

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF PUNJAB

FAFEN PARLIAMENT MONITOR

25th SESSION

November 24 - December 5, 2016



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Session
Number

25

Working
Days

12

Actual
Sittings

8

Session
Duration

16

Hours & 31 Minutes

Lawmakers Disinterest Marks Punjab Assembly's 25th session

- Chief Minister absent from House since June 24, 2016
- Six out of eight sittings adjourned due to lack of quorum

Lack of interest of provincial lawmakers in proceedings marked the 25th session of Punjab Assembly, which passed seven government bills and witnessed introduction of one legislative proposal.

The session continued for eight sittings from November 24, 2016 to December 5, 2016. The cumulative duration of the sittings was 16 hours and 31 minutes as each sitting, on average, saw a delay of an hour and 31 minutes from its starting time and continued for two hours and four minutes.

The lack of quorum persisted during the entire session and it was pointed out for eleven times in eight sittings. Six sittings had to be adjourned due to presence of less than 25% (93) lawmakers in the House while the required number was found complete for four times upon counting after the customary bells were rung for five minutes. One instance was such when quorum was found complete upon counting.

Attendance

The session, comprising eight sittings, started on November 24, 2016 and concluded on December 5, 2016. On average, each sitting started 91 minutes behind the schedule and lasted two hours and four minutes.

According to FAFEN's observation, the lawmakers' attendance remained low throughout the session – with an average of 22 (6%) members present at the start and 55 (15%) at the end of each sitting. The Chief Minister remained absent throughout the session, while the Opposition Leader attended seven out of eight sittings for a total of 28% of the session's time. Chief Minister appeared in the House last time on June 24, 2016 during 22nd session and since then he had not attended any of the sitting of last three sessions.

Nearly 62% of the session was chaired by the Speaker, who was present for seven sitting. The Deputy Speaker attended four sittings and presided over 22% of the session while 16% of the time was consumed in breaks and suspension of the sittings due to lack of quorum.

The parliamentary leader of JI attended four sittings followed by PPPP (2) and PML-Z (one). Parliamentary leaders of the PML, BNA-P and PNML did not attend any of the sittings.

Quorum

The entire session was marked by lack of quorum and it was pointed out in all eight sittings of the session. The lawmakers pointed out quorum eleven times and six sittings (1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8) had

KEY MEMBERS ATTENDANCE



Rana Muhammad Iqbal
SPEAKER

7/8

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

10:17



Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani
DEPUTY SPEAKER

4/8

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

3:40



Mian Shahbaz Sharif
CHIEF MINISTER

0/8

Attended Time (hh:mm)

0:00



Mian Mehmood-ur-Rashid
LEADER OF OPPOSITION

7/8

Attended Time (hh:mm)

4:38

PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS ATTENDANCE



S. Waseem Akhtar



JI

4/8



Sardar Shahab-ud-Din



PPP

2/8



Ghulam Murtaza



PML-Z

1/8



S. Iftikhar Gillani



BNAP

0/8



Ch Moonis Elahi



PML

0/8



Bilal Asghar Warraich



PNML

0/8

Break

154

Minutes

Members at Outset
(Average)

22

present

Members at End
(Average)

55

present

Minority Members
(Average)

4

present

to be adjourned due to lack of quorum while it got completed in four sittings after ringing bell for five minutes. Once, the headcount was made and quorum was found complete.

Legislation

Eight bills sponsored by the government and one private member's bill appeared on the list of business. Of these, seven government bills were passed which included the Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2016; the Punjab Local Government (Sixth Amendment) Bill, 2016; the Forman Christian College Lahore (Amendment) Bill, 2016; the Punjab Criminal Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions and Powers) (Amendment) Bill 2016; the Parks and Horticulture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2016; the Punjab Halal Development Agency Bill, 2016 and the Punjab Animals Feed Stuff and Compound Feed Bill, 2016. The only government bill introduced in the House was the Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

According to the Sub section 6 of section 91 of Rules of Procedure of the Provincial Assembly of the Punjab 1997, "an Ordinance laid before the Assembly under clause (2) of Article 128 of the Constitution shall be deemed to be a Bill introduced in the Assembly on the day it is so laid". Two Ordinances presented in the House included the Punjab Land Records Authority Ordinance, 2016 and the Punjab Urban Immovable Property Tax (Amendment) Ordinance, 2016. One private member's bill – the Punjab Land Preservation (Amendment) Bill, 2016 – was not taken up by the House due to early adjournment of sitting after lack of quorum.

Passed Bills

THE PUNJAB LOCAL GOVERNMENT (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016

This Bill aims to amend the Punjab Local Government Ordinance, 2001 and empowers the local governments to sell the immovable property through public auction and after prior approval of the Government. To safeguard the interests

of the occupants, it is proposed that the occupant, who clears all the outstanding dues, shall have the first right of refusal.

THE PUNJAB LOCAL GOVERNMENT (SIXTH AMENDMENT) BILL, 2016

It amends the Punjab Local Government Act 2013 and also empowers the local governments to sell the immovable property through public auction and after prior approval of the Government. To safeguard the interests of the occupants, it is proposed that the occupant, who clears all the outstanding dues, shall have the first right of refusal.

THE FORMAN CHRISTIAN COLLEGE LAHORE (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016

This bill aims to amend the Forman Christian College Lahore Act, 2004 by incorporating amendments enabling the Forman Christian College to obtain foreign accreditation. The administration of the Forman Christian College submitted a request to the Government for amendments in the charter of the College keeping in view the requirements of accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges in the USA. The amendments proposed by the administration of FC College were thoroughly deliberated keeping in view the best interest of the students of the institution and various amendments were agreed to in the series of meetings with the College administration for obtaining foreign accreditation.

THE PUNJAB CRIMINAL PROSECUTION SERVICE (CONSTITUTION, FUNCTIONS AND POWERS) (AMENDMENT) BILL 2016

This bill suggests to amend the Punjab Criminal Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions and Powers) Act 2006 to clarify provisions relating to superintendence, administration and conduct of Prosecutors; and, for other purposes.

The Prosecutor General shall, with the prior approval of Government, issue a

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Government
Bills Passed

1

Government
Bills Introduced

145

Starred
Questions

45

Unstarred
Questions

code of conduct for the Prosecutors.

THE PARKS AND HORTICULTURE AUTHORITY (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2016

This bill aims to preserve the trees at public land and to provide specific penalty for illegal cutting of trees. For the purpose, while permitting the necessary trimming, the illegal cutting of trees is proposed to be liable to punishment up to fifteen days of imprisonment but which shall not be less than three days imprisonment and fine up to two hundred thousand rupees but which shall not less than twenty thousand rupees.

THE PUNJAB HALAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY BILL, 2016

It has the purpose to establish the Punjab Halal Development Agency in the Punjab for promotion of the trade of halal food and non-food products so that halal processes for the trade, commerce and industry may be regulated in the Province. The proposed Agency shall inter alia implement uniform Halal Standards and directions of the Pakistan Halal Authority, a Federal Authority established under the Pakistan Halal Authority Act, 2016.

THE PUNJAB ANIMALS FEED STUFF AND COMPOUND FEED BILL, 2016

It has the purpose to regulate poultry production activities in the Punjab. It will assist to regulate the manufacture, storage, supply, transport for sale and marketing of feed stuff and compound feed in the Province of the Punjab; to ensure standards of production and quality of feed stuff; to check adulteration and misbranding of poultry and livestock feed stuff and compound feed ingredients; and, to deal with ancillary matters.

Resolutions

The House unanimously adopted a supplementary resolution to condemn Indian aggression on Line of Control and paid rich tributes to Pakistan Army for giving a befitting response to India. It urged the federal government to raise the issue internationally to press India

to abide by International Laws.

Seven other resolutions appearing on the agenda were not taken up which were about ineffective action against illegal slaughter houses; decanting gas in cylinders illegally, education of Quran and its translation in educational institutions; sale of notebooks of private schools at affordable prices and without logo; unstandardized seed and illegal drug sellers; provision of solar system on subsidized rates to farmers and declaring blood screening test mandatory before Nikah.

Questions

Out of 145 starred questions, only 50 (34%) were taken up during the session and responded by the relevant ministries/departments. The MPAs also raised 98 supplementary questions to gain further clarity on government's responses.

Reports

The House witnessed presentation of five reports of various committees on legislative proposals while six reports on questions of privileges were also presented. The House granted extension in time period for submission of 28 reports about various parliamentary interventions.

Calling Attention Notices/Adjournment Motions

The House took up five Calling Attention Notices (CANs) about law and order situation while one CAN on the same subject was kept pending.

The lawmakers sponsored five Adjournment Motions on various matters of urgent public importance during this session. All of these AMs were kept pending throughout the session as no replies were received from the treasury. These AMs were related to health sector, bad governance and law and order.

The matters concerning corruption, bad governance, health sector and education were highlighted through

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Calling Attention Notices

these motions. Seven of these motions were sponsored by PML-N lawmakers, four by PTI and one by PML.

Privilege Motion

Six lawmakers – PTI (2), PML-N (2) and PPP (one) – submitted one privilege motion each. Three motions were against public servants for misbehaving with lawmakers, two against illegal arrests by police and one against misleading statement of DCO Gujrat. Four motions were referred to relevant Committee on Privileges and two were kept pending.

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Privilege Motion

Protests

The entire opposition staged a token walkout in first sitting for eight minutes against deteriorating law and order situation in the province. In the same sitting, JI Parliamentary Leader walked out against defensive India-policy of the federal government.

During 5th sitting, JI Parliamentary Leader boycotted the proceedings of the House after unsatisfactory reply to question raised by him which was accompanied by entire Opposition through walkout with him for five minutes.

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Private Members' Bills Not Taken Up

A PTI lawmaker protested within the House for three minutes against the attitude of the Chair for not allowing him to speak on a parliamentary intervention.

1

Resolutions Adopted

ABOUT FAFEN

- FAFEN is one of the most credible networks of civil society organizations working for strengthening citizens' voice and accountability in Pakistan since 2006.
- FAFEN has harnessed information technology for real-time monitoring, facilitation and technical backstopping of partners for effective and result-based program delivery.
- FAFEN is the only civil society group to have been invited by the Judicial Commission to present the evidence of illegalities and irregularities documented through the course of General Elections 2013 Observation. The systemic and procedural issues identified by FAFEN have been acknowledged by the commission in its detailed findings.
- FAFEN's recommendations for electoral reforms have contributed to the work of Parliamentary Committee for Electoral Reforms.
- FAFEN's advocacy for parliamentary transparency, accountability and reforms has shaped public discourse on parliamentary reforms. Improved citizens' access to parliamentary information including daily public release of parliamentarians' attendance records can be directly attributed to FAFEN's work.
- FAFEN deployed 18,000 and 40,000 non-partisan and trained observers for the systematic observation of general election 2008 and 2013, respectively, largest citizens' observation ever undertaken in Pakistan.
- FAFEN's evidence and recommendations for reforms have improved the quality of public and political discourse on elections, its issues and need for reforms. Leading political parties and media houses extensively use FAFEN's election findings and analysis to build a case for reforms.
- With more than 16,900 followers on Twitter and around 72,000 on Facebook, FAFEN is considered one of the most reliable sources of electoral and parliamentary information in the country.

Free and Fair Election Network
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This report is based on direct observation of the proceedings of the Punjab Assembly conducted by PATTAN Development Organization – a member organization of FAFEN. Every effort has been made to keep this report, which deals with on-floor performance of the Members, accurate and comprehensive. Errors and omissions are excepted.