

Musharraf assures free, fair poll

by UPI

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan -- Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf Thursday warned against violence in Monday's elections and urged against pre-judging the poll results. Speaking in Islamabad at a government seminar, the president again assured the elections would be free, fair and transparent, the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan reported. The opposition parties and some critics fear the polls would be rigged which could set off unrest. The military has deployed thousands of troops to improve security during the elections. "Let there be no doubt that anyone will be allowed to resort to lawlessness, in the garb of allegations about rigging in the elections," the news agency quoted Musharraf as saying. In a cautionary note to media and foreign organizations, Musharraf said, "Do not incite trouble in Pakistan, by pre-judging election results, by creating hopes and expectations, that may be unrealistic ... Let (the) results speak for themselves." "This is my pledge to the nation," he said, adding, "I assure you elections will be fair, free and transparent." The BBC reported in a poll of 1,476 people its World Service conducted across Pakistan on Jan. 27-28, a majority said stability and security in the country would improve if Musharraf resigned. The report quoted a presidential spokesman as saying the poll did not represent public opinion.

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