



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 2: Session No. 33 of the National Assembly

Low Attendance of Members Marks 2nd Sitting of 33rd NA Session

ISLAMABAD, August 02, 2011: The National Assembly met for two hours and 34 minutes in the second sitting of the ongoing 33rd Session. The sitting witnessed low attendance of Members with only 17% of the legislators present at the outset of the sitting and 23% were present when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 49% MNAs were observed to be present at one point of the sitting.

The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages during the sitting. However, lack of quorum was not pointed out by any of the Members of the National Assembly.

A total of 13 Members of the House – two each of the PMLN and MMAP and one each of the PPPP, PMLN and PPPS – spoke on the Motion Under Rule 259 regarding deteriorating law and order condition in the country for 107 minutes.

The Capital Development Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2011 was introduced and sent to the Standing Committee of the Cabinet Secretariat.

The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 68 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition was not present. The Parliamentary Leaders of the NPP and PPPS were the only one present, whereas the leaders of other parliamentary parties did not attend the sitting's proceedings.

Following are some key observations of the Parliamentary Business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for two hours and 34 minutes.
- ⇒ The second sitting started at 1111 Hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours. The House proceedings started late by 41 minutes.
- ⇒ The Speaker presided over the entire sitting time. The Deputy Speaker was also present during the sitting.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 45 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of the NPP and PPPS were the only ones present, while the leaders of the PML, PMLF, ANP, MQM and MMAP were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of PPPP, PMLN, PML, ANP, PMLN and MQM were present, while the chief whips of PMLF and BNPA were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 57 (17%) Members were present at the outset of the sitting, while 80 (23%) Members were present at the end of the sitting.
- ⇒ Maximum presence of 168 Members (49%) was observed at one point of the sitting.
- ⇒ Five Members applied for leave to be absent from the sitting.
- ⇒ A total of nine out of 10 Minority Members were present during the course of the sitting.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ There were two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) on the Orders of the Day. The House took up one CAN.
- ⇒ The taken up CAN was regarding the “criteria/formula by the NEPRA culminating into excessive billing from the consumers”. This CAN was directed to the Cabinet Secretariat and was moved by five Members of the PMLN.
- ⇒ There was no Question and Answer session as Tuesday’s sitting was a Private Members Day.
- ⇒ A total of 13 Members of the House – two each of the PMLN and MMAP and one each of the PPPP, PMLN and PPPS – spoke on the Motion Under Rule 259 regarding deteriorating law and order condition in the country for 107 minutes.

Output

- ⇒ The Capital Development Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2011 was introduced and sent to the Standing Committee of the Cabinet Secretariat.
- ⇒ Two Standing Committee Reports regarding the Code of Criminal Procedure (Amendment) Bill, 2009 and The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2009 were presented to the House during the sitting.

Order and Institutionalization

- ⇒ A total of nine Points of Order were raised, consuming 13 minutes of the sitting. However, none of the Point of Order raised by Members attracted Speaker’s ruling.
- ⇒ A total of five Resolutions were tabled on the Orders of the Day, which were not taken up by the House.
- ⇒ A total of five Motions Under Rule 259 were listed on the agenda, but were not taken up by the House.
- ⇒ One Matter of Public Importance regarding “Energy crisis in the country” was also listed for the Private Members’ Day agenda, but were not taken up by the House.
- ⇒ The sitting witnessed a walkout by Members of the MQM on the issue of target killings in Karachi and Quetta. The walkout lasted 10 minutes.

Transparency

- ⇒ Orders of the Day were available to legislators, observers and others.
- ⇒ Information on Members’ attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- ⇒ The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages during the sitting. However, lack of quorum was not pointed out by any of the Members of the National Assembly.

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