



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 6: Session No. 38 of the National Assembly

Last Sitting of 38th Session Marked by Low Attendance

ISLAMABAD, January 19, 2012: The National Assembly unanimously passed the National Commission for Women Bill 2011 during its last sitting of the 38th session.

Spread over two hours and 16 minutes, the sitting was marked by low attendance of Members with 78 Legislators present at the start and 85 there when the session prorogued.

Members raised a total of nine Points of Order which consumed 32% of the sitting time. However, none of the Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling

The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 29 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition was not present. Only the parliamentary leaders of the ANP and NPP attended the proceedings.

Members' participation in House proceedings

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for two hours and 16 minutes.
- ⇒ The last sitting started at 1802 hours instead of the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The proceedings started 62 minutes late.
- ⇒ The Speaker chaired the sitting.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister was present for 29 minutes. The Leader of the Opposition did not attend the proceedings.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of the ANP and NPP were the only ones present, while the leaders of the MMAP, MQM, PPPS, PML and PMLF were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of ANP, PMLN, PML, MQM, and PPPP were present, while those of the MMAP, BNPA and PMLF were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 78 (23%) Members were present at the outset of the sitting while there were 85 (25%) Members at the end of the sitting.
- ⇒ Six Members applied for leave to be absent.
- ⇒ Eight out of 10 minority Members were present.

Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ The House took up one out of two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) which appeared on the Orders of the Day.
- ⇒ Moved by five PMLN Members – three males and two females - the CAN was about "increase in the price of Palm Oil by Rs. 7 per kg", which was directed to Ministry of Industries.
- ⇒ There was no Question Hour as the prerequisite two weeks have not lapsed between the two sessions



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Output

- ⇒ The National Assembly unanimously passed the National Commission for Women Bill 2011 during the sitting.

Order and institutionalization

- ⇒ Nine Points of Order were raised which consumed 43 minutes (32% of the sitting time). However, none of the Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling.
- ⇒ A PMLN Member walked out of the House protesting against the arrangements made for the Prime Minister to attend the Supreme Court's hearing, which caused havoc for the general public. The Member walked out of the House at 1827 hours and did not come back to attend the remaining proceedings of the House.

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 Member.

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.