

Zardari OKs Shariah law for Malakand

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari has signed a controversial law to allow Islamic law in an area of the North West Frontier province, observers said.

Zardari signed the measure after the country's National Assembly approved a resolution asking for what seems to Pakistan's allies to be a concession to Taliban militants in efforts to implement a peace deal in the province, Pakistan's English-language newspaper Dawn reported Tuesday.

The National Assembly passed a resolution supporting Shariah law in the Malakand district of the Swat Valley after a heated debate in which Pakistani left-wing, right-wing, progressive and Islamic parties supported the 2-month-old proposal, Dawn said.

The newspaper said the parliamentary resolution wasn't needed to enforce the Shariah provision, which was written by the Awami National Party-led NWFP coalition government, since the Pakistani Constitution empowers the president to impose such laws in Provincially Administered Tribal Areas, such as Malakand.

But analysts told Dawn the government's move to place the matter before the assembly appeared to be a political move to involve all parties so they could share the blame if things go wrong.

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