



Free and Fair Election Network

Sitting Marked by Low Attendance

ISLAMABAD, February 08, 2012: Starting an hour and 15 minutes late, the 11th and the last sitting of the Senate's 90th session was marked by low attendance. Only 11 senators were present at the outset while 14 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 36 senators were present at one point of sitting.

A supplementary bill – 24th Constitutional (Amendment) Bill – about the creation of new provinces in Punjab was taken up and referred to the respective standing committee.

An annual report for the year 2011-12 of the Central Board of Directors of State Bank of Pakistan on the state of Pakistan's economy was also laid before the House.

Two walkouts were observed during the sitting.

The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Leader of the Opposition and the parliamentary leaders of PML, BNPA, 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 54 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1145 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours, witnessing a delay of an hour and 15 minutes.
- The Chairman chaired the entire sitting.
- The Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting while the Leader of the House was absent.
- The parliamentary leaders of MQM, JUIF, ANP and NP were present whereas those of PML, BNPA and PMLF did not attend the sitting.
- Only 11 senators were present at the outset while 14 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 36 senators 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.
- One minority senator attended the sitting.
- Six senators applied for leave.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- Four of the 20 starred questions appearing on the agenda were taken up of which three were responded to by the relevant ministries. The reply of the fourth question, which was about KESC, was not received. The matter was referred to the privilege committee.
- A calling attention notice appearing on the agenda was not taken up.

Output

- A supplementary bill - 24th Constitutional (Amendment) Bill – about the creation of new provinces in Punjab was taken up. It was then referred to the respective standing committee.
- An annual report for the year 2011-12 of the Central Board of Directors of State Bank of Pakistan on the state of Pakistan's economy was presented.

Order and Institutionalization

- Eight points of order consumed 20 minutes.
- Two walkouts were observed during the sitting. The JUIF senators walked out of the House over the imposition of Governor Rule in Balochistan five minutes before the end of the sitting and did not return. A PPPP lawmaker, accompanied by PMLN lawmakers staged a token walkout as a parliamentary committee's report about missing persons was not presented.

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