



FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 6: Session No. 39 of the National Assembly

NA defers the Constitution (Twentieth Amendment) Bill

ISLAMABAD, February 8, 2012: The National Assembly deferred the Constitution (Twentieth Amendment) Bill, 2012 during its sixth sitting of the ongoing 39th session on Wednesday.

Starting an hour and eight minutes behind schedule, the sitting met for two hours and 40 minutes, and was marked by low attendance. A total 108 Legislators were present at the start while 76 were there when the sitting adjourned.

The House unanimously passed the Private Power and Infrastructure Board Bill, 2011 and the State Bank of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2011 during the sitting.

The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition were not present. The Parliamentary Leaders of the PML, MQM, NPP, PMLF, and the BNPA were present.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- The National Assembly met for two hours and 40 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1808 hours instead of the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The proceedings started an hour and eight minutes late.
- The Deputy Speaker chaired the sitting.
- The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the sitting.
- The Parliamentary Leaders of the PML, MQM, NPP, PMLF, and the BNPA were present, while those of the MMAP, PMLN, PPPS, and the ANP were absent.
- The Chief Whips of MMAP, PMLN, MQM, and PPPP were present, while those of the PML, ANP and PMLF were absent.
- A total of 108 Legislators (32%) were present at the outset of the sitting while there were 76 MNAs (23%) at the end of the sitting. A maximum of 168 Members were present at one point of the sitting.
- Three Members applied for leave to be absent.
- Ten minority Members were present.

Representation and Responsiveness

- The House took up one Calling Attention Notices (CANs) which appeared on the Orders of the Day.



Free and Fair Election Network

- Moved by five PMLN Members – two males and three females – the notice was about “terming the economy of Pakistan vulnerable by IMF” it was directed to Ministry of Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, Statistics and Planning and Development.

Output

- The Lower House deferred the Constitution (Twentieth Amendment) Bill, 2012.
- The Private Power and Infrastructure Board Bill, 2011 and the State Bank of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill, 2011 were unanimously passed by the House.
- The annual report of the National Economic Council for the financial year 2010-11 was presented to the House.

Order and institutionalization

- Nine Points of Order were raised which consumed 17 minutes (11% of the sitting time). However, none of the Points of Order attracted the Chair’s formal ruling.
- A PMLN Member staged a walkout protesting against the non-release of development funds.

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.