



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 04, Session No. 90 of the Senate

Senate: Sitting Marked by Low Attendance, Walkouts

ISLAMABAD, January 24, 2012: Starting 32 minutes late, the fourth sitting of Senate's 90th session was marked by low attendance and walkouts. Only eight senators in the 104-member House were present at the outset and 11 at the adjournment. A maximum of 39 Senators (38%) were present at one point of sitting.

The House witnessed four walkouts. An MQM Senator staged a token walkout over reports of embezzlement in a vaccine project. ANP Senators along with a colleague from PPPP staged a token walkout over Prime Minister's remarks about the accused of Baldia Town incident. JUI and BNPA jointly walked out of the House over Governor's Rule in Balochistan, and PMLN lawmakers staged a 25-minute walkout over remarks of Punjab Governor about new provinces in Punjab.

The House passed the Maritime Security Agency (Amendment) Bill 2012. A report on the Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2012 was presented by the Standing Committee on Interior. Further, a calling attention notice about the death of 1000 persons because of outbreak of measles in Sindh was taken up.

The Chairman chaired the entire sitting. The Leader of the House, the Leader of the Opposition and the parliamentary leaders of all the parties attended the sitting.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for an hour and 30 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1102 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1030 hours, witnessing a delay of 32 minutes.
- 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 all parties were present.
- Only eight Senators were present at the start while 11 were there at the time of adjournment. A maximum of 39 Senators were present at one point of sitting.
- The quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any Senator.
- Two minority Senators attended the sitting.
- Eight Senators applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Four of the seven starred questions appearing on the agenda were taken up and responded to by the relevant ministries. Additionally, eight supplementary questions were asked.



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- A calling attention notice (CAN) about the death of 1000 persons because of outbreak of measles in Sindh, and reports of insufficient vaccines was taken up.

Output

- The House passed the Maritime Security Agency (Amendment) Bill 2012. The bill has already been passed by the National Assembly.
- A report on the Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2012 was presented by the Standing Committee on Interior.

Order and Institutionalization

- Eleven points of order consumed 40 minutes (44%) of the sitting time.
- Four instances of walkouts were observed during the sitting. An MQM legislator staged a token walkout over reports of embezzlement in a vaccine project; the ANP legislators, along with a PPP Senator, staged a token walkout over Prime Minister's remarks about the accused of *Baldia Town* incident; JUI and BNPA jointly walked out over the Governor Rule in Balochistan; and PMLN lawmakers staged a 25-minute walkout over remarks of Punjab Governor about new provinces in Punjab.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day was available to 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