

## PAKISTAN

**Date of Elections:** March 7, 1977

### **Purpose of Elections**

Elections were held for all the members of the National Assembly in the country's first general elections since **1970**.

### **Characteristics of Parliament**

The bicameral Parliament of Pakistan consists of the National Assembly and the Senate.

The National Assembly is composed of 200 members elected for 5 years. Under the Constitution of 1973 \*, these deputies then choose 10 female members and 6 representatives of the country's non-Moslem minorities, who also sit as Assembly members.

The Senate consists of 63 members, of whom 14 are elected by each of Pakistan's four Provincial Assemblies; 5 are elected by the National Assembly members from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas and 2 are chosen from the Federal Capital. The term of Senators is 4 years, half of them retiring every 2 years.

### **Electoral System**

**All** citizens of Pakistan who are at least 18 years of age, registered as voters and not insane are entitled to vote in the constituency in which they reside.

Electoral registers are revised annually. Voting is not compulsory. Government employees and their spouses and prisoners may vote by post.

Qualified electors not less than 25 years of age may be candidates for the National Assembly, while the required age for the Senate is 30 years. Disqualified from the Senate are persons who were sentenced to imprisonment for a term of not less than two years (unless five years have elapsed since their release) and persons who have been dismissed, removed or compulsorily retired from the service of Pakistan (unless five years have since elapsed). Disqualified from either House are undischarged bankrupts, while holders of certain offices of profit and of government contracts cannot simultaneously be parliamentarians.

\* See *Chronicle of Parliamentary Elections VII* (1972-1973), p. 10.

Candidates for Parliament must be nominated by two electors from their constituency and make a deposit of 1,000 Pakistani *rupees* (Assembly) or 2,000 *rupees* (Senate), which is reimbursed if the candidate polls more than one-eighth of the votes cast (Assembly) or one or more votes cast (Senate).

National Assembly seats are allocated to each Province, Federally Administered Tribal Area and the Federal Capital on the basis of population; members are elected by simple majority in single-member constituencies. Senators are indirectly elected on the basis of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote, the whole Province or, as the case may be, the Federally Administered Tribal Area being taken as one constituency.

By-elections are held to fill parliamentary seats which fall vacant between general elections.

### **General Political Considerations and Conduct of the Elections**

The election date was announced on January 7, 1977. The National Assembly was dissolved three days later.

The election manifesto of the ruling Pakistan People's Party (PPP), led by Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was published on January 24. The PPP was opposed by the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), formed within a week after the elections were called by nine political parties, among which the *Tehrik Istiqlal*, the *Jumiat Ulema Pakistan*, the *Jamaat Islami*, the Moslem League and the National Democratic Party; these groups ranged from extreme-right religious parties to the left-leaning NDP. The PPP ran on its record in office and promised wide-ranging economic and social benefits and a higher standard of living for the nation. The essentially conservative PNA proposed, *inter alia*, to introduce Islamic laws, ban liquor and gambling, lift the state of emergency existing since 1965, and restore prices to 1970 levels, and questioned the increasing personal power of Mr. Bhutto. Some 1,200 candidates contested the 200 general seats.

In gaining 155 Assembly seats, the PPP obtained a large majority. The PNA alleged that irregularities had characterized the voting and consequently decided that all of its 36 successful candidates would refuse to take their seats; it called for fresh elections. The newly-elected Assembly, as well as the Senate, were then dissolved on July 5, when martial law was proclaimed in the country.

Statistics

1. Results of the Elections and Distribution of Seats in the National Assembly

Number of registered voters	31,000,000 (approx.)
Voters.	17,000,000 (approx.)

Political Group	Number
Pakistan People's Party	155
Pakistan National Alliance	36
Qayyum Moslem League	1
Independents	8
	200*

\* 16 additional members (10 female members and 6 representatives of non-Moslem minorities) are elected by the 200 general members.