

# DEMOCRACY VIBES

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VOLUME IV, ISSUE 1

November 2016

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## Punjab LG polls: elections on reserved seats completed

The final phase of the local government elections on reserved seats has been completed in the Punjab. The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf and Pakistan People Party participated in the final phase of election. In most of the cities of Punjab, the ruling party candidates remained successful and ready to formulate government at

local level.

It may be mentioned here that the PML-N candidates have already been elected unopposed on reserved seats for youth, technocrats and labourers in the provincial metropolis, while polling on 25 seats reserved for women and 10 seats for non-Muslims held here on Tuesday in the city.

According to the unoffi-

cial results of the election commission, Pakistan Muslim League has won ten seats reserved for minorities in the city. Meanwhile as announced results, Pakistan Muslim league Nawaz has also won twenty four seats out of twenty five reserved for the women for Lahore city.

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## No fair deal for women

**There is no systematic monitoring of the impact of women-friendly legislation**

THIS year, Pakistan's women activists are observing 16 days of activism against gender violence (Nov 25 to Dec 10) with greater fervour than previously. At the same time, no sooner is a law to curb forced conversions adopted in Sindh than the orthodoxy is out in battledress to kill it. The fight for women's rights in this country is going to get even more bitter.

Our women suffer every possible form of deprivation, insult and injury. Over the years, they have also won a few conces-

sions in the form of somewhat favourable laws and policies. They have scored these successes largely through their own struggles. They have certainly received some support from governments, though more in the form of rhetoric than benevolent measures. And they have been helped by a tiny percentage of men who can risk being taunted by big, burly clerics as wives' 'slaves', or worse, as the West's 'stooges'.

Each year, the women of Pakistan march a step forward and are pushed

more than two steps back by the formidable knights of orthodoxy, patriarchy and pseudo-religious militancy. Thus, on balance, year by year the condition of women becomes bleaker and bleaker. Why is this so? But let us first pay some attention to the women's dirge.

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## The yes-men

**Bureaucracy can't be reformed without reforming government too.**

THERE is no shortage of detractors of civil servants in this country and around the world. An English poet once described them as civil to all, and servants to the devil. They take most of the blame for society's corruption, for its lack of development, inefficiency and many organisational failures.

If their slanderers are many, no less are the wise men who offer advice on reform. Such wise men mostly populate multinational agencies. Bees gather nectar

from many flowers; they flash their global experience. But their advice has not made any country richer. The premise — to think of reforming civil service in isolation — is flawed.

MNA Capt Muhammad Safdar (retired) publicly accused the prime minister's personal secretary at no less a forum than the National Assembly. This raised eyebrows for two reasons. One, the accuser was the prime minister's son-in-law. Two, the accused was allegedly involved in fa-

vouritism, playing with the careers of government officers, many who have been in service for up to 30 years. If true, then for what purpose? To indulge personal whims as powerful men tend to do? Nothing is more important to government servants than to rise to the top towards the latter years of their career. For this stage, good civil servants will forgo fatal temptations and toil profusely.

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### Point to think over

"Before holding others accountable, be accountable to yourself first".

## Poll reform

THE transfer of electoral rolls from Nadra to the Election Commission of Pakistan may seem like an obscure bureaucratic exercise that has little substantive relevance to the holding of free and fair polls at the time of the next general election. In reality, however, the process of transferring electoral rolls — done as per an agreement between the ECP and Nadra — indicates just how far off the agenda poll re-

forms and the holding of meaningfully free and fair elections have fallen. According to a recent report in this newspaper, no less than an ECP member himself raised concerns about the electoral body's capacity to handle an electronic databank of approximately 100m voters. Moreover, the procedure for adding new voters to the electoral rolls has yet to be determined. These developments reiterate at

least three flaws with the electoral process in the country. First, the holding of free and fair polls, while vital to the democratic process, is inherently a technical and bureaucratic exercise. Within that process, the sanctity and accuracy of electoral rolls is paramount

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## Candidate backed by banned party wins by-poll

JHANG: Independent candidate Maulana Masroor Nawaz Jhangvi, supported by the banned Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (ASWJ), won the Punjab Assembly's PP-78 by-election on Thursday with a margin of 12,793 votes, according to unofficial results.

Mr Nawaz, son of the slain Maulana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi who founded the now defunct Sipah-i-Sahaba Pakistan, received 48,562 votes, whereas his closest rival, Azad Nasir Ansari of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, received 35,469 votes. The candidates

fielded by the Pakistan Peoples Party and the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf were virtually routed, as PPP's Sarfaraz Rabbani received 3,671 votes and PTI candidate Arfa Majeed 2,821 votes.

Earlier, polling at the 171 polling stations of the constituency proceeded peacefully throughout the day and no untoward incident was reported. Security was beefed up and police were accompanied by Rangers contingents and Army personnel at all polling stations. The overall voter turnout appears to be around 30

per cent.

The PTI's national and provincial leaders had paid scant attention to the by-election campaign. On the other hand, PPP's top leadership, including former prime minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, opposition leader Syed Khurshid Shah, Sindh Assembly Deputy Speaker Shehla Raza and members of the central executive committee including Chaudhry Manzoor had visited the constituency, addressed rallies and corner meetings and engaged in door-to-door campaigning.

## PPP wins NA-258 Karachi by-elections

KARACHI: Pakistan People's Party candidate Abdul Hakim Baloch has won NA-258 by-elections Malir Karachi, according to unofficial results here.

Abdul Hakim Baloch secured 80,292 votes to regain the area that has been one of its few traditional strongholds in Karachi.

The seat fell vacant after Hakim Baloch resigned from the Pakistan Muslim League and joined the Pakistan People's Party (PPP). Eleven candidates from different political parties contested the election.

The PML-N, PTI, MQM did not participate in the polls.

Meanwhile, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari congratulated the people of Karachi for their overwhelming victory in the by-election from NA-258.

He said that PPP candidate Hakim Baloch winning the seat must show the path to all the former PPP leaders to return to their mother party and carry forward the mission for a democratic Pakistan as envisioned by Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

"Victory of Hakim Baloch as the PPP candidate just one day ahead of the Party's entry into 50th year after its foundation from Karachi

is an open message to the people of Pakistan that PPP is the only Party which binds all Pakistanis in strong unity and national fraternity," PPP Chairman said.

"Victory of PPP candidate Hakim Baloch is just a start and PPP candidates will win from all over the country in 2018 general elections," he added and congratulated to the PPP candidate and all the workers of Malir and Karachi.