

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF PUNJAB

FAFEN PARLIAMENT MONITOR

30th SESSION

June 2 - June 15, 2017



FREE AND FAIR ELECTION NETWORK

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Session
Number

30

Working
Days

14

Actual
Sittings

10

Working
Hours

26

Hours & 30 Minutes

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY: 79% LAWMAKERS ABSTAIN FROM BUDGET DEBATE

- Chief Minister attends three out of 10 sittings
- 84% of PML-N and 44% of PTI members remain silent during budget debate
- PML-N Government presents 10th consecutive budget in Punjab
- Lack of quorum disrupts House proceedings seven times

ISLAMABAD, June 16, 2017: Most of the lawmakers did not take part in the general discussion during the budget session of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab held between June 2 and June 15, 2017, observes Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its session report.

As many as 294 members (79%) did not participate in the debate held on the Money Bill. Maximum number of such lawmakers belonged to the ruling party, PML-N (84%) while those belonging to the main opposition party, PTI remained 44 percent.

The Punjab Assembly passed the Annual Budget 2017-18 and the Supplementary Budget 2016-17 during 30th (Budget) session. It is Punjab's 10th consecutive budget presented by the PML-N leadership.

The budget session began with the introduction of the Finance Bill, 2017 and the presentation of Annual and Supplementary Budgets on June 2, 2017. Two days after the budget speech, the House commenced

discussion on the budget that continued for four sittings, while 43 Demands for Grants were approved during the next two days. The provincial government managed to pass the Punjab Finance Bill 2017 on June 13. The opposition lawmakers moved six Cut Motions which were rejected by a majority vote. The remaining Demands for Grants were approved by the House under Rule 144 (4) of the Rules of Procedure of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab, 1997. According to the said Rule, all questions outstanding on the last days allotted for voting on Demands for Grants are put before the House for disposal. The last two sittings of the session were consumed by discussion and voting on the Supplementary Budget 2016-17. The Cut Motions on Supplementary Demands for Grants were also rejected by the House.

Attendance

The Chief Minister attended three sittings consuming 11% of the proceedings' time. The Leader of the Opposition, on the other hand, attended nine sittings consuming 37% of the sitting time while the

KEY MEMBERS ATTENDANCE



Rana Muhammad Iqbal
SPEAKER

1/10

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

02:11



Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani
DEPUTY SPEAKER

10/10

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

22:45



Mian Shahbaz Sharif
CHIEF MINISTER

3/10

Attended Time (hh:mm)

02:53



Mian Mehmood-ur-Rashid
LEADER OF OPPOSITION

9/10

Attended Time (hh:mm)

09:49



Dr. Aisha Ghaus Pasha
FINANCE MINISTER

10/10

Attended Time (hh:mm)

22:57

PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS ATTENDANCE



Syed Waseem Akhtar



JI

4/10



Ghulam Murtaza



PML-Z

4/10



Sardar Shahab-ud-Din



PPPP

2/10



Bilal Asghar Warraich



PNML

0/10



S. Iftikhar Gillani



BNAP

0/10



Ch Moonis Elahi



PML

0/10

Suspension

2

1 Hour & 34 Minutes

Members at Outset
(Average)

59

present

Members at End
(Average)

80

present

Maximum Attendance

109

present

Finance Minister remained present during all 10 sittings consuming 87% of the total time. The Speaker chaired 8% of the session's time, the Deputy Speaker presided over 86% of the proceedings, while two sittings remained suspended for six percent of the session's time. Among parliamentary leaders, those of JI and PML-Z attended four sittings each, followed by two sittings by the PPPP leader. The parliamentary leader of PML, PNML and BNA-P did not attend any of the sittings.

Lawmakers Participation in Budget Debate

As many as 76 out of 370 lawmakers (21%) took part in the deliberations while the remaining 294 (79%) legislators did not participate in the fiscal discussion. The lawmakers spent 17 hours and 22 minutes (66% of session's duration) on the general discussion as well as the debate on Demands for Grants, Finance Bill and the Supplementary Budget.

Among 76 members taking part in budget discussion, 25 (33%) were female lawmakers who consumed 23% of the proceedings' time (236 minutes). Seventeen lawmakers of the main opposition party, PTI consumed maximum part of the discussions (eight hours and 27 minutes), followed by lawmakers of the ruling party, PML-N whose 50 members took six hours and 13 minutes. Three lawmakers each of PPPP and PML spoke for 50 and 39 minutes, respectively while one lawmaker each of JI, Independent and JUI-F consumed 53 minutes, 15 minutes and five minutes, respectively.

Budget Statements

Apart from the Annual and Supplementary Budget statements,

the Finance Minister laid the Schedule of Authorized Expenditure for the year 2017-2018 and the Supplementary Schedule of the Authorized Expenditure for the year 2016-2017.

The Budget (30th) session of the Punjab Assembly started with an average delay of an hour and seven minutes, while each sitting lasted two hours and 39 minutes, on average. Fifty-nine members, on average, were present at the outset and 80 lawmakers at the time of adjournment of the sitting.

Quorum

The quorum was pointed out seven times during the entire session. However, it got completed on four occasions after the bells were rung for five minutes while it was found complete once upon head counting. During the 3rd and 5th sittings, proceedings had to be suspended for 64 and 30 minutes, respectively.

Walkouts

The House witnessed six walkouts for 85 minutes and four protests for 99 minutes during the reporting session. Two walkouts were observed by as many PML-N lawmakers over the Chair's refusal to grant them extra time for their speeches while the entire opposition walked out of the House on four occasions over interruptions by treasury benches over PTI lawmaker's speech; imposition of new taxes, unwarranted remarks of a treasury lawmaker and the rejection of their cut motions.

Protests

Four protests were observed by the opposition lawmakers on the floor of the House during the session. The opposition protested during the speech of the Minister for Finance over treasury benches' interruption



2

Bills Referred
to Committee

1

Bill Passed

3

Adjournment
Motions

26

Points of
Orders

during PTI lawmaker's speech, allegations of corruption against the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister and the unwarranted remarks of a treasury lawmaker against the opposition members.

Legislation

The House passed the Punjab Finance Bill, 2017 and referred two other bills, including the Punjab Destitute and Neglected Children (Amendment) Bill 2017 and the Punjab Education Standards Development Authority Bill 2017, to relevant committees for review and deliberations.

Three Adjournment Motions (AMs) remained pending on the shortage of potable water in Lahore, embezzlement in the funds of Lahore Transport Company and non-availability of MRI and C.T Scan machines in the public hospitals in Lahore.

One of the ministers laid notifications before the House which were related to the amendments in the Second Schedule of the Punjab

Sales Tax on Services Act 2012 and the Rules made under the Act.

Points of Order

The lawmakers spoke on 26 Points of Order during the session, consuming 34 minutes of the proceedings. Though reserved for matters related to the rules, the lawmakers used the POs to talk about various other issues as well.

Reports

A report of the Public Accounts Committee was presented while the House granted extension for presentation of reports on various parliamentary interventions, including five reports on the questions and one on the Privilege Motions.

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 18,400 followers on Twitter and around 117,700 on Facebook, FAFEN is considered one of the most reliable sources of electoral and parliamentary information in the country.

Free and Fair Election Network
www.fafen.org



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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.