

Sharif gets revenge on Musharraf, convinces coalition partner

After a nine year wait, former Pakistani premier Nawaz Sharif's revenge is almost complete - he has convinced his coalition partners to not only oust but also initiate a case of high treason against President Pervez Musharraf, who had overthrown his government in 1999 and pushed him into exile.

'He (Musharraf) will have to face consequences,' former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had told reporters when he appeared before the anti-terrorist court at Attock Fort, about 40 km from here, in the summer of 2000.

Sharif was sent to jail on Oct 12, 1999 - the day his government was overthrown by Musharraf, who was then the army chief. A year later, Musharraf sent Sharif and his entire family to exile in Saudi Arabia.

On Thursday, a jubilant Sharif said: 'Musharraf has no option but to go...I said no option.'

'The man who tried to strangle democracy in the country will have to go now,' Sharif, leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), said at a press conference here following three days of discussion with coalition partner Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

The PPP has agreed with PML-N on impeaching Musharraf, who had been a major ally in the US-led war on terrorism.

'Neither America nor any other country has anything to do with it (Musharraf's impeachment). This is our internal matter,' Sharif said when asked if the government was facing any pressure from the US.

Sources privy to the talks held between the coalition partners at Zardari House here said Sharif has also convinced members of the ruling coalition to file a case of high treason against Musharraf for abrogating the constitution, the 1999 Kargil war in which several Pakistani soldiers were killed, handing over of Pakistanis to America and the July 2007 raid on the Lal Masjid in which more than 250 people were killed.

'Though PPP and other coalition members were reluctant to charge Musharraf with treason, PML-N threatened to quit the coalition if a criminal case was not initiated against him,' said a politician.

'Nawaz Sharif is in a vengeful mood and wants to see Musharraf in jail,' he added.

At the press conference, Sharif said the decision on initiating a treason case against Musharraf would be taken after his impeachment.

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