



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 5: Session No. 42 of the National Assembly

Only Six Legislators take part in Budget Debate

ISLAMABAD, June 7, 2012: Legislators' low attendance persisted during the fifth sitting of the ongoing National Assembly's budget session. Only 65 legislators were present at the start of the sitting while 70 were there when it was adjourned.

Starting 25 minutes late, the House met for three and 38 minutes. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition along with the parliamentary leaders of the PML, MQM, MMAP, ANP, and PPPS did not attend the sitting. The Speaker also did not attend the sitting.

Six legislators – two each from PPPP and PML, one MQM and one Independent – spoke on the Annual Budget Statement for 120 minutes (55% of sitting time).

PMLN legislators staged a 13-minute walkout against the Prime Minister's conviction in the contempt case and the budget.

The Quorum was pointed out thrice by a PMLN legislator, but at least one-fourth of the membership was present on all three occasions.

The following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for three hours and 38 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 for 135 minutes while the remaining time was presided over by a Member of Panel of Chairpersons. The Speaker did not attend the sitting.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the sitting.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary leaders of PML, BNPA and ANP were present while the leaders of PML, MQM, MMAP, ANP, and PPPS were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of the PPPP, PMLN, PML, MQM, MMAP and PMLF were present.
- ⇒ A total of 65 (19%) legislators were present at the start and 70 (21%) at the end of the sitting.
- ⇒ The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue attended the sitting for 62.
- ⇒ Ten Minority Members were present.
- ⇒ Six Members applied for leave to be absent.
- ⇒ The House took a 56-minute break.



Free and Fair Representation and Responsiveness Election Network

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

Output

- ⇒ The Finance Bill 2012 was presented in the House on June 1, 2012.
- ⇒ Six legislators – two each from PPPP and PML, one MQM and one Independent – spoke on the Annual Budget Statement for 120 minutes (55% of sitting time).

Order and institutionalization

- ⇒ Five Points of Order consumed 16 minutes of the sitting time.
- ⇒ There was no Adjournment Motion on the Orders of the Day.
- ⇒ PMLN legislators staged a 13-minute walkout against the Prime Minister's conviction in the contempt case and the budget.

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 pointed out thrice by a PMLN legislator, but at least one-fourth of the membership was present on all three occasions.

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