

Pak SC brands Musharraf's emergency rule illegal

AFP, Islamabad

Pakistan's top court ruled Friday that former president Pervez Musharraf's decision to impose emergency rule and dismiss dozens of senior judges two years ago was unconstitutional.

A 14-member Supreme Court bench headed by recently reinstated Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry had summoned Musharraf to appear in person or through a lawyer, but the ex-president ignored the notice.

"The Proclamation of Emergency issued by General Pervez Musharraf as the Chief of Army Staff on November 3, 2007... (is) hereby declared to be unconstitutional, ultra vires of the constitution and consequently being illegal," Chaudhry said, reading the court's order.

Chaudhry also said Musharraf had illegally sacked about 60 Supreme Court and High Court judges and that his appointment of a new chief

justice was "unconstitutional." The Chaudhry-led bench also ruled "to be void" the validation of emergency rule by Musharraf-appointed chief justice Abdul Hameed Dogar and declared all constitutional amendments by Musharraf to be illegal.

The court order said that the decision would not disrupt the present constitutional system, including the presidency, office of the prime minister and the parliamentary system.

Musharraf was replaced last year as Pakistan's president by Asif Ali Zardari, whose party won general elections and who reinstated Chaudhry and his fellow judges in March following a protracted political crisis.

Opposition leader Nawaz Sharif and lawyers had organised a march on the capital Islamabad to demand that Zardari reinstate Chaudhry, during mass protests last March that risked further destabilising the nuclear-armed country.

"This is a historic decision. We welcome it," Raja Zafarul Haq, a senior official in Sharif's party, told reporters.

Tigers complete cleansweep

FROM PAGE 1 delivery from Kemar Roach through squareleg.

Bangladesh won the opening match in Dominica last Sunday by 52 runs, and the second match at the same venue on Tuesday by three wickets.

Their ODI series victory followed a cleansweep of the preceding two-Test series against a weak home side.

"After winning the Test series, we were looking forward to this ODI series," said Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan.

"It was a total team effort. Every time the team was under pressure, someone was able to put their hands up and do the job. This success in the Caribbean will help to take us to the next level."

Bangladesh dismissed West Indies for 248 in 47.4 overs, after the home team decided to bat.

Siddiqui and fellow opener Tamim Iqbal set Bangladesh on their way with a stand of 54 for the first wicket.

But they slid to 133 for five in the 28th over before Mahmudullah joined Mushfiqur Rahim and added 50 for the sixth wicket.

It however, took a stand of 49 for the seventh wicket between Mahmudullah and Nayeem Islam which virtually pushed the Tigers over the threshold.

Earlier, Mahmudullah, bowling his off-spin, along with fast-medium bowler Mahbubul Alam, and left-arm spinner Abdur Razzaq all captured two wickets.

Bangladesh bowlers maintained the pressure throughout, and several West Indies batsmen got starts.

Andre Fletcher led the way with 52 from 42 balls, captain Floyd Reifer and his deputy Darren Sammy made 40 apiece.

"I think throughout the series we needed to build more and better partnerships when we were batting," said Reifer.

"Whenever we seem to be building partnerships, the guys always seem to be getting out at the wrong time. They

needed to carry on at crucial stages in the game."

He added: "But we had a young, inexperienced team. We have got to continue to play hard, keep talking more about the game, and looking back at our mistakes."

All the games were very close, and it was just that we kept making crucial mistakes at crucial times."

Bangladesh restricted West Indies to 10 for two in the fourth over before Dowlin and Andre Fletcher put on 76 for the third wicket.

Fletcher reached his 50 from 40 balls, when he slogged Abdur Razzaq over mid-wicket for his eighth four in the 14th over, after he had taken a four and a six off the third and fourth balls of the same over.

Bangladesh then made West Indies wobble on 124 for five in the 28th over, but were revived when Reifer and Sammy added 64 before they were among a cluster of wickets that fell in the last 15 overs.

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