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**FAFEN’s Session Report on 114th Session of the Senate**

**Senate Sets Precedent for Punctuality**

* **Marked decrease in misuse of POs observed**
* **Prime Minister attends only one out of seven sittings**

ISLAMABAD, April 21, 2015: The 114th session of the Senate witnessed a marked improvement in parliamentary business as the House strictly followed the schedule and witnessed a considerable decrease in misuse of points of order (POs).

The session, comprising seven sittings, started on April 6 and concluded on April 20, 2015 – with all the sittings starting on time. On average, each sitting lasted three hours and 10 minutes with 21 (20%) lawmakers present at the start and 45 (43%) at the time of adjournment.

The Prime Minister attended only one sitting for 30 minutes, while the Leader of the House and Opposition Leader were present in five and four sittings respectively.

The Chairman, who was present in all the sittings, presided over 89% of the session. The Deputy Chairman, who was also present in all the sittings, chaired 4% of the proceedings. The remaining time was presided over by a member of the Panel of Chairpersons.

The House passed the Securities Bill 2015 to amend and consolidate laws regulating the securities industry. In addition, five other bills – including a private bill – were introduced during the session. These included the Islamabad Mandatory Vaccination and Protection of Health Workers Bill 2015, the Seed (Amendment Bill) 2015, the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Bill 2015, the Credit Bureaus Bill 2015 and the Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Bill 2015.

The Seed (Amendment) Bill 2014 seeks to regulate the private seed industry by establishing terms and conditions for production on the basis of certification from relevant authorities. Similarly, the Credit Bureaus Bill 2015 regulates private credit bureaus, while the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils (Amendment) Bill 2014 proposes amendments to the Legal Practitioners and Bar Councils Act 1973 (XXXV of 1973) to regulate disciplinary proceedings and prescribe a period for complaints’ disposal.

The Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Bill 2014 defines the composition of the local government for the federal capital; prescribes its functions and establishes a mechanism for revenue generation. The bill specifies a minimum representation of 33% for women, 5% each for peasants/workers, non-Muslims and youth and 2% for technocrats in the metropolitan corporation. Apart from that, it suggests holding the polls on a non-party basis.

The Islamabad Mandatory Vaccination and Protection of Health Workers Bill 2015 aims to make universal immunization mandatory for children and protect health workers designated to vaccinate children.

In addition to the legislative bills, five ordinances were also presented during the session. These included the Safeguard Measures (Amendment) Ordinance 2015, the Countervailing Duties Ordnance 2015, the Anti-Dumping Duties Ordinance 2015, the National Tariff Commission Ordinance 2015 and the General Elections 2013 Inquiry Commission Ordinance 2015.

The House adopted four resolutions to preserve and develop archaeological sites, ensure effective steps for livestock development in Balochistan and to express grief over the demise of Senator Azam Khan Hoti and ex-senator Qazi Muhammad Shahid.

The House took up three out of five calling attention notices regarding problems faced by people in biometric verification of SIM cards, repatriation of commercial councilors from abroad and blocked CNICs of people belonging to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As many as 33 out of 62 (53%) questions were taken up during the session as the lawmakers raised another 89 supplementary questions on the floor of the House. However, 29 questions were either left unaddressed or withdrawn by the movers.

The members raised a total of 66 points of orders (POs) that consumed 176 minutes (13%) of the session. A considerable improvement was witnessed compared to the previous (112th) session, where 73 POs took up nearly half of the session time.

The House also took up seven out of 10 motions under Rule 218 and debated four of them during the session. The debated motions were related to the performance of Federal Government hospitals, LNG import, the banking sector’s performance and the status of Pak-China Economic Corridor.

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