



**FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 12: Session No. 35 of the National Assembly**

**35<sup>th</sup> Session: Last Sitting Marked by Low Attendance, Unfinished Agenda**

ISLAMABAD, October 18, 2011: The National Assembly met for two hours and 50 minutes during the last sitting of the 35<sup>th</sup> session. The sitting was marked by low attendance of Members, with 93 present at the outset and only 52 present when the session prorogued. The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any of the Legislators.

The agenda for the last sitting was set up over ambitiously, which is actually impossible to take up within a span of a regular sitting. The National Assembly did not address 76% of the agenda.

A total of 34 Points of Order were raised, which consumed 54% of the total time. However, none of the POs raised by Members attracted the Chair's formal ruling.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2011 was unanimously passed by the House.

The Prime Minister attended the proceedings for 15 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition was present for 45 minutes. The parliamentary leaders of the MQM, PPPS, BNPA and NPP were present, while the leaders of other parliamentary parties remained absent.

**Members' participation in House proceedings**

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for two hours and 50 minutes.
- ⇒ The last sitting started at 1800 Hours against the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The House proceedings started late by 60 minutes.
- ⇒ The Speaker and the Deputy Speaker remained absent. The entire sitting was presided over by a Member of Panel of Chairpersons.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 15 minutes, while the Leader of the Opposition was present for 45 minutes.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of the NPP, PPPS, MQM and BNPA were present while the leaders of the MMAP, ANP, PML and PMLF were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of PMLN, PML, MQM, ANP and PPPP were present, while those of the MMAP and PMLF were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 93 (27%) Members were present at the outset of the sitting, while 52 (15%) Members at the end of the sitting.
- ⇒ A total of 14 Members applied for leave to be absent from the sitting.
- ⇒ Eight out of 10 minority Members were present during the sitting.



## Free and Fair Election Network

### Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ There were two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) on the Orders of the Day. The House took up one CAN.
- ⇒ Moved by five PMLN Members- two females and two males, the CAN was regarding “increasing accidents on Motor-ways in the county”, which was directed to the Ministry of Communications.
- ⇒ There was no Question and Answer session as Tuesday’s sitting was a Private Members Day.

### Output

- ⇒ Five Bills were listed on the Orders of the Day. The Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill 2008 was taken up, but was deferred. The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2011 was unanimously passed by the House, while the remaining three Bills were not taken up.
- ⇒ Another two Bills, which were submitted as supplementary agenda– The Gas Infrastructure and Development Bill 2011 and the Petroleum Levis Bill 2011 – were passed by the House.
- ⇒ Two Standing Committees reports regarding The National Data Base & Registration Authority (Amendment) Bill 2010 and the Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2011 was presented to the House.
- ⇒ The Opposition Leader presented the reports of the Public Accounts Committee during the sitting.

### Order and institutionalization

- ⇒ A total of 34 Points of Order were raised, consuming 92 minutes (54% of total sitting time) of the sitting. However, none of the Points of Order raised by Members attracted the Chair’s formal ruling.
- ⇒ There were no instances of protests, boycotts or walkouts during the sitting

### 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.*