



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 4: Session No. 82 of the Senate

Only two Senators debate budget; low attendance

ISLAMABAD, June 6, 2012: Starting 45 minutes late, the fourth sitting of the Senate's 82nd session, which met for an hour and 27 minutes, witnessed low attendance and a protest by PMLN.

Only eight legislators present at the start and 26 when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 42 Senators were observed at any time of the sitting.

PMLN Senators staged a four-minute walkout claiming that the Opposition Benches were not given enough time to speak on budget.

As the federal budget for 2012-13 was presented in the first sitting, only two Senators spoke on the Annual Budget Statement – one each from PPPP and ANP – for 77 minutes (88% of sitting time).

The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition did not attend the proceedings.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- Senate met for one hour and 28 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1745 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The House proceedings started late by 45 minutes.
- The Deputy Chairman chaired the sitting.
- The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was absent.
- The Parliamentary Leaders of PMLF, NP and ANP attended the sitting.
- Eight Senators (8% of total Membership) were present at the start, while 26 (25%) 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.
- Two Senators spoke on the Annual Budget Statement – one each from PPPP and ANP – for 77 minutes (88% of sitting time).



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Output

- The House debated the Annual Budget Statement.

Order and Institutionalization

- No Points of Order were raised during the sitting.
- PMLN Senators staged a four-minute walkout claiming that the Opposition Benches were not given enough time to speak on budget.

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