

Pakistan opposition parties plan coalition

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - Pakistan's victorious opposition parties say their coalition government will leave the issue of the ousted judiciary to be determined by the new Parliament. Asif Ali Zardari, co-chairman of the Pakistan People's Party and husband of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who was assassinated, said, "In principle there is no disagreement on the restoration of the judiciary. We will work out the modalities in the parliament," the Daily Times, a Lahore newspaper, reported. Zardari said his party's first business would be to rally support for a U.N. investigation into his wife's death. The PPP joined forces with Nawaz Sharif, a former prime minister who heads a faction of the Pakistan Muslim League, setting aside decades of political enmity "to work together for supremacy of parliament, rule of law and democracy in the country" of 165 million people, Zardari said. Their decision to work together imposed a fresh challenge to Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf, the former army commander who ousted Sharif in a 1999 coup and is considered by U.S. President George Bush as a staunch ally. The Bush administration has sent billions of dollars in aid to the Musharraf government, which it views as a partner against rising Islamic radicalism in Pakistan and neighboring Afghanistan. A spokesman said Musharraf, who has refused to resign, wants to "ease himself out" of politics "in a peaceful and civil manner."

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