



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 12: Session No. 37 of the National Assembly

MQM, ANP and PMLN in row over new provinces

ISLAMABAD, January 5, 2012: The National Assembly met for three hours and 55 minutes, its 12th sitting of the ongoing session. Only the parliamentary leaders of the ANP, MQM and NPP attended the proceedings.

Just as it was in previous sittings, Members' attendance remained low. Only 66 Legislators were present at the start while 58 were there when the sitting was adjourned.

The House witnessed a tussle between the Members of the ANP and MQM over the issue of new provinces. The PMLN was of the opinion that the issue should have been on the Agenda. This interrupted the proceedings, prompting the Deputy Speaker to suspend the sitting for 25 minutes. The same issue led to a boycott by ANP Members.

Despite the row and boycott by ANP, six Members – two each from PMLN and PML, and one each representing MMAP and MQM – spoke on the issue of new provinces for 94 minutes (40% of the sitting time).

The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 30 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition was there for 15 minutes.

Members' participation in House proceedings

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for three hours and 55 minutes.
- ⇒ The sitting started at 1050 hours instead of the scheduled starting time of 1000 hours. The proceedings were delayed by 50 minutes.
- ⇒ A Member of the Panel of Chairpersons chaired the sitting for 55 minutes while the Deputy Speaker was in the chair for the remaining time.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 30 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition was there for 15 minutes.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of the ANP, MQM and NPP were the only ones present while those of the PPPS, BNPA, MMAP, PML and PMLF were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of PPPP, ANP, MQM and PML were present while those of the PMLN, MMAP and PMLF were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 66 (19%) Members were present at the start of the sitting while 58 (17%) Members were there at the end.
- ⇒ Four applied for leave to be absent from the sitting.
- ⇒ Eight minority Members were present during the sitting.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ The House did not take up any of the Calling Attention Notices (CANs) which appeared on the Orders of the Day.
- ⇒ Out of the 19 Questions to be taken up during the Question Hour, only nine were put up and responded to by the relevant ministries.
- ⇒ Eighteen supplementary questions were raised during the sitting.

Output

- ⇒ The Annual Report for the year 2010-2011 of the Central Board of Directors of the State Bank of Pakistan was presented to the House.
- ⇒ The Standing Committee's report about the Price Control and Prevention of Profiteering and Hoarding (Amendment) Bill, 2007 was presented.
- ⇒ The Price Control and Prevention of Profiteering and Hoarding (Amendment) Bill, 2007 was withdrawn.

Order and institutionalization

- ⇒ Eighteen Points of Order were raised, consuming 95 minutes (40% of the total sitting time). However, no Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling.
- ⇒ The National Assembly debated the issue of new provinces. Six Members – two each representing PMLN and PML, and one each from MMAP and MQM – spoke on the subject for 94 minutes (40% of the sitting time).
- ⇒ Following a row between the Members of ANP, MQM and PMLN on the issue of new provinces, the Deputy Speaker suspended the sitting for 25 minutes. The same issue led to a boycott by ANP Members. They left the House at 1315 hours and did not return. A PPP Member staged a walkout for not being granted permission to raise a Point of Order. His protest lasted 60 minutes.

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.