



Free and Fair Election Network

Debate on Budget Begins in Senate

ISLAMABAD, June 15, 2013: The Senate opened debate on the federal budget in the second sitting of the 95th session which met for two hours and 28 minutes on Saturday. Three Senators spoke about the budget for an hour and eleven minutes.

The sitting started 30 minutes late. Moved by the Leader of the House, a resolution was unanimously adopted to condemn the attack on Ziarat Residency. The PPPP, JUJIF, ANP, and the Senators from Baluchistan staged a token walkout over attack on the Ziarat Residency and bomb attacks in Quetta. They returned after five minutes.

The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Leader of the Opposition and the parliamentary leaders of JUJIF, PML, and BNPA did not attend the sitting.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for two hours and 28 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1630 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1600 hours, witnessing a delay of 30 minutes.
- The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Deputy Chairman was also present.
- The Leader of the House attended the sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was not present.
- The parliamentary leaders of ANP, MQM, NP and PMLF attended the sitting while those of JUJIF, PML and BNPA remained absent.
- The Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs, Statistics and Privatization was present.
- Fifteen senators were present at the outset while 23 were there at the adjournment. A maximum of 36 senators were present at one point of sitting.
- Two minority senators attended the sitting.
- Thirteen senators applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Terming the increase of GST on petroleum products before passage of the finance bill as unconstitutional and breach of parliament's privilege, a PPPP lawmaker wanted to raise the issue through a Privilege Motion. But the Chairman gave ruling that it was not a Privilege Motion and referred the matter to the Senate's Standing Committee on Finance.
- The Motion regarding making recommendations to the National Assembly on the Finance Bill 2013 was admitted for debate.



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Output

- The House unanimously adopted a resolution condemning the attack on Ziarat Residency. It was moved by the Leader of the House.
- One member each from the PPPP, ANP and PMLN discussed the federal budget for 35, 19, and 17 minutes, respectively.

Order and Institutionalization

- Twelve points of order were raised which consumed an hour and 10 minutes of the sitting time. None of the points of order attracted the Chair's formal ruling.
- The PPPP, JUIF, ANP and the senators from Baluchistan staged a token walkout over attack on the Ziarat Residency and bomb attacks in Quetta. They returned after five minutes.

Transparency

- 'Orders of the Day' was available to the legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.

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