



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.03, Session No.97 of the Senate of Pakistan

Senate: Low Attendance Persists

ISLAMABAD, August 21, 2013: The Upper House on Wednesday witnessed low attendance of Senators as the debate on the August 15 standoff in Islamabad was concluded by the Interior Minister in the third sitting of the 97th session.

There were five Senators at the beginning of the sitting, 22 at the adjournment and 38 at a point of maximum attendance.

A female BNPA Senator and the Leader of the Opposition spoke on the continuing debate on a PPPP motion regarding "hostage of the entire federal capital by an armed person on 15th August, 2013".

The Chairman presided over the four hours and eight minutes sitting. The Leader of the House and the Leader of Opposition attended the proceedings.

The report of the Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination for March 2012 to April 2013 was laid before the House. Additionally the State Minister for Privatization, on behalf of the Finance Minister, presented the report of federal accounts for the financial year 2011-2012 and the reports of Auditor General for the audit year 2012-2013.

Two token walkouts, each lasting three minutes, were staged during the sitting. ANP Senators along with the opposition parties walked out over the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's outstanding dues. Similarly the JUI-F Senators backed by the opposition parties walked out over postponement of by-elections in NA-25.

Following are some key observations of the House proceedings:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for four hours and eight minutes. A 26-minute prayer break was taken.
- The sitting started at 1632 hours witnessing a 32-minute delay against the scheduled start time of 1600 hours.
- There were five Senators present at the start of the proceedings, 22 at the end and a maximum 38 Members at a point during the sitting.
- The Chairman presided over the entire sitting.
- Both the Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the proceedings.
- Parliamentary leaders of JUIF, MQM and ANP attended the sitting while those of PML and BNPA were not present.
- Six Members applied for leave.
- Two minority Members were present.



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- There were 30 starred questions on the agenda; six were taken up and answered by the Minister of State for Privatization, on behalf of the Finance Minister. Additionally, 10 supplementary questions were asked.
- A Calling Attention Notice moved by a PML Senator about the electricity price hike was not taken up.
- A female BNPA Senator and the Leader of the Opposition spoke on the August 15 standoff in Islamabad while continuing the debate on an Adjournment Motion from the previous sitting. The Interior Minister concluded the debate.
- The report of the Standing Committee on Inter-Provincial Coordination for March 2012 to April 2013 was laid before the House. Additionally the Minister of State for Privatization, on behalf of the Finance Minister, presented the report of federal accounts for the financial year 2011-2012 and the reports of Auditor General for the audit year 2012-2013.

Order and Institutionalization

- Lawmakers spoke on two points of order consuming five minutes.
- Two token walkouts, each lasting three minutes, were staged during the sitting. ANP Senators along with the opposition parties walked out over the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's outstanding dues. Similarly the JUI-F Senators backed by the opposition parties walked out over postponement of by-elections in NA-25.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day was available to the legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Senators' 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