisements on TV and radio as well as in newspaper. The main focus was to increase the number of voter turnout from 35 percent in the 1997 elections. However, the ECP Director of Public Relations admitted that the number of these advertisements was very few due to the high costs involved, which inevitably reduced the impact.

ANFREL long-term observers questioned ECP on a number of occasions regarding ECP’s public information video explaining the procedures in polling stations, which inappropriately showed actual election symbols on mock ballot papers broadcast on national TV. The most prominent symbol used was that of PML (QA). This message could send a message misleading uneducated voters to cast their ballots for PML (QA).

Attitudes of ECP officials at district levels also reduced the efficiency of voter education campaigns. In many areas, these officials showed no interest in or intention to conduct voter education activities as they saw that voter education was responsible by ECP in Islamabad and UNDP. As a result, ANFREL observers reported a lack of voter education activities at district levels in every area of deployment. Even basic voter education materials such as posters, leaflets and information sheets, except those produced by political parties and candidates, were insufficient.

4.6 ECP and Electoral Administration

CEC and the four election commissioners, selected from sitting judges of the High Courts in four provinces, were not seen as highly competent in making decisions on election-related issues despite their background as seasoned judges with extensive legal background.



Ballot boxes were transported to polling stations outside Rawalpindi

All of them were practically inexperienced in terms of electoral management. CEC, for example, was appointed less than 10 months prior to Election Day. The administration of electoral below commissioners therefore was in the hands of officials, who were generally quite experienced from organizing elections domestically.

There was a shortage of manpower in the actual operation of ECP. In the electoral context of Pakistan, the traditional way of finding returning officers was to approach the judiciary. Provincial election commissioners had to rely on the government's judiciary to handle the nomination of candidates in all the 272 constituencies, as the vast majority of returning officers were Judges. These Judges were supposed to be trained by UNDP under a multi-million dollar capacity building program, UNDP also ran programs with ECP to train almost 300,000 polling station staffs recruited on an ad hoc basis primarily from educational institutions to work in 65,000 polling stations across the

country. However in reality, UNDP did not conduct but rather sub-contracted the task to a number of organizations that had prior experience in organizing training. These trainings experienced difficulties because the distribution of necessary manual was slow and limited. The attendance rate was generally low. ANFREL observers also reported that practically there was no effort to train returning officers, who played a crucial role both in nomination of candidates as well as the aggregation of results at constituency levels. Some political parties tried to train parts of their polling agents but, due to limited interaction with ECP, they had an incomplete picture as how the ECP intended to conduct the vote and the count.

Although the dependency on human resources of the government could be seen common to many Asian countries, the politicization of Pakistan's bureaucracy cast serious doubts among local and international observation groups about the neutrality and transparency of government officials in the operation of electoral administration. This problem was multiplied by suspicions in the integrity and non-partisanship of CEC because of his roles in legitimizing the 1999 coup. He was also responsible for administrating the heavily criticized presidential referendum.

ECP was ineffective in curbing the misuse of state resources by government agencies in favor of political parties, mostly for PML (QA). This issue further cast serious doubts over the independence of ECP.

ECP's direct interaction with political parties was patchy. As ECP issued a large number of orders, procedures, amendments and clarifications to already issued orders and procedures during the run-up to the Election Day, it became apparent that political parties and candidates were unaware of a substantial amount of the ECP's decisions.

Instructions issued by CEC ordering parties and government officials to adhere to the legal framework and the Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates were also not taken seriously by political parties and government officials. Many Nazims ignored the rules and both

overtly and indirectly supported certain candidates and political parties in the run-up to Election Day. On many Nazims took part in campaign activities of candidates and even delivered speeches in a partisan way. Many Nazims agreed to lend their names and faces to posters, brochures, newspaper advertisements and other campaign material of specific candidates. The beneficiaries of that interference appeared to be from the King's parties such as PML (QA), SDA, NAPP and PPP (S). However, ECP was reluctant to exercise its power to take swift and decisive actions against violators.

ECP was also clearly unable and not willing to defend its jurisdiction from political interference when President Musharraf imposed serious restrictions on campaign activities, which clearly ran contrary to the Code of Conduct for Political Parties and Candidates issued by ECP.

PPP-P and PML-N raised a number of concerns regarding the delimitation of the constituencies and accused ECP of gerrymandering. Allegedly, a number of new constituencies were created in such a way that strongholds of parties opposing President Musharraf were weakened, while the King's parties supporting the military were benefiting. ECP received 945 complaints lodged against the preliminary delimitation. However, the majority of these complaints were regarded as lacking legal basis. Due to the very limited availability of reliable constituency maps, ANFREL long-term observers were not able to verify the merit of ECP's positions on the alleged gerrymandering.

At the same time, to be fair, ECP initiated a number of positive steps to improve the quality of electoral process, including the issuing of several directives regarding impartial media reports; informing returning officers not to accept nomination papers from sitting ministers and Nazims (heads of local authorities) because they might use state resources to further their re-election; and the allocation of election symbols was conducted in an open manner. The extension of the nomination period could be seen helpful to allow political parties to field candidates for the forthcoming elections. And for the very first time, ECP announced that copies of the results should be given to party agents in the polling stations immediately following the count, which

improved the transparency and provided an opportunity to verify the counting process where party agents were present.

4.7 Media Reports

The elections were extensively covered in the electronic and print media. Given the country's high illiteracy rate, television and radio are very important means of communication.

ANFREL observers found that most television news coverage did not touch any contentious matters but rather focused on technical information regarding various steps of electoral procedures. Controversial issues concerning political interference of President Musharraf in the elections were either downplayed or presented rather in a way that created his image as an advocate for Pakistan's democracy.

On 8 August 2002 ECP issued a Code of Conduct for the Electronic Media, which stated that election coverage by the state broadcast media should be "fair, balanced and unbiased in favor of any political party, a candidate or leader". However, it appeared that additional time was allocated by PTV 1 and PTV World to PML (QA), GNA, MQM and PAT. On the other hand, political parties in the rival coalition such as PPP-P, PML (N) and PTI complained that they were treated unfairly in terms of time allocation. Confirming the findings of a media-monitoring project by the Liberal Forum Pakistan (LFP), PPP-P and PML (N) mentioned that PTV 1 and PTV World carried out a series of criticisms on their leaders. This included a televised message of President Musharraf before the Election Day, reiterating how "corrupt" the governments of Nawaz Sharif and Benazir Bhutto had been in the past.

Newspapers and magazines in general exhibited a diversity of views. Activities of political parties and candidates as well as actions of the government were given extensive news and analysis coverage in the print media. Nevertheless, there were substantial concerns regarding corruption and unethical conducts of newspaper journalists, particularly in the Urdu media. More important is the existence of a culture of self-censorship, in which journalists and editors chose to downplay or

suppress reports considered by the government as “sensitive to national interests”. Several journalists and editors, particularly in the English press, also mentioned about interference or attempted interference by the Ministry of Information through “persuasive” telephone calls or meetings with government officials.

5. Election Day Observation Report (10 October 2002)

ANFREL observers were in electoral constituencies across Islamabad Capital Territory, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh, Balochistan and Tribal Areas. On the Election Day, they visited more than 300 polling stations.

Deployment of ANFREL Observers

Deployment Areas	Observers
Kyber Agency and Peshawar	Mr. Hideyuki Ando Mr. Suto Nobuhiko Mr. Nishiyama Takashi Ms. Mochida Minako Mr. Watanabe Kiminori Ms. Ito Mihoko
Nowshehra and Mard	Ms. Hashido Yuki Mr. Tamaki Tomohiro
Kohat and the Adjoining Tribal Constituencies	Mr. Sakaguchi Naoto Ms. Nakayama Yukari
Malakhand (Swat)	Mr. Jehan Gregory Ignatious Perera
Swabi	Mr. Asaduzzaman
Islamabad	General Saiyud Kerphol Mr. Sunai Phasuk Ms. Degli Albizi Eva Maria
Rawalpindi	Dr. Gothom Arya Mr. Somchai Homlaor Mr. A.F. Hassan Ariff Ms. Somsri Berger Ms. Anothai Soma

Jehlum	Mr. Kamal Perera
Sargodha	Ms. Letchimi Devi Mr. Takigawa Manabu
Jhang	Ms. Bae Shinjeong Mr. Komura Tetsuo
Gujarat and Gujranwala	Mr. Ravindra Chanaka Samthadasa Ms. Shimizu Maiko
Lahore	Ms. Samjha Shrestha Mr. Kang Iong Nian
Multan and Muzaffargarh D G Khan	Mr. Shahiduzzaman
Larkana	Mr. Okada Daisuke Mr. Chosa Soichiro
Hyderabad	Mr. Kingsley Rodrigo
Karachi	Mr. Eric Paulsen
Quetta	Mr. Alaster Lynsley Susirith Mendis
Qila Abdul and Pashin	Mr. Dasharath Budhathoki Mr. Neang Sovann

The following observation covered the period from the beginning of voting process until ballots were counted at polling stations on 10 October 2002.

- **In general the Election Day passed off peacefully throughout the country, except reports of isolated violence in some areas.**

There was a positive atmosphere at most polling stations across the country. Situations in and around polling stations were peaceful or sometimes even festive.

During voting hour, relations between supporters of different political parties and independent candidates were friendly.

ANFREL observers did not witness any efforts to intimidate voters in and around polling stations.

Observers were welcome by the public, polling officers, security officers and party agents.

The presence of security officers was visible in and around polling stations. Tensions were quickly subdued. Nevertheless, ANFREL observers were aware of violent clashes between supporters of rival political parties in few areas. ANFREL observer had first hand information about on serious case in Hyderabad, where a presiding officer in Bakir Nizamani was shot.



Male & female voters queuing separately

- **The public showed apathy to the elections and voter's turnout was low.**

People in general were clearly not very excited to exercise their rights to vote. By the end of voting hour, ANFREL observers reported that approximately less than 30 percent of eligible voters.

Male voters appeared to be more confident and have better understanding about voting procedures as well as about candidates contesting in their constituencies than female voters. Still, the number of spoiled ballots was about 3-10 percent in most polling stations visited by ANFREL observers. More voter education would be required, especially targeting female voters.

ANFREL observers in every district expressed their concerns about the disenfranchisement of voting rights of a large number of people due to strict regulations on National Identification Cards. Most of these voters, however, did not become unruly or violent although they were openly disappointed. Their cases as well as other incidents should have been recorded by polling officers for further rectification.

- **Female voters were discouraged and not allowed to participate in the elections in some areas.**



The participation of female voters in balloting was admirable. However, ANFREL observers in Kyber Agency, Peshawar, Noshera, Mardan, Kohat, Malakhand (Swat) and Swabi were concerned that a large number of eligible female voters, particularly in remote areas, were not able to cast their votes. Candidates and community councils in these areas reportedly made informal agreements not to allow female voters to participate in the elections, citing their traditional norms

Notwithstanding the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, ANFREL observers do believe in universal suffrage and that elections would not be totally free unless all, including female population, could enjoy their legitimate voting rights.

- **Most government officials and security officers did not participate in postal voting.**

Although arrangements for postal voting was made available by the Election Commission, most government officials and security officers serving on the Election Day informed ANFREL observers that they did not register to cast their votes by postal means because of inconveniences or were not aware of it.

- **Technically, voting process in general was conducted with sufficient transparency and efficiency**

Most polling stations received the necessary election material. But this did not include screens to ensure that voters could cast ballots in full secrecy. In the face of such challenges, polling officers should be commended for their resourcefulness in making makeshift arrangements. In most polling booths, except in some polling booths in Lahore, areas were arranged in such a way that voters could cast their ballots in secrecy.



Nevertheless, the voter register required improvement and updating. It was further observed that polling officers experienced difficulties finding voters names on the register, particularly when the voter did not carry the slip given to them by political parties. This resulted in long queues at busy polling stations.

In few places, polling stations were slow to open due to difficulties faced by polling officers in arranging secrecy areas or to the fact that polling officers and party agents were late.

There were inconsistencies in the administration of polling stations, which caused by confusions and poor training. Nevertheless, most polling officers worked hard to ensure the transparency of balloting and tried to fulfill their duties in a conscientious manner. ANFREL observers noted that attempts to impersonate voters or cast multiple votes were often detected and stopped, but except in rare cases, culprits were not further persecuted.

There were some minor irregularities and lapses in the enforcement of electoral regulations. For example, polling officers in few places forgot to put coded stamp and their signatures on the back of ballots, they were sometimes lax in checking voters for ink prior to voting. Few polling stations in Jehlum and Lahore did experience more serious problems, including improper sealing of ballot boxes.



*Sealing after closing ballot box
in the evening of polling day*

Party agents were present in every polling station visited by ANFREL observers, creating a transparent environment during voting hours. They were found to have sufficient understanding of their rights, duties and responsibilities. These party agents were often vigilant in performing their works, particularly in verifying the identity of voters. Many party agents, however, complained to ANFREL observers that they did not vote. Future arrangements, such as casting “tendered votes”, should be made to facilitate the voting of those on duty in polling stations.

- **Representatives and supporters of political parties and independent candidates were facilitating process, but they showed negligence in observing regulations on the conducts inside polling stations.**

Outside polling stations, political parties and independent candidates set up camps to assist voters to locate their names on voter's lists and identify their polling booths. However, most of these camps were found inside the 400-yard perimeter of polling stations. Similarly, agents of political parties and independent candidates were also allowed to openly continue their campaigns, provide transportation to voters and wear political badges inside polling stations contrary to the code of conduct stipulated by ECP.

ANFREL observers were concerned at the number of unauthorized people in and around polling stations. Usually they did not appear to be interfering with the electoral process. But given the suspicions of possible intimidation or interference by government officials and local political leaders during the run-up to the elections, such people might have unduly influenced voters' decision in some cases.

- **Vote count was generally quick, but not necessarily organized in accordance with regulations.**

Vote count in all polling stations visited by ANFREL observers was speedy, but polling officers did not strictly followed procedures instructed by the Election Commission. Generally, consistent and appropriate standards for determining the validity of ballot papers were applied. Party agents were allowed to witness the conducts of vote count. However, party agents rarely had a chance to verify votes marked on ballots or recount ballots by themselves, they simply accepted the tabulation of electoral results at polling stations.

- **The immediate post-election environment was peaceful.**

The environment after the elections was vibrant as winning political parties and independent candidates celebrated their victories, but situations in general remained peaceful. This was another positive indication for the Election Day.

6. By-Elections Observation (15 January 2003)

ANFREL Country Coordinator for Pakistan, Sher Zaman, supplied an additional report on the by-elections held on 15 January 2003 for 10 National Assembly seats and 18 Provincial Assemblies seats.¹⁰

¹⁰ *By-elections for a Punjab Provincial Assembly seat were postponed because 5,000 ballot papers were stolen.*

Electoral abuses and irregularities still happened largely in the same pattern as during the 2002 general elections. Political interference by the administration to create an advantage edge for PML (QA) and other pro-government political parties was visible. In Rawalpindi, for example, Prime Minister Zafar Ullah Khan Jamali spoke to one public meeting and announced several development projects for a constituency where the Information Minister Sheikh Rashid's nephew was contesting for the National Assembly seats. These practices clearly breached electoral regulations, but ECP failed to take any actions against violators.

In general, voter's turnout was lower than the general elections. Efforts to ensure a safe environment for the poll also seemed to be less effective. There were also reports of violence on the Election Day. Three supporters of PPP-P were killed by unidentified gunmen, while more than 10 were injured, on their way to vote near Nawabshah in Karachi. Polling stations in Orangi, also in Karachi, were attacked by Islamic militants and wounded supporters of MQM.

Results of the by-elections suggested that power of the government coalition was further strengthened as PML (QA) received four seats and MMA received three seats in the National Assembly. PML (F) and an independent candidate each received one seat in the National Assembly. PPP-P did not win any seat.

7. Conclusions

The transition to democracy through elections is not a single day of voting. It must be judged as a process that also includes voter registration, candidate nomination and validation, campaigning and the transition period until the new officials take office. In this context, ANFREL was deeply concerned by reports about misconducts during pre-election period. Some of these practices observed by ANFREL were serious enough to undermine the fairness of the elections and to limit the legitimacy of genuine democratic transition in Pakistan.

Intimidation of candidates, biased amendment of electoral framework and regulations, restrictive interpretations of campaign regulations and

unbalanced media coverage, accusation of government acting in favor of certain parties or candidates etc. prohibited a fully free environment or equal opportunity. Some aspects of the pre-election period therefore fell short of international standards.

Against those backdrops, however, the Election Day passed off peacefully, except reports of isolated violence in some areas. ANFREL observers witnessed the good conduct of officials and voters on the Election Day, with problems limited to isolated incidents. In the face of logistical challenges, polling officers should be commended for their resourcefulness in making makeshift arrangements to ensure vote secrecy. The presence of party agents and observers in polling stations also helped ensure the transparency of the vote and vote count.



Press Conference after the polling day at Margala Motel, Islamabad

On people's participation, ANFREL was worried about the fact that the public showed apathy to the elections and turnout was low. Also female voters were discouraged and not allowed to participate in the elections in some areas. Notwithstanding the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, ANFREL stressed the principle of universal suffrage and that the elections would not be totally free unless all, including female population, could enjoy their legitimate voting rights.

8. Recommendations

For further improvement of the electoral process in Pakistan, ANFREL makes the following recommendations:

- 1) Violence and intimidation must be eliminated from Pakistan's political landscape.
 - ANFREL cannot accept candidates or political parties that resort to violence, condone it, or are ambivalent about it. Leaders of all political parties should take decisive legal and disciplinary actions against their candidates and supporters who engage in all forms of political thuggery.
 - To ensure peaceful, free, and fair electoral contests, ECP as well as law enforcement and security authorities should exercise their powers and take pro-active measures to uphold the law and order. Complaints about political violence and harassment must be investigated and settled promptly, impartially, and transparently. At the same time, they must show the strongest vigilance and commitment to exercise their powers in these cases. Those responsible for political violence and harassment must be brought to justice and prosecuted.
 - The people of Pakistan should vote to reject violence and reject politicians who use or condone violence.
 - ECP, the government of Pakistan, civil society organizations and the media must work harder to promote a new political culture based on the principles of tolerance, fair play, mutual respect and good citizenship.

2) The integrity of the electoral process requires administration by impartial electoral officials. Actions must be taken to ensure that elections in Pakistan are administered by a neutral body.

- There should be an open debate on the best way forward to make ECP an effective institution capable of preventing violence and electoral abuses, resolving complaints and conducting its duties in a neutral and impartial manner. ECP should also strictly enforce the principle of transparency and impartiality in the selection of election officials at all levels.

3) More checks and balances must be introduced on the interference of the government in election campaigns.

- Serious actions should be taken by ECP and the government of Pakistan to prevent officials at all levels of the administration, as well as officers of the armed forces and the police, from using their power to promote party interests and undermine voter's freedom of choice.

4) The technical capacity of ECP as well as electoral officials and polling station officials should be improved before the next general elections.

- ANFREL observed that there were still too many technical irregularities in the general elections. Most of these were minor incidents, but they suggested that training for polling station officials and education for voters might not have been adequate, and that some regulations need to be clarified. ANFREL calls on ECP to address these issues immediately. Otherwise, some of these minor irregularities could potentially lead to disputes or undermine voter confidence in the integrity of the electoral process.
- More training for Returning Officers and Election Tribunals would also be necessary to avoid a non-uniform implementation of the rules and procedures, which could cast doubt on the election results.

5) The necessity for civil society organizations to institute independent observation mechanisms, thereby playing an active role in promoting a free and fair electoral environment.

- ANFREL urges ECP and the government of Pakistan to guarantee that procedures and regulations for the next general elections would safeguard the rights of civil society organizations to conduct independent observation and implement civic and voter education programs safely and effectively.
- To achieve an objective in providing independent mechanisms for election observation and political awareness programs, it would be necessary for civil society organizations to receive relevant and sufficient training. This should be arranged by ECP, the government of Pakistan and international development agencies, both governmental and non-governmental.

6) More concerted efforts to implement civic and voter education programs are needed.

- The people of Pakistan are entitled to a more meaningful democracy where elections focus on issues, not money or intimidation. ECP, the government of Pakistan, political parties, civil society organization and the media should implement civic and voter education programs emphasizing the secrecy of the vote and individual freedom to select a representative to serve in public office.
- Given low literacy rates in Pakistan, the chance for voters to make an informed choice has been reduced by the limited publicity of the campaigns and of the platforms of political parties and candidates on television and radio. It should be the main responsibility of ECP to ensure fair and constructive media coverage of electoral campaigns.

- Women constitute more than 50 percent of the total voting population in Pakistan. Given the traditionally subordinate status of women in the society, during the 2002 general elections political parties failed to commit themselves to overcome cultural barriers to promote greater political participation as voters and candidates by women. More effective broad-based awareness and education programs to promote and support women representation and participation should be conducted by ECP, the government of Pakistan, political parties, civil society organizations and the media.
 - There should also be a general political awareness campaign not only to inform women of their rights but also to educate men so that they will acknowledge and respect women's rights.
 - It is crucial that more grassroots and civil society based actions are taken to make civic and voter education programs more effective.
- 7) More concrete measures to promote universal franchise, especially among women and minorities.
- Especially in FATA, women were prevented from exercising their franchise. Many women were not registered and inaccurate names were found on the electoral lists. There should be more female enumerators to increase the number of females registered to vote in the area in which they live.
 - The provision that set aside seats for women and minorities were indirectly elected using a proportional system based on the number of general seats won by the each political party in combination with a 5 percent of the seats threshold further increased the effect of the majority vote because in practice it excludes regional parties and independent candidates. It is therefore recommended that the 5 percent threshold be abolished and a proportional system be used, based on the number of votes instead of the number of seats.

- The computerized identification cards should be systematically used for any future elections. All eligible persons should receive one in time. In parallel, as the register is now computerized, names of every voter should be listed in a more uniform way.



Annex 1 ANFREL Press Releases

13 September 2002

Asian Biggest Network of Independent Election Observers to Start Observation Activities in Pakistan

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) has started election monitoring activity in Pakistan on 12 September 2002 with the arrival of six long-term observers from Sri Lanka, Japan, Nepal, Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The first batch of ANFREL observers will be stationed in Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Quetta and Peshawar.

Altogether, in this mission ANFREL deploys a strong team of 42 long-term and short-term international observers from 11 countries under the leadership of General Saiyud Kerdphol, ANFREL Chairman and former Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces.

Activities of ANFREL in the upcoming elections scheduled on 10 October 2002 is planned and implemented in response to the decision of the government of Pakistan and President General Pervez Musharraf to welcome of international election observers.

ANFREL believes that the presence of independent international elections observers will constitute an important factor to the effort of the government and the people of Pakistan to ensure the integrity of electoral process in a way that balloting will be translated into a meaningful exercise of democracy.

Election observation activities of ANFREL are hosted and facilitated by its member organization, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). In addition, ANFREL also seeks to cooperate with the Election Commission of Pakistan as well as other state agencies and non-governmental organizations.

ANFREL observers will take note of the preparation of electoral process, the enforcement of election campaign regulations, the

participation of people's organizations, the media and the voting public, the conduct of balloting and vote count as well as the surrounding political climate. After the polls, ANFREL observers will monitor the review of complaints, the declaration of election result and the installation of election winners. Findings and recommendations of ANFREL mission regarding each stage of electoral process will be presented to the public on a regular basis.

6 October 2002

Chairman of Asia's Biggest Network of Independent Election Observers Arrived in Pakistan

General Saiyud Kerdphol, Chairman of the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), Asia's biggest network of independent election observation organizations, arrived in Pakistan on 5 October 2002.

The former Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces will lead a strong team of 42 long-term and short-term international observers from 11 countries to monitor the 10 October 2002 elections in Pakistan.

General Saiyud Kerdphol mentioned during a reception function held by the Honorary Consul General of Thailand in Lahore on 5 October 2002 that "the upcoming elections, if held freely, fairly and peacefully, could become a significant step in democratization process in Pakistan." In addition, he also stressed that "the presence of independent international elections observers would constitute an important factor to efforts of the government and the people of Pakistan to ensure the integrity of electoral process in a the way that balloting will be translated into a meaningful exercise of democracy."

The key objectives of this election observation mission in Pakistan are:

- To conduct a comprehensive analysis of electoral process with an impartial, balanced and informed assessment;

- By the presence of independent international observers, ANFREL seeks to reduce tension, minimize instances of fraud, intimidation and violence and hopefully give confidence to contestants and voters to participate freely;
- Through cooperation with civil society organizations in Pakistan, ANFREL extends solidarity support of people's sector across Asia to the people of Pakistan in their aspiration for the establishment of foundations of democratic governance through the conduct of elections; and
- To create an opportunity for people's sectors from other Asian countries to learn and exchange experiences with the people of Pakistan in using elections as a platform for democratic transition.

ANFREL's missions are hosted and facilitated by its member organization, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP). In addition, ANFREL also seeks to cooperate with the Election Commission of Pakistan as well as other state agencies and civil society organizations.

ANFREL observers take account of the registration of voters and candidates, the election campaign, complaints and appeals and the preparations for Election Day. ANFREL observers will assess the electoral framework, the democratic and human rights environment, the conduct of the media during the campaign and the voting, counting and tabulation procedures. The election-monitoring mission of ANFREL will remain in Pakistan after the Election Day to follow the complaints and appeals procedures. During this period, regular meetings will be held with election officials, state agencies, political parties, candidates, civil society organizations and media throughout the country.

ANFREL will hold a press conference to present preliminary findings of the overall electoral process on 12 October 2002 at 11.00 a.m. at Margala Hotel in Islamabad.

12 October 2002

Summary of Preliminary Findings on the National Assembly and Provincial Assembly Elections in Pakistan

The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL), upon the invitation of the government of Pakistan and in cooperation with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), sent a team of 42 long-term and short-term international observers from 11 Asian countries to monitor the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly elections in Islamabad Capital Territory, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh, Balochistan and Tribal Areas. On the Election Day, ANFREL observers visited more than 300 polling stations across Pakistan.

ANFREL is deeply concerned by reports about misconducts during pre-election period. Some of these practices observed by ANFREL were serious enough to undermine the fairness of the elections and to limit the legitimacy of genuine democratic transition in Pakistan.

Intimidation of candidates, biased amendment of electoral framework and regulations, restrictive interpretations of campaign regulations and unbalanced media coverage, accusation of government acting in favor of certain parties or candidates etc. prohibited a fully free environment or equal opportunity. Some aspects of the pre-election period therefore fell short of international standards.

Against those backdrops, however, the Election Day passed off peacefully, except reports of isolated violence in some areas. ANFREL observers witnessed the good conduct of officials and voters on the Election Day, with problems limited to isolated incidents. In the face of logistical challenges, polling officers should be commended for their resourcefulness in making makeshift arrangements to ensure vote secrecy. The presence of party agents and observers in polling stations also helped ensure the transparency of the vote and vote count.

On people's participation, ANFREL is worried about the fact that the public showed apathy to the elections and turnout was low. Also female voters were discouraged and not allowed to participate in the elections

in some areas. Notwithstanding the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, ANFREL believes in universal suffrage and that elections would not be totally free unless all, including female population, could enjoy their legitimate voting rights.

The transition to democracy through elections is not a single day of voting. It must be judged as a process that also includes voter registration, candidate nomination and validation, campaigning and the transition period until the new officials take office. ANFREL stresses that the electoral process is not yet complete, with results still being tabulated and electoral complaints still to be addressed. ANFREL will continue to monitor the announcement of results and any complaints and appeals, which are crucial elements in the electoral process.

12 October 2002

Preliminary Findings on the National Assembly and Provincial Assembly Elections in Pakistan

ANFREL observers were in electoral constituencies across Islamabad Capital Territory, Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sindh, Balochistan and Tribal Areas. On the Election Day, they visited more than 300 polling stations.

The following report covered the period from the beginning of voting process until ballots were counted at polling stations on 10 October 2002.

- **In general the Election Day passed off peacefully throughout the country, except reports of isolated violence in some areas.**

There was a positive atmosphere at most polling stations across the country. Situations in and around polling stations were peaceful or sometimes even festive.

During voting hour, relations between supporters of different political parties and independent candidates were friendly.

ANFREL observers did not witness any efforts to intimidate voters in and around polling stations.

Observers were welcome by the public, polling officers, security officers and party agents.

The presence of security officers was visible in and around polling stations. Tensions were quickly subdued. Nevertheless, ANFREL observers were aware of violent clashes between supporters of rival political parties in few areas. ANFREL observer had first hand information about on serious case in Hyderabad, where a presiding officer in Bakir Nizamani was shot.

- **The public showed apathy to the elections and voter's turnout was low.**

People in general were clearly not very excited to exercise their rights to vote. By the end of voting hour, ANFREL observers reported that approximately less than 30 percent of eligible voters.

Male voters appeared to be more confident and have better understanding about voting procedures as well as about candidates contesting in their constituencies than female voters. Still, the number of spoiled ballots was about 3-10 percent in most polling stations visited by ANFREL observers. More voter education would be required, especially targeting female voters.

ANFREL observers in every district expressed their concerns about the disenfranchisement of voting rights of a large number of people due to strict regulations on National Identification Cards. Most of these voters, however, did not become unruly or violent although they were openly disappointed. Their cases as well as other incidents should have been recorded by polling officers for further rectification.

- **Female voters were discouraged and not allowed to participate in the elections in some areas.**

The participation of female voters in balloting was admirable.

However, ANFREL observers in Kyber Agency, Peshawar, Noshera, Mardan, Kohat, Malakhand (Swat) and Swabi were concerned that a large number of eligible female voters, particularly in remote areas, were not able to cast their votes. Candidates and community councils in these areas reportedly made informal agreements not to allow female voters to participate in the elections, citing their traditional norms.

Notwithstanding the socio-cultural context of Pakistan, ANFREL observers do believe in universal suffrage and that elections would not be totally free unless all, including female population, could enjoy their legitimate voting rights.

- **Most government officials and security officers did not participate in postal voting.**

Although arrangements for postal voting was made available by the Election Commission, most government officials and security officers serving on the Election Day informed ANFREL observers that they did not register to cast their votes by postal means because of inconveniences or were not aware of it.

- **Technically, voting process in general was conducted with sufficient transparency and efficiency**

Most polling stations received the necessary election material. But this did not include screens to ensure that voters could cast ballots in full secrecy. In the face of such challenges, polling officers should be commended for their resourcefulness in making makeshift arrangements. In most polling booths, except in some polling booths in Lahore, areas were arranged in such a way that voters could cast their ballots in secrecy.

In few places, polling stations were slow to open due to difficulties faced by polling officers in arranging secrecy areas or to the fact that polling officers and party agents were late.

There were inconsistencies in the administration of polling stations, which caused by confusions and poor training. Nevertheless, most polling officers worked hard to ensure the transparency of balloting and tried to fulfill their duties in a conscientious manner. ANFREL observers noted that attempts to impersonate voters or cast multiple votes were often detected and stopped, but except in rare cases, culprits were not further persecuted.

There were some minor irregularities and lapses in the enforcement of electoral regulations. For example, polling officers in few places forgot to put coded stamp and their signatures on the back of ballots, they were sometimes lax in checking voters for ink prior to voting. Few polling stations in Jehlum and Lahore did experience more serious problems, including improper sealing of ballot boxes.

Party agents were present in every polling station visited by ANFREL observers, creating a transparent environment during voting hour. They were found to have sufficient understanding of their rights, duties and responsibilities. These party agents were often vigilant in performing their works, particularly in verifying the identity of voters. Many party agents, however, complained to ANFREL observers that they did not vote. Future arrangements, such as casting "tendered votes", should be made to facilitate the voting of those on duty in polling stations.

- **Representatives and supporters of political parties and independent candidates were facilitating process, but they showed negligence in observing regulations on the conducts inside polling stations.**

Outside polling stations, political parties and independent candidates set up camps to assist voters to locate their names on voter's lists and identify their polling booths. However, most of these camps were found

inside the 400-yard perimeter of polling stations. Similarly, agents of political parties and independent candidates were also allowed to openly continue their campaigns, provide transportation to voters and wear political badges inside polling stations contrary to the code of conduct stipulated by ECP.

ANFREL observers were concerned at the number of unauthorized people in and around polling stations. Usually they did not appear to be interfering with the electoral process. But given the suspicions of possible intimidation or interference by government officials and local political leaders during the run-up to the elections, such people might have unduly influenced voters' decision in some cases.

- **Vote count was generally quick, but not necessarily organized in accordance with regulations.**

Vote count in all polling stations visited by ANFREL observers was speedy, but polling officers did not strictly followed procedures instructed by the Election Commission. Generally, consistent and appropriate standards for determining the validity of ballot papers were applied. Party agents were allowed to witness the conducts of vote count. However, party agents rarely had a chance to verify votes marked on ballots or recount ballots by themselves, they simply accepted the tabulation of electoral results at polling stations.

- **The immediate post-election environment was peaceful.**

The environment after the elections was vibrant as winning political parties and independent candidates celebrated their victories, but situations in general remained peaceful. This was another positive indication for the Election Day.

Annex 2 Election Results – National Assembly By Province

Party	NWFP	FATA	Islamabad	Punjab	Sindh	Balochistan	Total
Balochistan National Party	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Jamhoori Wattan Party	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Muhajir Qaumi Movement Pakistan	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Muttahidda Majlis-E-Amal Pakistan	29	0	1	3	6	6	45
Muttahidda Qaumi Movement	0	0	0	0	13	0	13
National Alliance	0	0	0	7	5	1	13
Pakistan Awami Tehreek	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pakistan Muslim League (F)	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Pakistan Muslim League (J)	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	0	0	0	14	0	0	14
Pakistan Muslim League (QA)	4	0	0	68	4	2	78
Pakistan Muslim League (Z)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pakistan People's Party (Sherpao)	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians	0	0	1	35	27	0	63
Pakistan Shia Political Party	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Pakistan Tehreek-E-Insaf	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Independent Candidates	0	12	0	15	1	1	29
* By-Elections	0	0	0	0	0	2	2

Annex 3 Election Results – Special Seats

Party	Independent Candidates	Women	Non-Muslim
Balochistan National Party	0	0	0
Jamhoori Wattan Party	0	0	0
Muhajir Qaumi Movement Pakistan	0	0	0
Muttahidda Majlis-E-Amal Pakistan	1	12	2
Muttahidda Qaumi Movement	0	3	1
National Alliance	0	3	0
Pakistan Awami Tehreek	0	0	0
Pakistan Muslim League (F)	0	1	0
Pakistan Muslim League (J)	0	1	0
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	0	3	1
Pakistan Muslim League (QA)	13	22	4
Pakistan Muslim League (Z)	0	0	0
Pakistan People's Party (Sherpao)	0	0	0
Pakistan People's Party Parliamentarians	1	15	2
Pakistan Shia Political Party	0	0	0
Pakistan Tehreek-E-Insaf	0	0	0
* By-Elections	0	0	0

Chronology

12 Oct 1999 The Pakistan Army deposed on Oct.12. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who had earlier dismissed the Chief of the Army staff, Gen. Pervez Musharraf and replaced him with Inter Service Intelligence (ISI) chief Lt. Gen. Ziauddin.

16 Oct 1999 Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff Committee and chief of the Army Staff, General Pervez Musharraf, has said that restoration of democracy is the 'top priority' of the military authorities.

13 Nov 1999 The Federal Cabinet approved in principle the preparation of new voters lists and fresh delimitation of constituencies all over the country on the basis of new computerized cards which will be issued by the National Database Organization (NDO).

19 Nov 1999 The National Database Org. (NDO) has undertaken the task of computerization of the National identity cards and compilation of electoral lists under the directives of the Chief Executive.

19 Nov 1999 Gen. Musharraf said in an interview that there was no question of the country's return to democracy at least in the near future. He also said that he couldn't give 'any time-frame for the return of democratic rule until the main objectives, for instance, reviving the economy are achieved.

14 Jan 2000 Chief Executive Gen. Musharraf announced on Jan. 14, his government's commitment to restore democratic institutions on the basis of the devolution of power and to hold local body elections during the current year

27 Jan 2000 Senior politicians and intellectuals expressed on the need for electoral reforms, including the establishment of an independent election commission, restoration of Federal Parliamentary system, and

autonomy for the provinces to make Pakistan a true democratic and welfare state.

22 Feb 2000 The military govt. has decided to exalt unprecedented electoral reforms, as part of its ambitious agenda to bring in what it says will be real democracy.

5 Apr 2000 The National Reconstruction Bureau chief Lt. Gen. (retd.) Tanveer Hussain Naqvi declared that elections to the National and provincial assemblies would be held on Party basis.

9 Apr 2000 The Chairman of the National Reconstruction Bureau (NRB) Lt. Gen. (retd) Tanveer Hussain Naqvi has vowed to make the Election Commission 'autonomous'.

12 Apr 2000 Chief Executive, Gen. Musharraf briefed UN Sec. Gen. Kofi Annan about his plans to restore democracy in Pakistan.

15 Apr 2000 Kofi Annan urges Musharraf to restore democracy in Pakistan.

15 May 2000 The EC of Pak. has proposed that political parties should be bound to ensure elections within their ranks to qualify for contesting any general elections.

25 May 2000 Gen. Musharraf reiterated his commitment to the restoration of civilian rule and hinted at evolving a system of balance that will prevent the Army's intervention in politics in future.

26 May 2000: Gen. Musharraf said that the govt. has accepted the Supreme Court's verdict, which gave the military authorities within a three-year period for the restoration of democracy.

29 May 2000 The Supreme Court while declaring that there was no democracy before Oct.12, released a detailed 579 page judgement

giving reasons and logic behind the doctrine of state necessity to validate extra constitutional steps by the military to overthrow the elected government of Nawaz Sharif.

6 Jun 2000 The government has set in motion the process of reviving democracy in the country with the grant of autonomous status to the EC preparation of new electoral rolls and delimitation of constituencies.

9 Jun 2000 The EC sought the record from all the four provincial election authorities for arrangements to hold local body's post in Dec. 2000.

10 Jun 2002 The EC announced 15 point proposal to conduct the Local Body elections.

13 Jun 2000 The Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) has asked the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) to prepare computerised fresh electoral rolls by September for the next local council elections.

23 Jun 2000 Heads of major political parties have called for restoration of democracy and holding of free and fair general elections at the earliest while stressing the need for internal unity and preservation of sovereignty of Pakistan.

24 Jun 2000 The Election Commission has recommended that the present 'first past the post' system should be combined with the run-off elections system. It required the winning candidate to secure 51% of the total registered votes.

4 Aug 2000 The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has opposed a proposal ordinance aimed at changing election laws and procedures.

6 Aug 2000 More than 12 political and religious parties at an All-parties conference in Lahore on Aug. 6 adopted a declaration calling upon the

govt. to give immediately a time-frame for the free and fair elections in which participation of all political parties was ensured.

6 Aug 2000: The Federal govt. has formally declared the Election Commission an independent and autonomous body for exercising financial and administrative powers. The govt. gave a formal directive to EC.

3 Sept 2000 The Election Commission is examining different reports that it has prepared to introduce mandatory voting.

15 Sept 2000 The National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) had completed fresh computerized electoral rolls for the first phase of 'local bodies' polls to be held in December.

17 Oct 2000 Gen. Musharraf said that he would not allow any corrupt politician to contest elections.

11 Nov 2000 The EC has rejected the computerized voters lists prepared by National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) in view of a large number of complaints of errors and omissions received from across the country, a spokesman for the commission

15 Nov 2000 The Supreme Council of the Pakistan Oppressed Nations Movement has called for a caretaker govt. comprising those Judges of the SC who had refused to take oath under the Provisional Constitutional Order (PCO), reports.. Such a caretaker set-up should conduct fresh general elections within 3 months.

17 Nov 2000 The Jamait-ul-Ulema Islam of Fazhir Rahman has accused NADRA of tampering with electoral roll to create small fiefdoms of Indians and Christians in Pakistan.

15 Dec 2000 The Hindu minority has announced the boycott of elections at all levels in the country till the restoration of joint electorate system.

25 Jan 2001 In a major concession to the longstanding demand of the minorities, the next general elections, roughly scheduled for Oct. 2002, will be held on the basis of point electorate.

6 Feb 2001 The SC has asked the Federal Govt. to inform when it intends to hold general elections and restore democracy in the country. *"We are not in favour of the military rule for an indefinite period rather in favour of parliamentary democracy and people's rule" the Chief Justice observed and added that the constitution is still the Supreme Law of the land"*

22 Feb 2001 The All Parties Conference (APC) organised by the Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA) through a unanimously adopted resolution urged the govt. to announce election schedule within a month to hold fresh general elections under the supervision of an independent election commission.

15 Mar 2001 CE Gen. Musharraf ruled out on March 15 the possibility of any interim setup in the country.

11 Apr 2001 The Commonwealth has given a deadline of Oct. 2001, to the Musharraf govt. to hold general elections, while the European Union has asked to hold them at the earliest.

20 Apr 2001 Chief Justice Irshad Hasan Khan has reiterated that elections to the senate the National Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies have to be held before Oct. 12, 2002 and democratic institutions revived.

29 Apr 2001 Leaders from all walks of life at a National Convention demanded the CE to announce a schedule for the general elections under Article 62 and 63 of the Constitution to be conducted by an independent

Election Commission to transfer power to genuine public representatives.

4 May 2001 The EC has proposed to the govt. not to allow those political parties to contest lower level and national level elections, which do not hold election within the party and sought special powers to bend these parties to hold party elections. The EC has also suggested rules and regulations under which party workers should be allotted tickets for elections to Parliament seats.

2 Jun 2001 The Pakistan's Chief Justice Irshad Hasan Khan said that the military govt. of Gen. Musharraf would lose legitimacy if it tries to stay a day longer than mandated by the SC.

20 Jun 2001 The US reacted strongly to the news of Gen. Musharraf decision to elevate himself to the office of the President and dissolve the suspended assemblies, described it a turn-away from democracy.

14 Aug 2001 President Musharraf outlined on Aug.14 about the time frame and a schedule for return to democracy with parliamentary elections to be held between Oct. 1 and 11 next year, and the move was immediately welcomed by a broad section of the political spectrum and claimed to be held according to the guidelines of the Supreme Court.

14 Aug 2001: Gen Musharraf also announced that there would be constitutional amendments to introduce checks and balances but those proposals would be open for public debate and would be open for public debate and would be finalised and released by May 2002.

16 Aug 2001 The govt. announced that the present set up would continue till the holding of general elections in Oct. 2002 and there would not be caretaker govt. before power is transferred to civilian rulers.

23 Aug 2001 Commonwealth Sec. Gen. Donald McKinnon addressed a press conference after a meeting with Musharraf, he said that there would not be any major constitutional amendments before the elections.

25 Aug 2001 President Musharraf said that on August 25, his government is determined to restore democracy by holding fair and free elections in Oct. 2002.

4 Sep 2001 Foreign Ministers from Britain and other Commonwealth countries called on September 4 for monitoring Pakistan's time table for return to civilian rule, saying it should remain suspended from the Commonwealth until the 'restoration of democracy'.

11 Sep 2001 President Musharraf said in Karachi that there was no democracy in Pakistan and it is the present government. which is introducing real democracy.

1 Oct 2001

The govt. has decided not to change the voter's age from 21 years to 18 years in the Oct.2002 national elections, said an official.

12 Nov 2001 President Musharraf said that, "democracy is a must for Pakistan and the military should not takeover power as this is not in national interest."

16 Jan 2002 The govt. raised the strength of the 3 member EC to five with its commissioner and 4 members to be drawn from each province but they should be judge of the respective provincial high courts.

19 Jan 2002: On Jan 16, the cabinet came up with the decision to increase substantially the number of National Assembly seats reserved for women and also to introduce the joint electorate system.

19 Jan 2002 The alliance for the restoration of democracy in its meeting rejected the parliamentary and an electoral reforms package announced by the military government.

10 Feb 2002 President Musharraf has appointed 4 judges of as many high courts as members of EC of Pakistan.

17 Feb 2002 The council of Islamic ideology is not in favour of a joint electorate as a system and has twice rejected this proposal with majority vote.

18 Feb 2002 The Election Commission has raised objections over the allocation of National Assembly (NA) seats to provinces by the National Reconstruction Bureau.

26 Feb 2002 The order for the election to national (357 seats) and provincial (758 seats) assemblies on the basis of joint electorate. Scheduled for October this year, it has been issued and the President has signed the relevant ordinance.

27 Feb 2002 To give a legal cover to the electoral reforms President Musharraf issued on Feb. 22 Conduct of General Elections Order 2002 which also empowered the Chief Election Commissioner to carry out his responsibilities effectively.

28 Feb 2002 The PPP opposed on February 28, the proposal to boycott the forthcoming elections and convert the Alliance for Restoration of Democracy (ARD) in to an election alliance.

6 Mar 2002 President Musharraf said that he would stay in power after the parliamentary elections in October to consolidate his structure reform plans.

6 Mar 2002: The cabinet at its meeting unanimously agreed to stay the educational condition of graduation for the prospective contestants of general elections.

8 Mar 2002 The Lahore High Court heard detailed but inconclusive arguments on Musharraf against the appointment of former Chief Justice Irshad Khan as Chief Election Commissioner.

11 Mar 2002 CEC Justice (RETD.) Irshad Khan said that International observers would be welcome and facilitated to observe the electoral process.

16 Mar 2002 The government would be holding the Oct. general elections for the national and provincial assemblies on the same day.

18 Mar 2002 The religious parties will contest the forthcoming general elections from the platform of the Muttahada Majlis Amal.

19 Mar 2002 CEC CJ Irshad Kahan declared that the forthcoming general elections would be party based, bringing all speculations about the possibility of non-party based polls to an end.

21 Mar 2002 President Musharraf gave an assurance to the politicians on March 21 that the future parliament would be a sovereign institution and the proposed National Security Council would not be super cabinet..

24 Mar 2002 The Election Commission has not been intimidated of the govt. plans for holding of presidential referendum, a high official of the Commission said.

26 Mar 2002 Chief Election Commissioner Irshad Khan said on March 26 that the Election Commission is the only authority to disqualify any person from contesting polls.

9 Apr 2002 President Musharraf promulgated an order under which the EC has been empowered to hold referendum on April 30. "to give the mandate to Gen. Musharraf to serve the nation as President for a period of 5 years."

12 Apr 2002 President Musharraf said that the govt. would make an 'essential' amendment to constitution before the general elections in Oct. after public debate.

13 Apr 2002 Former PM Benazir Bhutto has said that Gen. Musharraf's decision to hold referendum was unconstitutional and illegal and asked him to hold elections and present himself before parliament to get elected.

19 Apr 2002 Referendum would not be an election for the presidential office but an endorsement, said President Musharraf.

27 Apr 2002 The Chief Executives Referendum Order - 2002 is issued validly, declared a 9- member bench of the SC in a unanimous judgement.

1 May 2002 President Pervez Musharraf has earned 5 more years as president after 98% of the voters, who cast their ballot, approved his agenda, the EC said.

2 May 2002 The EC invited the political parties to send written suggestions for holding 'transparent elections'.

4 May 2002 President Musharraf promised on May 4 to hand over 'the power to govern' to an elected PM by October.

14 May 2002 Pakistan people's party leaders demanded President Pervez Musharraf to step down and to hold free and fair general elections under the supervision of superior courts' judge.

17 May 2002 The electoral list being updated by the EC rather sudden decision by the government to hold October polls, carries 30 to 40% inaccuracies says the NADRA

22 Jun 2002 The government made the educational qualification of graduation level as mandatory for candidates contesting the October elections, throwing many of the leading non-graduate old politicians out of the electoral field.

22 Jun 2002 Chairman National Reconstruction Bureau Gen. Tanvir Naqvi has denied speculations about the governments intention to hold forthcoming general elections on non-party basis.

26 Jun 2002 A presidential order was issued on Jun 26, which would bar those political parties from contesting the October elections which

do not hold intra-party elections within 40 days of the issuance of the order.

28 Jun 2002 The federal law minister Khalid Raza declared that the government will not supervise the elections of any political party nor would interfere in their internal party affairs.

30 Jun 2002 The national alliance decided to resist all moves of the government to allow former Ms. Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to contest general elections.

2 Jul 2002 The PPP alleged that top officials of the Punjab government were visiting various cities to pressurize PPP candidates not to take part in the elections.

4 Jul 2002 Over 80% of the parliamentarians elected in the past 15 years will not make it to the senate, the National Assembly and the four provincial assemblies that will come into being in Oct. this year (due to a new policy of the government).

6 Jul 2002 The govt. announces through an executive order that twice elected PM or CM would not be re-elected as they stand disqualified for these offices.

7 Jul 2002 The federal govt. formally asked the EC to prepare the schedule for holding the next general elections before Oct. 12.

8 Jul 2002 Maj. Gen. Rashid Qureshi said that no family member of the exiled Sharif family will be allowed to contest the forthcoming general elections.

10 Jul 2002 Elections to the NA, the senate and four provincial assemblies will be held on Oct. 10, said a presidential announcement, setting at rest speculations about postponement of the polls.

15 Jul 2002 The EC asks govt. to immediately finalize the manner in which elections to the senate will be held.

20 Jul 2002 The EC has recommended the guidelines for the polling agents of the candidates in the forthcoming general elections, which would be sent to political parties.

23 Jul 2002 The Pakistan People's Party has said it will participate in the Oct. general elections in all circumstances to foil the government's objectives to keep the party and its leadership out of politics.

24 Jul 2002 The Chief Executive issued an order empowering the CEC to organise local elections in Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

24 Jul 2002. The EC of Pakistan reminded on Jul 24 that the political parties of what was in store for them when they would approach it for the allotment of election symbol.

5 Aug 2002 CEC Irshad Hasan Khan reiterated on Aug. 5 that the sitting ministers desiring to contest the upcoming general elections must relinquish their offices before they file nomination papers.

7 Aug 2002 CEC Irshad khan made it abundantly clear on Aug.7 to a delegation of observers from European Union that they would be welcome to observe but not supervise the forthcoming general elections.

8 Aug 2002 The EC issued on Aug. 8 a code of conduct for the PTV and RADIO PAKISTAN for fair, balanced and unbiased coverage for the general elections 2002.

12 Aug 2002 The CEC said elections will be held on Oct. 10 and all political parties, which fulfill the required conditions, would take part in it as there would be no possibility of holding non-party based elections.

13 Aug 2002 The EC has accepted the documents of 71 political parties and declared them eligible to contest for general elections on Oct. 10, the EC rejected the documents of 58 other parties for not being in conformity with the provisions of the political parties order 2002.

13 Aug 2002: The EC directed the returning officers not to accept the nomination forms of the sitting governor of any province and Federal or Provincial ministers for the Oct. elections until and unless they relinquish their offices.

16 Aug 2002 The EC announced the schedule to the National and Provincial assemblies which will be held on Oct. 10.

21 Aug 2002: The Chief Executive Wednesday issued Legal Framework Order 2002 amending constitutional provisions.

22 Aug 2002 The govt. machinery would not be used in the elections to ensure victory of pro-government political parties declared President Musharraf.

1 Sep 2002 The returning officers in Larkana and Karachi rejected two separate nomination forms filed by PPP chairperson Benazir there by expelling her completely out of the race for elections to the National Assembly and triggering angry protest by her supporters.

1 Sep 2002 Former PM and leader of PML Nawaz would not contest Oct. elections to protest against the rejection of the nomination papers of PPP chairperson Benazir.

2 Sep 2002 A preliminary scrutiny process of candidates for Oct. polls was completed which has seen 2 ex-premiers Benazir eliminated and Nawaz pull out and cricket hero-turned politician Imran Khan rejected in 2 of the 3 seats for which he was nominated. (NEWS 3/9). A record of 4020 candidates, including 379 women filed nominations to contest 342 National Assembly seats while 9648 candidates, including 913 women applied for 728 seats in the 4 provincial assemblies, the EC said.

3 Sep 2002 President Musharraf once again declared in unequivocal terms the elections would take place on Oct.10 and no outside interference would be allowed in the process.

4 Sep 2002 The PPP has launched a campaign to appraise the international community of the alleged pre-poll rigging and other measures adopted by the military regime to keep the twice elected PM Benazir out of the polls, party sources have said.

9 Sep 2002 The CEC said that it had not influenced nor had any intention to interfere with the election campaign of the political parties.

9 Sep 2002 President Musharraf promulgated an ordinance regarding the procedure for the senate election.

10 Sep 2002 The EC notifies the procedure and methodology for transparent counting of votes in the forthcoming general elections.

10 Sep 2002 Secretary EC Hasan Muhammad said October 3 is the target date for printing ballot papers for the forthcoming general elections being held on October 10.

12 Sep 2002: PML-N president Shahbaz Sharif and Kulsoom Nawaz were disqualified on Thursday by an election tribunal of the Lahore High Court from contesting the October elections, ousting the entire former ruling family from the electoral race.

13 Sep 2002: The election tribunals on Friday rejected the appeals of Benazir Bhutto, Chairperson of the Pakistan People's Party, and Ghinwa Bhutto, Chairperson of PPP Shaheed Bhutto, for contesting the forthcoming elections.

13 Sep 2002: Another important phase of October 10 general elections was completed on Friday with the disposal of appeals against rejection or acceptance of nomination papers by the election tribunals comprising high court judges

13 Sep 2002: The Election Commission (EC) issued show cause notices to eight political parties on Friday for failing to submit their accounts and directed them to appear before it on Sept 16.

16 Sep 2002: The Election Commission (EC) has given a 2-day extension to 7 political parties, who had failed to submit their attested statements of party accounts to the EC. Jamote Qaumi Movement, Kakar Jhamhoori Party Pakistan, Pakistan Awami Quwwat Party, Pakistan Brohi Party, Pakistan Jhamhoori Aman Party, Pakistan Progressive Party and Tehreek Wafaq Pakistan have been issued fresh notices to submit their statements by the 18th of this month. If not, their party symbols shall be withdrawn without any further notice.

17 Sep 2002: Election Commission (EC) on Monday announced restriction of expenditures on election campaign for National and Provincial assemblies candidates. According to the restrictions, a candidate contesting National Assembly cannot exceed Rs 1.5 million while a candidate for provincial assembly can not exceed expenditures of Rs 1 million on election campaign.

20 Sep 2002: Deadline for applying for the facility of mailing in votes for general elections to the national and provincial assemblies ends today.

20 Sep 2002: The Ahmadis on Friday resented the government's decision of declaring them non-Muslims and yet not including their names in the minorities' list.

22 Sep 2002: The Election Commission on Sunday once again asked the political parties and all the contesting candidates to abide by the code of conduct already issued by the commission in this regard to ensure smooth, peaceful and orderly election campaign for the forthcoming general election.

22 Sep 2002: President Gen Pervez Musharraf said on Sunday he was willing to sign a certificate, if there was any, to confirm that the Oct 10 elections would be held as planned.

22 Sep 2002: The Election Commission (EC) has started dispatching election material to different parts of the country to ensure smooth and orderly conduct of general elections.

25 Sep 2002: The Election Commission (EC) on Wednesday decided to withdraw the election symbols allotted to five political parties and disqualify them from contesting the elections. The Pakistan Awami Quwwat Party (Brush), the Pakistan Brohi Party (Catapult), the Pakistan Jamhoori Aman Party (Scissors), the Pakistan Progressive Party (Well) and the Tehreek-e-Wafaq Pakistan (Whistle) had failed to submit their 'statements of accounts' duly verified by chartered accountants as stated in Article 13 of the Political Parties Order, 2002.

27 Sep 2002: J. Salik filed a constitutional petition in the Supreme Court under the original jurisdiction of the apex court (Article 184-3), and stated that the recent amendments to the election laws had deprived the minorities of their rights whereby any citizen could contest for reserved seats as an independent candidate.

30 Sep 2002: A full bench of the Supreme Court on Monday observed that laws promulgated under the Provisional Constitution Order (PCO) had no legal status without validation by parliament.

1 Oct 2002: The Election Commission has finalised the polling plan for the October 10 general election, under which 64,475 polling stations would be set up across the country to be supervised by 64,691 presiding officers.

2 Oct 2002: The chief election commissioner on Wednesday asked the law enforcement agencies to be extra vigilant and remain alert throughout the election period, particularly, on the polling day and post election period.

3 Oct 2002 Pointing out the utility of Article 58 (2b) of the constitution, the Supreme Court judges on Thursday observed that the coming

parliament could review all amendments and issued notices to the Federation on a petition filed against the Legal Framework Order.

5 Oct 2002: President Gen Pervez Musharraf said on Saturday that he would no longer be running the government after elections as the responsibility would stand transferred fully to the elected prime minister.

6 Oct 2002 26-member ANFREL (Asian Network For Free Elections) delegation of observers met Chief Election Commissioner Irshad Hasan Khan late on Sunday.

8 Oct 2002 Election campaign by political parties came into end Tuesday midnight, 24 hours prior to the election.

10 Oct 2002 **Polling day for General Election 2002**

11 Oct 2002 Results of the election start to come

13 Oct 2002 Most of the results had been announced.

15 Oct 2002 Secretary, Election Commission (EC) denied changes in results of certain constituencies, saying the electoral process was transparent and foolproof.

17 Oct 2002 The requirement, of at least five per cent of the general seats in the national assembly for a political party to qualify for reserved seats for women and minorities, was withdrawn on Thursday.

19 Oct 2002 The Election Commission on Saturday announced re-polling in some of the polling stations of NA-111, NA-263 and PB-14 on Oct 24.

22 Oct 2002 Election Commission (EC) of Pakistan has given three days to the independent members of National Assembly-elect to take a decision on whether or not to join any parliamentary party.

- 24 Oct 2002** The Election Commission on Thursday appointed 21 judges of the high courts to act as Election Tribunals who would decide petitions against the alleged rigging.
- 27 Oct 2002** Chief Election Commissioner former chief justice Irshad Hasan Khan on Saturday directed that every candidate must submitted return of the expenses within 30 days of the publication of names of the successful candidates in the general election.
- 28 Oct 2002** The candidates defeated in the election for the National and Provincial Assemblies held on October 10 will not be allowed to contest the Senate seats, according to an amendment in the election order.
- 31 Oct 2002** Election Commission of Pakistan announced the results of 60 reserve seats for women allocated in the National Assembly.
- 1 Nov 2002** The Election Commission on Friday notified the results of 10 seats reserved for non-Muslims in National Assembly.
- 2 Nov 2002** Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, today summoned the newly-elected National Assembly to meet on November 8 for its members to take oath.
- 6 Nov 2002** The inaugural session of the National Assembly in Pakistan, scheduled for November 8, stands postponed. The announcement to postpone the session was made by the Pakistan President, Pervez Musharraf, at the weekly Cabinet meeting.
- 16 Nov 2002** General Pervez Musharraf on Saturday took fresh oath as president of Pakistan for five years under the Constitution, which he restored with some of its provisions still in abeyance.
- 16 Nov 2002** 324 out of 334 newly-elected parliamentarians took oath under the 1973 Constitution as the National Assembly held its inaugural session on Saturday.

19 Nov 2002 The Pakistan Muslim League-Q on Tuesday won both the posts of Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly.

21 Nov 2002 Mir Zafarullah Khan Jamali of the Pakistan Muslim League-Q was elected Leader of the House by the new National Assembly.

23 Nov 2002 Prime Minister Mir Zafarullah Jamali and 14 federal and seven ministers of state were sworn.

Vote Turn Out In The Last Six Elections

1985	53.69%
1988	43.07%
1990	45.46%
1993	40.32%
1997	35.99%
2002	40.80%

ANFREL NEWS

DAWN Sunday
15th September, 2002

ANFREL team starts polls monitoring activity

By Our Reporter

ISLAMABAD, Sept 14: The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) has initiated its election monitoring activity in Pakistan.

A press release issued by the ANFREL here on Saturday said the first batch of six long-term observers from Sri Lanka, Japan, Nepal, Malaysia, and Thailand would be stationed at Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Multan, Quetta, and Peshawar.

The ANFREL has a plan to deploy a team of 45 long-term and short-term international observers from 11 countries.

The activities of the network in the upcoming October 10 elections are planned and implemented in response to the decision of the government of Pakistan to allow international election observers to monitor the election process.

The election monitoring activity of the ANFREL is hosted and facilitated by its member organization, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP).

The network also seeks to cooperate with the Election Commission, state agencies and non-government organizations.

ISLAMABAD (October 07 2002) : Chief Election Commission, former Chief Justice Irshad Hasan Khan, on Sunday assured a 39-member Asian observers group that the Election Commission is committed to act with neutrality, objectivity, impartiality and independence at every stage of the October 10 electoral process.

Briefing about details of various steps taken by the Election Commission to members of delegation from Asian Network for Free and Fair Election (ANFREL), the Chief Election Commissioner said the Commission has taken every conceivable step to ensure that the forthcoming polls are conducted in an open, transparent, fair, impartial and professional manner

The ANFREL delegation was headed by General Saiyud Kerdhpol, Chairman ANFREL, who is former Thai Chief of Army Staff.

The Chief Election Commissioner said they were at liberty to observe the process as a whole and to form their independent judgement as to the transparency of the election process.

He said they may observe the arrangements at the polling stations, deployment of law enforcing agencies, the observance of the statutory stoppage of campaign within specified period before the close of the poll, state of readiness and preparedness of the election machinery with regard to copies of electoral rolls to be used for poll, ballot boxes, polling material, etc.

The Chief Election Commissioner said that on the day of poll, the observers could check the commencement of poll in the polling stations in the constituency, as scheduled.

He hoped that the observers will also keep a watch to ensure that all prescribed procedures about the identification of voters, use of indelible ink, sealing of statutory and non-statutory papers into separate packets, preparation of ballot paper account have been duly followed by the polling personnel.

The observers, he said, have a crucial role at the time of counting of votes and keeping the sensitivity of the counting process.

He said the observers shall be in a position to effectively determine in their own independent judgement whether the elections were free, fair and transparent and the results of the elections reflect the wishes of the people of Pakistan.

The Chief Election Commissioner recapitulating the preparatory work completed by the Election Commission, explained to the delegation that a great deal of work had been done by the Commission to improve the election arrangements. APP

2 METROPOLITAN

October 13, 2002

Asian observers accuse govt of undermining electoral process

Kamran Haider

ISLAMABAD: Election monitors from 11 Asian countries on Saturday accused the government of actions which undermined the fairness of the electoral process.

"Some of these practices, we observed, were serious enough to undermine the fairness of the elections," General Saifuddin Kheri, head of 42-member team of Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFRE), told reporters while launching preliminary report on the elections.

Intimidation of candidates, biased amendment of electoral

framework and regulations, restrictive interpretations of campaign regulations and unbalanced media coverage, accusation of government acting in favour of certain parties or candidates, etc., prohibited a fully free environment or equal opportunity, he said.

During the team's visit to 300 polling stations across the country, he said, the presence of a number of unauthorised people was noticed in and around polling stations which "created suspicions of possible intimidation or interference by government officials and local political

leaders during the run up to the election."

Referring to misconduct in the elections, Kheri said the counting of votes at polling stations was speedy, but polling officers did not strictly followed the procedures laid down by the Election Commission.

"Party agents were allowed to witness the conduct of vote count, however, they rarely had a chance to verify votes marked on ballots or recount ballots by themselves, and they simply accepted the tabulation of electoral results at polling stations," he pointed out.

The Asian observers also took exception to improper sealing of ballot boxes, putting coded stamps and signatures on the back of ballots and relax in checking voters for ink prior to voting in few polling stations in Jhelum and Lahore.

Kheri said although arrangements for postal ballots were made by the Election Commission, most of the government officials and security officers complained on the polling day that they did not register to cast their votes by postal means because of inconvenience or were unaware of it.



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The Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL) sent a team of 42 long-term and short-term international observers from 11 Asian countries to monitor the National Assembly and the Provincial Assembly elections in Pakistan. Although the Election Day passed off peacefully, except reports of isolated violence in some areas, ANFREL was deeply concerned by reports about misconducts during pre-election period. Some of these practices observed by ANFREL were serious enough to undermine the fairness of the elections and to limit the legitimacy of genuine democratic transition in Pakistan. Intimidation of candidates, biased amendment of electoral framework and regulations, restrictive interpretations of campaign regulations and unbalanced media coverage, accusation of government acting in favor of certain parties or candidates etc, prohibited a fully free environment or equal opportunity.



ANFREL is a special project of Forum - Asia. It came about as part of Forum Asia's campaign for human rights and democratization in the region, starting from Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia and Malaysia. Formed in November 1997 by election monitoring groups and human rights organizations in Asia, ANFREL aims to contribute to the democratization process by building capacities through training and supporting actual monitoring of elections by local groups, lobbying and disseminating election-related information.

Forum Asia is a regional network of human rights and development organizations in Asia. It was established in Manila, Philippines in 1991. It strives to promote, on the basis of global perspective, a regional initiative towards the protection of human rights, development and peace in the region through collaboration of human rights and development NGOs and peoples' organizations in Asia.