



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 02, Session No. 49 of the National Assembly

National Assembly: Most of Agenda Left Unaddressed

ISLAMABAD, January 22, 2013: Most of the agenda appearing on the Orders of the Day was left unaddressed in the second sitting of the 49th session of National Assembly, which met for two hours and 21 minutes on Tuesday.

The sitting, which started 35 minutes late, was marked by low attendance as only 41 members were present at the outset while 65 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 120 (35%) members were present at one point of the sitting.

The house unanimously adopted a supplementary resolution to bestow civil awards on the assassinated provincial legislators of MQM and ANP.

The Torture and Custodial Death (Punishment) Bill 2013 and the General Statistics (Reorganization) (Amendment) Bill 2013 were taken up and sent to the relevant Standing Committees. A Standing Committee report on the National Database and Registration Authority (Amendment) Bill 2011 was also presented.

Two calling attention notices appearing on the agenda were taken up by the house. One was about the acute shortage of petrol in various cities while the other raised the issue of payment of Rs1.1 million by Higher Education Commission (HEC) for the membership of Islamabad Club for its chairman and foreign trips of the officers during the last year.

The sitting was chaired partly by the Deputy Speaker and a member of the Panel of Chairpersons. The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition, the Speaker and the parliamentary leaders of MQM, ANP, PML, PMLF and BNPA did not attend the sitting

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The National Assembly met for two hours and 21 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1135 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1100 hours, witnessing a delay of 35 minutes.
- The Deputy Speaker chaired the sitting for 40 minutes while the rest of the proceedings were chaired by a member of the Panel of Chairpersons. The Speaker was not present.
- The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the sitting.
- Parliamentary leaders of MMAP, PPS and NPP were present while those of MQM, ANP, PML, PMLF and BNPA did not attend the sitting.
- The chief whips of PPP, MMAP, ANP, PML and PPS attended the sitting whereas those of PMLN, MQM, PMLF and BNPA remained absent.



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- Forty-one members (12% of the total membership) were present at the outset while 65 (19%) were present at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 120 (35%) members were present at one point of the sitting.
- Six minority members attended the sitting.
- One member applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Two calling attention notices (CANS) appearing on the agenda were taken up by the house. One of these was about the acute shortage of petrol in various cities of the country while the other raised the issue of payment of Rs1.1 million by Higher Education Commission (HEC) for the membership of Islamabad Club for its chairman and foreign trips of the officers of the commission during the last year.
- Eight motions under rule 259 appearing on the Orders of the Day were not taken up.

Output

- The Torture and Custodial Death (Punishment) Bill 2013 and the General Statistics (Reorganization) (Amendment) Bill 2013 – two of the seven bills appearing on the agenda were sent to the concerned standing committees.
- The other five bills were deferred by the house.
- The house unanimously adopted a supplementary resolution to bestow civil awards on the assassinated provincial legislators of MQM and ANP.
- The Standing Committee on Interior presented its report on the National Database and Registration Authority (Amendment) Bill 2011.
- A motion seeking amendment in the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly was deferred till next private members' day.
- Five resolutions appearing on the agenda were not taken up.

Order and Institutionalization

- Sixteen points of order (POs) consumed 56 minutes of the sitting time. None of the POs attracted the Chair's formal ruling and unless the Chair gives its formal ruling, it does not lead to any output.
- The legislators belonging to MMAP walked of the house at 12:30 over the issue of imposition of Governor Rule in Balochistan. They did not return to attend rest of the proceedings.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on members' attendance was not available to observers and the public.

The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the National Assembly proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI); a member organization of FAFEN