



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 6: Session No. 42 of the National Assembly

Low attendance and less interest of Members in budget sitting

ISLAMABAD, June 8, 2012: Only three legislators took part in the budget debate on Friday for less than hour as the National Assembly's sixth sitting of the 42 session continued to witness low presence of Members.

Only 71 legislators were present at the start of the sitting while 64 were there when it was adjourned. The three legislators discussed the budget 2012-13 for 54 minutes.

Starting 25 minutes late, the House met for an hour and two minutes. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition along with the parliamentary leaders of the PML, MQM, MMAP, ANP, and BNPA did not attend the sitting. The Speaker also did not attend the sitting. The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue attended the sitting for seven minutes.

PMLN legislators continued to show their reservations on the budget as they boycotted the entire sitting.

The Quorum was visible lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any of the legislators.

The following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- The National Assembly met for an hour and two minutes.
- The sitting started at 1125 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1100 hours. The House proceedings started late by 25 minutes.
- The Deputy Speaker chaired the sitting.
- The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the sitting.
- Only the Parliamentary leaders of PPPS and NPP were present while the leaders of PML, BNPA, ANP, MQM, MMAP and ANP were absent.
- The Chief Whips of the PPPP, PML, ANP PMLF, MMAP and MQM were present.
- A total of 71 (21%) legislators were present at the start and 64 (19%) at the end of the sitting.
- The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue attended the sitting for seven minutes.
- Five Minority Members were present.
- Thirteen Members applied for leave to be absent.

Representation and Responsiveness

- There was no other agenda on the Orders of the Day.



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Output

- The Finance Bill 2012 was presented in the House on June 1, 2012.
- Three legislators – one each from PPP, MQM and ANP – spoke on the Annual Budget Statement for 54 minutes (87% of sitting time).

Order and institutionalization

- Two Points of Order consumed three minutes of the sitting time.
- There was no Adjournment Motion on the Orders of the Day.
- The PMLN legislators did not attend the entire sitting.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day was available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Members' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- Copies of the budget speech were available to the legislators.
- The Quorum was visible lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any of the legislators.

The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the Senate proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), a member organization of FAFEN