



## **Senators Show Less Interest in Proceedings**

ISLAMABAD, April 15, 2013: Starting 40 minutes late, the first sitting of the 92<sup>nd</sup> session of Senate witnessed the introduction of the Constitutional (Amendment) Bill 2013, which seeks changes in the clauses of the article 63. The Bill was taken up and sent to the Standing Committee on Law and Justice for further deliberations.

This is the first session after completion of the five years of the coalition government and it will go on till April 24.

The first sitting, a Private Members' Day, met for two hours and 35 minutes. Senators showed less interest in the proceedings as only 12 were present at the outset of the sitting while 14 were there at the adjournment. A maximum of 31 senators were observed to be present at one point of sitting

The Pakistan Pharmacy Council Bill 2013, along with three Motions under Rule 218 about increasing financial losses of Pakistan Railways, growing unemployment and non-vacation of government quarters by the Estate Office Islamabad from the unauthorized occupants were not taken up and deferred till the next sitting.

Seven Points of Order were raised which consumed an hour and 30 minutes (58%) of the sitting time. None of the Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling.

A Motion under Rule 218 about the law and order in the country was debated by the House. An MQM Senator, who was also the prime mover of the, spoke on the issue for 12 minutes. After finishing his address, he, along with his party colleagues, staged a walkout. The walkout lasted 40 minutes.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

### **Members' Participation in House Proceedings**

- The Senate met for two hours and 35 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1740 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours, witnessing a delay of 40 minutes.
- The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Deputy Chairman also attended the sitting.
- The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of MQM, JUIF and ANP attended the sitting while those of NP, PML, BNPA and PMLF remained absent.
- Only 12 senators (12% of the total membership) were present at the start, while 14 were there when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 31 senators were observed to be present at one point of sitting.
- One of the four minority senators in the Upper House attended the sitting.
- The House took a 35-minute prayer break.



## Free and Fair Election Network

### Representation and Responsiveness

- The Question Hour was not held as today was a Private Members' Day.
- A Motion under Rule 218 about the law and order in the country was debated by the House. An MQM Senator, who was also the prime mover of the, spoke on the issue for 12 minutes. After finishing his address, he, along with his party colleagues, staged a walkout.
- The Motions under Rule 218 about increasing financial losses of Pakistan Railways, growing unemployment and non-vacation of government quarters by the Estate Office Islamabad from the unauthorized occupants were deferred.
- The Motion under Rule 218 about the prevailing price hike of all commodities was not taken up as the prime mover was not present.

### Output

- The Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2013 was introduced and sent to the Standing Committee of Law and Justice.
- The Pakistan Pharmacy Council Bill 2013 was not taken up and deferred till the next sitting.

### Order and Institutionalization

- Seven Points of Order were raised which consumed an hour and 30 minutes (58%) of the sitting time. None of the Points of Order attracted the Chair's formal ruling.
- The MQM Senators staged a walkout over the law and order in Karachi. They walked out of the House five minutes prior to the prayer break and came back to the House after 40 minutes.

### Transparency

- Orders of the day were available to the legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- The quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any of the legislators.

*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*