



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 1: Session No. 29 of the National Assembly

Low Attendance Observed in Relatively More Productive First Sitting

ISLAMABAD, February 21, 2011: The National Assembly met for two hours and 35 minutes during the first sitting of the 29th Session that went under way on Monday, reports the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its Daily Factsheet on the National Assembly Proceedings.

The first sitting witnessed low attendance of Members, with 90 Members present at the outset and 50 present when the sitting was adjourned. The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, lack of it was not pointed out by any of the Members.

The National Assembly unanimously passed the National Defence University Bill, 2009 during the course of the sitting.

The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 38 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition was not present. The Parliamentary Leaders of the PML, MQM, MMAP and PPPS were present, while the other party leaders remained absent. The following are some key observations of the Parliamentary Business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for two hours and 35 minutes.
- ⇒ The first sitting started at 1755 Hours against the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The House proceedings started late by 55 minutes.
- ⇒ The Speaker chaired the entire sitting and the Deputy Speaker remained absent.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 38 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition was not present.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of PML, MQM, MMAP and PPPS were present, while the leaders of ANP, PMLF, NPP and BNPA were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of PPPP, PML, MMAP, ANP and PMLF were present, while the chief whips of MQM, PMLN, NPP and BNPA were absent.
- ⇒ The House took a 25-minute break for prayers.
- ⇒ A total of 97 (29%) Members were present at the outset of the sitting, while 50 (15%) Members at the end of the sitting. Maximum presence of 191 Members (56%) was observed at one point of the sitting, when the Prime Minister was present.
- ⇒ A total of six out of 10 minority Members were present during the first sitting of 29th Session.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ There were two Calling Attention Notices on the Orders of the Day. The House took up both the CANs.
- ⇒ The first CAN was regarding the “non-payment of pension to the retired employees of Railways for the last two months”, which was directed to the Ministry of Railways. This CAN was moved by five Members of the PMLN.
- ⇒ The second CAN was regarding the “adverse affect of export of cotton yarn on the Textile and Cottage Industry “. This CAN was directed towards the Ministry of Textile, and was moved by five Members of the PMLN.
- ⇒ A total of 26 questions were listed to be taken up during the Questions Hour. However, only six were raised and responded to by the relevant minister.
- ⇒ A total of 12 Supplementary Questions were raised in the House during the first sitting.

Output

- ⇒ The National Assembly unanimously passed the National Defence University Bill, 2009. The remaining three bills on the Orders of the Day were introduced during the course of the sitting.

Order and Institutionalization

- ⇒ A total of 13 Points of Order were raised, consuming 44 (28%) minutes of the sitting time. However, none of the Points of Order raised by Members attracted Speaker’s ruling.
- ⇒ Members of the PMLN and PML raised an Adjournment Motion during the sitting. This motion was admitted, and the debate on the motion is most likely to start from Wednesday.
- ⇒ 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.