



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 2: Session No. 29 of the National Assembly

Despite Low Attendance, 2nd Sitting Takes Up More Agenda Items

ISLAMABAD, February 22, 2011: The National Assembly met for three hours during the 2nd sitting of the ongoing 29th session. Low attendance of Members was observed, with only 68 Members present at the outset and 55 were present when the sitting was adjourned.

While the attendance of Members remained low, the Business conducted during this sitting was observed to be relatively more than the previous Private Members' Days held.

The House took up two Private Members' Bill, two Calling Attention Notices, three Resolutions, one Motion Under Rule 259 and a motion for the amendments in the Rules of Procedure and Business of Conduct of the National Assembly.

A total of 15 Points of Order was raised, consuming 75 minutes (42% of total sitting time). However, none of the Points of Orders attracted Speaker's formal ruling.

The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 32 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent. The Parliamentary Leader of the PPPS was the only one present, while the remaining party leaders remained absent. The following are some key observations of the Parliamentary Business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for three hours.
- ⇒ The second sitting started at 1100 Hours against the scheduled starting time of 1000 hours. The House proceedings started late by 45 minutes.
- ⇒ The entire sitting was presided over by the Speaker. The Deputy Speaker was also present during the sitting.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 32 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of the PPPS was the only one present, while the leaders of the MMAP, ANP, MQM, PML, PMLF and NPP were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of the PPPP, PMLN, PML MMAP, MQM, BNPA and PMLF were present, while the chief whips of the NPP and ANP were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 68 (20%) Members were present at the outset of the sitting, while 55 (16%) Members at the end of the sitting.
- ⇒ Two Members applied for leave to be absent from Tuesday's sitting.



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- ⇒ As many as eight out of 10 minority Members were present during the 2nd sitting.

Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ There were two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) on the Orders of the Day. The House took up both the CANs.
- ⇒ The first CAN was regarding them "non-release of funds under Layari Express Way Resettlement Programme (LERP)". The CAN was directed to the Ministry of Communication and was moved by three Members of the PPPP and an Independent Member
- ⇒ The other CAN was regarding the "increase in the tariff of KESE", which was directed to the Ministry of Water and Power. This CAN was sponsored by five Members of the MQM.
- ⇒ There was no Question and Answer session as Tuesday's sitting was a Private Members Day.

Output

- ⇒ Four Private Members Bills [The Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2009) (Amendment) Bill, 2010], [The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2011], [The Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2010] and [The Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill, 2008] were listed on the Orders of the Day.
- ⇒ The Civil Servants (Amendment) Bill, 2011 was taken up by the House and sent to the Cabinet Secretariat Standing Committee, while the Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2009) (Amendment) Bill, 2010 was taken up and deferred till next Private Members' Day.
- ⇒ The remaining two bills were not taken up by the House.
- ⇒ Four Standing Committee reports were presented during the proceedings, regarding the Family Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2008, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2008, the Code of Civil Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2008 and Amendments to Rules and Procedures and Business of Conduct of the National Assembly.

Order and institutionalization

- ⇒ A total of 15 Points of Order was raised, consuming 75 minutes (42% of total sitting time) of the sitting. However, none of the Points of Orders raised by Members attracted Speaker's ruling.
- ⇒ A total of five Resolutions were tabled on the Orders of the Day. Two Resolutions regarding Railways deficit and construction more government hostels for serving women in the Federal Capital were unanimously passed by the House.
- ⇒ One Motion regarding the amendments to the Rules of Procedure and Business of Conduct of the National Assembly was taken up by the House and sent to the Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure and Business of Conduct.



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- ⇒ One Motion Under Rule 259 regarding agriculture was debated upon for 35 Minutes. A total of four PMLN Members, two PPP Members and one MQM Member took part in the debates. One Independent Member also spoke on the issue.
- ⇒ An Adjournment Motion regarding the increase in Railways' fares was raised by a Member of the PMLN during the sitting.
- ⇒ One Matter of Public Importance regarding the "energy crisis in the country" was also listed for the Private Members' Day agenda, but was not taken up by the House.
- ⇒ An Independent Member staged a walkout against no actions or policies being devised by the Government for the putting a halt to Drone Attacks in FATA. The walkout lasted five minutes.

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 of the Members of the National Assembly.

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.