



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 3: Session No. 41 of the National Assembly

Sitting Marked by Low Attendance, PMLN walkout

ISLAMABAD, April 27, 2012: Starting 26 minutes late, the National Assembly met for 60 minutes during its third sitting of the 41st session on Friday, continued to witness low attendance by the MPs.

With 55 Legislators present at the start and 120 when the sitting was adjourned.

The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 38 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition was absent. Only the parliamentary leader of the PPPS was present, while those of the BNPA, NPP, ANP, MQM, MMAP, PMLF and PML remained absent.

The PMLN staged a walkout while the Prime Minister was addressing the House on a Point of Order. They went out of the House at 1200 hours and did not come back to attend the remaining proceedings.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- The National Assembly met for an hour.
- The sitting started at 1126 hours instead of the scheduled starting time of 1100 hours. The proceedings started 26 minutes late.
- The Speaker chaired the sitting. The Deputy Speaker was also present
- The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 38 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition was not present.
- Only the parliamentary leader of the PPPS was present, while those of the BNPA, NPP, ANP, MQM, MMAP, PMLF and PML remained absent.
- The Chief Whips of PPPP, PMLN, PML, MMAP and MQM were present.
- Fifty-five Legislators (16%) were present at the outset of the sitting while there were 120 MNAs (35%) at the end of the sitting. A maximum of 152 Members were present at one point of the sitting.
- Six minority Members were present.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Out of the 19 questions to be taken up during the Question Hour, only two were put up and responded by the relevant ministries.
- Three Supplementary questions were raised during the sitting.



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Output

- The Chartered Accountants (Amendment) Bill, 2012 was not taken up by the House.

Order and institutionalization

- Three Points of Order consumed 27 minutes of the sitting time. None of them attracted the Chair's formal ruling.
- The PMLN staged a walkout while the Prime Minister was addressing the House on a Point of Order. They went out of the House at 1200 hours and did not come back to attend the rest of the 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 visibly lacking at various stages during the sitting. However, lack of quorum was not pointed out by any Member.

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.