



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 7: Session No. 81 of the Senate

Sitting Marked by Low Attendance, Protests by PMLN and JUIF

ISLAMABAD, May 9, 2012: As the PMLN continued protest over the Prime Minister's conviction in the contempt case, the seventh sitting of Senate's 81st session, which met for two hours and 17 minutes, witnessed low attendance of Senators.

Only six Senators were present at the start and 11 were there when the sitting, which started 38 minutes late, was adjourned.

PMLN Senators again protested over the issue of the Prime Minister's conviction in the contempt case and boycotted the proceedings. They went out of the House at 1810 hours and did not come back to attend the remaining proceedings.

JUIF Senators staged a five-minute token walkout over complete autonomy not being granted to the provinces.

The Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was there for 40 minutes. Additionally, the parliamentary leaders of MQM, JUIF and ANP were present.

Two Senators spoke on the president's address to the joint session of the parliament in March.

Following are some key observations of the parliamentary business:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- Senate met for two hours and 17 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1738 hours against the scheduled starting time of 1700 hours. The proceedings started late by 38 minutes.
- The Chairman chaired the sitting. The Deputy Chairman was not present.
- The Leader of the House was present during the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition attended the sitting for 40 minutes.
- The Parliamentary Leaders of the MQM, ANP and JUIF attended the sitting.
- Six Senators (6% of total Membership) were present at the start, while 11 (11%) were present when the sitting was adjourned.
- Two Minority Members were present during the sitting.
- Three Senators were applied for leave to be absent.

Representation and Responsiveness

- Two Senators debated the Presidential Address held on March 17, 2012 for 15 minutes.
- Three out of 17 questions appearing on the Agenda were taken up and responded by the relevant minister. Additionally, five Supplementary questions were raised.



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- The Medical and Dental Council (Amendment) Bill, 2012.

Order and Institutionalization

- No Points of Order was raised during the sitting time.
- The sitting witnessed a walkout by PMLN legislators demanding resignation of Prime Minister after his conviction by the apex court in the contempt case. They went out of the House at 1810 hours and did not come back to attend the remaining proceedings.
- JUIF Senators staged a five-minute token walkout over complete autonomy not being granted to the provinces.

Transparency

- Orders of the Day were available to Legislators, observers and others.
- Information on Members' 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