



Senate: Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Bill Passed

ISLAMABAD, March 05, 2013: The Senate, which met for two hours and 28 minutes in the 10th sitting of the 91st session, passed the Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2013.

An ordinance – the Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Ordinance 2013 – was laid and a Special Committee report on Election Issues was presented before the House. Additionally, a calling attention notice regarding grant of permission to the US Army to build a Tactical Command and Operations Center compound at Karachi airport was also taken up.

The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition, and the parliamentary leaders of of MQM, ANP, JUIF and PMLF attended the sitting.

Two instances of walkout observed during the sitting. The ANP senators staged a walkout over increased incidents of kidnapping for ransom in Balochistan and a PPP senator, on the other instance, walked off the House as he was not satisfied with the response to the calling attention notice he raised.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for two hours and 28 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1132 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours, witnessing a delay of an hour and two minutes.
- The Chairman chaired the entire sitting.
- The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of MQM, ANP, JUIF and PMLF were present whereas those of PML, NP and BNPA were absent.
- Only 15 senators were present at the outset while 18 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 36 senators were present at one point of sitting.
- The quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any member.
- Two minority senators attended the sitting.
- A single senator applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness



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- Seven of the eight starred questions on the agenda were taken up and responded to by the relevant minister. Additionally, 18 supplementary questions were asked.
- A calling attention notice regarding grant of permission to the US Army Corp of Engineer to build a Tactical Command and Operations Center compound at the Jinnah International Airport Karachi was taken up.

Output

- The Anti-terrorism (Amendment) Bill 2013, already passed by the National Assembly, was passed. The other bill on the agenda, the Constitution (Twenty-fourth Amendment) Bill 2013, was deferred.
- The Federal Ombudsmen Institutional Reforms Ordinance 2013 was laid before the House.
- The Special Committee on Election Issues presented its report.

Order and Institutionalization

- Eight points of order consumed 25 minutes of the sitting time.
- The sitting was marked by two walkouts. The ANP senators staged a 40-minute walkout over increased incidents of kidnapping for ransom in Balochistan, and a PPP senator staged a 20-minute walkout as he was not satisfied with the ministerial response to his calling attention notice.

Transparency

- 'Orders of the Day' was available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.

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