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## ECP Declares Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Senate Elections Transparent and Fair

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The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has declared the Senate elections in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) held on July 21, 2025, transparent and orderly, marking a positive step for democratic processes despite earlier political tensions. The polls, which filled 11 vacant seats, resulted from a seat-sharing agreement between the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and the opposition, with the PTI securing six seats and the opposition five.

The elections took place at the KP Provincial Assembly after months of delays caused by disputes over reserved seat oaths, which had led to accusations of electoral manipulation. To ensure a smooth process, the ECP appointed eight polling officers under Section 105 of the Elections Act, 2017. By 3 p.m., 83 votes had been cast, including those of prominent figures such as former Chief Minister Akram Khan Durrani and Speaker Babar Salim Swati. Polling continued until 4 p.m. The ECP's oversight ensured that each Member of the Provincial Assembly (MPA) cast three votes, white ballots for general seats, green for technocrat seats, and pink for women's seats. The required number of votes was 19 for general seats and 49 for reserved seats.

The PTI won general seats with candidates Murad Saeed, Faisal Javed, Mirza Afridi, and Noorul Haq Qadri, while the opposition secured five seats, including three general seats and one each for technocrat and women's seats. The seat-sharing agreement between the PTI-led government and opposition, finalized after negotiations, overcame resistance from some PTI dissidents who initially opposed the arrangement, alleging favoritism toward "pro-establishment" candidates. An ECP official noted that the agreement held firm, emphasizing the commission's commitment to fairness.

The successful conduct of these polls counters earlier PTI allegations of "mandate theft" during the April 2024 delays. By resolving logistical challenges and ensuring transparency, the ECP has reinforced confidence in Pakistan's electoral system, which is crucial for democratic legitimacy and investor trust. Following the election, the ruling coalition now holds 54 seats in the Senate, 10 seats short of a two-thirds majority, as it continues to navigate ongoing political challenges.