

Pakistan ruling coalition sweeps by-elections

Pakistan's ruling coalition swept Thursday's by-elections to the national and provincial assemblies, according to initial results Friday.

Of the five National Assembly seats at stake, three were bagged by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the remaining two by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), according to unofficial results which also indicated that the two parties have secured most of 23 provincial assembly seats.

Thursday's elections were marred by violence in which at least 26 people were reportedly injured.

The polling in one constituency in Lahore, where former prime minister and PML-N supremo Nawaz Sharif was to contest from, was postponed by the Supreme Court till it hears this month-end an appeal by the PML-N against the Lahore High Court verdict disqualifying Sharif from contesting in the by-election.

The February general elections in Pakistan saw assassinated former premier Benazir Bhutto's PPP emerging as the single largest party followed by PML-N sweeping aside the parties supporting President Musharraf.

The two, together with other smaller parties, set up a coalition government at the centre.

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