

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF PAKISTAN

FAFEN PARLIAMENT MONITOR

46th SESSION

Sep 11 – Sep 21, 2017



FREE AND FAIR ELECTION NETWORK

www.fafen.org | www.openparliament.pk

ABBREVIATIONS

AJIP	Awami Jamhoori Ittehad Pakistan
ANP	Awami National Party
APML	All Pakistan Muslim League
AMLPP	Awami Muslim League Pakistan
BISP	Benazir Income Support Program
BNP	Balochistan National Party
CANs	Calling Attention Notices
IND	Independent Member
JI	Jamaat-e-Islami
JUI-F	Jamiat-e-Ulema-Islam (Fazlur Rehman)
MQM	Muttahida Qaumi Movement
MUR	Motion under Rule
NP	National Party
NPP	National Peoples Party
PkMAP	Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party
PML	Pakistan Muslim League
PML-F	Pakistan Muslim League (Functional)
PML-N	Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz)
PML-Z	Pakistan Muslim League (Zia-ul-Haq Shaheed)
PPPP	Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians
PTI	Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf
QWP-S	Qaumi Watan Party (Sherpao)

Actual
Sittings

09

Cumulative
Duration

21

Hours & 42 Minutes

Average
Sitting Delay

13

Minutes

Members at Outset
(Average)

49

present

National Assembly Leaves 38% Agenda Unaddressed

- Five Sittings adjourned due to lack of quorum
- The Right of Access to Information Bill Remains Pending

The National Assembly left its 38% agenda unaddressed amidst low attendance of lawmakers and frequent adjournments due to lack of quorum during 46th session, observes the Free and Fair Election Network in its session report based on the direct observation of the House proceedings.

The Lower House managed to take up 62% of the business listed on the Orders of the Day. The remaining agenda items were either dropped due to absence of the concerned lawmakers or were not taken up due to the suspension or adjournment of the House proceedings owing to lack of quorum. Five out of the session's nine sittings were adjourned due to this reason.

The House passed three bills, referred ten legislative proposals to the committees, adopted six resolutions, took up five Calling Attention Notices and held discussions on two motions regarding violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar and excessive electricity billing.

The session comprised nine sittings spanning over 21 hours and

42 minutes. Each sitting, on average, continued for two hours and 24 minutes. The Prime Minister did not attend any sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was present in five sittings.

According to official record of the plenary's attendance records, 173 (50%) lawmakers attended each sitting on an average. The highest attendance – 211 members present – was recorded during last sitting while the lowest attendance – 98 members present - was during sixth sitting. As per the headcounts conducted by FAFEN at commencement and conclusion of the sittings, on average 49 lawmakers were present at the commencement and 47 at the adjournment of every sitting.

The Speaker of the House was present in six sittings and presided over 21% of the proceedings (four hours and 38 minutes) while the Deputy Speaker was present in seven sittings and chaired 44% of the proceedings (nine hours and 37 minutes). Nearly 21 percent of the proceedings (four hours and 35 minutes) was presided over by the members of Panel of Chairpersons while the remaining time (two hours and 52 minutes) was lost in

Members at End
(Average)

47
present



3

Bills Passed



5

CANs
Taken Up



6

Resolution
Adopted

suspensions due to prayer break or lack of quorum.

Among leaders of 18 parliamentary parties, the leaders of NP and APML attended nine and eight sittings respectively. The parliamentary leaders of PPPP, AJIP, PML-Z, and PkMAP were present in seven sittings each, while the leaders of ANP and JI attended six sittings each. The parliamentary leaders of PTI and PML-F did not attend any of the sittings.

Legislation: The House passed two government bills and a private member's bill of MQM lawmaker during the session. The government legislation focused on child rights and workers' training.

Following is given the brief description of the bills approved by the House:

The National Commission on the Rights of the Child Bill, 2017

The bill provides institutional mechanism for setting up the National Commission on the Rights of the Child.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2014

The bill seeks to amend the Pakistan Penal Code 1860 and the Code of Criminal Procedure 1898 in order to increase the punishment for the offence of theft.

The Apprenticeship Bill, 2017

The bill seeks to develop, promote and regulate the systematic apprenticeship programme in the industry to impart technical and vocational training and skills in

various fields.

The House also held first reading of the two government bills and eight private members' bills. These bills were referred to the relevant standing committees for further deliberations. The treasury-sponsored bills sent to the committees included the Service Tribunals (Amendment) Bill, 2017 and the Supreme Court and High Court (Extension of Jurisdiction to Federally Administered Tribal Areas) Bill, 2017.

The private members' bills referred to the committees included the Redistributive Land Reforms Bill, 2017, the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2017, the Minimum Wages (Amendment) Bill, 2017, the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Amendment in Article 25 A), the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Amendment in Article 198), the Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2017 (Amendment in Article 160), the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2017 and the Controller General of Accounts (Appointment, Functions and Powers) (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

Moreover, two legislative proposals submitted by private lawmakers were dropped due to absence of concerned members and one was deferred. Three government bills – the Right of Access to Information Bill, 2017, the Corporate Rehabilitation Bill, 2017 and the Auditor-General's (Functions, Powers and Terms and Conditions of Service) (Amendment) Bill, 2017 – included

in the agenda of the House were not addressed.

Resolutions: The House adopted six resolutions including five private members' resolutions during the reporting session. In a resolution jointly sponsored by treasury and opposition lawmakers, the House condemned the violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. The private members' resolutions urged the government to construct more dams, curb gas load-shedding, restore educational increments of federal government employees, set up more hospitals in Islamabad and control manufacturing spurious drugs. Two of the adopted private members' resolutions were sponsored by PML-N lawmakers and one each by PPPP, MQM and JI members. Moreover, the House did not take up five private members' resolutions originated by PML-N (1), PPP (1) PTI (1) and JI (2).

Motions under Rule 259: The House converted an Adjournment Motion regarding violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar into a motion under Rule 259 and held a discussion on it for three hours and 12 minutes. Fourteen including the Minister for Law and Justice participated in the discussion. The House discussed a motion under Rule 259 regarding excessive electricity billing for 51 minutes. Ten lawmakers took part in the discussion and it was concluded by the Minister of State for Water and Power. Seven other motions under Rule 259 submitted by private lawmakers belonging to JI, PML-N and PPPP remained unaddressed. The House also ignored taking up for discussion a Motion of Thanks about address of President to the Parliament.

Reports: The standing committees of the National Assembly presented their reports on 11 legislative proposals during the session. The committee on Narcotics & Interior Control reported on nine bills while committees on National Health Services, Coordination & Regulation and Federal Education & Professional Training reported on one bill each. The government also laid two statutory reports before the Assembly.

Calling Attention Notices: The lawmakers moved ten Calling Attention Notices (CANs) to draw government's attention to the issues of public

importance. Half of these notices were taken up and discussed in the House while two of the remaining five notices were dropped due to absence of concerned lawmakers and three were left unaddressed by the House. The lawmakers highlighted the issues relating to admissions in Islamabad's schools and colleges, atrocities against Rohingya Muslims, unscheduled power outages in Sindh, closure of foreign branches of two Pakistani banks, upgrading the pay scales of Superintendents and Assistants, unavailability of natural gas in Khairpur Special Economic Zone, anti-Pakistan posters in Geneva, pictorial meter reading and over-billing in Peshawar, closure of internet service in parts of Baluchistan and detention of Pakistani soldier by Afghan forces. The PML-N and PPPP lawmakers submitted two CANs each, and PTI, MQM and JI one each. The remaining three CANs were jointly sponsored by lawmakers belonging to two or more parties.

Questions: The Question Hour was held during six out of nine sittings of the session. Two of the remaining three sittings were reserved for Private Members' business and once the House lacked the quorum (one-fourth of total membership) to continue its proceedings.

As many as 373 questions including 266 Starred Questions were listed for answers. A written as well as oral answer is required for a Starred Question. However, the House took up only 50 (19%) Starred Questions for oral answers. As many as 119 questions – 55 starred and 64 unstarred – were not replied by the government. The remaining questions were not answered during the proceedings either due to absence of the relevant lawmakers or due to conclusion of the Question Hour. The lawmakers also asked 134 supplementary questions for further elucidation of the answers provided by the government.

As many as 63 lawmakers including 35 women exercised their right to ask questions. As many as 17 out of these 63 lawmakers belonged to PML-N, 16 to PPPP, eight to MQM, six to PTI, five each to JI and JUI-F and six to other parties.

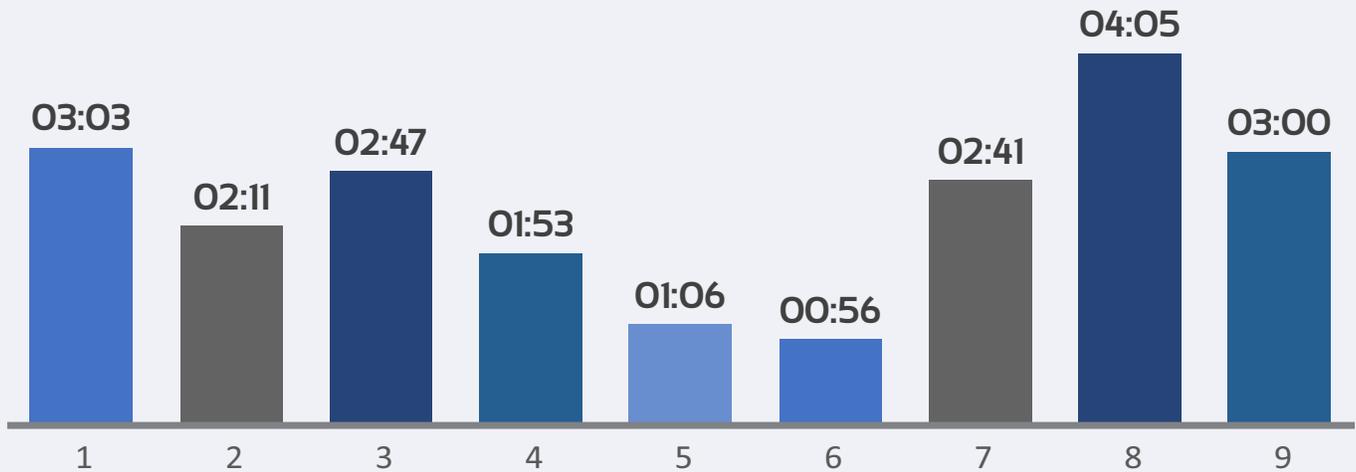
Points of Order: The lawmakers raised 31 Points of Order relating to various issues of public

importance. These POs consumed around seven percent (an hour and 38 minutes) of the proceedings.

Protests and Walkouts: The Assembly witnessed three incidents of walkouts during the session. The opposition lawmakers jointly staged a walkout for five minutes against unsatisfactory reply to a supplementary question raised during third sitting. The MQM lawmakers staged a token walkout over their reservations regarding National Population and Household Census 2017. A PPPP lawmaker also walked out against not being allowed to raise a Point of Order.

Quorum: The lack of quorum surfaced multiple times during the session. Five of the sittings were adjourned midway of the proceedings due to lack of quorum while on two occasions, the proceedings had to be suspended to complete the quorum. In total, the proceedings remained suspended for 44 minutes due to lack of quorum. The PPPP lawmakers identified the quorum issue four times, PTI two times and PkMAP once during the session.

SITTINGS DURATION (hh:mm)



KEY MEMBERS ATTENDANCE



Speaker



Deputy Speaker



Prime Minister

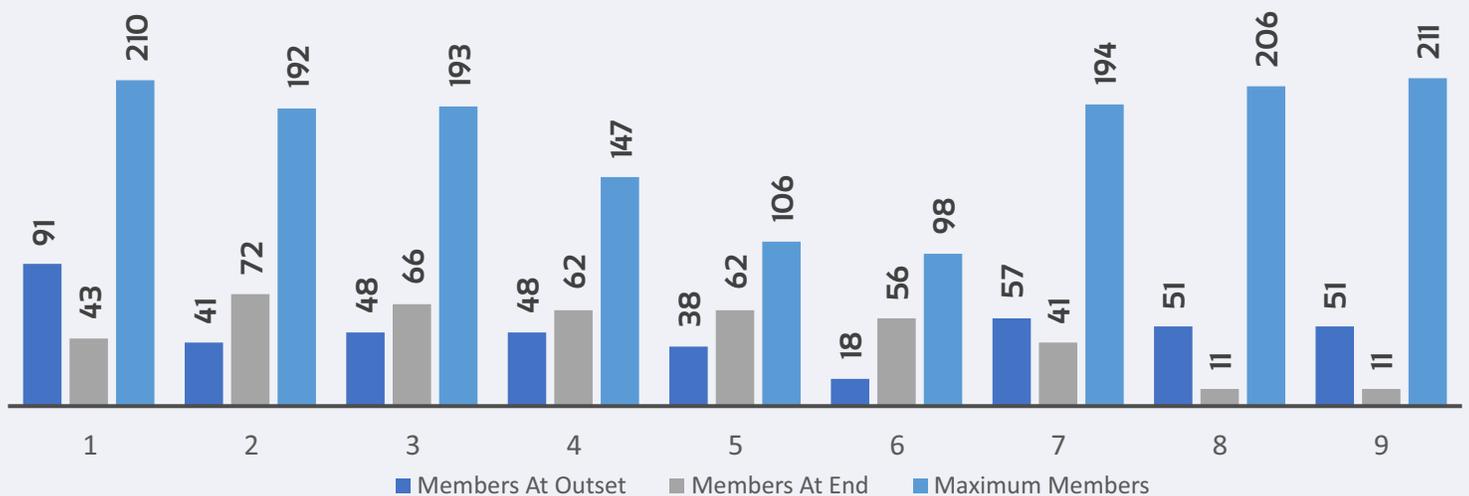


Leader of the Opposition



* 13 percent duration of session was consumed in prayer breaks or suspension of proceedings.
 * 21 percent proceedings of the session was chaired by a Member of Panel of Chairpersons.

MEMBERS ATTENDANCE



PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS ATTENDANCE



Sardar Kamal Bangulzai



NP

9

attended



Iftikhar Uddin



APML

8

attended



Engr. Usman Khan Tarakai



AJIP

7

attended



Muhammad Ijaz-ul-Haq



PML-Z

7

attended



Syed Naveed Qammar



PPPP

7

attended



Mahmood Khan Achakzai



PkMAP

7

attended



Ghulam Ahmed Bilour



ANP

6

attended



Sahibzada Tariqullah



JI

6

attended



Sayed Essa Nori



BNP

5

attended



Aftab Ahmed Sherpao



QWP-S

4

attended



Sheikh Rasheed Ahmed



AMLP

2

attended



Ch. Pervez Ellahi



PML

2

attended



Dr. M. Farooq Sattar



MQM

2

attended



Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman



JUI-F

1

attended



Imran Khan



PTI

0

attended



Saddar-ud-Din Rashidi



PML-F

0

attended

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 18,300 followers on Twitter and around 117,000 on Facebook, FAFEN is considered one of the most reliable sources of electoral and parliamentary information in the country.

Free and Fair Election Network
www.fafen.org

