



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 7: Session No. 29 of the National Assembly

7th Sitting: More than two-third of time consumed by Points of Order

ISLAMABAD, March 01, 2011: The National Assembly met for two hours and 45 minutes in the 7th sitting of the ongoing Session. The sitting witnessed low attendance of Members with only 11% of the legislators present at the outset of the sitting and 10% were present when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 38% MNAs were observed to be present at one point during 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 129 Points of Order were raised, which consumed 70% of the sitting time. However, none of the Points of Orders raised by Members attracted Speaker's formal ruling.

The House did not take up the Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill, 2008 during the course of the sitting.

The Prime Minister attended the sitting briefly for 25 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition was not present. The Parliamentary Leaders of the PML, PPPS and PMLF 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 three hours and five minutes.
- ⇒ The seventh sitting started at 1048 Hours against the scheduled starting time of 1000 hours. The House proceedings started late by 48 minutes.
- ⇒ The Speaker chaired the initial 60 minutes of the sitting, while the remaining time was presided over by a Member of Panel of Chairpersons. The Deputy Speaker was not present during the sitting.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting briefly for 25 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of the PML, PMLF and PPPS were the only ones present, while the leaders of the ANP, MQM, MMAP and NPP were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of PPPP, PMLN, PML, ANP, PMLF, BNPA and MQM were present, while the chief whips of PMLN and NPP were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 37 (11%) Members were present at the outset of the sitting, while 35 (10%) Members were present at the end of the sitting.



Free and Fair Election Network

- ⇒ Maximum presence of 128 Members (38%) was observed at one point of the sitting.
- ⇒ Seven Members applied for leave to be absent from the sitting.

Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ There were two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) on the Orders of the Day. The House took up both the CANs.
- ⇒ The first CAN was regarding the “non-repatriation of Pakistanis stranded in Libya and obstructed at Egyptian border”. This CAN was directed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was moved by four Members of the PMLN.
- ⇒ The other CAN was regarding the “increase in the prices of medicines by the Pharmaceutical Companies” which was directed to the Ministry of Health. This CAN was moved by five Members of the PMLN.
- ⇒ There was no Question and Answer session as Tuesday’s sitting was a Private Members Day.

Output

- ⇒ The Prevention of Anti-Women Practices (Criminal Law Amendment) Bill, 2008 was not taken up during the course of the sitting.
- ⇒ Four Standing Committee Reports were presented to the House during the sitting.

Order and Institutionalization

- ⇒ A total of 32 Points of Order were raised, consuming 129 minutes (70% of total sitting time) 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.
- ⇒ There was no adjournment motion raised during the course of the sitting.
- ⇒ A total of five Motions Under Rule 259 were listed on the agenda, but were not taken up by the House.
- ⇒ Two Matters of Public Importance regarding “Afghan Transit Trade Agreement-2010 and its effects on the economy of Pakistan” and “the rapidly increasing ratio of Child and Maternal Mortality in the country” were also listed for the Private Members’ Day agenda, but were not taken up by the House.
- ⇒ The sitting witnessed three token walkouts by Members of the PMLN, MQM and PML on the issue of increase in the prices of petroleum products. The walkout by PMLN lasted five minutes; the walkout by MQM lasted three minutes; and the walkout by PML lasted four minutes.



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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.