

**3rd Joint Session:**

# **11% Legislators Take Part in Debate on Political Situation in Pakistan**



Report on  
Joint Session  
of the  
Parliament

September 2nd to  
September 19, 2014

- Senators show more interest than MNAs**
- On Average 103 present at outset and 141 at close of each sitting**

As many as 94 percent Members of the National Assembly and 77 percent Senators did not participate in the debate on the current political situation during the longest ever Joint Session of the Parliament which concluded on Friday, September 19, 2014.

The third Joint Session of the Parliament was called on September 2, 2014 to discuss the current political situation in wake of Islamabad *dharnas* by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) against the alleged rigging in General Elections 2013 and by Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) against the killing of its workers in Model Town Lahore. Under pressure by protests and amid potential risks to the stability of the system, the session was convened at the joint request of treasury and opposition parties with the purpose of demonstrating of political unity for the continuity of the democratic system.

The session was spread over ten sittings – the longest in Pakistan's parliamentary history - and was prorogued on September 19, 2014. At the end of the ten days, the parliamentary parties unanimously passed a Resolution supporting constitutional supremacy and democratic continuity, and censuring *dharnas* as anti-democratic. Another Resolution, irrelevant to the purpose of the Joint Sitting, was also passed which coincided with the World Literacy Day and pertained to the increasing the literacy rate in Pakistan.

While the treasury has been successful in drawing the support of all opposition parties against the Islamabad *dharnas* and their demands concerning the resignation of the Prime Minister as raised by PTI and dissolution of all assemblies as raised by PAT, the support came at a price. Opposition parties raised serious concerns with the style of governance of the PML-N government, leading to embarrassing moments for the treasury benches.

Considering the political importance and symbolism of the Joint Session, the attendance and participation of legislators remained dismal. With the exception of parliamentary party leaders and certain other prominent

legislators, most of the 446 legislators of Parliament<sup>1</sup> remained silent throughout the debate. Only three out of the 85<sup>2</sup> women legislators spoke on the Motion under Rule 259 about the political situation in Pakistan. Attendance during the session was also observed to be low, with an average of only 103 (23 percent) legislators present at the outset and 141 (32 percent) at the end of each sitting<sup>3</sup>.

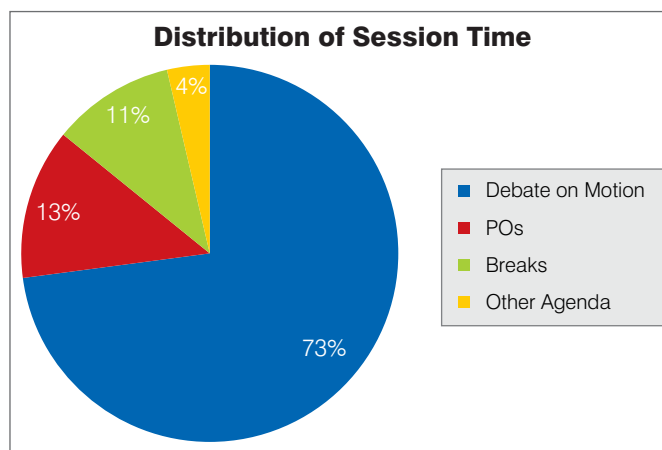
Most conspicuous, however, was the attendance of the Prime Minister, who attended nine sittings for a total of 1,025 minutes. This was a marked improvement from the first parliamentary year when he attended only seven out of 99 sittings. On the other hand, the Leader of the Opposition attended 77 sittings during the year. During this third Joint Session of Parliament, he was present for nine sittings for 1,256 minutes.

## Debate on the Prevailing Political Situation in Pakistan

Around 11 percent of the total parliamentary membership<sup>4</sup> – 24 Senators and 22 MNAs – took part in the debate on the Motion under Rule 259 regarding the political situation. A total of 24 hours and 38 minutes were consumed by the debate during the session.

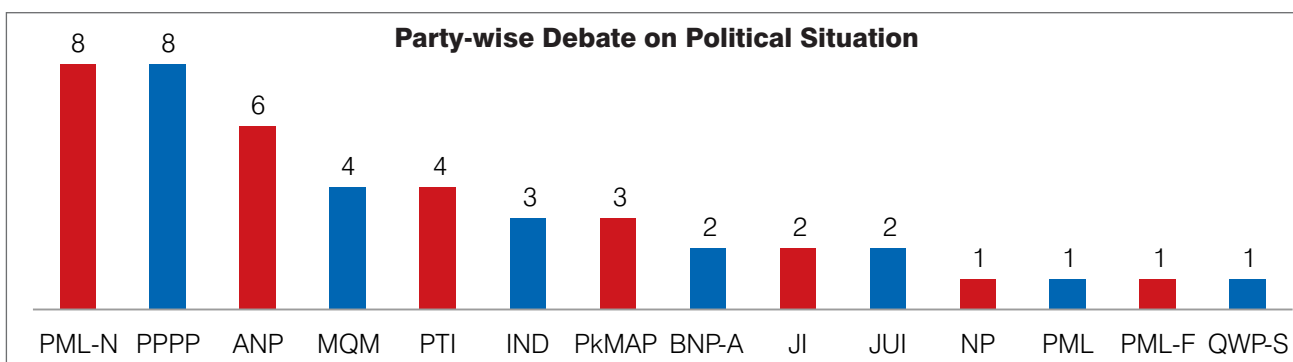
The rest of the time was consumed by breaks, Points of Orders, Resolutions and other agendas.

Around 90 percent of the legislators did not participate in the debate. Out of the 446 total legislators of National Assembly and Senate, only forty-six (11 percent) took part in the debate of the Motion under Rule 259 for 1,478 minutes – which is 73 percent of the total session time of 33 hours and 47 minutes.



Legislators belonging to PML-Z, AML, AJIP and APML either did not participate or were not allowed by the Speaker to interject on the motion under discussion. Those who participated in the debate included eight legislators belonging to PPPP (three MNAs and five Senators), ANP's six (five Senators and one MNA), PTI's four (all MNAs), MQM's four (two Senators and two MNAs), PkMAP's three (two MNAs and one Senator), BNP-A's two (both Senators), JI's two (both MNAs), JUI-F's two (one Senator and one MNA), NP's one (Senator), PML (Senator), PML-F's one (Senator), and QWP's one legislator (MNA) spoke on the Motion.

In addition, three Independents – two Senators and one MNA – also expressed their views on the political situation in Pakistan. Eight legislators of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League – Nawaz (PML-N) participated in the debate during the session, making up for 56 percent of the treasury benches in the National Assembly (190 seats) and 15 percent in the Senate (16 seats). The Prime Minister spoke twice during the session for 46 minutes – 12 minutes in the 4th sitting and 34 minutes in the last sitting. The following graph shows party-wise breakdown of legislators taking part in the debate:



<sup>1</sup> The total membership of the National Assembly is 342, and the total membership of the Senate is 104.

<sup>2</sup> There are a total of 17 Women Senators and 68 NA Members (eight directly elected on general seats and 60 on reserved seats for women).

<sup>3</sup> As the Assembly Secretariat does not make public, the attendance record of legislators, FAFEN conducts a head count at the start and end of each sitting.

<sup>4</sup> See Annexure 1 for Details of the Debate on Motion under Rule 259 regarding the political situation in Pakistan.

Only three out of the total 85 women in Parliament took part in the debate, two belonging to BNPA and one belonging to PPPP.

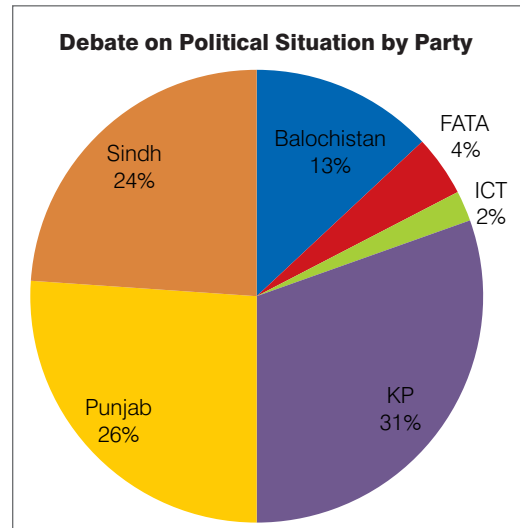
Surprisingly, a province-wise analysis shows that the greatest number of legislators (14) taking part in the debate belonged to KP, followed by 12 from Punjab, 11 from Sindh, six from Balochistan, two from FATA and one MP from the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

## Resolutions

The House adopted two Resolutions -- one to mark the World Literacy Day and the second to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the democratic system, sanctity of State institutions and the rule of law.

Sponsored by the Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Reforms, the first Resolution was adopted during the fifth sitting expressing the determination to eliminate illiteracy from Pakistan<sup>5</sup>.

The second Resolution was moved by the Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Statistics, and was adopted during the last sitting to uphold the supremacy of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the democratic system, sanctity of State institutions and the rule of law, which are the founding pillars of the State of Pakistan, as envisaged by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Rehmatullah Alaih, and the sovereignty of Parliament which embodies the will and the mandate of the people of Pakistan. Parliament condemns the Dharnas in the Red Zone of Islamabad and their unconstitutional demands made under threat of forcible occupation of Parliament House, Prime Minister's House and other State buildings. Parliament also strongly condemns the forcible entry into and occupation of the front compound of Parliament House by workers of PTI and PAT and other allied parties, the assault of the Prime Minister's House and Pakistan Secretariat and the forcible occupation of PTV<sup>6</sup>.



## Session Duration and Attendance

This session was the longest Joint Session of both Houses of Parliament in the parliamentary history of Pakistan, and was held from September 2 to September 19, 2014. The session comprised ten sittings, which on average lasted three hours and 23 minutes each.

The last sitting was the longest, spanning four hours and 25 minutes while the fourth was the shortest, lasting for an hour and 44 minutes. Each sitting began late by an average of 37 minutes. Prayer breaks consumed 213 minutes (11 percent) of the total time.

Sr. No.	Day and Date	Sitting	Late Starts	Hours	Minutes	Breaks
1	Tuesday, September 2, 2014	1st	51	3	24	0
2	Wednesday, September 3, 2014	2nd	38	4	59	60
3	Thursday, September 4, 2014	3rd	41	3	31	0
4	Friday, September 5, 2014	4th	35	1	44	0
5	Monday, September 8, 2014	5th	50	2	39	27
6	Tuesday, September 9, 2014	6th	21	2	24	0
7	Wednesday, September 10, 2014	7th	26	4	4	0
8	Wednesday, September 17, 2014	8th	35	3	37	26
9	Thursday, September 18, 2014	9th	32	3	0	0
10	Friday, September 19, 2014	10th	45	4	25	100
<b>Total</b>			<b>Average Delay 37</b>	<b>33 hours and 47 minutes</b>		<b>213 minutes</b>

<sup>5</sup> The Entire Text of the Resolution adopted in the 5th sitting can be accessed at [http://www.na.gov.pk/en/resolution\\_detail.php?id=181](http://www.na.gov.pk/en/resolution_detail.php?id=181)

<sup>6</sup> The Entire Text of the Resolution adopted in the last sitting can be accessed at [http://www.na.gov.pk/en/resolution\\_detail.php?id=182](http://www.na.gov.pk/en/resolution_detail.php?id=182)

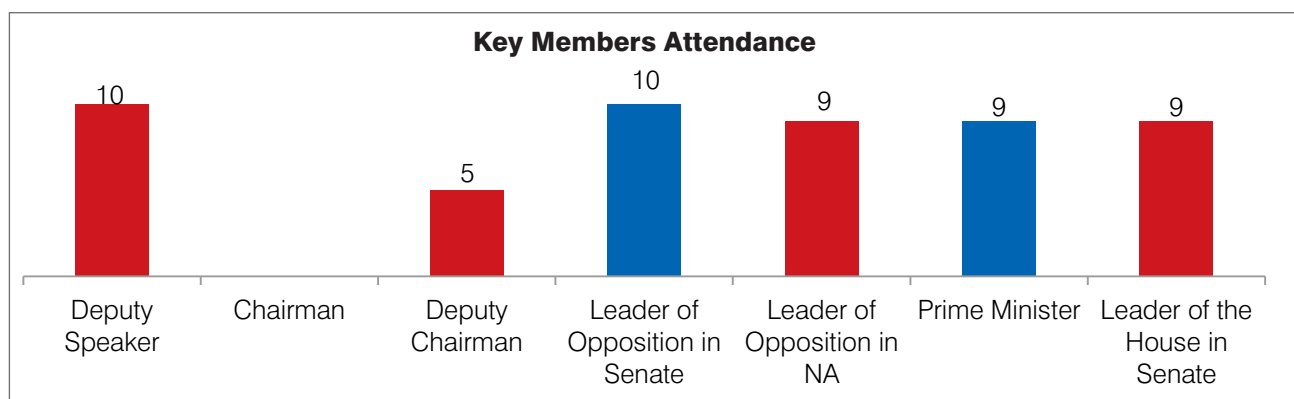
## Legislators' Attendance

Attendance was observed to be low during the session, with an average of only 103 legislators (23 percent of total membership) present at the outset and 141 (32 percent) at the end of each sitting. The total membership of both the Houses is 446 – National Assembly (342) and Senate (104).

The ninth sitting witnessed the lowest attendance -- 27 legislators were present at the start and only 79 at the close.

Sitting No.	Legislators Present at the Outset of the sitting	Legislators present at the end	Maximum Legislators Present at a Point of the sitting
1st	251	232	310
2nd	136	175	292
3rd	114	173	218
4th	92	224	246
5th	107	102	186
6th	63	136	178
7th	87	38	228
8th	64	101	182
9th	27	79	128
10th	87	154	219
<b>Average</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>219</b>

The entire session was chaired by the Speaker National Assembly. His Deputy was also present during the entire session. The Chairman Senate did not attend the session. However, his Deputy was present in five sittings.



Attendance in parliamentary sittings is crucial in order for legislators, especially those holding important positions (such as the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition), to perform their legislative and representative roles.

The Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition attended nine sittings each for 1,028 minutes and 1,256 minutes, respectively.

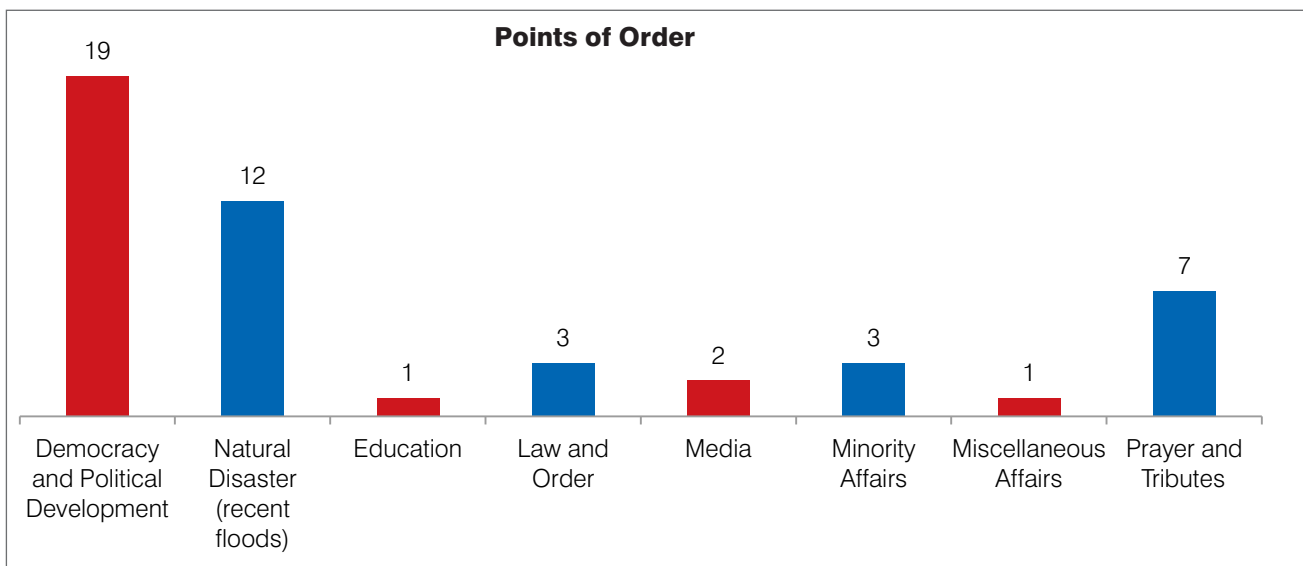
Similarly, the Leader of the House in Senate attended nine sittings for 1,641 minutes, while the Leader of the Opposition in Senate was present during 10 sittings for 1,051 minutes.

Key Member	Sittings Attended	Time Present	Percentage of Time Present in the House
Leader of Opposition in Senate	10	1,051	52%
Leader of the House in Senate	9	1,641	81%
Prime Minister	9	1,028	51%
Leader of Opposition in NA	9	1,256	62%

## Points of Order

A total of 48 Points of Order consumed 262 minutes – 11 percent of the total session time. However, none of the Points of Order raised were able to receive a formal ruling from the Chair. Unless the Chair gives a formal ruling on a Point of Order, it does not lead to any assembly output. A Point of Order is raised to address an apparent breach in the rules of parliamentary procedure while an Assembly's business is underway, and usually requests the Chair's ruling on the issue. Points of Order must never be concerned with non-procedural issues; however, this agenda item is frequently used by legislators to raise matters of national interest and other issues.

All 48 Points of Orders raised during the Joint Session have been categorized into eight broader themes, of which 38 percent related to democracy and political development and 26 percent to the devastation caused by recent floods. As none of the Points of Order attracted the Chairs' formal ruling, they did not contribute to any parliamentary output.



## Policy Statements by the Government

The Federal Minister for Water and Power also made two policy statements on the destruction caused by recent floods and terrorist attack on a naval base. These have not been included in this report as Points of Order. The statements consumed 37 minutes of the session time.

## Protests, Boycotts and Walkouts

With the exception of a few, most PTI legislators boycotted the entire Joint Session. However, the 2nd sitting witnessed heated moments when the PTI Deputy Parliamentary Leader made an appearance at the session to respond to allegations against his party levelled by his fellow legislators. The Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and the Federal Interior Minister went out of the House before he could start his speech. His address was interrupted by the Federal Minister for Finance, Revenue, Economic Affairs and Statistics. Right after the address, PTI legislators left the House.

Similarly, during the 4th sitting, the Prime Minister apologized to Leader of the Opposition in the Senate who was attacked by Federal Interior Minister in his press talk for his alleged involvement with land mafia and in other corrupt practices. The minister's remarks had angered the opposition, who was otherwise seen as the major support for the government under attack of PTI-PAT combine. However, the Premier's apology did not deter a visibly angered Leader of the Opposition in the Senate from clarifying his position as well as counterattacking the Federal Interior Minister, who was seen shuffling seats.

The MQM walked out of the last sitting after demanding to set up new administrative units in Sindh. One JI legislator staged a walkout during the second sitting as he was not allowed to speak on the Motion under Rule 259 regarding the political situation in Pakistan.

**Annexure 1: Details of Debate on Political Situation in Pakistan**

Sr. No.	Sitting	Legislator taking part in debate on Motion	Party	Membership
1	1st	Ch. Nisar Ali Khan	PML-N	MNA
2		Aitzaz Ahsan	PPPP	Senator
3		Ch. Nisar Ali Khan	PML-N	MNA
4		Mehmood Khan Achakzai	PkMAP	MNA
5		Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui	MQM	MNA
6		Fazal-Ur-Rehman	JUI	MNA
7		Sardar Ayaz Sadiq (Speaker's Address)	PML-N	MNA
8		Makhdoom Muhammad Javed Hashmi	PTI	MNA
9	2nd	Muhammad Zahid Khan	ANP	Senator
10		Mir Hasil Khan Bizenjo	NP	Senator
11		Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao	QWP	MNA
12		Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah	PPPP	MNA
13		Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi	PTI	MNA
14		Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah	PPPP	MNA
15		Mehmood Khan Achakzai	PkMAP	MNA
16		Aftab Ahmad Khan Sherpao	QWP	MNA
17		Sardar Ayaz Sadiq (Speaker's Address)	PML-N	MNA
18		Abdul Nabi Bangash	ANP	Senator
19		Mohammad Ishaq Dar	PML-N	Senator
20		Sahibzada Tariq Ullah	JI	MNA
21		Fazal-Ur-Rehman	JUI	MNA
22		Sardar Ayaz Sadiq (Speaker's Address)	PML-N	MNA
23		Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah	PPPP	MNA
24	3rd	Prof. Sajid Mir	PML-N	Senator
25		Mushahid Hussain Syed	PML	Senator
26		Haji Mohammad Adeel	ANP	Senator
27		Mian Raza Rabbani	PPPP	Senator
28		Ahsan Iqbal	PML-N	MNA
29	4th	Shah Jee Gul Afridi	IND	MNA
30	5th	Shah Jee Gul Afridi	IND	MNA
31		Babar Khan Ghauri	MQM	Senator
32	6th	Farhatullah Babar	PPPP	Senator
33		Abdul Rauf	PkMAP	Senator
34		Ghulam Ahmad Bilour	ANP	MNA
35		Syed Muzafar Hussain Shah	PML-F	Senator
36	7th	Kalsoom Perveen	BNP-A	Senator
37		Dr. Abdul Qayoom Soomro	PPPP	Senator
38		Khawaja Saad Rafique	PML-N	MNA
39		Mohammad Ishaq Dar	PML-N	Senator

Sr. No.	Sitting	Legislator taking part in debate on Motion	Party	Membership
40		Haji Ghulam Ali	JUI	Senator
41		Col (R) Syed Tahir Hussain Mashhadi	MQM	Senator
42		Shazia Marri	PPPP	MNA
43	8th	Naseema Ehsan	BNP-A	Senator
44		Ilyas Ahmad Bilour	ANP	Senator
45		Saeed Ghani	PPPP	Senator
46	9th	Muhammad Saleh Shah	IND	Senator
47		Abdul Rahim Mandokhail	PkMAP	MNA
48		Adbul Rashid Godil	MQM	MNA
49		Mohammad Ayaz Soomro	PPPP	MNA
50		Nasir Khan Khattak	PTI	MNA
51		Mushahid Ullah Khan	PML-N	Senator
52	10th	Sher Akbar Khan	JI	MNA
53		Shahi Syed	ANP	Senator
54		Muhammad Mohsin Khan Leghari	IND	Senator
55		Gulzar Khan	PTI	MNA
56		Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif	PML-N	MNA
57		Syed Khursheed Ahmed Shah	PPPP	MNA

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This report is based on direct observation of the National Assembly proceedings conducted by Centre for Peace and Development Initiatives (CPDI), a member organization of FAFEN

# About FAFEN

Free and Fair Election Network (FAFEN) is a nationwide network of 42 Pakistani civil society organizations. It has been working since 2006 to strengthen democratic systems and promote active citizenship and is now governed by Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability (TDEA). With its primary mandate to observe elections and seek reforms to improve the quality of elections, FAFEN managed unprecedented long-term voter education and election observation initiatives that got 20,000 Pakistani citizens from every district of the country directly involved in the general election process in 2007-08.

In 2013, FAFEN deployed more than 40,000 trained, non-partisan long- and short-term observers to monitor all phases of general election. FAFEN election observation has yielded valuable insights into the quality of the electoral process and enabled generation of critical recommendations for reforms in the constitutional, legal and procedural frameworks that govern elections in Pakistan.

In addition to its vibrant Electoral Oversight, Research and Reforms Program, FAFEN has developed innovative techniques to observe the functioning of Parliament and Provincial Assemblies in order to advocate for parliamentary reforms for a more accountable, transparent and responsive legislative governance. Under its Parliament Oversight, Research and Reforms Program, FAFEN directly observes and objectively reports on the proceedings of all elected Houses in Pakistan.

FAFEN mobilizes and facilitates citizens engagements with elected and public institutions across Pakistan as a prerequisite for strengthening democratic accountabilities as part of its Electoral Governance Oversight, Research and Reforms Program. These activities fit in with the core FAFEN's objective of promotion of active citizenry—a critical ingredient of a vibrant democratic system.



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