



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 03, Session No. 90 of the Senate

Senate: Sitting Marked by Low Attendance

- **58% of Sitting Time Consumed by POs**

ISLAMABAD, January 23, 2012: Starting 52 minutes late, the 3rd sitting of the 90th session of Senate was marked by low attendance as only 10 senators were present at the outset and 19 at the adjournment. Senators raised 11 points of order which consumed 58% of the sitting time.

The sitting, which met for an hour and nine minutes, also witnessed two instances of walkouts. The PMLN lawmakers staged a walkout over the issue of target killings in Karachi and a JUIF senator walked of the house over the imposition of Governor rule in Balochistan.

The Investigation for Fair Trial Bill 2012, a bill already passed by the National Assembly, was taken up and sent to the relevant standing committee. A standing committee report about the privilege motion moved by a member was also presented.

The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the parliamentary leaders of MQM, PML, ANP, NP and PMLF attended the sitting while the parliamentary leaders of BNPA and JUIF were not present.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for an hour and nine minutes.
- The sitting started at 1122 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours, witnessing a delay of 52 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 sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of MQM, PML, ANP, NP and PMLF attended the sitting while those of BNPA and JUIF were absent.
- Only 10 senators were present at the start while 19 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 32 senators (31% of the total membership) were present at one point of sitting.
- The quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any member.
- Two of four minority senators attended the sitting.
- Three senators applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Only two of seven starred questions (requiring oral replies) appearing on the agenda were taken up and responded to by the relevant ministries. Additionally, 10 supplementary questions were asked.



Output

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- The Investigation for Fair Trial Bill 2012 was taken up and sent to the relevant standing committee. The bill has already been passed by the lower house.
- The Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges presented its report on the privilege motion moved by a member. It was about the irresponsible attitude of Deputy Chief of Protocol, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Order and Institutionalization

- Eleven points of order (POs) consumed 40 minutes (58%) of the sitting time.
- Two instances of walkouts were observed during the sitting. A JUIF member walked out of the house for 40 minutes before the end of the sitting on imposing of Governor rule in Balochistan while PMLN lawmakers walked out for 30 minutes over the issue of target killings in Karachi. Both protesting parties did not return to attend the proceedings.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day was available to 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