

Caretaker govt. picked for Pakistan

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan - A caretaker government was picked Friday to oversee Pakistan until the January election, as former Premier Benazir Bhutto's house arrest was lifted. The 18-member caretaker government, to be sworn in Friday by President Pervez Musharraf would oversee the elections to be held before Jan. 9, but there was no indication Musharraf would lift his unpopular emergency decree before then. Dawn newspaper, quoting sources, reported Musharraf had approved the selection of Mohammadmian Soomro, currently the Senate chairman, as caretaker prime minister. Soomro's government replaces the national assembly which was dissolved Thursday at the end of its term. Soomro is seen as a confidant of Musharraf, the report said. GEO TV reported Bhutto, who has called for Musharraf's resignation, was freed after being kept under house arrest for three days to stop her from leading a march against the emergency decree. Bhutto has ruled out any sharing power with Musharraf. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte was to arrive in Pakistan Friday. China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported Negroponte would urge the lifting of the emergency rule. Xinhua quoted Pakistan Attorney General Malik Mohammad Qayyum as saying Musharraf will give up his military chief post before Dec. 1.

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