



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.09, Session No.04 of the National Assembly

National Assembly: Debate on Presidential Address

ISLAMABAD, August 26, 2013: The National Assembly debated the presidential address to the parliament's joint session in June this year during the ninth sitting of the fourth session on Monday. The debate lasted an hour and 34 minutes.

The Leader of the Opposition opened the debate on the presidential address and spoke for 29 minutes. Legislators of JUI-F, PkMAP, MQM, PTI, JI and a FATA MNA also expressed views on the address.

The entire sitting was chaired by the Deputy Speaker. The Prime Minister did not attend the sitting whereas the Leader of the Opposition was present for an hour and 16 minutes.

One of two Calling Attention Notices on the agenda regarding the likely increase by SNGPL and SSGCL in the rates of security deposit from Rs1500 to Rs4500 for supply of gas to the consumers was taken up. The notice was addressed to the Ministry for Petroleum and Natural Resource.

The entire opposition staged a five-minute walkout to protest the arrest of PTI leaders and workers from a sit-in protest in Lahore on August 24 against alleged rigging in the by-elections.

Following are some key observations of the proceedings:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The National Assembly met for three hour and 38 minutes. A 27-minute prayer break was observed.
- The sitting started 49 minutes late at 1649 hours instead of the scheduled start time of 1600 hours.
- Seventy-five Members were present at the sitting's start and 51 at the end. At one point, there were a maximum of 130 Members in the House.
- The Deputy Speaker chaired the entire sitting.
- The Prime Minister did not attend the sitting whereas the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting for one hour and 16 minutes.
- The relevant Minister for Question Hour was present.
- Parliamentary leaders of PkMAP, JI, PML-Z and PTI's deputy parliamentary leader attended the proceedings.
- Fourteen MNAs applied for leave.
- Six minority Members were present.



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Representation and Responsiveness

- Out of the 13 starred questions on the agenda, five were taken up and answered by the relevant Ministers. Lawmakers also asked 18 supplementary questions.
- The house took up a Calling Attention Notices on the possible increase by SNGPL and SSGCL in the rates of security deposit from Rs1500 to Rs4500 for supply of gas to the consumers. Another notice on recent terrorist attacks on Pakistan Railways' trains and insufficient security arrangements for the passengers was not taken up.
- The House discussed the presidential address to the Parliament on June 10, 2013 for an hour and 34 minutes. The Leader of the Opposition Leader opened the discussion by speaking for 29 minutes, followed by MNAs belonging to JUI-F (18 minutes), PkMAP (13 minutes), MQM (12 minutes), PTI (10 minutes) and a FATA MNA spoke for six minutes.

Order and Institutionalization

- MNAs spoke on 20 points of order for 36 minutes.
- The entire opposition walked out to protest the on August 24 arrest of PTI leaders and workers from a sit-in in Lahore against alleged rigging in the by-elections. The walkout lasted five minutes.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to the legislators, observers and others.
- Information on members' attendance was not available to the observers and the public.

The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the National Assembly proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI); a member organization of FAFEN