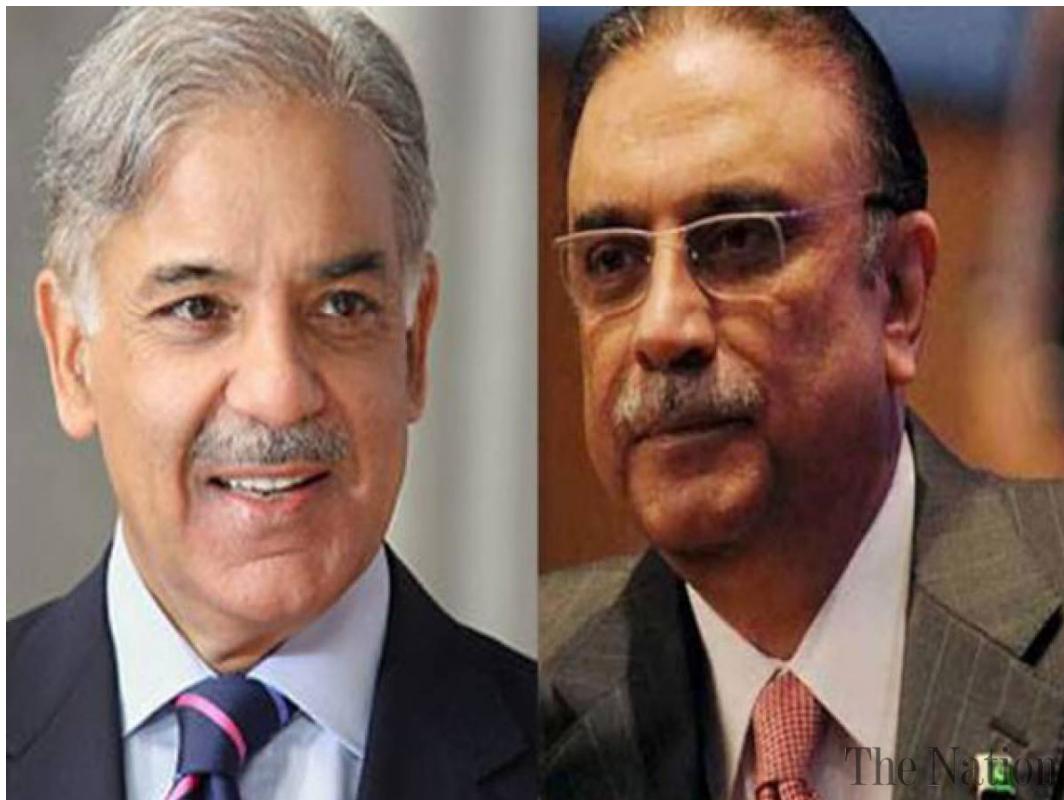


PM Shehbaz meets President Zardari to discuss constitutional amendments

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Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has met with President Asif Ali Zardari at the President house to discuss proposed constitutional amendments and the prevailing political situation. The meeting on Thursday comes as the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) step back from their earlier proposal to establish constitutional courts. Moreover, during a special parliamentary committee meeting, chaired by Khursheed Shah, discussions were held on the 26th constitutional amendment draft. According to sources, the governing coalition parties and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) have agreed to drop the proposed 26th constitutional amendment, which called for the creation of constitutional courts. Instead, they reached a consensus on forming a constitutional bench. The special committee meeting concluded with the government and JUI-F deciding to consult the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) on a joint draft. JUI-F leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman will share the finalised draft with PTI leadership,

marking the nearing completion of the amendment process. However, Information Advisor for Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Barrister Saif announced PTI will mount both legal and political resistance against the proposed constitutional amendment. PTI lawmaker Barrister Saif labelled on Thursday that the current government is “illegitimate” and accused it of “attempting to secretly alter the constitution without public representation”. PTI’s political committee has announced its decision to resist recent constitutional amendments and hold a nationwide protest this Friday. The parliamentary committee will reconvene after Friday prayers to continue discussions on the draft. Earlier today, Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan’s (MQM-P) amendments to 26th constitutional draft have been discarded. The proposed amendments related to local government powers and funds have also been removed from the draft. The ruling parties, Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) and Pakistan People’s Party (PPP), succeeded in convincing MQM. However, MQM’s constitutional amendments will be considered in the next 27th constitutional amendment, with the party expressing agreement with the government’s suggestions

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