



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 6: Session No. 29 of the National Assembly

Points of Order consume more than half of time of 6th sitting of NA

ISLAMABAD, February 28, 2011: The National Assembly met for three hours and five minutes during the 6th sitting of the ongoing 29th session. The sitting was marked by low Members' attendance, with only 70 Members present at the outset and 65 were present when the sitting was adjourned

The Members interrupted the regular proceedings of the sitting to raise a total of 15 Points of Order, which consumed 52% of the sitting time. The House did not debate upon the Motion Under Rule 259 regarding the prevailing Law and Order situation in the country.

The sole bill listed on the Orders of the Day [The National Commission for Human Rights Bill, 2010] was also not taken up during the sitting.

The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 59 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent. The Parliamentary Leaders of the PML and PPPS were present, while 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 sixth sitting started at 1747 Hours against the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The House proceedings started late by 47 minutes.
- ⇒ A Member of the Panel of Chairpersons chaired the initial 29 minutes of the sitting, while the remaining time was presided over by the Speaker. The Deputy Speaker was not present during the sitting.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 59 minutes, while the Leader of Opposition remained absent.
- ⇒ The Parliamentary Leaders of PPPS and PML were present, while the leaders of MMAP, ANP, MQM, PMLF and NPP were absent.
- ⇒ The Chief Whips of PPPP, PMLN, PML, ANP, MMAP, MQM and BNPA were present, while the chief whips of PMLF and NPP were absent.
- ⇒ A total of 70 (21%) members were present at the outset of the sitting, while 65 (19%) members at the end of the sitting.
- ⇒ The house took a break of 25-minute.
- ⇒ As many as five out of 10 minority members were present during the 6th sitting.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- ⇒ There were two Calling Attention Notices (CANs) on the Orders of the Day. The House did take up one Calling Attention Notice.
- ⇒ The taken up CAN was regarding "the reluctance of Government to give autonomy to the State Bank of Pakistan". This CAN was directed to the Ministry of Finance and Revenue and was raised by five Members of the MQM and PML.
- ⇒ A total of 17 questions were listed to be taken up during the Questions Hour. However, only seven were raised and responded to by the relevant minister
- ⇒ A total of 13 Supplementary Questions were raised in the House during the sixth sitting.

Output

- ⇒ The National Commission for Human Rights Bill, 2010 was not taken by the House during the course of the sitting.
- ⇒ One Standing Committee report regarding the State Bank of Pakistan was presented to the House during the sitting.

Order and institutionalization

- ⇒ A total of 15 Points of Order were raised, consuming 97 minutes (52% of total sitting time) of the sitting. However, none of the Points of Order raised by Members attracted the Speaker's formal ruling.
- ⇒ The Motion Under Rule 259 regarding the Law and Order situation prevailing in the country was not debated upon during the sitting
- ⇒ There were no instances of protests, walkouts or boycotts during the sixth 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.