



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 1: Session No. 45 of the National Assembly

NA Sitting Witnesses Low Attendance of Members

- **Walkouts by ANP, MQM and PMLN against petroleum prices**

ISLAMABAD, September 3, 2012: The National Assembly met for two hours and 38 minutes during the first sitting of the 45th session on Monday, reports the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its Daily Factsheet on the National Assembly proceedings.

The sitting was marked by low attendance with 105 legislators present at the start and 48 were there when the sitting was adjourned.

Fifteen Points of Order were raised which consumed 63 minutes (40% of the sitting time). However, none of the Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling.

The sitting witnessed three walkouts by government coalition partners ANP and MQM against the price hike in petroleum products, and the main opposition party – PMLN – on deteriorating law and order in the country and petroleum prices.

The Quorum was pointed out by a PMLN Member. However, after count the Quorum was complete and the sitting resumed.

The Airports Security Force (Amendment) Bill 2011 was passed by the House while the Maritime Security Agency (Amendment) Bill 2012 was introduced and sent to the Standing Committee.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- The National Assembly met for two hours and 38 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1814 hours instead of the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The proceedings started an hour and 14 minutes late.
- The Deputy Speaker chaired the sitting. The Speaker did not attend the sitting.
- The Prime Minister was present for 28 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting for 15 minutes.
- Only the Parliamentary Leader of the PMLF was present while those of the PML, BNPA, PPPS, NPP, MQM ANP and MMAP were absent.
- The Chief Whips of PPPP, PML and ANP were present.
- A total of 105 Legislators (31%) were present at the outset of the sitting while there were 48 MNAs (11%) at the end of the sitting. A maximum of 156 Members were present at one point of the sitting.
- Three Members applied for leave to be absent.
- Eight minority Members were present.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- The two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) appearing on the Orders of the Day were taken up by the House.
- Moved by four PPPP Members, the first CAN was about non-existence of fee structure, extra curricular activities and sports facilities in private schools in Islamabad inspite of charging heavy fee was directed to the Ministry of Capital Administration and Development.
- The other CAN was about grounding of several PIA Air crafts due to non-availability of their spare parts thereby having effect on the Hajj flights, which was directed to the Ministry of Defence. This CAN was sponsored by five PMLN Members.
- Out of the 23 questions to be taken up during the Question Hour, only six were put up and responded by the relevant ministries.
- A total of seven supplementary questions were also asked during the sitting.

Output

- The Airports Security Force (Amendment) Bill 2011 was passed by the House while the Maritime Security Agency (Amendment) Bill 2012 was introduced and sent to the Standing Committee.

Order and institutionalization

- Fifteen Points of Order were raised which consumed 63 minutes (40% of the sitting time). However, none of the Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling.
- The sitting witnessed three walkouts. On the first instance, MQM Members staged a five-minute walkout against the increase in the prices of petroleum products.
- PMLN Members staged a walkout against the deteriorating law and order in the country and increase in the prices of petroleum products. They went out of the House at 2015 hours and did not come back to attend the remaining proceedings.
- Similarly, ANP legislators walked out of the House against the price hike in petroleum products. They went out of the House at 2035 and did not come back to attend the remaining proceedings.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to Legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Members' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- The Quorum was pointed out by a PMLN Member. However, after count the Quorum was complete and the sitting resumed.

The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of National Assembly proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), a Member organization of FAFEN.