

Former Pak president Zardari back from 18-month long self-imposed exile; vows freedom for Kashmir

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Karachi: Pakistan's former president Asif Ali Zardari and chairman of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Asif Ali Zardari, returned to his country from Dubai in a private jet on Friday, ending his self-imposed exile after 18 months.

Zardari waves to supporters who gathered near Karachi airport to welcome him

Addressing his supporters outside Karachi airport shortly after his arrival, Zardari said that he will continue his fight to make "Kashmir a part of Pakistan".

The former president said that Pakistani flag has become the "symbol of freedom for Kashmiris".

"Kashmir will become part of Pakistan," he said, adding that "Pakistan is a nation that has overcome all challenges and that it is not a country of terrorists".

Assuring his supporters that PPP will be in power again, he said, "It does not matter who is in power today. It matters who will lead us tomorrow. I want to send a message to all political actors in this country "We may occasionally leave the country, but we will always be buried in its soil."

He also said that there is a sense of despair in Pakistan.

"However, I want to tell you that I have brought hope and not despair with me. I assure you that my programme will give Pakistanis new hope. Pakistan is secure with the efforts of the masses and the armed forces and will never face failure," he said.

Slamming his opponents, the former president went on to add that his party will once again rule the country and establish itself in the Parliament.

He also expressed pleasure over the thriving democracy and democratic culture in the country.

"We will keep moving forward with the spirit of democracy and as only democracy has the solution for Pakistan's problems," he said.

The PPP leader had left the country in June last year following a hard-hitting speech that criticised the establishment for over-stepping its domain, thereby offending it. Since then, he divided his time between Dubai and London.

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