

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF PUNJAB

FAFEN PARLIAMENT MONITOR

28th SESSION

April 24 - April 28, 2017



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Session
Number

28

Working
Days

5

Actual
Sittings

5

Working
Hours

9

Hours

FIVE-SITTING SESSION TRANSACTS LESS THAN 50 PERCENT BUSINESS

The 28th session of the Punjab Assembly was the shortest session during the fourth parliamentary year ending this month. The Assembly has so far held seven sessions comprising 66 sittings and completed 90 Working Days. However, the Assembly constitutionally requires to meet for at least 100 working days during a parliamentary year.

The government presented three ordinances promulgated between 27th and 28th sessions, which along with two Private Members' bills were referred to relevant standing committees. The House also adopted four resolutions, including three resolutions on matters of public importance. The session followed announcement of the Supreme Court's verdict on Panama Papers Case involving the Prime Minister and his family. The controversy prompted a government resolution expressing confidence on the Premier and several protests by opposition parties against him.

The House addressed less than half (45%) of its scheduled business appearing on Orders of the Day. The remaining 55% agenda was not addressed either due to absence of the movers or on government's unpreparedness. Some of the items appeared more than once on the agenda and still remained unaddressed. Only 55 out of 119

Starred Questions were taken up for oral answers while no Adjournment Motion (AM) was answered during the entire session. The government did not provide written answers to 25 out of 192 questions asked by the lawmakers. Moreover, the Question of Privilege and Zero Hour notices also remained unaddressed during the reporting period.

The attendance of lawmakers witnessed a gradual downward trend with 212 (57%) members present in the first sitting and 181 (48%) during the last sitting. On average, 27 (7%) lawmakers were observed to be present at the beginning and 54 (15%) at the adjournment of each sitting. The issue of quorum surfaced five times but on three occasions it was completed after ringing of the bells.

Duration and Attendance

The 28th session of the Punjab Assembly comprised five sittings and had cumulative duration of nine hours. The sittings started an hour and 42 minutes behind the scheduled time. The Speaker, who was present during all sittings, presided over majority of the proceedings (76%) while the Deputy Speaker attended two sittings and chaired the rest of the session (13%). The remaining one percent of the duration was the time lost in suspension due to lack of quorum.

KEY MEMBERS ATTENDANCE



Rana Muhammad Iqbal
SPEAKER

5/5

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

06:48



Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani
DEPUTY SPEAKER

2/5

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

01:09



Mian Shahbaz Sharif
CHIEF MINISTER

0/5

Attended Time (hh:mm)

0:00



Mian Mehmood-ur-Rashid
LEADER OF OPPOSITION

4/5

Attended Time (hh:mm)

01:57

* The Members of panel of chairpersons presided over the sitting for two hours and 48 minutes.

PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS ATTENDANCE



Syed Waseem Akhtar



JI

3/5



Ghulam Murtaza



PML-Z

2/5



Muhammad Sibtain Khan



PTI

2/5



S. Iftikhar Gillani



BNAP

0/5



Ch Moonis Elahi



PML

0/5



Bilal Asghar Warraich



PNML

0/5



Sardar Shahab-ud-Din



PPPP

0/5

Suspension

1

Hours & 03 Minutes

Members at Outset
(Average)

27

present

Members at End
(Average)

54

present

Maximum Attendance

194

present

The Chief Minister did not attend any of the sittings. The Leader of the Opposition, on the other hand, was observed to be present in four sittings and attended proceedings for an hour and 57 minutes (22%).

The attendance of lawmakers witnessed a gradual decline during the course of the session. There were 212 (57%) lawmakers marked present during the first sitting and 181 (49%) during the last sitting. On average, 192 (52%) lawmakers attended each sitting of the session. FAFEN also conducts headcount at commencement and close of each sitting. According to the head counts, on average, 27 (7%) lawmakers were observed to be present at the beginning and 54 (15%) at the adjournment of each sitting. The parliamentary leaders of PTI and PML-Z attended two sittings each while the sole lawmaker of JI remained present in three sittings.

Legislation

The Assembly's business also comprised seven legislative proposals, including three government ordinances. The remaining four bills were sponsored by Private Members belonging to PML-N and PPPP lawmakers. The House referred two Private Members' bills and three ordinances to the relevant committees after their first reading (introduction before the House) while one bill moved by PPPP lawmaker was rejected and another bill remained unaddressed.

Following is the brief introduction of bills referred to the committees:

Government Bills

The Punjab Women Protection Authority Ordinance 2017

The ordinance provides for the establishment of Women Protection Authority and designation of an Additional Inspector General of Police for Women. The Authority shall look after the matters of Women Protection Centers to be set up under the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Act 2016.

The Punjab Boilers and Pressure Vessels (Amendment) Ordinance, 2017

The latest ordinance amends the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Ordinance, 2002 in order to provide for regulation of boilers and pressure vessels and reorganization of the Punjab Boilers and Pressure Vessels Safety Board and the Ad-hoc Technical Committee.

The Punjab Shehr-e-Khamoshan Authority Ordinance, 2017

The ordinance provides for the establishment of Punjab Shehr-e-Khamoshan Authority in order to regulate the affairs of graveyards in the province.

Private Members' Bill

The Punjab Tobacco Vend (Amendment) Bill, 2017

The bill proposes to raise the penalties provided under the Punjab Tobacco Vend Act, 1958 for the unauthorized sale of tobacco.

The Punjab Private Educational Institutions (Promotion and Regulation) (Amendment) Bill, 2017

The bill proposes to raise the penalty for management of private schools who compel the parents of students to purchase textbooks, uniform and other material from a

5

Bills Referred
to Committee

4

Resolutions
Adopted

16

Adjournment
Motions

2

Calling Attention
Notices

particular shop or provider.

Resolutions

The House adopted four resolutions during the reporting session. One of these resolutions, moved out-of-turn by a minister as a supplementary agenda, expressed confidence on the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. The remaining three resolutions were sponsored by private lawmakers belonging to PML-N. These resolutions recommended the government to install incinerators in each District Headquarter Hospital, recognize the police officials who lost their lives in line of duty as martyrs and prevent indecent advertisements on rickshaws.

Moreover, a PTI lawmaker's resolution recommending cancellation of route permits of public transport vehicles with unsafe CNG cylinders was rejected while a resolution by another member of the same party was disposed of due to absence of the sponsor. Furthermore, three Private Members' resolutions sponsored by PML-N and PTI lawmakers were kept pending.

Reports

The standing committees on agriculture and health presented their reports on matters referred to them. The House granted two-month extension to the Public Accounts Committee for presentation of its reports on audit of the provincial government's accounts for years 2008-2009 and 2013-2014. Moreover, the Provincial Minister for Women Development presented annual performance report of the Punjab Commission on

Status of Women for year 2014-15 before the House.

Questions

The Assembly held five Question Hours and listed 192 questions (119 Starred and 73 Unstarred) during the reporting session. However, only 55 Starred Questions (46%) were taken up for oral answers. The lawmakers also asked 78 supplementary questions for further clarification of written answers. Moreover, 25 questions (13%) did not receive written replies.

Of 192 questions, 115 were asked by members of PML-N, PTI (23), PPP (15), JI (13), PML (12) and 14 by members belonging to smaller parties or independents. As many as 57 questions (30%) were raised by female lawmakers belonging to different parties. A total of 48 (including 16 female) out of 369 lawmakers used the questions as tool to perform oversight of the government. These questions were addressed to five ministries comprising Home (33); Housing, Urban Development and Public Health Engineering (40); Local Government and Community Development (51); Primary and Secondary Healthcare (44); and Revenue and Colonies (24).

Calling Attention Notices (CANs)

The House took up two CANs during first sitting of the session. These CANs were submitted by PTI and PML-N lawmakers to draw attention of the government against murder of a police official and attack on Census team in Lahore. Both CANs were disposed of after relevant minister made statements on them.

119

Starred
Questions

73

Unstarred
Questions

2

Committee
Reports

1

Statutory
Reports

Adjournment Motions (AMs)

The treasury and opposition lawmakers made 16 motions seeking adjournment of the proceedings to take up various public importance issues. None of these motions were answered by the government instead those were kept pending till the prorogation of the session. The lawmakers highlighted the subjects related to governance, health, education, traffic problems and child labour. Seven of these AMs were submitted by PML-N, four by PML and five by PTI.

Questions of Privilege

A PTI lawmaker raised a Question of Privilege claiming that a former lawmaker of his constituency forged documents to show himself as Member of the Provincial Assembly and acquire funds from the government. The question was kept pending.

Protests

The opposition parties staged a protest against the Prime Minister in every sitting of the session except the last one. They demanded resignation of the Prime Minister following the verdict of apex court in the Panama Papers Case. The lawmakers protested within the House for 58 minutes while they also resorted to a 15-minute walkout from the proceedings. The sole lawmaker of JI staged a token walkout for 10 minutes against depriving Bahawalpur division of its due development funds.

Quorum

The opposition lawmakers (PTI and an Independent) pointed out quorum five times during the session. On

three occasions, the quorum was completed on ringing the bells for five minutes while the last sitting of the session had to be suspended for an hour and three minutes due to lack of quorum. Later, the quorum was found missing again that led to the prorogation of the session.

Zero Hour and Points of Order

The lawmakers raised 33 Points of Order during the five sittings which consumed 37 minutes of the session's duration. Moreover, two lawmakers belonging to PML-N and PML-Z submitted Zero Hour notices concerning their constituency matters. One of these notices was addressed by the government while the other was kept pending till the prorogation of the session.

ABOUT FAFEN

- FAFEN is one of the most credible networks of civil society organizations working for strengthening citizens' voice and accountability in Pakistan since 2006.
- FAFEN has harnessed information technology for real-time monitoring, facilitation and technical backstopping of partners for effective and result-based program delivery.
- FAFEN is the only civil society group to have been invited by the Judicial Commission to present the evidence of illegalities and irregularities documented through the course of General Elections 2013 Observation. The systemic and procedural issues identified by FAFEN have been acknowledged by the commission in its detailed findings.
- FAFEN's recommendations for electoral reforms have contributed to the work of Parliamentary Committee for Electoral Reforms.
- FAFEN's advocacy for parliamentary transparency, accountability and reforms has shaped public discourse on parliamentary reforms. Improved citizens' access to parliamentary information including daily public release of parliamentarians' attendance records can be directly attributed to FAFEN's work.
- FAFEN deployed 18,000 and 40,000 non-partisan and trained observers for the systematic observation of general election 2008 and 2013, respectively, largest citizens' observation ever undertaken in Pakistan.
- FAFEN's evidence and recommendations for reforms have improved the quality of public and political discourse on elections, its issues and need for reforms. Leading political parties and media houses extensively use FAFEN's election findings and analysis to build a case for reforms.
- With more than 18,200 followers on Twitter and around 117,000 on Facebook, FAFEN is considered one of the most reliable sources of electoral and parliamentary information in the country.

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This report is based on direct observation of the proceedings of the Punjab Assembly conducted by PATTAN Development Organization – a member organization of FAFEN. Every effort has been made to keep this report, which deals with on-floor performance of the Members, accurate and comprehensive. Errors and omissions are excepted.