



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.12, Session No.04 of the National Assembly

National Assembly: Points of Order Consume 46% of Proceedings

ISLAMABAD, August 29, 2013: The recent terrorist attacks on trains and insufficient security arrangements for passengers were highlighted in a Calling Attention Notice (CAN) taken up by the National Assembly during the twelfth sitting of the fourth session on Thursday.

The sitting lasted three hours and 30 minutes during which the members spoke on various issues through points of order for 96 minutes (46% of the total sitting time).

The House, however, did not take up questions on the agenda due to lengthy discussion on points of order raised by the members at the outset of the sitting. The assembly did not take up another CAN on power outages and low voltage in Swat due to the absence of the movers.

Speaking on a point of order, the Interior Minister discussed the law and order situation in Karachi and the government strategy to overcome the security problems.

An MNA each from PTI, PPPP and AMLP participated in the debate on presidential address to the parliament's joint session.

The MQM legislators protested over the arrests in Karachi by wearing black armbands and staged a walkout for 20 minutes.

The sitting was chaired by the Speaker for two hours and 20 minutes while the Deputy Speaker chaired the rest of the proceedings. The Prime Minister did not attend the sitting and the Leader of the Opposition was present for one hour and 35 minutes.

Parliamentary leaders of PPPP, JI, AMLP, PkMAP, APML, MQM, ANP, NPP, PML-Z and PTI's deputy parliamentary leader attended the proceedings.

Following are some key observations of the proceedings:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The National Assembly met for three hours and 30 minutes.
- The sitting started 30 minutes late at 1100 hours instead of the scheduled start time of 1030 hours.
- Sixty-one members were present at the sitting's start and 75 at the end. At one point, there were a maximum of 185 MNAs in the House.
- The Speaker chaired the sitting for two hours and 20 minutes while the rest of the proceedings were chaired by the Deputy Speaker.
- The Prime Minister was absent while the Leader of Opposition attended the sitting for one hour and 35 minutes.



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- Parliamentary leaders of PPPP, JI, AMLP, PkMAP, APML, MQM, ANP, NPP, PML-Z and PTI's deputy parliamentary leader attended the proceedings.
- Eight MNAs applied for leave.
- Seven minority members were present.

Representation and Responsiveness

- The House took up a CAN on the recent terrorist attacks on trains and insufficient security arrangements for passengers.
- Another CAN on power outages and low voltage in Swat and the questions on the agenda were not taken up.
- An MNA each from PTI, PPPP and AMLP participated in the debate on the presidential address to the parliament's joint session in June this year. The PTI legislator spoke for 38 minutes followed by the PPPP and AMLP MNAs who expressed views for 20 and 15 minutes respectively.

Order and Institutionalization

- MNAs spoke on 24 Points of Order for one hour and 36 minutes.
- MQM legislators staged a protest against arrests of its workers in Karachi by wearing black armbands and walked out of the proceedings for 20 minutes.
- A PPPP legislator pointed out the lack of quorum at 1353 hours but a headcount found the quorum complete.

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