

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF PUNJAB

FAFEN PARLIAMENT MONITOR

32nd SESSION

Oct 16 - Oct 30, 2017



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Session
Number

32

Working
Days

15

Actual
Sittings

11

Working
Hours

20

Hours & 06 Minutes

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY LEAVES 51% AGENDA UNADDRESSED DURING 32ND SESSION

- Six out of 11 sittings adjourned due to lack of quorum

ISLAMABAD, November 2, 2017: The Punjab Assembly left 51% of its scheduled business unaddressed due to low attendance and treasury's disinterest during 32nd session.

The House took up 88 percent bills, 55 percent resolutions, thirty-three discussions and only six percent Adjournment Motions during the proceedings. Moreover, only 30 percent Starred Questions were discussed by the House.

The Adjournment Motions were not discussed due to unpreparedness of the treasury while the resolutions remained unaddressed due to the absence of the concerned lawmakers. The unaddressed bills and discussions were not taken up due to lack of quorum. As many as six out of 11 sittings were adjourned due to quorum deficiency.

The session, comprising eleven sittings, started on October 16, 2017 and concluded on October 30, 2017. On average, each sitting started an hour and 48 minutes behind the scheduled time and lasted an hour and 49 minutes.

According to FAFEN's observation, the lawmakers' attendance remained low throughout the session – with an average of 16 (4%) members present at the start and 42(11%) at the adjournment of each sitting. The Chief Minister did not attend any sitting while the Leader of the Opposition attended ten sittings for 10 hours and 27 minutes (52% of the proceedings).

The Speaker attended all sittings and chaired the House for 13 hours and 49 minutes while the Deputy Speaker attended four sittings and presided over the proceedings for three hours and nine minutes. The rest of the time (three hours and eight minutes) was lost in suspension of the proceedings due to lack of quorum.

The parliamentary leaders of political parties represented in the assembly did not attend most of the sittings. The JI leader attended three sittings and was followed by leaders of PML-Z (two) and PPPP (one). The leaders of PML, BNA-P and PNML did not attend any of the sittings.

KEY MEMBERS ATTENDANCE



Rana Muhammad Iqbal
SPEAKER

11 /11

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

13:49

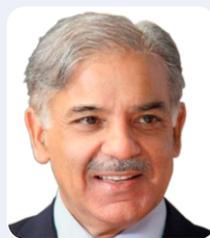


Sardar Sher Ali Gorchani
DEPUTY SPEAKER

4 /11

Presiding Time (hh:mm)

03:09



Mian Shabbaz Sharif
CHIEF MINISTER

0 /11

Attended Time (hh:mm)

00:00



Mian Mehmood-ur-Rashid
LEADER OF OPPOSITION

10 /11

Attended Time (hh:mm)

10:27

PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS ATTENDANCE



Syed Waseem Akhtar



JI

3 /11



Ghulam Murtaza



PML-Z

2 /11



Sardar Shahab-ud-Din



PPPP

1 /11



Ch Moonis Elahi



PML

0 /11



S. Iftikhar Gillani



BNAP

0 /11



Bilal Asghar Warraich



PNML

0 /11

Suspension

3

Hours & 08 Minutes

Members at Outset
(Average)

16

present

Members at End
(Average)

42

present

Maximum Attendance

62

present

Legislation

The 32nd session's legislative agenda comprised 17 bills including seven private members' bills. The House passed eight out of ten government bills and referred four – two government and two private members' – to the relevant standing committees. Of the remaining five private members' bills, two bills were not taken, as many were kept pending while one was withdrawn. The House passed the Punjab Employees Efficiency, Discipline and Accountability (Amendment) Bill, 2017; the Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2017; the Parks and Horticulture Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2017; the Punjab Ehtram-e-Ramazan (Amendment) Bill, 2017; the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order (Amendment) Bill, 2017; the Punjab Criminal Prosecution Service (Constitution, Functions and Powers) (Amendment) Bill, 2017; the Punjab Environmental Protection (Amendment) Bill, 2017 and the Dera Ghazi Khan Development Authority (Repeal) Bill, 2017.

The bills referred to the standing committees included the Punjab Zakat and Ushr Bill, 2017, Punjab Medical Supplies Authority Bill, 2017, the Punjab Anand Karaj Bill, 2017 and the Punjab Regulation of Public Infrastructure Projects Bill, 2017.

Resolutions

A total of 11 resolutions appeared on the agenda of which five were adopted by the House. These

resolutions urged the government to promote the public servants working in BS-16 and 17; maintain subsidy on fertilizers; promote the country's agricultural products through Commercial Attaches of Pakistani embassies; legislate for annual medical checkup of students in educational institutions and crackdown against quacks, soothsayers and fake faith-healers in Punjab. One of the remaining six resolutions was withdrawn, two were kept pending and three remained unaddressed during the session.

The House also adopted a supplementary resolution condemning the attack on a senior journalist in Islamabad. The resolution asked the government to bring to justice those responsible for the attack.

Reports

The Assembly's Standing Committees presented ten reports to the House during the session. These reports were made on the legislative proposals, privilege motions and a matter of public importance referred to the committees by the Chair. The House granted extension to various standing committees for presentation of 11 reports. The government also presented nine statutory reports to the House.

Questions

The assembly held Question Hours during 10 out of 11 sittings. As many as 228 Starred Questions and

8

Government
Bills Passed

6

Resolutions
Adopted

17

Adjournment
Motions

1

Calling Attention
Notice

86 Unstarred Questions were set up for answers during the session. A starred question requires written as well as oral reply while an unstarred question requires written reply only. However, the House took up only 68 (30%) Starred Questions for answers during the proceedings. The lawmakers raised 129 supplementary questions to gain further clarity on government's responses. The Chair deferred the Question Hour during tenth sitting due to absence of the concerned government secretary.

Calling Attention Notices & Adjournment Motions

A lawmaker submitted Calling Attention Notice over an incident of murder in Debalpur Tehsil of District Okara. However, the notice was disposed of without being discussed in the House due to mover's absence.

The lawmakers also submitted 17 Adjournment Motions (AMs) on various matters of public importance related to education, health, governance, water and corruption. Only one of these AMs seeking treasury's response regarding firefighting preparedness in the province was discussed during the proceedings while remaining 16 were kept pending throughout the session as no replies were received from the treasury. Nine of these motions were sponsored by PTI lawmakers, six by PML-N and two by PML.

Privilege Motion

Seven lawmakers – three from PML-N, two from PPP and one each from PTI and JUI – submitted privilege motions during the session. Six of these motions were referred to the relevant committee for further proceeding while one motion was kept pending.

Discussion

The House held a general discussion on the price control. Only two lawmakers, including the Minister for Commerce and Industry and the Leader of the Opposition, participated in the discussion consuming 24 minutes of the proceedings. There were also scheduled discussions on the Annual Reports of the Punjab Commission on the Status of Women and the Punjab Pension Fund for 2016. However, these discussions were not held.

Zero Hour and Points of Order

The Leader of the Opposition moved to discuss the drainage and sewerage system issues of Allama Iqbal Town Lahore during the Zero Hour. The issue was deferred for two days but was never taken up again. The lawmakers also raised 94 Points of Order (POs) consuming two hours and 29 minutes (12% of the proceedings).

Quorum

The opposition lawmakers identified the lack of quorum ten times during the proceedings. This caused as many as eight out of 11 sittings to be disrupted due to lack of quorum.

HIGHLIGHTS

228

Starred
Questions

86

Unstarred
Questions

10

Committee
Reports

9

Statutory
Reports

Six sittings (first, fourth, sixth, ninth, 10th and 11th) were adjourned without addressing the entire agenda of the day due to quorum deficiencies. Two hours and 16 minutes of the proceedings were also lost due to lack of quorum. On three occasions, the quorum was completed after the Assembly bells were rung for five minutes.

Protests

The House witnessed three incidents of walkout and two incidents of protest during the session. The opposition parties collectively staged two walkouts; one against the police raid at a lawmaker's residence without search warrants and the other protesting treasury's reluctance to allow a private member's bill. Besides these, a PTI lawmaker also staged a walkout individually over government's unsatisfactory reply to a starred question. Another PTI lawmaker protested in the House over deferring his privilege motion. The opposition parties also staged a joint protest against imposition of regulatory duty on the import of various eatable and luxury items.

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 19,000 followers on Twitter and around 121,200 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.