

Pervez Musharraf could face fresh legal jeopardy: Daily

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Islamabad: Pakistan's former military strongman General Pervez Musharraf could face "renewed legal jeopardy", a leading Pakistani daily said on Thursday.

An editorial "Musharraf's emergency" in the Dawn said that Musharraf has told "the FIA (Federal Investigation Agency) that the November 2007 emergency was the result of a vast consultative exercise, imposed on the advice of then-prime minister Shaukat Aziz and approved by soon-to-be army chief General Ashfaq Kayani, among many other senior political and military functionaries at the time."

The daily described it as "a rather extraordinary and thoroughly self-inflicted descent into ignominy".

It said: "Gen Musharraf, it seems, was so enfeebled that he could not possibly have acted on his own - at least as far as he himself can tell. The November 2007 emergency required principal offenders, aiders, abettors and collaborators so numerous that it is - again according to Gen Musharraf - simply wrong and unfair to target him alone".

Calling it "an unbelievable tale", the daily said that Gen Musharraf had handpicked Aziz and Gen Kayani for the slots of prime minister and army chief, respectively.

It went on to say that while "it has been apparent for a while that Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's bid to have Gen Musharraf tried for treason has been delayed, and likely blocked, by the military establishment, the prime minister has not given any indication that he is willing to let Gen Musharraf simply walk free".

"Now, with the FIA conducting its inquiry anew and the likelihood that it may complete its job soon, there is a possibility that Gen Musharraf could face renewed legal jeopardy.

"In a rather transparent calculation to help stave off that possibility, the legal team of Gen Musharraf appears determined to draw in as many individuals as possible to make a fresh trial unlikely."

The editorial observed that the direct reference to Gen Kayani as a principal offender, an aider and abettor in the continuation of the emergency seems particularly designed to draw the military further into the equation.

"If the military establishment is skittish about seeing one former army chief tried on treason, it will be doubly concerned about two former chiefs facing treason charges - especially if the two are the immediate predecessors of Gen Raheel Sharif.

"Ignominious and desperate as Gen Musharraf's chosen strategy may be, could it be a winning one?," the daily wondered.

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