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**FAFEN’s Session Report on the 19th Session of the Sindh Assembly**

**19th Session: Sindh Assembly Passes 20 Bills, Adopts 18 Resolutions**

ISLAMABAD, May 28, 2015: The 19th session of the Sindh Assembly was marked by low attendance of lawmakers as the House passed 20 bills and adopted 18 resolutions, says Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN).

The session, comprising 18 sittings, started on April 6 and ended on May 21, 2015. On average, each sitting started 74 minutes behind the schedule and lasted three hours and 16 minutes.

The session witnessed thin attendance of lawmakers, with each sitting attended by less than half of the total members. On average, 35 members (21% of the total membership) were present at the start of the sitting and 48 (29%) at the time of adjournment.

The 16th sitting was attended by the highest number of lawmakers (85, or 50%), while the sixth sitting had the lowest number of members (46, or 27%) present in the assembly.

The Chief Minister attended only 8% of the proceedings in five sittings, while the Opposition Leader attended 40% of the session in 13 sittings. Among parliamentary leaders, the PPPP leader attended all the sittings, followed by the leaders of PML-N and MQM (17), PTI (16) and PML-F (15).

Nearly 78% of the session was chaired by the Sindh Assembly Speaker, followed by the Deputy Speaker (13%) and members of the Panel of Chairpersons (9%). No breaks were held during the entire session.

The House passed 20 bills appearing on the agenda, of which 19 were sponsored by the government. Four other bills were introduced, in addition to three ordinances that were presented during the session. Another four bills (including three sponsored by private members) were not taken up, while three other government bills were deferred during the session.

The House also adopted 18 resolutions, including 12 appearing on the supplementary agenda. On the other hand, eight resolutions on the regular agenda were not taken up. One of the resolutions that condemned the attack on the Ismaili community in Karachi was debated by 29 lawmakers for four hours.

A considerable part of the session was consumed by the pre-budget debate and a report on budget expenditure during the third quarter of the ongoing fiscal year.As many as 59 lawmakers shared their views during these debates, which took up 20% of the session time.

The House also took up 57 out of 86 starred questions appearing on the agenda, while the member raised another 276 supplementary questions on the floor of the House to seek further clarity on the starred questions. On the other hand, 29 questions remained were not taken up by the House.

To member raised a total of 24 calling attention notices (CANs), of which 16 were taken up by the House. The CANs were related to issues of local government, revenue, health, irrigation, food, tourism, environment, education, Zakat, corruption and vacancies in the Home Department.

Although 20 private motions appeared on the list of business, none of them were debated by the House. Fifteen motions were submitted by MQM, followed by PPPP and PTI (two each) and PML-F (one).

The House also took up eight adjournment motions (AMs), of which seven were related to governance and one on law and order. The lawmakers debated another AM on water shortage in Karachi, while three other AMs on lack of basic facilities in Sanghar, unpaid salaries of police constables and mistakes in the question paper of Class V exams in Hyderabad were not taken up during the session.

Three questions of privilege (QoPs) were submitted by the lawmakers during the session. One of the QoPs raised by an MQM lawmaker was referred to the Special Committee for Privileges, while another QoP raised by PTI was rejected. The third QoP raised by a PML-F lawmaker was withdrawn by the mover.

The members also raised 140 points of order that consumed 6% of the session time. On the other hand, amendments to the Rules of Procedure proposed by MQM lawmakers were left unaddressed by the House.

The session witnessed five walkouts and 15 protests over multiple issues which took up 7% of the session time. Most of the walkouts/protests were carried out against the Chair for not allowing them to speak or to raise issues, while other demonstrations were held against the provincial ministers for their remarks against the opposition parties.

*The session report is based on direct observation of the Sindh Assembly proceedings conducted by Pakistan Press Foundation (PPF) – a member organization of FAFEN. Errors and omissions are excepted*