



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 5: Session No. 28 of the National Assembly

5th Sitting: NA Leaves Entire Agenda on Orders of the Day Unaddressed

ISLAMABAD, January 28, 2011: The National Assembly met for an hour and 55 minutes during the fifth sitting of the ongoing 28th session. The sitting which started 45 minutes late witnessed low attendance of Members, with only 56 Members present at the beginning and 75 present when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 142 Members was recorded at one point of sitting.

The House did not take up any formal agenda listed on the Orders of the Day and debated on the Points of Order. A total of 18 POs were raised, which consumed more than one-third of the sitting time.

The National Assembly did not take up the Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2010.

The Prime Minister attended the sitting briefly for nine minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent. The Parliamentary Leader of the PPPS was the only one present, whereas the leaders of other parliamentary parties did not attend the sitting's proceedings. The following are some key observations of the Parliamentary Business:

Members' participation in House proceedings

- ⇒ The National Assembly met for an hour and 55 minutes.
- ⇒ The fifth sitting started at 1045 Hours against the scheduled starting time of 1000 hours. The House proceedings started late by 45 minutes.
- ⇒ The Speaker was not present during the sitting. The entire sitting was presided over by the Deputy Speaker.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting briefly for nine minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leader of the PPPS was the only one present, while the leaders of the PML, MMAP, ANP, MQM, PMLF, NPP and BNPA were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of the PPPP, PMLN and ANP were present, while the chief whips of the PML, MQM, PMLF, MMAP, NPP and BNPA were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 56 (16%) members were present at the outset of the sitting, while 75 (22%) members at the end of the sitting.
- ⇒ A total of six members applied for leave to be absent from the sitting.
- ⇒ As many as seven out of 10 minority members were present during the 5th sitting.



Free and Fair Election Network

Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ There were two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) on the Orders of the Day. The House did not take up any of the CANs
- ⇒ A total of 22 questions were listed to be taken up during the Questions Hour. However, only nine were raised and responded to by the relevant minister
- ⇒ A total of 18 Supplementary Questions were raised in the House during the fifth sitting.

Output

- ⇒ The Women in Distress and Detention Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2010 was not taken up by the House during the proceedings.

Order and institutionalization

- ⇒ A total of 18 Points of Order were raised, consuming 40 minutes (35% of total sitting time) of the sitting. However, none of the Points of Order raised by Members attracted the Speaker's formal ruling
- ⇒ There were no instances of protests, walkouts or boycotts during the fifth sitting.

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