

PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY OF PUNJAB

FAFEN PARLIAMENT MONITOR

17th Session

December 18 - December 31, 2019



FREE AND FAIR ELECTION NETWORK

www.fafen.org | www.openparliament.pk

ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|---|
| CANs | CALL ATTENTION NOTICES |
| PML | PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE |
| PML-N | PAKISTAN MUSLIM LEAGUE (NAWAZ) |
| PPPP | PAKISTAN PEOPLES PARTY PARLIAMENTARIANS |
| PRHP | PAKISTAN RAH-E-HAQ PARTY |
| PTI | PAKISTAN TEHREEK-E-INSAF |
| POs | POINTS OF ORDER |

Total
Sittings

9

Total Session's
Time

17

Hours, 9 Minutes

Breaks/Suspension

2

Hours, 49 Minutes

Members at the
outset

39

PUNJAB ASSEMBLY ADDRESSES TWO-FIFTH AGENDA DURING 17TH SESSION

The Provincial Assembly of Punjab transacted 41% of its scheduled business during 17th session that continued between December 18, 2019 and December 31, 2019, observes Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) in its session report.

Each sitting, on an average, commenced an hour and 19 minutes behind the scheduled time and lasted an hour and 54 minutes. An average of 39 (10%) lawmakers were present at the outset and 59 (16%) lawmakers at the adjournment of each sitting. The Leader of the House (Chief Minister) did not attend any of the sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was present in two sittings for 57 minutes.

The regular as well as supplementary agenda of the House during the session comprised four government bills, 14 resolutions, eight Call Attention Notices (CANs), two zero hour notices and 204 starred questions. The House overall transacted 41% agenda while 103 lawmakers (27%) participated in the different interventions of the assembly proceedings.

Lawmakers spoke on 79 Points of Order (POs) during the session, consuming two hours and 30 minutes of the proceedings.

1 Session, Duration and Attendance

The 17th session of the Punjab Assembly, comprising nine sittings, continued between December 18, 2019 and December 31, 2019. The cumulative duration of the session was 17 hours and nine minutes while the proceedings remained suspended for two hours and 49 minutes due to prayer breaks.

Each sitting, on an average, commenced an hour and 19 minutes behind the scheduled time and continued nearly for an hour and 54 minutes. The Speaker was present in five sittings and presided over the proceedings for six hours and nine minutes (36 percent of the session's time). The Deputy Speaker attended only one sitting and chaired the proceedings for 51 minutes (five percent of session's time) while a member of Panel of Chairpersons presided over the sitting for seven hours and 20 minutes (43 percent of total time).

The Leader of the House (Chief Minister) did not attend any of the sitting while the Leader of the Opposition was present in two sittings for 57 minutes (six percent of the proceedings). The official attendance records indicates that an average of 83 members were present in the proceedings. According to headcounts conducted by FAFEN, an av-

Members at the
End

59

Maximum
Members

83

Government
Bills

4

Passed Bills

4

erage of 39 (10%) lawmakers were present at the outset and 59 (16%) at the adjournment of each sitting. The parliamentary leader of PPPP attended four sittings while the only member of PRHP was present in one sitting.

1.2 Member's Participation

As many as 103 lawmakers (27%) – men (65) and women (35) – of the Punjab Assembly participated in the different interventions of the assembly proceedings. Among the participating members, 53 were from PML-N followed by PTI (37), PML (six), PPPP (five), PRHP and Independent (one each).

2 Assembly Output

This section deals with the legislative business, resolutions, amendment to the rules, reports and documents presented before the House during the session.

2.1 Legislation

Four government bills were brought before the House during 17th session and all of them were passed by the House. These bills included the Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2019, the Punjab Probation and Parole Service Bill, 2019, the Punjab Village Panchayats and Neighborhood Councils (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and the University of North Punjab, Chakwal Bill, 2019.

2.1.1 Passed Govt. Bills

1. The Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2019

The Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill, 2019 proposes several amendments to the Punjab Local Government Act, 2019 (PLGA-2019). A total of 42 sections and two schedules of the PLGA-2019 have been amended through the ordinance. These amendments may be broadly classified as amendments to make the PLGA-2019 consistent with the Elections Act 2017, amendments to remove language, editing and referencing errors and for verbal clarity, structural amendments to PLGA-2019, other than those relating to Election Commission and amendments to Schedules of PLGA-2019.

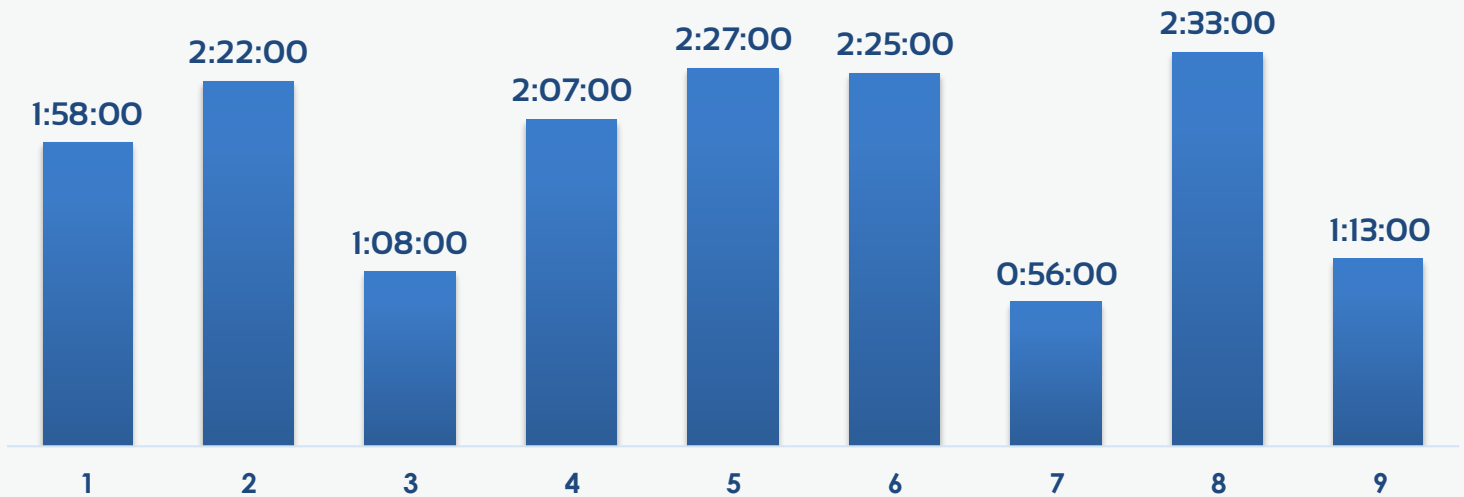
2. The Punjab Probation and Parole Service Bill, 2019

The bill suggests that immediate release of prisoners from other provinces. Following this bill, prisoners from other provinces in Punjab jails will be able to benefit from the service of immediate parole, while prisoners of drug addiction and petty crimes will also get relief under the law.

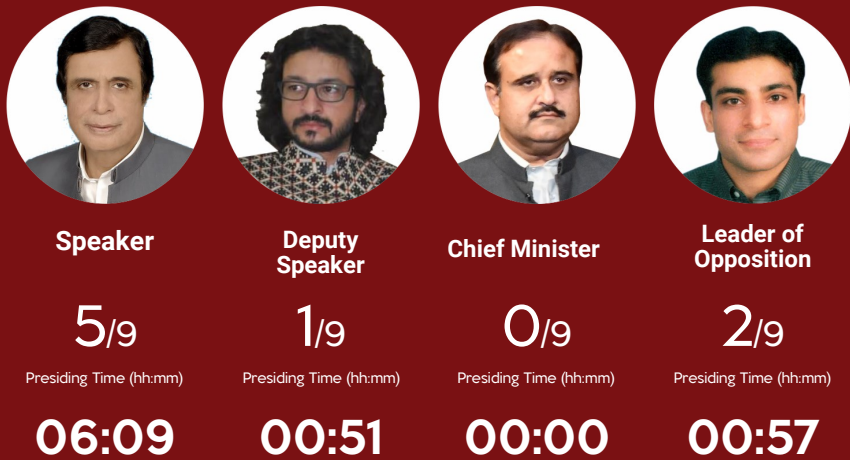
3. The Punjab Village Panchayats and Neighborhood Councils (Amendment) Bill, 2019

This bill extends the application of Elections Act, 2017, to Panchayats and Neighborhood Councils bringing their elections under purview of

SITTINGS DURATION (hh:mm)



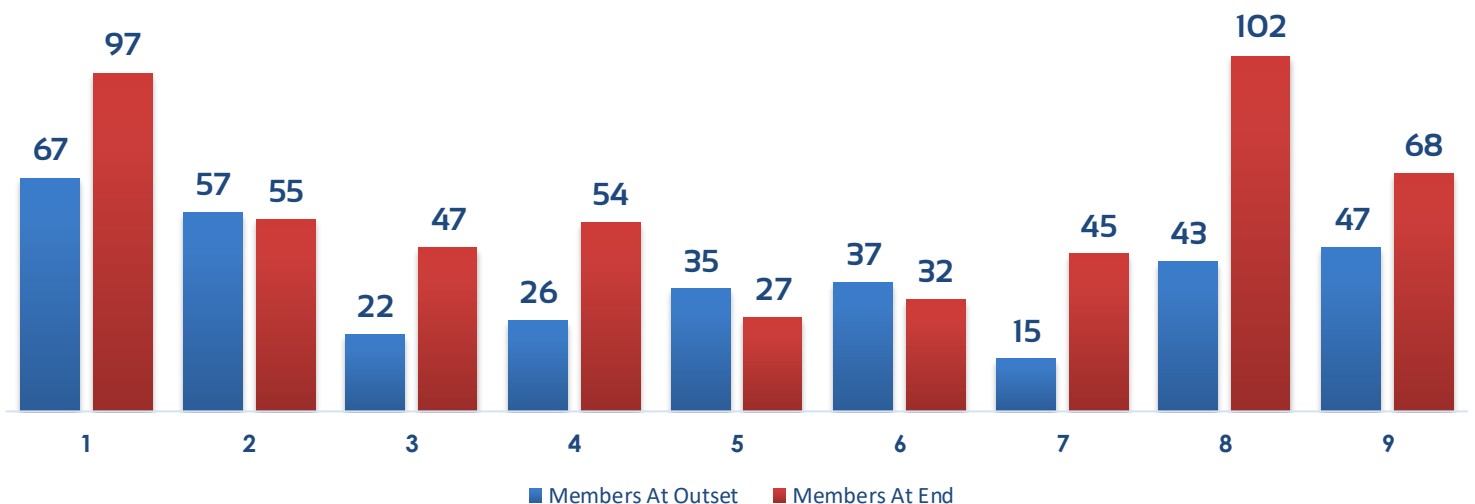
KEY MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE



PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS ATTENDANCE



MEMBERS' ATTENDANCE



Reports

10

Resolutions

14

Call Attention Notices

8

Adjournment Motions

23

ECP. ECP has the constitutional mandate (Article 218) to hold general, LG and elections to any other public office as may be specified by the law.

The Government shall, by notification in the official Gazette, demarcate villages within the local areas, excluding the cantonments and urban local areas. The Election Commission shall delimit the villages and neighbourhoods under this proposed legislation and the Elections Act.

A voter will cast two votes- one for the general seat and the other for women seat. A voter belonging to religious minority can cast an additional third ballot in case where a seat is reserved for the religious minority in a council. However, voters belonging to a majority faith will not be able to vote for a candidate contesting election on a minority seat. This excludes the majority to have their opinion on election of representative of a religious minority.

4. The University of North Punjab, Chakwal Bill, 2019

The bill aims to set up a university in Chakwal to facilitate students of the region to acquire knowledge by utilising modern means in the field of research in science and technology. The bill was passed after accepting the amendment of opposition of changing the name from University of North Punjab to University of Chakwal. The amendment was moved by PML-N MPA which was unanimously accepted by the House.

2.2 Resolutions

The Provincial Assembly adopted five out of 14 resolutions during the session while five were kept pending, three were rejected and one was withdrawn by the mover. All the resolutions were privately sponsored by the lawmakers as PTI members sponsored eight resolutions, PML-N (5) and PML sponsored one resolution.

The resolutions adopted by the House demanded the government to approach the United Nations against Indian atrocities in Occupied Kashmir, repairing the railing along Motorway to reduce accidents, express solidarity with special people, ensure public washrooms for women and ban blasphemous content on social media.

2.3 Reports and Papers

Special Committees of the House presented nine audit reports of various departments for various financial years while Standing Committee on Higher Education presented report on a legislative proposal.

3

Representation, Responsiveness and Government Oversight

This section gives statistical as well as qualitative overview of legislator's interventions in the House – Calling Attention Notices (CANs), Questions, Adjournment Motions (AM) or any other motions – for the oversight of government and to articulate issues of public interest and im-

Starred Questions

204

Taken Up Questions

76

Unaddressed Questions

128

Points of Order

79

portance.

3.1 Questions

According to the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of the Punjab Assembly, the first hour of a sitting of the House is reserved for asking and answering of question by the members. The lawmakers asked as many as 204 starred questions from ten different departments of the government during the session. The House took up 76 (37 percent) starred questions for verbal answers during the proceedings while the remaining 128 (63 percent) were left unaddressed due to absence of their movers or the concerned ministers. In addition, lawmakers asked 147 supplementary questions as well for further elucidation of the government's replies on starred questions

The ministry wise break-up of starred questions raised during the session is as following:

| Ministries-Answer Wise Starred Questions | |
|--|------------|
| Home | 36 |
| Primary and Secondary Healthcare Department | 34 |
| Housing, Urban Development & Public Health Engineering | 31 |
| Auqaf and Religious Affairs | 24 |
| Labour & Human Resource | 20 |
| Livestock & Dairy Development Department | 20 |
| Services General Administration Department | 17 |
| Special Education | 13 |
| Zakat & Ushr | 8 |
| Housing | 1 |
| Total | 204 |

3.2 Calling Attention Notices

A lawmaker can call the attention of a minister/department's head for any matter involving law and order situation or a definite matter of urgent public importance, by submitting one calling attention notice per sitting

The lawmakers submitted as many as eight Call Attention Notices (CANs) related to law and incidents to draw government's attention to the issues of public importance. All the notices were addressed in the House and disposed of. Four of the CANs addressed during the reporting period were sponsored by PTI lawmakers and as many were sponsored by PML-N lawmakers.

3.3 Adjournment Motions

The Assembly may adjourn its regular proceedings to debate any definite and urgent matter of public importance raised through an Adjournment Motions. Following the discussion, the House may refer the contents of debated Adjournment Motion to the provincial cabinet for its consideration through a substantive motion.

Zero Hour Notices

2

Protest

1

Walkout

1

Identification of Lack of Quorum

3

The lawmakers belonging to treasury and opposition parties submitted 23 Adjournment Motions seeking discussions on matters of urgent public importance. The House disposed of five adjournment motions in the House while 14 were not taken up and kept pending, two were deferred and two were referred to concerned committees.

3.4 Zero Hour

Two members belonging to PML-N sponsored two Zero Hour notices during the session. The House took up a notice about proposed changes in land and revenue management system in Punjab while other about non-functional laser machine in Mayo hospital Lahore was not taken up.

3.5 General Debates in the House

As many as two lawmakers debated the Annual Report of the Punjab Public Service Commission for the Year 2017 for eight minutes during the session.

2 Order and Institutionalization

Order and Institutionalization is important for an efficient and productive legislature. This section provides information about Points of Order, quorum and any instances of walkout during the proceedings.

4.1 Points of Order

Lawmakers spoke on 79 Points of Order (POs) during the session consuming two hours and 30 minutes of the proceedings. They discussed the issues related to environment, food, garbage, Business of the House and governance through these POs.

4.2 Walkout/Protest

PML-N lawmakers walked out of the House during first sitting for 16 minutes against the attitude of the Chair who disallowed them to move amendments in the Punjab Local Government (Amendment) Bill 2019, and the Punjab Village Panchayats and Neighborhood Councils (Amendment) Bill, 2019.

PTI lawmakers protested for three minutes during second sitting against remarks of PML-N lawmaker about their leadership.

4.3 Quorum

The lawmakers belonging to PML-N identified the lack of quorum for three times during the proceedings. During the first sitting, the Chair ignored the call of quorum while it was found complete on another occasion during same sitting. However, the 3rd sitting was adjourned due to lack of quorum.

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 25,000 followers on Twitter and around 144,000 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
www.openparliament.pk
www.parliamentfiles.com



This report is based on direct observation of the proceedings of the National Assembly conducted by Free and Fair Election Network. 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.