

Pakistan says no to Commonwealth demand

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - Pakistan rejected a demand from the Commonwealth group of countries that it lift emergency rule and restore the constitution, saying it is unable to do so. The Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group, meeting in London, had set Nov. 22 as the date for the government of President Pervez Musharraf to end the emergency he imposed Nov. 3 or face suspension from the 53-member group, which is made up of Britain and mostly independent countries that were once British colonies. Expressing disappointment over the group's statement, the Pakistan foreign office said the emergency decree was imposed to prevent an institutional breakdown and internal crisis, Dawn newspaper reported Wednesday. "Pakistan will follow its own road map to transition to democracy as outlined by the president," the foreign office said in a statement. "Decisions on issues of vital importance will be taken in accordance with our national interests and requirements and not in observance of any artificially set time lines from outside." The Daily Times quoted sources as saying major countries in the Commonwealth group had no problems with the emergency rule because they understood the situation in Pakistan.

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