



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.6 Session No.100 of the Senate

Senate sitting marked by low attendance, opposition's walkout

ISLAMABAD, January 15, 2014: The sixth sitting of ongoing Senate session witnessed low attendance of lawmakers amid opposition's walkout, says Free and Fair Election Network in its Daily Factsheet based on direct observation of the Senate.

Eight parliamentarians debated on a motion for an hour sponsored by ANP senator regarding the details of project launched by Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) at Thall Block, District Hangu. All the opposition parties staged a token walkout of four minutes against disallowing debate on the privatization of PIA and dealing with it without taking Council of Common Interests (CCI) on-board. An ANP senator also staged a walkout for two minutes for not getting proper answer to his question. The senators also raised 13 points of order during the sitting.

Only seven of the 31 Starred Questions (requiring oral as well as written replies) appearing on the agenda were taken up and answered by the relevant ministries. Additionally, senators asked 35 supplementary questions.

Following are some key observations of the House proceedings:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for three hours and 53 minutes. The House observed a 43-minute long prayer break.
- The sitting started at 1545 hours against the scheduled time of 1500 hours, witnessing a delay of 45 minutes.
- The Chairman presided over the sitting for an hour and 21 minutes while the Deputy Chairman chaired the remaining proceedings (minus the break).
- The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the entire sitting.
- Twenty-four senators were present at the outset, 26 at the adjournment and a maximum 32 at a point during the proceedings.
- The parliamentary leaders of JUI-F, NP and BNP-A were present. The members belonging to PML-F and PkMAP - single member parties - also attended the sitting.
- Three minority senators attended the sitting.
- Four members applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Eight senators debated a motion under rule 60 for an hour sponsored by ANP lawmaker regarding the details of project launched by SNGPL at Thall Block, District Hangu. The minister of state for interior and narcotics control concluded the debate.
- The Chair deferred the privilege motion of PPPP lawmaker for ten days on the request of the Leader of the House. The senator had moved the motion against disallowing Senate to debate the privatization of PIA and dealing with the said privatization without taking Council of Common Interests on-board.



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Order and Institutionalization

- Thirteen points of order (POs) were raised during the meeting, consuming 30 minutes of the sitting. Four lawmakers of PPPP; two of ANP and one each of PkMAP, PML-N, JUI-F, MQM, BNP-A and PML shared their views while speaking on POs.
- All opposition parties staged a token walkout for four minutes against disallowing Senate to debate privatization of PIA and dealing with it without taking Council of Common Interests on-board.
- An ANP senator also staged a walkout for two minutes for not getting proper answer to his question.

Transparency

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

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