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Pakistan denies emergency, elections to be held, Musharraf says

By Staff

(AXcess News) Washington - Pakistan President [Pervez Musharraf](#) denies state of emergency, declaring that free elections will be held a day after Pakistan media was reporting that Musharraf was going to declare a state of emergency to deal with rising violence and political instability.

Pakistan's Minister for Information and Broadcasting, [Muhammad Ali](#) Durrani, categorically denied the rumors, saying "there is no justification for such a step."

Durrani told reporters that he spoke to Musharraf by phone and that Pakistan's President said he was "committed to holding free elections."

"The President is determined to make the atmosphere congenial for the elections and to take the country forward," he said.

Durrani also said that other political parties would join the government, inferring that it would ease political tensions amongst groups being accused of supporting terrorism. His comments sounded more like Musharraf was being bottled in by opposition parties who oppose his government, which could even lead to a more open radical Islamic movement inside Pakistan.

Musharraf had recently announced that he would not be going to Kabul, Afghanistan to meet with Afghan [President Karzai](#) to discuss a peace initiative where Musharraf was to meet with more than 600 Pakistani and Afghan tribal leaders to discuss ways to work collectively together to end the [Taliban](#) extremists control over the two countries tribal regions, much of which is remote, mountainous area that al Qaeda

leaders are thought to be hiding in. Pakistan Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz went instead.

Taliban leader Imran Khan said that the Taliban should be included in the Afghan-Pakistan Jirga if a lasting peace is to be expected.

Khan also said that Iraq should not permit the U.S. military to remain, that diplomacy with Islamic militant groups would be better for the Country as a whole. Khan also said that Pakistan should end its alliance with the United States as well.

Khan expressed hope that with the restoration of Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry by the Apex Court would assure Pakistan of being able to hold free and fair elections.

Last week, a bench of the court freed a political opponent of Musharraf, and on Thursday heard a freedom of movement case lodged by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, who is seeking to return from exile to run in parliamentary elections. Sharif went into exile after Musharraf ousted him in a 1999 coup.

Since Musharraf failed at ousting the Supreme Court Justice, the chances of his running for another five-year term have diminished.

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