



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.7: Session No. 77 of the Senate

Around One-fourth of Senators Attend Sitting

ISLAMABAD, January 25, 2012: The Senate met for two hours and 14 minutes during the seventh sitting of the ongoing 77th session.

The sitting witnessed low attendance as only 17 Legislators were present at the start, while eight were present when the sitting was adjourned.

The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any of the Legislators.

A Calling Attention Notice about increase in the rate of illiteracy was taken up.

Only one out of 11 Starred questions listed for the Question Hour was responded by the relevant minister.

Two Adjournment Motions about “shortage of water” and “alleged corruption in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting” were raised, which were not taken up by the House.

The Leader of the House attended the sitting for 45 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition not present.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members’ Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for two hours and 14 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1655 hours instead of the scheduled starting time of 1600 hours. The House proceedings started 55 minutes late.
- The Deputy Chairman presided over the entire sitting.

After successfully observing proceedings of the National Assembly, the Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has started the observation of the provincial assemblies – Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan – and the Senate.

This daily factsheet is based on FAFEN’s direct observation of the seventh sitting of 77th session of the Senate.

These reports are released on the day the sittings are held to provide media and other interested stakeholders vital statistics about the Assembly proceedings to encourage informed public discourse on its performance.



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- The Leader of the House attended the sitting for 45 minutes while the Leader of the Opposition was not present.
- The Parliamentary Leaders of the PMLN, PML, MQM, PMLF, PKMAP, NP and the JI attended the sitting while the leaders of the JWP, BNPA, PPPS and the ANP were absent.
- Seventeen Senators (17%) were present at the start of the sitting while eight (8%) were there when the sitting was adjourned. A maximum of 28 Senators (28%) were present during one point of the sitting.
- Four Senators applied for leave to be absent.
- The House took a 32-minute break due to prayers.

Representation and Responsiveness

- A Calling Attention Notice (CAN) about increase in the rate of illiteracy was taken up by the Upper House. This was directed to the Ministry of Professional and Technical Training.
- Eleven questions were listed for the Question Hour; only one was put up and responded to by the relevant minister.
- Three supplementary questions were raised during the sitting.
- Two Adjournment Motions about “shortage of water” and “alleged corruption in the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting” were raised by a JI Member. These Motions were not taken up by the House.

Output

- The National Commission for Human Rights Bill, 2011 was introduced and sent to the respective Standing Committee.

Order and Institutionalization

- Nine Points of Order were raised which consumed 18 minutes of the sitting time. However, none of the Points of Order attracted the Chair’s formal ruling.
- There were no instances of protests, boycotts or walkouts.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to Legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Members’ attendance was unavailable to observers and the public.
- The Quorum was visibly lacking at various stages during the sitting. However, this was not pointed out by any of the Senators.



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Election Network**
*The Daily Factsheet is based on direct observation of the Senate proceedings conducted by Center for
Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), a member organization of FAFEN*