



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 03, Session No. 49 of the National Assembly

National Assembly: Bill Passed Amidst Low Attendance; POs Consumed 61% of Sitting Time

ISLAMABAD, January 23, 2013: The 3rd sitting of the ongoing 49th session of National Assembly was marked by low attendance as a single treasury bill was passed. Legislators raised a large number of POs consuming an hour and 44 minutes of the sitting time.

In the 342 member house only 27 members (8% of the total membership) were present at the outset while 56 (16%) were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 148 members (43%) were present at one point of sitting.

The house passed the Islamabad Capital Territory Private Educational Institution (Registration and Regulation) Bill 2012. The other bill appearing on the agenda – The Global Change Impact Studies Center Bill 2013 – was taken up and sent to the relevant standing committee.

The house also adopted a report about question of privilege which was raised by a PPPP legislator against the officers of FIA. Similarly, a special report by Public Accounts Committee on the matter of non-appearance of principal accounting officer of Supreme Court before the Public Accounts Committee was presented.

The Prime Minister, the Leader of the Opposition and the parliamentary leaders of MQM, ANP, PMLF and PPPS did not attend the sitting. The Deputy Speaker chaired the entire sitting as the Speaker was not present.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The National Assembly met for two hours and 51 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1120 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1100 hours, witnessing a delay of 20 minutes.
- The Deputy Speaker chaired the entire sitting. The Speaker was not present.
- The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the sitting.
- Parliamentary leaders of MMAP, PML, NPP and BNPA were present during the sitting.
- Chief whips of PPPP, MMAP, ANP, and PML attended the sitting whereas those of PMLN, MQM, PMLF and PPPS remained absent.
- Twenty-seven members (8% of the total membership) were present at the outset while 56 (16%) were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 148 (43%) members were present at one point of sitting.
- Five minority members attended the sitting.
- Nine members applied for leave.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- Twenty-one starred questions (requiring oral replies) appeared on the agenda of which only eight were taken up and responded to by the relevant ministries. Additionally, five supplementary questions were asked.
- One of the two calling attention notices (CANs) appearing on the agenda was taken up by the house. It was about the adjustment of three billion rupees against input tax by the FBR on fake invoices to bogus individuals and companies in the first four months of the current fiscal year.

Output

- The house passed the Islamabad Capital Territory Private Educational Institution (Registration and Regulation) Bill 2012.
- The Global Change Impact Studies Center Bill 2013 was taken up and sent to the relevant standing committee.
- A special report by Public Accounts Committee on the matter of non-appearance of principal accounting officer of Supreme Court before the Public Accounts Committee for examination of appropriation accounts/ audit reports relating to Supreme Court was presented before the house.
- The house adopted the Standing Committee on Rules of Procedure and Privileges' report about question of privilege. It was raised by a PPPP legislator against the officers of FIA.

Order and Institutionalization

- Eighteen points of order (POs) were raised consuming 104 minutes (61%) of the sitting time. None of the POs attracted the Chair's formal ruling and unless the Chair gives its formal ruling, it does not lead to any output.
- Two instances of walkout were observed during the sitting. The PMLN members staged a three-minute walkout over killing of its workers in Karachi, whereas the MMAP members walked out of the house over imposing of Governor rule in Balochistan. They did not return to attend the proceedings.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day was available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on members' attendance was not available to observers and the public.

The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the National Assembly proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI); a member organization of FAFEN