



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 2, Session No. 89 of the Senate

Senate: Sitting Marked by Low Attendance; Walkouts

ISLAMABAD, January 04, 2013: Starting 37 minutes late, the second sitting of the 89th session of Senate was marked by low attendance. Only five senators were present at the start and 36 at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 49 senators were present at one point of sitting, which met for two hours and 30 minutes.

Three walkouts were observed in this sitting. A PPPP lawmaker staged a token walkout for not getting replies to questions about KESC; a BNPA senator staged a 20-minute walkout saying that the Prime Minister was not available for meetings with the senators from Balochistan; and the ANP lawmakers walked off the house claiming that they were not being allowed to speak in the house.

A standing committee report on the proposals for making recommendations on the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill 2012 was presented. Eleven points of order consumed 26% of the sitting time.

The sitting was chaired by the Chairman. The Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the parliamentary leaders of MQM and NP were present while those of PML, BNPA, ANP, JUIF and PMLF did not attend the sitting.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for two hours and 30 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1637 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1600 hours, witnessing a delay of 37 minutes. There was a prayer break of 24 minutes.
- The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Deputy Chairman was not present.
- The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the entire sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of MQM and NP were present while those of PML, BNPA, ANP, JUIF and PMLF were absent.
- Only five senators were present at the start, while 36 were there when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 49 (47%) senators were present at one point of sitting.
- Two minority senators attended the sitting.
- Ten senators applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Only four of the 25 starred questions appearing on the agenda were taken up and responded to by the relevant ministries. Additionally, nine supplementary questions were asked.



Output

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- A standing committee report on the proposals for making recommendations on the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill 2012 was presented.
- A motion moved by the Minister for Finance, Revenue, Planning and Development, Economic Affairs and Statistics to make recommendations to the National Assembly on the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill 2012 was taken up by the House.

Order and Institutionalization

- Eleven points of order consumed 40 minutes of the sitting time.
- Three incidents of walkouts were observed in today's sitting. A PPPP lawmaker staged a token walkout for not getting reply to questions about KESC; a BNPA senator staged a 20-minute walkout saying the Prime Minister was not available for meetings with the senators from Balochistan; and the ANP lawmakers walked off the house claiming that they are not being allowed to speak in the house. They walked-off the house 43 minutes before the end of sitting and did not return.

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 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