



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 5: Session No. 82 of the Senate

Only three out of 104 Senators Speak on Budget

ISLAMABAD, June 7, 2012: Starting 50 minutes late, the fifth sitting of Senate's 82nd session, which met for two hours and 10 minutes, debated budget amid low attendance by Senators on Thursday.

With only 12 legislators present at the start and 36 when the sitting was adjourned, a maximum of 49 (less than half) Senators were observed at any time of the sitting.

As the federal budget for 2012-13 was presented in the first sitting, three Senators spoke on the Annual Budget Statement – one each from PPPP, PMLN and PMLF – for 85 minutes (77% of sitting time).

The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was there for an hour and 35 minutes.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- Senate met for two hours and 10 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1050 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1000 hours. The proceedings started late by 50 minutes.
- The Deputy Chairman chaired the sitting for 49 minutes while the remaining time was presided over by a Member of Panel of Chairpersons.
- The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was present for an hour and 35 minutes.
- The Parliamentary Leaders of NP, PMLF and ANP attended the sitting.
- Twelve Senators (12% of total Membership) were present at the start, while 36 (35%) were present when the sitting was adjourned.

Representation and Responsiveness

- The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue presented the budget on June 1. After the 18th amendment, the Senate has 14 days to give recommendations on the budget.
- Three Senators spoke on the Annual Budget Statement – one each from PMLN, PPPP and PMLF – for 85 minutes (77% of sitting time).

Output

- The House debated the Annual Budget Statement.

Order and Institutionalization

- Six Points of Order consumed 35 minutes of the sitting time.
- PMLN Members staged a four-minute walkout against the corruption in the country.



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Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to Legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Senators' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- The copies of the budget speech were available to Senators.

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