



Free and Fair Election Network

Only two Senators debate budget

ISLAMABAD, June 8, 2012: Senators on Friday showed less interest in debating the budget during the sixth sitting of the Upper House's 82nd session on Friday.

Starting 44 minutes late, the sitting met for an hour and 22 minutes, only two Senators spoke on the Annual Budget Statement. Moreover, only 15 legislators were present at the start and 18 when the sitting was adjourned – a maximum of 36 (less than half) Senators were observed at any time of the sitting.

As the federal budget for 2012-13 was presented in the first sitting, two Senators spoke on the Annual Budget Statement – one each from PPPP and PMLN – for 72 minutes (72% of sitting time).

The Leader of the Opposition along with the parliamentary leaders of ANP, MQM, JUIF, BNPA and PML did not attend the sitting.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- Senate met for an hour and 22 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1114 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours. The proceedings started late by 44 minutes.
- The Deputy Chairman chaired the sitting.
- The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was not present.
- The Parliamentary Leaders of NP and PMLF attended the sitting.
- Fifteen Senators (15% of total Membership) were present at the start, while 18 (18%) were present when the sitting was adjourned.
- Two minority Members were present.
- Three Members applied for leave to be absent.

Representation and Responsiveness

- The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue presented the budget on June 1. After the 18th amendment, the Senate has 14 days to give recommendations on the budget.
- Two Senators spoke on the Annual Budget Statement – one each from PMLN and PPPP – for 72 minutes (88% of sitting time).



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Output

- The House debated the Annual Budget Statement.

Order and Institutionalization

- Two Points of Order consumed five minutes of the sitting time.
- There were no instances of protest, boycotts or walkouts.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to Legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Senators' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- The copies of the budget speech were available to Senators.

The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the Senate proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), a member organization of FAFEN