

Bhutto calls for massive protest rally

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- An anti-government rally was announced Wednesday by the leader of Pakistan's largest opposition party, former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. Bhutto, who leads the Pakistan People's Party, said the rally would take place Friday in Rawalpindi, Voice of America reported. City and regional officials in Rawalpindi were quick to say they wouldn't allow the rally but Bhutto has historically been able to mass her supporters, the report said. The country has been in turmoil since Saturday when Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf imposed martial law and suspended national elections scheduled for March. He suspended the Supreme Court and thousands of lawyers took to the streets in protest. Political analyst Hassan Askari told VOA that Friday's rally could be a turning point, as other opposition parties would likely join in. "If General Musharraf does not make a political, conciliatory gesture toward the political forces in the next two or three days, I think these political parties will be forced to return to the political fray," he said.

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