



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 8: Session No. 42 of the National Assembly

Seven debate budget as PMLN attends sitting

ISLAMABAD, June 12, 2012: Seven legislators took part in the debate on budget on Tuesday as the Prime Minister and the Minister for Finance did not attend the eighth sitting of the National Assembly's 42nd session.

But overall legislators' attendance witnessed improvement as the main opposition party PMLN attended the sitting. The PMLN legislators had boycotted the last two sittings. However the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting for seven minutes only.

The House also witnessed a 30-minute protest by the PMLN legislators and two walkouts.

Starting 52 minutes late, the House met for two hours and 48 minutes. Though 100 legislators were present at the start of the sitting, 116 were in the House when it was adjourned. A maximum of 172 legislators were observed to be present at one point of the sitting.

Seven legislators – three from PPP and one each from MQM, PML, ANP and PMLN – spoke on the budget for 142 minutes (85% of sitting time).

A PMLN legislator, as in the previous sittings, again pointed out the Quorum, but on count 99 Members were present – 13 more than the 86 needed in the House of 342.

A female PMLN legislator walked out against the absent of Finance Minister. MQM parliamentarians also walked out against the killing of a worker in Karachi on Tuesday.

Only the parliamentary leaders of NPP, PMLN and BNPA were present while the leaders of PML, ANP, MQM and MMAP were absent. The Speaker chaired the sitting for 38 minutes, the Deputy Speaker chaired the sitting for 44 minutes and remaining time was presided over by the Member of panel of chairperson.

The following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- The National Assembly met for two hours and 48 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1152 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1100 hours. The House proceedings started late by 52 minutes.
- The Speaker chaired the sitting for 38 minutes; the Deputy Speaker for 44 minutes and remaining time was presided over by the Member of panel of chairperson.
- The Prime Minister did not attend the sitting while and the Leader of the Opposition was present only for seven minutes.



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- Only the Parliamentary leaders of PMLN, NPP and BNPA were present while the leaders of PML, ANP, MQM and MMAP were absent.
- The Chief Whips of the PPP, PMLN, PML, ANP BNPA, MMAP and NPP were present.
- A total of 100 (29%) legislators were present at the start and 116 (34%) at the end of the sitting.
- The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue did not attend the sitting.
- Ten Minority Members were present.
- Six Members applied for leave to be absent.

Representation and Responsiveness

- There was no other agenda on the Orders of the Day.

Output

- Seven legislators – three from PPP and one each from MQM, PML, ANP and PMLN – spoke on the budget for 142 minutes (85% of sitting time).

Order and institutionalization

- Three Points of Order consuming five minutes of sitting time.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Members' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- Copies of the budget speech were available to the legislators.
- The Quorum was pointed out by a PMLN Member but on count, 99 Members were present.
- A female PMLN Member walked out from the House at 1340 hours against the absence of Finance Minister and did not come back.
- MQM Members also walked out at 1438 hours against the killing of a worker in Karachi on Tuesday.

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