



Free and Fair Election Network

FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No. 10 Session No.99 of the Senate

Senate Continues Debate on Foreign Policy

ISLAMABAD, December 17, 2013: A thinly attended meeting of the Senate continued its debate on a motion regarding the foreign policy during 10th sitting of the 99th session of Upper House, says Free and Fair Election Network in its Daily Factsheet based on direct observation of the Upper House.

Five members belonging to PML, PPP, BNP-A, NP and an Independent spoke for 75 minutes on the motion about foreign policy with particular reference to the visit of the Prime Minister to US, the repercussions of the expected reduction of forces in Afghanistan by the US/ISAF in 2014, offer of talks to Taliban, drone attacks and NATO supply.

Moreover, the Minister of State for Commerce and Textile Industry gave policy statement on award of GSP-Plus status to Pakistan by the European Union Parliament.

Starting 33 minutes behind the schedule, the sitting lasted three hours and seven minutes while consuming 27 minutes for prayers break. Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while Leader of the Opposition remained present for an hour and 44 minutes. The parliamentary leaders of PML-N and MQM were also present during the sitting.

Thirteen out of 22 Starred Questions on the Orders of the Day were taken up; however the relevant ministers did not attend the session. The members also asked 38 supplementary questions.

Following are some key observations of the House proceedings:

Members' Participation in House Proceedings

- The Senate met for three hours and 07 minutes.
- The sitting started at 1603 hours against the scheduled time of 1530 hours, witnessing a delay of 33 minutes.
- The House took a prayer break of 27 minutes.
- The Chairman presided over the sitting till break. The Deputy Chairman Chaired the rest of the proceedings.
- Leader of the House attended the entire sitting while the Leader of the Opposition remained present for an hour and 44 minutes.
- Eight senators were present at the outset, 23 at the end while maximum 31 were counted to be present at a point during the sitting.
- The parliamentary leaders of PML-N and MQM attended the sitting.
- Two minority senators attended the proceedings.
- None of the members applied for leave.

Representation and Responsiveness



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- Thirteen out of 22 Starred Questions on the agenda – requiring both oral and written answers – were taken up. Additionally, lawmakers asked 38 supplementary questions. These were addressed to the Ministries of Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs & Statistics and Industries & Production.

Order and Institutionalization

- A senator spoke once on a point of order consuming four minutes of the proceedings.
- There were no instances of the protests/walkouts/boycotts.

Transparency

- 'Orders of the Day' was available to the legislators, observers and others.
- Information on senators' attendance was not available to the observers and the public.

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