

PRESS RELEASE

Lahore 6th April, 2002. Safdar Hasan Siddiqi, Chairman "ROSHNI" said, in a press statement, established democratic principles envisage that the duly elected representatives of the people in Parliament alone possess the right to appoint the Prime Minister and the President. According to the 1973 Constitution, the President has to be elected by the Electoral College consisting of the four provincial assemblies and the parliament. Any other method adopted for the appointment of the President, he said, is undemocratic and unconstitutional and cannot be countenanced by the people of Pakistan, the true sovereigns.

Safdar Siddiqi said, the massive financial resources to be spent on the referendum announced by President Parvez Musharraf are a heavy burden on the *bait-ul-maal*, and is unwarrantable. He said, in fact, the very wording and spirit of General Parvez Musharraf's speech of October 12, 1999 clearly marks the end of his political role after the October 2002 elections. In all fairness it should not be extended beyond that.

Safdar Siddiqi said, so far as the maintenance of continuity of the useful reforms of the present government is concerned, it is a foregone conclusion that the future elected government will ensure their continuity in the national interest. These reforms could be identified in clear terms and an assurance had from the contestants for future elections. The new post-election political dispensation, consisting of capable representatives of the civil society, could certainly be expected to achieve much more in the social, political and economic fields than the present government if they are allowed to function freely and in their own right.

Safdar Siddiqi said, it is still time for the well-meaning leaders of democratically organized political parties' to agree on a minimum program to be carried out for strengthening the political process against all possible intrusions. He said, the "Roshni", in a recent exercise carried out in the name of "National Political Consultation" (NPC) achieved a 19-point consensus on basic national issues, and it has been dispatched to all the political leaders and intellectuals for formulating a joint Action Plan.

Released to the Press for favour of publication by: (Safdar Hasan Siddiqi)

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Lahore: 30 October 2002. Safdar Hasan Siddiqi, Chairman "Roshni" has said in a statement that any delay in the election of the Prime Minister is absolutely against democratic norms and the vital interests of the people. He said, the right democratic path is that the National Assembly session should be called immediately, and the Coalition that may have the majority of votes in the assembly should elect the Prime Minister. He said, to appoint a Prime Minister outside the Parliament by give and take is not proper and is against democratic norms.

Safdar Siddiqi said, in the present circumstances, the people are fed up with the former politicians' politics of intrigue and plunder and the army generals' dictatorial regimes. Now they want a manifest change in the system of governance. It has, therefore, become imperative that the future Prime Minister should be a person who possesses deep knowledge, balanced views, clear perception and understanding, maturity of opinion and a thorough commitment with the higher ideology of Islam. This aspect should, therefore, be kept in mind necessarily while electing the Prime Minister.

Safdar Siddiqi has stressed that the position of the Prime Minister, in and outside the Parliament, will not be that of a dictator any more. He will take all decisions with the consent of the Cabinet, and formulate State policies with the consultation and maximum consensus among the elected representatives of the people in the Parliament. He said, no future Prime minister can follow his own will in a democratic setup. Therefore, he said, no person or institution in the form of a President or National Security Council, with superior powers than the Prime Minister, should be allowed to exist over and above the head of the Prime Minister

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