



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.3 Session No.100 of the Senate

Senate: Low attendance, ministerial absence observed

ISLAMABAD, January 8, 2014: Low attendance, particularly of the parliamentary leaders, and ministerial absence was observed, during the 3rd sitting of the Senate's 100th session, on Wednesday, says Free and Fair Election Network in its Daily Factsheet based on direct observation of the Senate.

More than half of the House strength did not attend the proceedings with six senators observed at the outset, 15 at the adjournment and a maximum 40 at a point during the proceedings. Only the parliamentary leader of BNP-A attended the proceedings.

The three hour and six minute proceedings also witnessed a longer break - 53 minutes - due to ministerial absence and prayers.

Eight out of 17 Starred Questions, addressed to the Ministries of Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Statistics; and Planning and Development, were taken up on the floor. The relevant ministers were not present to answer the questions.

An MQM and PML-N senator shared their views on a PPPP sponsored motion (under Rule 218) on the current political and security situation in the country with particular reference to Balochistan, FATA and Rawalpindi incident.

Following are some key observations of the House proceedings:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for three hours and six minutes. The House observed a 53-minute break on account of ministerial absence and to for prayer.
- 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 while the Deputy Chairman was present.
- The Leader of the House attended the entire proceedings while the Leader of the Opposition was present for 58 minutes. Six senators were present at the outset, 15 at the adjournment and a maximum 40 at a point during the proceedings.
- Only the parliamentary leader of BNP-A was present while the members belonging to PML-F and PkMAP - single member parties - also attended the sitting.
- Two minority senators attended the sitting.
- Eight of the members applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness



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- Eight out of 17 Starred Questions - requiring oral reply- were taken up on the floor. Additionally, lawmakers asked 32 supplementary questions. The ministers of both ministries receiving questions; Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Statistics, and Planning and Development were not present to answer the questions.
- The House debated for 51 minutes a PPPP sponsored Motion under Rule 218 on the current political and security situation in the country with particular reference to Balochistan, FATA and Rawalpindi incidents. Two lawmakers belonging to MQM and PML-N shared their views on the motion.

Order and Institutionalization

- Seven points of order were raised consuming 21 minutes of the sitting.

Transparency

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

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