



FAFEN Session Report on 14th Session of the Punjab Assembly

Punjab PA Adopted 13 Resolutions, Passed Two Bills during 14th Session

ISLAMABAD, May 26, 2015: The Punjab Assembly adopted 13 resolutions and passed two bills during its 14th session, says Free and Fair Election Network in its session report based on direct observation of Punjab Assembly.

A total of 14 resolutions were tabled during the session, of which, the House adopted 13 and kept one pending. The pending resolution was regarding fixation of 3% revenue of all corporations, municipal committees, district councils and union councils for the development and establishment of libraries.

Of 13 adopted resolutions, two condemned terrorist attack on bus in Karachi, and alleged killing of President Daska Bar Association and a lawyer by SHO Daska City police station while the other two were about expressing grief over helicopter crash in Naltar, and death of six children during fire in a house at Shadbagh Lahore.

The other resolutions adopted by the House demanded vaccination against water-borne diseases; treatment facilities for hepatitis patients; increase in NADRA staff; decrease in PIA fares for Umrah; ban on import of intoxicated substances; provision of clean drinking water; hepatitis test in all hospitals; use of nets by butchers in their shops and declaring three tehsils of Mianwali as calamity hit areas after heavy rains.

Out of 11 bills on list of business during the session, the House passed two government bills which included the Punjab Overseas Pakistanis Commission (Amendment) Bill 2015 and the Fatima Jinnah Medical University Lahore Bill 2015.

Seven government bills were introduced in the House; the University of Okara Bill 2015, the Punjab Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Bill 2015; the Stamp (Amendment) Bill 2015; the Provincial Motor Vehicles (Second Amendment) Bill 2015; the Punjab Motor Vehicle Transaction Licensees Bill 2015; the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women (Amendment) Bill 2015 and the Punjab Protection of Women against Violence Bill 2015.

Two government bills – the University of Jhang Bill 2015 and the University of Sahiwal Bill 2015 – were not taken up while the House witnessed presentation of the Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Ordinance 2015, the Punjab Mass Transit Authority Ordinance 2015 and the Ghazi University, Dera Ghazi Khan (Amendment) Ordinance 2015.

FAFEN is governed by the Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA).

The House witnessed presentation of four legislative reports; the University of Sahiwal Bill 2015, the University of Jhang Bill 2015, the Punjab Overseas Pakistanis Commission (Amendment) Bill 2015 and the Fatima Jinnah Medical University Lahore Bill 2015.

Spanning over 11 days, the 14th session of the Punjab Assembly met for seven sittings with an average delay of 60 minutes, while on average, each sitting lasted three hours and 20 minutes. On average, twenty eight members (8%) were present at the outset and 47 (13%) at the time of adjournment of the sittings. A maximum of 78 members (21%) 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) did not attend any of the sitting while the Leader of the Opposition attended 6 sittings (34% of the proceedings' time). The Speaker chaired 49% of the proceedings; the Deputy Speaker presided over 37% of the session while the remaining time (3%) was chaired by the Panel of Chairpersons. The House took four short breaks consuming 11% (156 minutes) of the session time.

Parliamentary leader of JI attended all seven sittings followed by PPPP (3) and none by PML, PML-Z, BNA-P and PNML.

Out of a total of 188 starred questions appearing on the questions list, lawmakers performed treasury's oversight on 67 starred questions (requiring both verbal and written answers). Members appeared to be locked up with the government to acquire satisfactory answers to their questions, as they asked additional 164 questions.

The House took up five Calling Attention Notices (CANs) during the 5th sitting. Four CANs regarding law and order were disposed of while one on the similar subject was kept pending. Three CANs related to law and order were taken up during the 7th sitting of which two were kept pending and one was disposed of.

As many as 30 adjournment motions on a variety of issues were on the agenda; however, 12 among them were taken up and disposed of by the House. Members raised 53 points of order, consuming 2% (33 minutes) of total session time.

A PTI lawmaker's privilege motion against District Education Officer Attock regarding improper security arrangements at a girls' primary school was taken up in the 2nd sitting and was referred to the privileges committee. A PML-N lawmaker's privilege motion against SHO in Mianwali was also taken up during the 7th sitting.

The House witnessed debate on law and order during the 6th and 7th sittings and 23 lawmakers participated in it and spoke for 184 minutes. These lawmakers included twelve by PML-N followed by PTI (8), JI and PML (one each) and an Independent lawmaker.

A PTI lawmaker pointed out the quorum during 2nd sitting which led to the adjournment of the sitting. During the 7th sitting, quorum was incomplete and pointed out twice separately by an independent lawmaker and a PTI legislator. However, the sitting was suspended for 61 minutes when quorum was pointed out for third time by another PTI lawmaker.

Three instances of protests were recorded during the session by the opposition lawmakers against the criticism of PML-N lawmaker towards PTI, absence of provincial ministers and Daska incident. The same number of walkouts was also witnessed during the session over the issues of non-allocation of development funds, joint investigation team's report on model town incident and Daska incident.

This Session Report is based on direct observation of the Punjab Assembly proceedings conducted by PATTAN Development Organization – a member organization of FAFEN. Errors and omissions are excepted.

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