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**FAFEN Session Report on 18th Session of the Sindh Assembly**

**Sindh PA Passes Five Bills, Adopts 22 Resolutions during 18th Session**

ISLAMABAD, March 13, 2015: The Sindh Assembly passed five bills and adopted 22 resolutions during its 18th session, says Free and Fair Election Network in its session report based on direct observation of Sindh Assembly.

Out of 22 bills on list of business during the session, the House passed five – four governments and one private member bill. Five government and five private bills were introduced in the House; two private and one government bills were not taken up while four government bills were not considered.

The Private member bill passed by the House include the Sindh Institute of Management and Technology Bill, 2015 and the other four passed government bills were the Sindh Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Bill 2014; the Sindh Consumer Protection Bill 2014; the Sindh Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2015 and the Sindh Insurance of Public Property Bill, 2015.

 The House witnessed presentation of four reports which were about the Sindh Consumer Protection Bills 2013 & 2014; quarterly report about receipt and total expenditure of province and periodic report on biannual monitoring on the implementation of National Finance Commission (NFC) award.

In the session, a total of 37 resolutions were tabled, of which, the House adopted 22 of them and did not take up 15 resolutions. Of these adopted resolutions, 11 were on the issues of good governance followed by energy reforms (4), tributes and condemnation (three), terrorism (two), education sector and lawmakers’ passports (one each).

The House debated one resolution for three hours and 54 minutes to condemn terrorism incident in Shikarpur which consumed seven percent of session’s total time. A total of 30 legislators shared their views on this resolution.

Lawmakers performed treasury’s oversight on 79 starred questions (requiring both verbal and written answers) out of a total of 111 starred questions appearing on the questions list for the session. Members appeared to be locked up with the government to acquire satisfactory answers to their questions, as they asked an additional 398 questions.

To seek government assurances on public issues the members tabled as many as 59 calling attention notices (CANs). The House took up 29 calling attention notices primarily on governance related issues, more on matters related to departments of Local Government, Education and Literacy, Interior and Health.

The House did not debate 21 private motions on various public issues- 19 submitted by MQM and two by PPPP lawmakers. Some provincial issues highlighted in the above motions included action against illegal seminaries, land grabbers, policemen included in criminal activities and security measures for schools as well as road and health infrastructure.

The House discussed an adjournment motion against blasphemous caricatures for 120 minutes participated by 20 lawmakers. Nine adjournment motions were rejected in the session which mostly dealt with issues in education and health sectors. Three AMs were not taken up while two were withdrawn by the movers.

Spanning for near one and half month, 18th session of Sindh Assembly met for 20 sittings with an average delay of 44 minutes, while each sitting on average lasted for two hours and 37 minutes. Twenty eight members were present at the time of outset of sitting, on average. The attendance of members increased subsequently till the end of each sitting, as 59 lawmakers were present at the end. A maximum of 71 members were noticed to be present at one point of sitting while four minority members attended the session on average.

The Chief Minister (Leader of the House) attended six sittings (10% of the proceedings’ time) while the Leader of the Opposition 12 sittings (53% of the proceedings’ time). The Speaker chaired 47% of the proceedings; the Deputy Speaker presided over 45% of the session while the remaining time (8%) was chaired by the Panel of Chairpersons. The House took three short breaks consuming nine minutes of the session time.

As many as eight questions of privilege (QoPs) were submitted by the members. Four QoPs raised by male lawmakers of PPPP were referred to the Special Committee for Privileges; three of PML-N and PML-F lawmakers were not taken up and one was withdrawn by the PML-F lawmaker (Opposition Leader).

Members raised 219 points of order, consuming 10% (328 minutes) of total session time. Amendments suggested by MQM lawmakers in the Sindh Assembly’s Rules of Procedure were left unaddressed.

The House witnessed eleven individual or joint protests. PML-F lawmakers protested four times on various issues including unsatisfactory reply to a question, attitude of PPPP lawmakers and not getting permission to speak on floor.

MQM lawmakers protested twice over killing of their party workers and PPPP legislators protested against MQM lawmakers who agitated in front of speaker. Joint protest by PML-N and PML-F lawmakers were staged thrice over the issues of non-implementation of sugarcane prices; Deputy Speaker’s refusal to permit them to speak on point of order and rejection of a resolution. Another joint protest by PML-F and MQM members was held after they were barred to speak on a resolution.

The Speaker adjourned the sitting twice owing absence of majority of lawmakers belonging to both the treasury and opposition benches during 6th and 11th sitting.

*The Session Report is based on direct observation of Sindh Assembly proceedings conducted by Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF), a member organization of FAFEN*