

Numerous independent candidates emerged victorious in the general elections of 2024, according to the Election Commission of Pakistan's early, non-official, and inconclusive results. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Imran Khan's party, backed the majority of them.

About fifty independent candidates have so far been elected to the National Assembly. These candidates include Ali Amin Gandapur, a party member, Senior Vice President Latif Khosa, former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser, and Chairman of Tehreek-e-Insaf Barrister Gohar Ali Khan.

However, Tehreek-e-Insaf-backed independent candidates secured a sizable majority in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly and over fifty seats in the Punjab Assembly, effectively opposing the Muslim League-N.

It should be noted that Tehreek-e-Insaf lost a few seats as a result of the Election Commission nullifying their intra-party election and removing its bat symbol. The Supreme Court upheld this ruling.

What possibilities are available to independent candidates who have PTI's endorsement?

Analysts cite the election laws as evidence that Azad Candidates are not constitutionally compelled to join political parties; instead, they are free to continue serving in the National or Provincial Assembly as independents.

For a variety of reasons, they are frequently expected to join a political party. Rafiullah Kakar, a political analyst, believes that an independent candidate may join a political party in order to further his political career, align himself with a certain philosophy, or take on a more active position in parliament.

In an interview with the BBC, he states that these candidates will have three days following their victory to become members of a political party.

He states that independent candidates are only permitted to affiliate with the party whose electoral emblem appears on their ballot, in accordance with electoral Commission regulations. The demise of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf presents a significant obstacle for these independent candidates about their choice of party.

The Tehreek-e-Insaf leaders had hinted that they would affiliate with and join a political party prior to the election.

Following several hours of delay, the Pakistani Election Commission began reporting the results of the nation's general elections. As of now, the results are still unofficial and unclear, with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leading from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Muslim League-N leading from Punjab, and Pakistan Peoples Party leading from Sindh.

Two big parties are making offers to join independent candidates in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa as a result of their unexpected success. While inviting them to join the People's Party, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari also stated that the Pakistan Muslim League-N had no issues with independent candidates running for office.

Rafiullah Kakar stated that there are two possible outcomes for this matter. Putting aside their inability to win an election symbol, these independent candidates ought to be let to join PTI. Second, they have the option to join forces with a tiny party and the People's Party to establish a government alliance.

Political pundits think that a "split mandate" is currently taking shape, requiring government unity.

"Where PML-N is winning in North Punjab," stated Rafiullah. In central Punjab, it continues to lose. In the National Assembly, 134 of the 266 members must be present in order to achieve a simple majority.

According to him, "there is a possibility that 50 or 55 members of the People's Party will also be successful where there are chances of up to 80 PML-G members." Independent candidates can therefore aid in growing the size of your party in such a situation.

It should be mentioned that, in a significant electoral upset, former prime minister and Muslim League-N leader Nawaz Sharif, an independent, lost in one National Assembly seat. Sharif was backed by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

In National Assembly Constituency NA-15 Mansehra, Shahzad Mohammad Gastasab Khan defeated Nawaz Sharif by a significant margin, according to the Election Commission's unofficial non-final results.

Muslim League candidate Nawaz Sharif ran in Lahore's National Assembly Constituency 130.

Can independent contenders choose the prime minister among themselves?

In response to the question of whether independent candidates may choose their own prime minister, Rafiullah Kakar said that they could. They can certainly do so, for instance, if they have 134 seats in the 266-member legislature.

Though he acknowledged that there is no legal restriction, he stated that it is not thought to be feasible for independent candidates to choose their own prime minister.