



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.9: Session No. 77 of the Senate

Sitting Marked by Low Attendance

ISLAMABAD, January 27, 2012: The ninth sitting of the Senate met for two hours and 10 minutes with low attendance of Senators. Only 14 were present at the outset of the sitting while 22 present at the adjournment.

Ten out of 17 questions listed for the Question Hour were responded to by the relevant minister.

The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition not present.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for two hours and 10 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1030 hours instead of the scheduled starting time of 1000 hours. The House proceedings started 30 minutes late.
- The Chairman presided over the sitting.
- The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was not present.
- The Parliamentary Leaders of the PMLN, MQM, PMLF, PKMAP, NP, ANP and the JI attended the sitting while the leaders of the PML, JWP, BNPA and the PPPS were absent.
- Fourteen Senators (14%) were present at the start of the sitting while 22 (22%) were there when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 33 Senators (33%) were present during one point of the sitting.
- Five Senators applied for leave to be absent.

After successfully observing proceedings of the National Assembly, the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has started the observation of the provincial assemblies – Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan – and the Senate.

This daily factsheet is based on FAFEN's direct observation of the ninth sitting of 77th session of the Senate.

These reports are released on the day the sittings are held to provide media and other interested stakeholders vital statistics about the Assembly proceedings to encourage informed public discourse on its performance.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- Seventeen starred questions were listed for the Question Hour; only 10 were put up and responded to by the relevant minister.
- A total of 16 supplementary questions were raised during the sitting.
- A Calling Attention Notice (CAN) about reported import of millions of automatic weapons in the country during the last many years was taken up. This CAN was directed to the Ministry of Finance, Revenue, Planning and Development, Economic Affairs and Statistics.
- An Adjournment Motion regarding shortage of water was summed up by the Federal Minister for Water and Power.

Output

- Two Standing Committee reports - Questions of Privilege- were presented.

Order and Institutionalization

- Fourteen Points of Order were raised that consumed 47 minutes of the sitting time.
- There were no instances of protests, boycotts or walkouts.

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, this was not pointed out by any of the Senators.

The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the Senate proceedings conducted by Center for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), a member organization of FAFEN