

New Pakistani Cabinet takes over

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- The new 24-member Pakistani Cabinet, led by Prime Minister Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani, is made up of mostly members of the country's two main parties. Of the total who received the oath of office Monday from Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, 11 represent the Pakistan People's Party of slain Benazir Bhutto which won the most seats in the national assembly elections in February. Of the rest, nine belong to the other main party, a faction of the Pakistan Muslim League led by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The rest are shared by the other two minor parties in the coalition government. Shah Mehmood Qureshi, a senior member of the PPP, becomes the foreign minister, while another PPP leader, Chaudhry Ahmed Muktar becomes defense minister. Ishaq Dar, who served as finance minister when Sharif was prime minister, will keep the post in the new government. There are two women in the Cabinet. Dawn newspaper reported the swearing-in ceremony lasted seven minutes and appeared to be dull and dreary. The report said the nine Cabinet members from Sharif's party wore black armbands to show their opposition to Musharraf. The report said reporters and cameramen of private channels and newspapers were kept from the ceremony.

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