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## Supreme Court to hear Musharraf treason petition on Monday

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ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's election board barred on Friday former President Pervez Musharraf from contesting polls in one constituency and the Supreme Court agreed to look into a treason complaint against him, hurting his efforts to win back influence.

The former army chief returned last month after nearly four years of self-imposed exile to contest a May 11 general election despite the possibility of arrest on various charges and death threats from the Pakistani Taliban.

The Election Commission barred Musharraf from the polls in Kasur in Punjab province because of court cases against him, commission officials said. He could also face disqualification in the three other constituencies where he plans to run. The officials, who declined to be identified, also said the decision was based on a clause in the constitution which requires candidates to be of good character and the fact that he had not declared all of his assets. "Musharraf has been disqualified under articles 62 and 63 of the constitution, among other reasons," an election commission official said, referring to clauses that require a candidate to be "of good character", among other things.

Neither Musharraf nor a spokesman for him was available for comment.

On Monday the Supreme Court will hear a petition asking for Musharraf to be put on trial for treason, the latest in a barrage of challenges to his bid for election, officials said. Taufiq Asif, president of the Rawalpindi high court bar association, told AFP that he had asked the Supreme

Court to try Musharraf for treason for imposing emergency rule in 2007, a move that ultimately paved the way for his downfall.

“I have been informed by the Supreme Court that a three-member bench headed by Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry is going to hear my petition against General Pervez Musharraf after three days,” Asif said.

Supreme Court officials confirmed that judges would hear the petition on Monday. In the meanwhile, Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz), Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, and Jamaat-e-Islami have filed an application with the Returning Officer of NA-32 Chitral district challenging Musharraf's nomination papers.

They have raised nine points, which according to the petitioners were sufficient to disqualify the former dictator to contest from Chitral district in the general elections. staff report/agencies