



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 2, Session No. 90 of the Senate

Senate: Sitting Marked by Low Attendance

ISLAMABAD, January 22, 2013: The 2nd sitting of the 90th session of Senate was marked by passage of a treasury-backed bill as low senators' attendance was observed.

The house passed the Pakistan Academy of Letters Bill 2012 already approved by the National Assembly in November, last year. The bill seeks to grant autonomy to Pakistan Academy of Letters and lays down the procedure for the recruitment of the Chairperson of the academy.

Only 11 senators were present at the outset and 21 at the adjournment of the sitting that lasted 38 minutes.

The sitting, presided over by the Chairman, was attended by the parliamentary leaders of PMLF and JUIF. The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting.

Nine questions of 15 appearing on the orders of the day were taken up and responded to during the question hour. The relevant minister was present in the house to provide answers to the questions.

Seventeen points of orders consumed an hour and 20 minutes (57%) of the sitting time.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for two hours and 21 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1108 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours, witnessing a delay of 38 minutes. It ended at 1329 hours.
- The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Deputy Chairman was not present.
- The Leader of the House and the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of JUIF and PMLF were present while the leaders of MQM, PMLN, PPP, PML, BNPA, ANP and NP were absent.
- Eleven senators were present at the start while 21 were there when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 38 senators were observed to be present at one point of sitting.
- Two out of four minority senators attended the sitting.
- Two senators applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- There were 15 questions on the agenda. Nine were asked and responded. Additionally, nine supplementary questions were asked.

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• The Pakistan Academy of Letters Bill 2012 was moved by the Law Minister and was passed by the House.

Order and Institutionalization

- Seventeen points of order were raised which consumed an hour and twenty minutes of the sitting time.
- A walkout was staged by a JUIF Senator belonging from Balochistan over the dissolution of the Balochistan provincial government. The Senator did not return to attend the rest of the proceedings.

Transparency

- Orders of the day were available to legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was recorded but was unavailable to 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