



100 DAYS OF **16<sup>TH</sup>**  
**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY  
OF PAKISTAN**



**FREE & FAIR ELECTION NETWORK - FAFEN**

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the first 100 days since taking oath on February 29, 2024, the 16<sup>th</sup> National Assembly of Pakistan demonstrated a performance similar to its predecessors, characterized by a slow pace of legislation despite high attendance. Amid heightened polarization and unresolved electoral controversies, the House encouraged bipartisanship by allocating nearly 54 percent of the time used for points of order to the opposition. Another hallmark feature of the incumbent Assembly was its enhanced focus on parliamentary transparency and gender responsiveness. However, the delay in forming standing committees and restrictions on citizens' access to the proceedings marred its overall performance.

Following the February 8, 2024 elections, no political parties secured a simple majority. The Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PMLN) formed the federal government with the support from eight parties including Pakistan Peoples Party Parliamentarians (PPPP), Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), Pakistan Muslim League (PML), Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP), Pakistan Muslim League Zia (PML-Z), Balochistan Awami Party (BAP), and National Party (NP). The Sunni Ittehad Council (SIC) emerged as the largest parliamentary party after a majority of independent lawmakers (84) supported by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) joined it. However, they opted to sit on opposition benches. The House still remains short of 26 members as the Supreme Court is yet to decide the legal dispute over SIC's eligibility for representation on the seats reserved for women and non-Muslims.

The Senate and Presidential elections followed shortly after the general elections, in contrast to the previous assemblies where the treasury parties in the National and Provincial Assemblies had to wait for several months for their mandate to be reflected in the Senate composition.

Key highlights of the first 100 days of 16<sup>th</sup> National Assembly are as follows:

## Plenary Proceedings

The 16<sup>th</sup> National Assembly had a slow legislative start with only a money bill approved during the first 100 days. Around half of legislative business presented before the House pertained to the outgoing caretaker government. Cumulatively, the House held 23

## INTRODUCTION

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) has been observing the plenary proceeding of the federal Parliament and Provincial Assemblies since 2010. FAFEN's observation and reporting on legislative proceedings has contributed to enhancing parliamentary transparency and bridging the gap between the citizens and their elected representatives. The current report reviews the 16<sup>th</sup> National Assembly's performance during its first 100 days starting from February 29, 2024 till June 7, 2024. The findings of this report are based on the direct observation of the Assembly proceedings and official plenary records available on the National Assembly website [www.na.gov.pk](http://www.na.gov.pk). The report is divided among four parts. The first part presents an analysis of the plenary proceedings covering the use of plenary time, agenda transaction and the members' attendance and participation in the House proceedings. The second part documents the commitments and assurances made by the Prime Minister and his cabinet on floor of the Assembly. The third part includes an assessment of the parliamentary transparency and accessibility while the fourth and last section assesses House proceedings from a gender lens documenting the women-specific issues raised by lawmakers and commitments made by the government.

sittings spanned over 66 hours and 33 minutes. The Speaker and Deputy Speaker chaired 84 percent of the proceedings. Points of order consumed 30 percent of the plenary's time, while five percent was lost to breaks. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif attended only two sittings (10 percent) after his election as Leader of the House, although he attended the first two sittings of the Assembly before his election. Comparatively, former Prime Ministers Imran Khan and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif had attended 29 percent and 26 percent sittings during first 100 days of their respective terms. The Assembly elected its standing committees and authorized the Speaker to nominate members to the committees on May 17. The formation of committees was delayed by more than a month from the time mentioned in Rule 200(1) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly 2007. According to the rule, the standing committees should have been formed within 30 days from the election of the Leader of the House i.e., by April 2, 2024.

### **Participation and Business**

Out of 310 members, 159 (51 percent) actively participated by sponsoring agenda items or participating in discussions on floor of the House. Female lawmakers had a higher participation rate (61 percent) compared to male lawmakers (49 percent). The House addressed 76 percent of its business, including 20 legislative bills, 93 questions, 28 calling attention notices (CANs), and 11 resolutions. The plenary attendance averaged 230 members per sitting, with a maximum attendance of 302 and a minimum of 176.

### **First Speech by Leader of the House**

In his maiden speech, the Prime Minister outlined his government's plans for foreign relations, agriculture, economic affairs, tax reforms, energy, human development, and law and order. Specific commitments included providing high-quality seeds to farmers, creating export zones, broad tax reforms, renewable energy projects, scholarships for students, and addressing terrorism and the issue of missing persons in Balochistan.

### **Transparency and Accessibility**

The details of the House proceedings and records are largely available on the National Assembly's website. However, the availability of livestreams and video recordings of the proceedings remains limited and selective. Additionally, the citizens' access to the Common Man's gallery has been restricted on the pretext of security concerns.

### **Gender Sensitivity**

Notwithstanding isolated display of gender-insensitivity by individual lawmakers, the Assembly in general kept a gender-sensitive and responsive outlook towards women's issues. The House constituted a Parliamentary Committee on Gender Mainstreaming to solicit recommendations on women's empowerment. In a welcome departure from culture of impunity towards gender-insensitive remarks, the House censured the use of inappropriate language against women lawmakers by adopting a treasury-sponsored resolution. The maiden addresses by the Prime Minister and the President also featured commitments and support to promoting gender equality. Lawmakers from both sides of the aisle highlighted various issues facing women and sought the treasury's intervention to address them.

# Part I

## PLENARY PROCEEDINGS

### *Around a third of parliamentary time goes to POs*

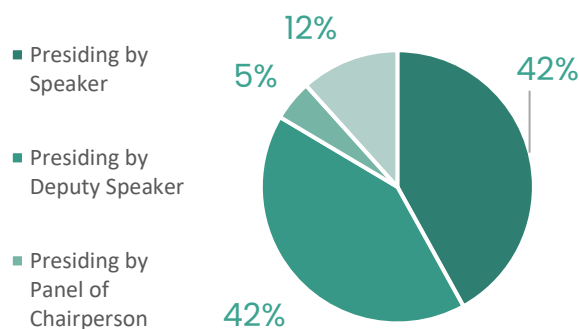
The National Assembly held 23 sittings during its first 100 days and met for a total of 66 hours and 33 minutes. The incumbent Speaker and Deputy Speaker chaired most (84 percent) of the House proceeding themselves while almost five percent of the proceeding was chaired by the members of the Panel of Chairpersons notified at the commencement of each session. The outgoing Speaker presided over nearly 12 percent of the proceeding before the election of the incumbent. Figure 1 shows the distribution of each chair's time.

The House spent nearly two thirds (65 percent) of its proceedings on transacting the regular agenda scheduled on its Order of the Day. Around a third (or 30 percent) of the plenary proceedings was consumed in points of order whereas around five percent of the time was lost in breaks taken during the sittings. A majority points of order raised during the House proceedings were on the general issues of public importance and did not relate to the interpretation or enforcement of the Assembly rules or such Articles of the Constitution that regulate the business of the Assembly. Figure 2 shows the duration of proceeding, disaggregated by the nature of its use.

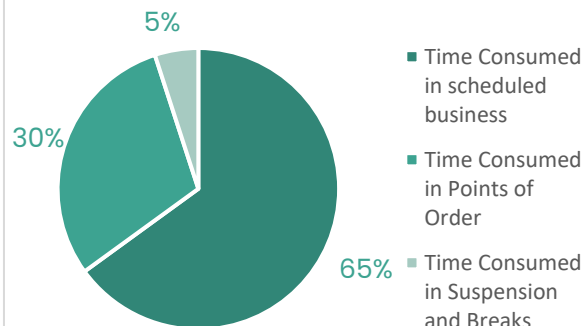
Lawmakers belonging to SIC and their allied independents protested on floor of the House on 11 instances during the reporting period. The protesters mainly raised political issues concerning the election outcome. The protesting lawmakers violated the Rules 30 and 31 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure that outline the conduct of members to be followed during presence in the House and while speaking on floor of the House. The Chair suspended the membership of two SIC lawmakers for their behavior during the President's Address to the Parliament. However, the membership was later restored on a treasury's motion.

Moreover, lawmakers drew the Chair's attention to lack of quorum on seven instances, thrice by PPP, twice by each SIC, and JUIP respectively. As many as three of the sittings had to be adjourned due to lack of quorum while the House was found in order in the remaining instances.

**Figure 1: Plenary Proceeding Disaggregated by Chair**

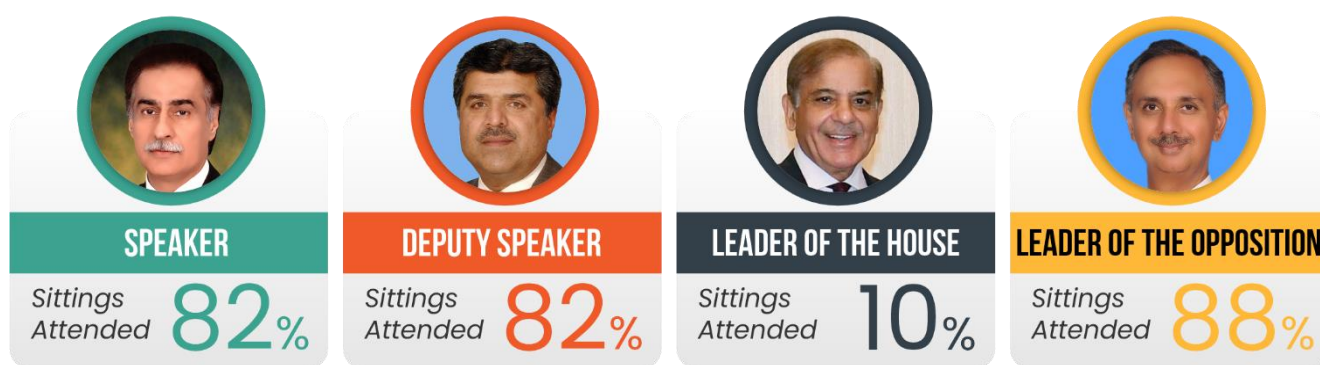


**Figure 2: Plenary Proceedings Disaggregated by Nature of Business**



## 29 MNAs have 100 percent attendance; Cabinet ministers' attendance lacking

According to official attendance records available on the National Assembly website for first 21 sittings<sup>1</sup>, the average attendance per sitting was 230 (68 percent of the total membership) during the reporting period. The maximum attendance was 302 (90 percent) recorded during the first sitting of the 16<sup>th</sup> National Assembly while the lowest attendance was 176 (52 percent) recorded during sixth sitting of the fourth session. On an average, each member attended 14 (67 percent) sittings. There was no significant different between the average attendance of male and female lawmakers. However, the cabinet minister's average attendance was significantly lower than the private members' attendance. On an average, each cabinet minister attended eight sittings whereas each private member attended 15 sittings. As many as 29 MNAs including 21 men and eight women had a 100 percent attendance. Following figure presents the attendance of key parliamentary officeholders and leaders during first 100 days.



## 49 percent lawmakers stay inactive during first 100 days

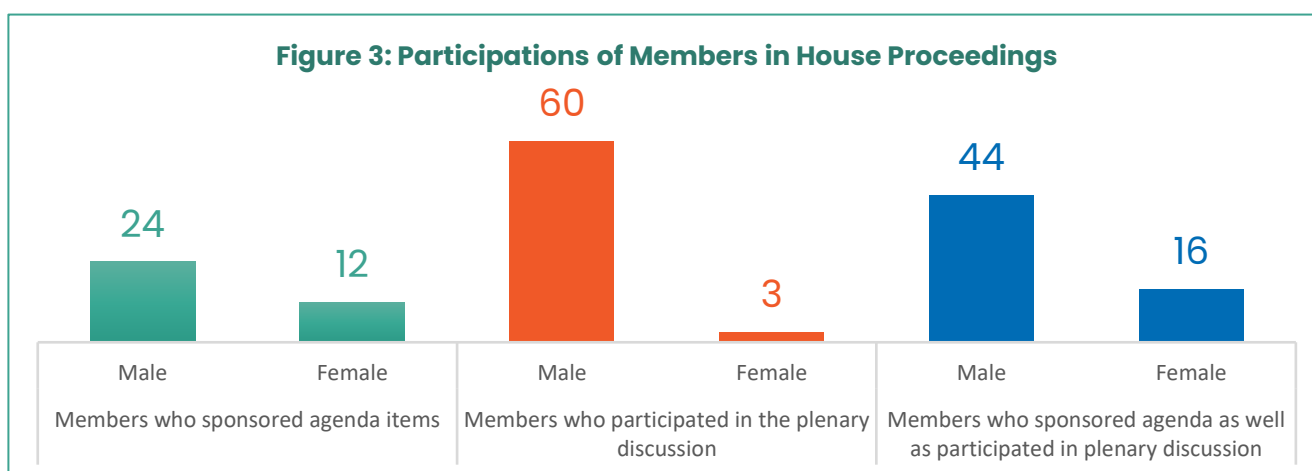
Of existing membership of 310, as many as 159 (51 percent) members actively participated in the proceedings of the House by either sponsoring agenda items, or participating in debates, or doing both while remaining 151 (49 percent) remained inactive. The rate of participation was higher among female lawmakers (61 percent) than male lawmakers (49 percent). FAFEN analysis suggests that regularity of members in attending the Assembly sittings does not necessarily equate to participation in the proceeding as eight lawmakers who attended all the sittings did not propose any agenda items or participate in any discussion. Following table shows number of active lawmakers, disaggregated by political party and gender.

Party	Members who sponsored agenda items		Members who participated in the plenary discussion		Members who sponsored agenda as well as participated in plenary discussion	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>SIC</b>	12		20	2	17	1
<b>PPPP</b>	3	4	17	0	9	8
<b>PML-N</b>	6	7	10	1	7	2
<b>MQMP</b>	2	1	2	-	5	3
<b>JUIP</b>	1	-	3	-	1	2

<sup>1</sup> The attendance for last two sittings held before completion of 100 days i.e. June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> was missing on the National Assembly website when this report was compiled.

Party	Members who sponsored agenda items		Members who participated in the plenary discussion		Members who sponsored agenda as well as participated in plenary discussion	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
IND	-	-	1	-	2	-
BAP	-	-	1	-	-	-
BNP	-	-	1	-	-	-
IPP	-	-	1	-	-	-
MWMP	-	-	1	-	-	-
NP	-	-	1	-	-	-
PKMAP	-	-	-	-	1	-
PML	-	-	1	-	-	-
PML-Z	-	-	1	-	-	-

**Figure 3: Participations of Members in House Proceedings**



### House addresses 76 percent of its scheduled business





















Nearly 76 percent of the House business appearing on the Orders of the Day proceeded to its next logical stage during the first 100 days, while the remaining 24 percent was either deferred or remained unaddressed. The Orders of the Day included a total of 20 legislative bills, 93 questions, 28 CANs, 11 resolutions, two motions under rule 259, and an amendment to the Assembly rules, among others. The House did not address two bills, 10 CANs while 31 questions did not receive response from the government.

#### Calling Attention Notice

As many as 60 MNAs including 40 men and 20 women collaborated to raise 28 Calling Attention Notices (CANs) highlighting various governance issues particularly related to energy and power. Party-wise, SIC lawmakers sponsored 29 percent CANs, PPPP 25 percent, each PML-N and JUIP lawmakers sponsored 18 percent, and independents raised four percent. The government ministers responded to 18 CANs. However, only five CANs received a response from the minister concerned while the remaining 13 were responded by a cabinet colleague of minister concerned although the Rule 88 of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure requires the minister whose attention has been called to make a statement on the issue by himself or herself.

## Questions Hour

The House held Question Hours during three out of 23 sittings listing a total of 93 questions asked by 42 lawmakers for answers. As many as 31 (33 percent) of these questions did not receive a reply from the government. These questions were addressed to 20 government ministries, divisions, or departments. The ministry of power received the maximum number of queries.

 <b>Energy (Power Division)</b> Total Question Asked: 18 Question Responded: 89%	 <b>National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination</b> Total Question Asked: 16 Question Responded: 0%	 <b>National Food Security and Research</b> Total Question Asked: 8 Question Responded: 63%
 <b>Federal Education and Professional Training</b> Total Question Asked: 7 Question Responded: 100%	 <b>Energy (Petroleum Division)</b> Total Question Asked: 5 Question Responded: 80%	 <b>Communication</b> Total Question Asked: 5 Question Responded: 100%
 <b>Aviation Division</b> Total Question Asked: 4 Question Responded: 100%	 <b>Housing &amp; Works</b> Total Question Asked: 4 Question Responded: 100%	 <b>Law and Justice</b> Total Question Asked: 4 Question Responded: 100%
 <b>Human Rights</b> Total Question Asked: 3 Question Responded: 67%	 <b>Industries &amp; Production</b> Total Question Asked: 3 Question Responded: 100%	 <b>Railways</b> Total Question Asked: 3 Question Responded: 33%
 <b>Religious Affairs and Inter-faith Harmony</b> Total Question Asked: 3 Question Responded: 0%	 <b>Climate Change and Environmental Coordination</b> Total Question Asked: 2 Question Responded: 100%	 <b>Establishment Division</b> Total Question Asked: 2 Question Responded: 100%
 <b>Water Resources</b> Total Question Asked: 2 Question Responded: 0%	 <b>Cabinet Division</b> Total Question Asked: 1 Question Responded: 100%	 <b>Foreign Affairs</b> Total Question Asked: 1 Question Responded: 100%
 <b>Parliamentary Affairs</b> Total Question Asked: 1 Question Responded: 100%	 <b>Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Division</b> Total Question Asked: 1 Question Responded: 0%	

## Motion under Rule 259

MQMP and PPPP lawmakers sought plenary discussions on economic situation in the country and higher education issues in Balochistan through MUR259. As many as four lawmakers participated in the discussion on economic situation that took 42 minutes while two lawmakers spoke during the discussion on higher education issues in Balochistan that continued for 13 minutes. The government ministers summed up both discussions giving general policy statements without any specific assurances or commitments.

## Resolution

The House adopted ten resolutions during its first 100 days. As many as four of these were government-sponsored resolutions including four constitutional resolutions to extend the life of nine presidential ordinances and a resolution taking notice of inappropriate remarks against female lawmakers by some of their male colleagues. As many as two were jointly sponsored by the government and private members to mark the international day against Islamophobia and World Earth Day. The remaining three resolutions were initiated by the private lawmakers to mark the International Women's Day; recommend the federal government to recognize the founder of Pakistan Peoples Party Zulfikar Ali Bhutto as a martyr and confer civilian award for his services to the democracy; and sought implementation of officially notified minimum wages. A private member's resolution recommending the government to establish Protectorate of Emigrants Office in Mansehra was withdrawn upon a government assurance to address the issue.

## Amendments to the Assembly Rules

The House referred a proposed amendment to its Rules of Procedure proposed to the committee concerned for review and recommendation. The amendment proposed by a female lawmaker of PPPP sought to develop regulatory mechanism for public petitions to the National Assembly.

## Motion of Thanks to the President

Following the presidential address to the Parliament on April 18, the government moved the House to adopt a motion of thanks to the President Asif Ali Zardari for his address. As many as 40 lawmakers including nine women participated in the discussion on the motion during the subsequent sittings. Cumulatively, the discussion has consumed more than 14 hours. The National Assembly Rules of Procedure restrict consideration of adjournment motion while the House is discussing the motion of thanks. During the tenure of 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> Assemblies, the motions of thanks to the President following their annual address to the Parliament stayed on Orders of the Day indefinitely.

## Legislation

The legislative business scheduled for the first five sessions comprised 20 bills including 16 government and four private members' bills. As many as 12 government bills were the ordinances out of which 10 ordinances were promulgated by the caretaker government which the incumbent government laid before the House. As many as two ordinances promulgated by the incumbent government concerning amendments in the Elections Act 2017 and the National Accountability Ordinance 1999 were also laid before the House. These ordinances and the remaining four



government bills were referred to the standing committees concerned for review and recommendations. One of these bills, the Tax Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2024, passed second and the final reading as well without the committee reporting back on it. The House approved the government's motion seeking suspension of the mandatory requirement of waiting until the committee report for the swift passage of the bill. As many as six lawmakers debated the bill for a total of 27 minutes before its passage.

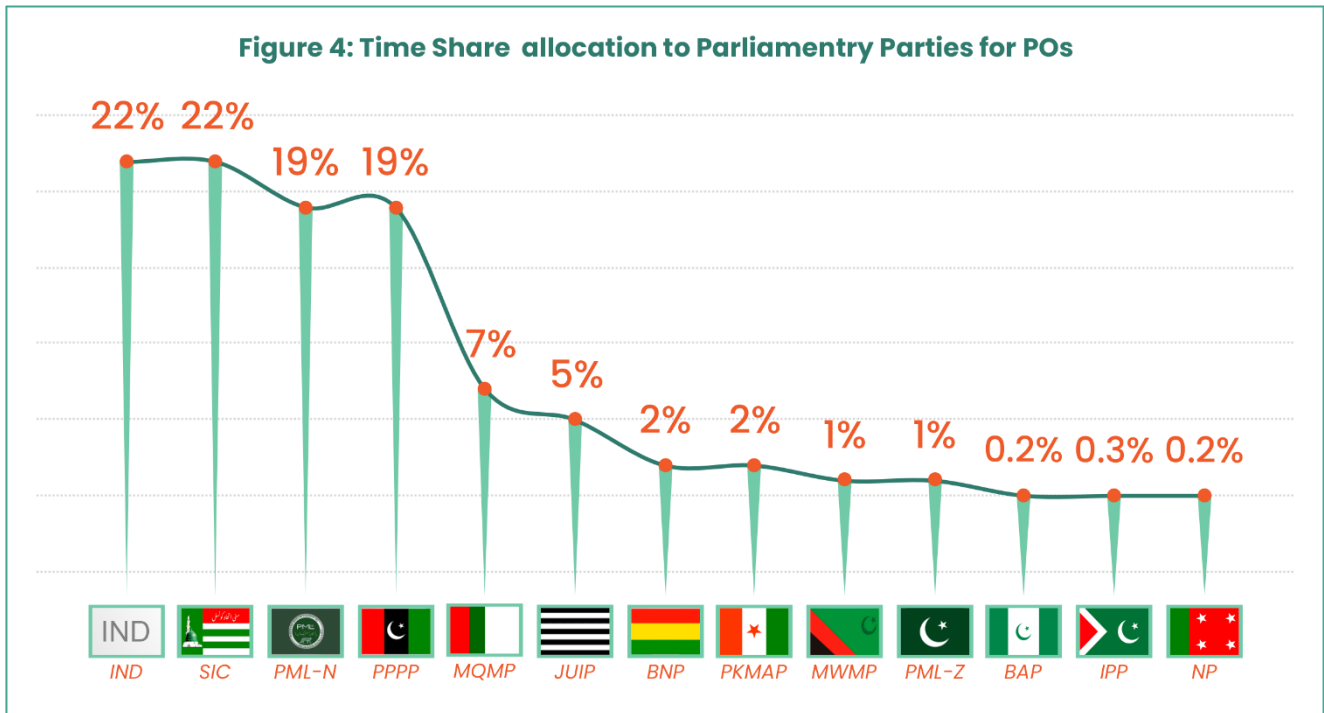
Among the private member legislation, as many as two bills passed the introduction stage and were referred to the standing committee concerned while the remaining two were deferred. These included two constitutional amendments, a higher education institution's charter and an amendment relating to the Islamabad High Court's pecuniary jurisdiction. Below is the list of bills introduced before the House:

Title of the Bill	Status	Bill Type	Date of Introduction	Date of Passage
The Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Technology Bill, 2024	Referred the bill to Committee	Private	23-Apr-24	
The Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023	Laid	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023	Laid	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Pakistan Postal Services Management Board (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023	Laid	Government	15-Mar-24	
The National Highway Authority (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023	Laid	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023	Laid	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Privatization Commission (Amendment) Ordinance, 2023	Laid	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Civil Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2024	Introduced	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Legal Aid and Justice Authority (Amendment) Bill, 2024	Introduced	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Establishment of Telecommunication Appellate Tribunal Ordinance, 2023	Laid	Government	15-Mar-24	
The Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2024	Laid	Government	13-May-24	
The Tax Law (Amendment) Bill, 2024	Passed	Government	24-Apr-24	29-Apr-24
The National University of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2024	Introduced	Government	19-Apr-24	
The Apostille Ordinance, 2024	Laid	Government	19-Apr-24	
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024. (Amendment in Article- 175A and 215)	Deferred	Private	23-Apr-24	
The Constitution (Amendment) Bill, 2024. (Amendment in Article- 25)	Introduced	Private	23-Apr-24	
The Child Marriage Restraint (Amendment) Bill, 2024.	Deferred	Private	23-Apr-24	
The Seed (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024	Laid	Government	29-Apr-24	
The Elections (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024	Laid	Government	6-Jun-24	
The National Accountability (Amendment) Ordinance, 2024	Laid	Government	6-Jun-24	

## Points of Order

As many as 106 lawmakers including 16 women raised a total of 249 points of order during the reporting period consuming 19 hours and 58 minutes of the House proceeding. Only 30 percent of these points of order pertained to the interpretation or enforcement of the Assembly's Rules of Procedure or the relevant constitutional provisions. Yet, issues concerning political developments, economic policies, energy issues, foreign relations, law and order, minorities issue among others, were discussed using points of order. Wheat prices issue remained the most debated topic through points of order.

Of the total time allowed to raise POs, women lawmakers got a meagre six percent while the rest 94 percent was given to men. Among political parties, SIC and their allied independents were allowed almost 44 percent time, the highest among all parties. Other opposition parties got 10 percent time. The members sitting on the treasury's side including PML-N, PPPP, MQMP, IPP, BAP, PML-Z and NP got 46 percent of the time for POs. Figure 4 shows the time share allowed to various parliamentary parties to raise POs.



## Part II

### EXECUTIVE'S COMMITMENTS

The Prime Minister's maiden speech in the National Assembly after his election as the Leader of the House touched upon a wide range of subjects concerning the country's foreign relations, electoral issues, agricultural policies, economy, human development, and security issues. In addition to laying out his government's plan for running the country, he also made substantive commitments during the speech, which covered many of the promises made in the PML-N's manifesto for General Election 2024. Such speeches, conventionally, set the tone for the government's performance and provide the benchmarks to hold the executive accountable, particularly in political context like Pakistan where election manifestoes gain little traction in the regular political discourse. Following are prominent takeaways of the premier's speech:

#### Politics and Elections

The Prime Minister acknowledged the split public mandate resulting from General Election 2024 and encouraged the political parties to work together to steer the country out of its existing economic and political crises. He encouraged the opposition parties to avail legal remedies for their election-related complaints.

#### Foreign Relations

The Prime Minister appreciated the support offered by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Turkey at a time when the country was battling severe economic crisis. He vowed to improve and advance the diplomatic ties with neighboring countries as well as the United States of America while avoiding to take

**Figure 4: List of commitments made by cabinet members**

#### Commitments by or on behalf of the Prime Minister

- Farmers to be provided subsidized fertilizers, solar tubewells and free-of-cost imported high quality seeds
- FBR to process tax refunds within 10 days
- Energy companies to establish a network of renewable energy projects
- Half a million students to receive IT and AI trainings
- Archaic legislation hindering investments to be repealed
- Export zones to be established across the country with cooperation of provincial governments
- More countries to be enrolled in the list of visa-free entry into Pakistan
- Foreign scholarship program to be launched
- Women and juvenile inmates serving up to two years of imprisonment to be freed and provided technical skills trainings
- Country-wide efficient public transport system to be established
- Issues of missing persons in Balochistan to be resolved in consultation with provincial elders
- Relations with USA, EU and Gulf Countries to be improved and strengthened
- Biannual examination to be held for accrediting doctors with foreign qualification

#### Commitments by Minister for Law and Justice

- Federal government to continue supporting provinces to maintain law and order within their jurisdictions
- Protectorate of Emigrants Office to be operational in Abbottabad by June 2024
- Contract for repairs on Chakdara-Upper Dir road already awarded and work to begin by next month i.e. May 2024

#### Commitment by Minister for Finance and Revenue

- Federal minister to facilitate a meeting between the lawmakers and FBR to exchange suggestions on taxation in former FATA and PATA regions

sides in an increasingly polarized world. He also spoke on the ongoing Israeli aggression against Palestinians and the Kashmir dispute.

### Agriculture

The Prime Minister committed to facilitating farmers by providing them with high-quality seeds, solar tube wells and subsidized fertilizers.

### Economic Affairs

The Prime Minister discussed the fiscal difficulties facing the federal government and committed to ensuring an enabling ecosystem for investments including establishment of export zones, removing *red-tape* culture, and expanding the network of countries allowed visa-free entry in the country.

### Tax Reforms

The Prime Minister stressed the need for broader tax reforms including a restructuring of Federal Board of Revenue.

### Energy Sector

The Prime Minister directed energy companies to establish a network of renewable energy projects to provide affordable electricity to consumers.

### Human Development

The Prime Minister announced to launch scholarships for students and bank loans for young entrepreneurs. He vowed to ensure protection for minorities and women against violence and harassment. Additionally, he committed to improve health services and public transport network in the cities. He also spoke of technical and vocational trainings to inmates.

### Law and Order

The Prime Minister emphasized the implementation on the National Action Plan to counter the terrorism. He also committed to

#### Commitment by Minister for Science and Technology

- Federal government to cooperate with provincial government of Balochistan to set up universities in the province
- Federal government to introduce a program engaging educated youth to teach children for improving country's literacy rate while no bus has been withdrawn from school duty

#### Commitment by Minister for Information and Broadcasting

- Federal government to extend support to Evacuee Trust Property Board for eviction of illegal encroachers in Nanakana Sahib
- Federal government to introduce National Counter Violent Terrorism Policy 2024 and continue supporting provinces to maintain law and order within their jurisdictions
- Federal minister to share on demand reasons for inclusion of legislators names in travel control lists

#### Commitment by Minister for Commerce

- Ban on export of agricultural exports to be reviewed and reconsidered in the near future

#### Commitment by or on behalf of Minister for Petroleum

- Issue of low gas pressure in Malir, Layari and Keamari to be resolved by October through installation of pumps
- Federal government to ensure availability of petroleum products at a suitable price
- Petroleum ministry to file for early hearing of gas tariff case in the court while Federal Minister for Law and Justice to facilitate a meeting between lawmakers and Secretary for Petroleum for exchange of suggestions on gas tariff

#### Commitment by or on behalf of Minister for Power

- NEPRA to be engaged to ensure quality of service by K-Electric while FIA to act against power sector officials involved in facilitating power theft
- Federal government to adjust the energy mix to decrease power prices and pursue solarization through establishment of manufacturing plants in Pakistan with cooperation of China

#### Commitment by Minister for Privatization

- Federal minister to personally monitor the work on old National Highway in Khairpur and share a comparison of government spending on highways in Punjab and Sindh

resolve the long-standing issue of missing persons in Balochistan.

In addition to the commitments by the Prime Minister, the members of his cabinet made 17 specific commitments while speaking on floor of the House or responding to an issue of public importance raised by the private lawmakers through Calling Attention Notices (CANs), Motions under Rule 259 (MUR-259) or resolutions.<sup>2</sup> The ministers gave an implementation timeline in only five of the commitments whereas the remaining were left vague.

Under the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the National Assembly 2007, there shall be a House Committee on Government Assurances comprising 16 members to take note of and scrutinize the assurances, promises, commitments, and undertakings of the Government given by the Ministers from time to time on the floor of the Assembly. The Committee is required to regularly report on the extent to which government assurances and promises have been implemented; and whether the implementation has taken place in time. So far, the 16<sup>th</sup> National Assembly has not notified such committee.

## Part III

### TRANSPARENCY AND ACCESSIBILITY

The information concerning the House proceeding and business are largely available on the Assembly's official website ([www.na.gov.pk](http://www.na.gov.pk)). A numbered list of the agenda items to be considered during each sitting is almost always available a day before a sitting is to take place. Within two days of a sitting, a summary of the proceedings and an official plenary attendance of the members is also uploaded on the website. The verbatim and video records, however, are uploaded with varying intervals. While almost all of the sittings' verbatim is available on the website, the livestream of the proceedings and the video recordings are available only for a select number of sittings on the official YouTube channel of the National Assembly. Following table presents the details of the information available about the Assembly proceedings online:

House Business Information	Description of Information	Availability Status
<b>Orders of the Day</b>	Numbered list of agenda items to be considered during a sitting	Uploaded on official website timely and regularly
<b>Daily Bulletin</b>	Summary of the House proceedings during a sitting	Uploaded on official website timely and regularly
<b>Verbatim/Debat es</b>	Verbatim record of the House proceedings during a sitting	Uploaded on the website intermittently
<b>Legislation</b>	Official text of a government or private member's bill introduced in the House or passed by the House	Uploaded on official website intermittently
<b>Resolutions</b>	Text of a resolution adopted by the House	Uploaded on official website timely and regularly
<b>List of Questions</b>	Numbered list of questions to be answered by the government during a sitting	Uploaded on official website timely and regularly
<b>Attendance</b>	Members attendance register for a sitting	Uploaded on official website timely and regularly

<sup>2</sup> These commitments do not include those made during the two sittings held on June 6 and June 7, 2024 as their verbatim record was not available on the National Assembly website.

House Business Information	Description of Information	Availability Status
<b>Video Recording</b>	Video record of the House proceeding during a sitting	Uploaded on official Youtube Channel rarely
<b>Ruling of the Chair</b>	Decision of the Speaker on a Point of Order or other matters referred to the Chair	No current rulings available on official website

Notwithstanding the improved transparency, the National Assembly has withdrawn the citizens' access to the Common Man's gallery. The citizens can now only get a visitor gallery's pass on a lawmaker's recommendation. The Common Man gallery initiative, launched during the term of 15<sup>th</sup> National Assembly, allowed the citizens to directly approach the Assembly secretariat and acquire a pass to witness the Assembly proceedings from the galleries without any recommendations. The withdrawal of access may have followed an incident of a guest in the galleries blowing whistles. Federal Minister for Defence has also raised the security concerns concerning the visitors' gallery and called for restricting access to the galleries. In response, Speaker Ayaz Sadiq mentioned that the matter had been discussed with the Minister for Interior, the I.G. Police of Islamabad, and the Senate Secretariat. Consequently, security measures are being taken to improve the security of the Parliament Building. In a separate incident, the Leader of the Opposition complained of restrictions on the opposition lawmaker's access to the Assembly building. The Deputy Speaker ordered an inquiry into the matter.

## Part IV

### GENDER ASSESSMENT OF HOUSE PROCEEDINGS

During the plenary proceedings of the National Assembly of Pakistan, several lawmakers belonging to both treasury and opposition reflected upon critical women-specific concerns in political and societal spheres through their agenda and verbal submissions. While individual lawmakers as well as the House made several promising commitments to women's political, social and economic empowerment, sporadic gender-insensitive remarks continued to surface during the House proceedings.

Moved by a female lawmaker, the House passed a resolution on International Women's Day i.e. March 8, 2024, reaffirming its commitment to gender equality and resolving to promote it through legislative measures, education, and awareness campaigns in collaboration with public and private sectors. Earlier, the Prime Minister, in his maiden speech before the House before taking oath as premier, committed to

#### Women-related Issues Discussed during House Proceedings

- i. Challenges faced by women political workers belonging to PTI
- ii. Allocation of women-reserved seats among political parties
- iii. Killing of a woman in Toba Tek Singh by her family
- iv. Parliamentary initiatives to invite marginalized citizens including women in the National Assembly Hall
- v. Women convicts serving imprisonment up to two years to be released and provided skills trainings
- vi. Use of foul language against women politicians and elected representatives
- vii. Promoting Girls Education and Health
- viii. Reducing Maternity mortality and enhance mother and child nutrition
- ix. Non-discrimination directly or indirectly on ground of gender or sex, pregnancy, and marital status

waive off the sentences of women and children serving imprisonment up to two years and impart them trainings to enhance their skills. During his address to the Parliament, the President Asif Ali Zardari urged the incumbent federal government to work towards promoting girls' education and health, including programs to reduce maternity mortality and enhance mother and child nutrition.

The opposition legislators drew the House attention towards the difficulties faced by political workers of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) facing violence, intimidation and imprisonment. Additionally, they discussed the issue of allocation of women-reserved seats in the directly-elected legislatures among political parties other than SIC.

The outgoing Speaker Raja Pervez Ashraf underscored the inclusivity in parliamentary processes while recalling his initiative to hold public conventions in the National Assembly Hall as part of diamond jubilee celebrations of the first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. These conventions provided women and other marginalized segments including transgender and persons with disabilities an opportunity to take a seat in the Assembly chambers. Earlier during the oath-taking of members, the outgoing Speaker also ruled to make arrangements for a wheel-chair bound lawmaker to cast his vote for election of the Speaker from his seat.

The House also constituted a Special Committee on Gender Mainstreaming comprising members from both Houses of the Parliament. The Special Committee shall make recommendations to the National Assembly on matters pertaining to women empowerment. The National Assembly Secretariat shall extend its Secretarial and administrative support to the Committee. The membership of the Committee is not publically notified on the website till date.

A proposal for Constitutional Amendment by a PPPP lawmaker, sought to expand the scope of equality as promised in the Constitution. The amendment proposed to substitute Article 25 to prove for non-discrimination on grounds of not only sex but also on the basis race, gender, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, economic position, color, age, disability, religion, culture, or language while also binding the State to take affirmative action to promote equality and non-discrimination.

In wake of gender-insensitive and ridiculing remarks against women politicians by their colleagues, the House adopted a resolution discouraging the inappropriate language against women. Multiple lawmakers took exception to the repeated use of foul language on the floor of the Assembly.

Female lawmakers persistently raised governance issues that affect women disproportionately including power and gas loadshedding, lack of higher education opportunities, and intimidation and harassment of political workers. A female lawmaker of PPPP sought investigations into the killing of a woman by her own family members in Toba Tek Singh. Speaking on a point of order, she asked for Speaker's permission to move a resolution concerning the killing. However, the Speaker did not allow moving a resolution and told the lawmaker to first seek signatures from the treasury and opposition lawmakers on the resolution before it can be considered for voting in the House.