

Musharraf now a civilian president

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pervez Musharraf was sworn in as the civilian president of Pakistan Thursday, one day after resigning as head of the nation's military. Musharraf, wearing a suit instead of a uniform at his swearing-in at the presidential palace in Islamabad, called for "political reconciliation," the BBC reported. He faces intense political pressures both within Pakistan, with two former premiers looking to wrest power from him, and internationally, as the United States pushes him to move toward democracy and lift the emergency rule he invoked this month. Musharraf claimed he has no problem with the return of exiled opposition leaders Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif to Pakistan. "I personally feel this is good for the political reconciliation I have spoken of," he said. Musharraf also insisted parliamentary elections would be held in January "come hell or high water." Musharraf called his switch from military to civilian leader "a historic day" and "a milestone in Pakistan's transition to democracy," the BBC reported. The oath he took called on him to "preserve, protect and defend the constitution." "They will not be derailed," he said, adding that the polls would be free and fair and open for monitoring by international observers.

Copyright © 2007, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Musharraf now a civilian president by UPI