**FAFEN Daily Factsheet: Sitting No.6, Session No.20 of the National Assembly**

**Five Bills Introduced in National Assembly**

ISLAMABAD, March 24, 2015: The National Assembly sitting started an hour behind the schedule but addressed most of its agenda on Tuesday, says Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its daily factsheet.

The agenda included seven bills, of which five were introduced and referred to the relevant standing committees while the remaining two were not taken up due to the movers’ absence. Two calling attention notices (CANs) regarding appointment of 50 officials on deputation in Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and discontinuation of support for families of government employees who pass away during service were also taken up during the sitting.

Two motions under Rule 259 to discuss steps taken by the government to safeguard religious freedom and increasing deficit due to poor performance of Pakistan Steel Mills were not taken up.

Sixty-eight lawmakers (20%) were present at the start of the sitting and 66 (19%) at the time of adjournment. The quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any of the lawmakers. The Prime Minister attended the sitting for one hour and two minutes, while the Opposition Leader was present for one hour and 14 minutes.

The following are some key observations of the House proceedings:

**Members’ Participation in the House Proceedings:**

* The National Assembly met for two hours and 35 minutes.
* The sitting began at 1700 hours against the scheduled time of 1600 hours.
* The Speaker chaired the entire sitting. The Deputy Speaker was also present.
* The Prime Minister attended the sitting for 62 minutes.
* The Opposition Leader was present for 74 minutes.
* 68 lawmakers (20%) were present at the start 66 (19%) at the end of the sitting.
* A maximum of 156 members (46%) attended the sitting.
* The parliamentary leaders of PML, PkMAP, APML, QWP, JI, PML-F, PML-Z, ANP, MQM and BNP were present.
* Six minority members attended the sitting.
* Thirty-one members applied for leave.

**Output**

* Five bills were introduced and referred to the relevant standing committees. These included the Holder of Public Exchequer (Accountability) Bill 2015, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2015 (Amendment in Article 184), the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 2015 (Amendment in Article 63), the National Accountability Ordinance (Amendment) Bill 2015 and the Islamabad Compulsory Civic Education Bill 2015.
* Two bills – the Pakistan Penal Code (Amendment) Bill 2015 and the National Database and Registration Authority (Amendment) Bill 2015 were not taken up.
* Chairman Standing Committee on Law, Justice and Human Rights presented two reports on bills seeking amendments to the Constitution, while the Chairman Standing Committee on Finance presented a report on the Credit Bureaus Bill 2015.
* The House adopted a resolution seeking establishment of a women varsity in Swat, while another resolution to curb electricity theft and pilferage was debated during the sitting. Three other resolutions were left unaddressed.
* Three amendments to the Rules of Procedure were taken up and referred to the relevant standing committees.

**Representation and Responsiveness**

* Two CANs – one regarding deputation of 50 government officials in PIA and another regarding discontinuation of support for families of government employees who pass away during service – were taken up during the sitting.

**Order and Institutionalization**

* Eight points of orders (POs) consumed 12 minutes (8%) of the sitting.

**Transparency**

* ‘Orders of the Day’ was available to the legislators, observers and others.
* Information on members’ attendance was not shared with observers and the public.
* The quorum was visibly lacking at various stages of the sitting. However, it was not pointed out by any of the lawmakers.

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