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The Daily Star



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Two key leaders flee: Withdrawal of troops and investigation ordered: Bush talks to Gorbachev

Coup collapses: Gorbachev back

MOSCOW, Aug 21: The coup against Mikhail S Gorbachev collapsed Wednesday, and he was reportedly heading back to Moscow. Coup leaders left the capital, and military units deployed after the takeover withdrew, report agencies.

Rejoicing crowds cheered and waved flags outside the Russian Parliament, which served as the headquarters for Russian President Boris Yeltsin, who led coup resistance since Monday. Soldiers, their tanks strewn with flowers, waved at television cameras.

Leaders of the national legislature invalidated all decrees made by the coup leaders, national lawmaker Yuri Karyakin told the Russian legislature. He gave no details about the vote.

With the coup's demise, the Communist Party moved to salvage its own credibility. It called the takeover unconstitutional and demanded a meeting with Gorbachev, the party chief, the state-run news agency Tass said. The party renounced any connection with the coup leaders.

The Soviet prosecutor also opened a criminal investigation into the actions of the eight men who staged the coup, Tass reported. It quoted the prosecutor's office as saying the junta's actions "contain signs of a state crime."

Word of Gorbachev's imminent return came from Lev Y Sukhanov, a long-time Yeltsin

deputy. He said Gorbachev would fly from his vacation retreat in the Crimea to the Soviet capital with Vladimir Ivashko, the deputy general-secretary of the Communist Party and other aides. The report could not be independently confirmed.

President Bush said that Gorbachev was once again in charge of the Soviet government, having been told so by the Soviet leader in a telephone call.

Bush said Gorbachev was "calling the shots."

Bush dismissed a claim by the president of the Soviet republic of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhourdia, that Gorbachev had engineered the coup as a way to boost his sagging popularity among the Soviet public.

"It makes absolutely no sense at all," Bush said, saying he discounted the claim "100 per cent."

The main television news programme in Moscow today said Gorbachev had told Soviet television he was in full control of the country and would be resuming his normal duties in the next few days.

He also ordered armed forces Chief of Staff General Mikhail Moiseyev to obey only his commands and to withdraw all troops to their permanent quarters.

The news of the coup leaders' departure — and Gorbachev's planned return — followed a series of rapid de-

velopments pointing to the disintegration of the takeover, one of the most tumultuous events in recent Soviet history.

Tass reported that the Soviet Defence Ministry decided to withdraw the hundreds of tanks and troops that had poured into Moscow to enforce emergency decrees after the takeover Monday.

Tanks and armoured personnel carriers were seen moving away from the Russian Parliament. A four-kilometre-long (2 1/2-mile-long) column of about 180 tanks and 60 trucks was heading out of Moscow, kicking up huge clouds of dust. The soldiers on board said they were returning to their base.

In Brussels, NATO chief Manfred Woerner, who spoke with Yeltsin by telephone, said the Russian president had taken over the powers of the armed forces chief in Gorbachev's absence.

Radio and television broadcasts that were banned during the takeover reappeared on the air, and Tass said a decree shutting independent publications was being lifted as of today.

Even before the announcement that the ban was being lifted, state-run media dropped the previous official line on the takeover and began reporting the unfolding events.

An announcer on Soviet television broke into a broad smile after reading a report calling the coup leaders dan-

gerous. "I'm sorry comrades, but I'm very excited!" he said.

Gorbachev's Foreign Minister, Alexander Bessmertnykh, who had dropped out of sight during the coup, reappeared and called the takeover a page in Soviet history that "has got to be turned."

At a news conference, he promised that reforms would continue and that Moscow would honour its international commitments.

Thousands of people had kept up their vigil at the Russian Parliament building following overnight clashes with Soviet troops that left at least four dead. They roared their approval when the announcement of the coup committee's departure came over a loudspeaker.

Four of them were killed overnight during clashes with Soviet troops.

News of the whereabouts of the coup leaders was sketchy. Colonel Valery Ochirov, Chairman of the Parliamentary Defence and Security Committee, said Defence Minister Dmitry Yazov and KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov had flown to the Crimea to apologise to Gorbachev.

Another report said the plane reportedly carrying the coup leaders was heading to Bishkek, formerly called Frunze, according to Radio Russia, which speaks for Yeltsin. There was no word on



STAR FILE PHOTO: Smiling Boris Yeltsin (left) and Mikhail Gorbachev shaking hands in a spontaneous moment at the Kremlin.

Ban on press repealed

MOSCOW, Aug 21: Banned TV and radio broadcasts reappeared on Wednesday and Tass said a decree shutting down independent publications was "being lifted," as Soviet coup leaders left Moscow, reports AP.

The official state news agency said that "all limitations imposed by the decision of the former State Committee of the State of Emergency concerning the publication of all national, Moscow, city and district social-political publications is being lifted."

The short dispatch came two hours after state-run television abruptly changed its hard-line tone and Russian government-run television and radio resumed broadcasting.

The 3 p.m. (1200 GMT) newscast by the national news programme quoted Russian President Boris Yeltsin as saying that Gorbachev was in isolation in the Crimea and in good health.

The communist hard-liners who ousted President Gorbachev had banned broadcasts by reformist radio and television stations, after previously banning all but nine newspapers.

But resistance to the media ban appeared quickly, however, from Moscow to the southern republic of Moldavia, where Prime Minister Valeriu Muravsky banned the official

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Inside Today

Focus on Soviet Union



"This coup is a hopeless adventure by people with principles from the Stone Age," Shevardnadze tells France's TF1 network
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Metropolitan

Dhaka Day by Day

It's really unfair how society often looks down on struggling women and expect every career woman to be a teacher, doctor or an engineer
 Page 3

International



Deng Xiaoping turns 87 today. Despite maintaining the lowest of profiles Deng continues to exert a strong influence on China's affairs
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Sport

The Bangladesh Navy quartet sets a new national 4 x 100m relay record in the 14th national swimming championships
 Page 10

Business

Garments export earnings will exceed target by Tk 1,000 crore
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Western leaders heartened by coup demise

LONDON, Aug 21: Western leaders were heartened Wednesday by reports from the Soviet Union that the coup against Soviet President Mikhail S Gorbachev had failed, reports AP.

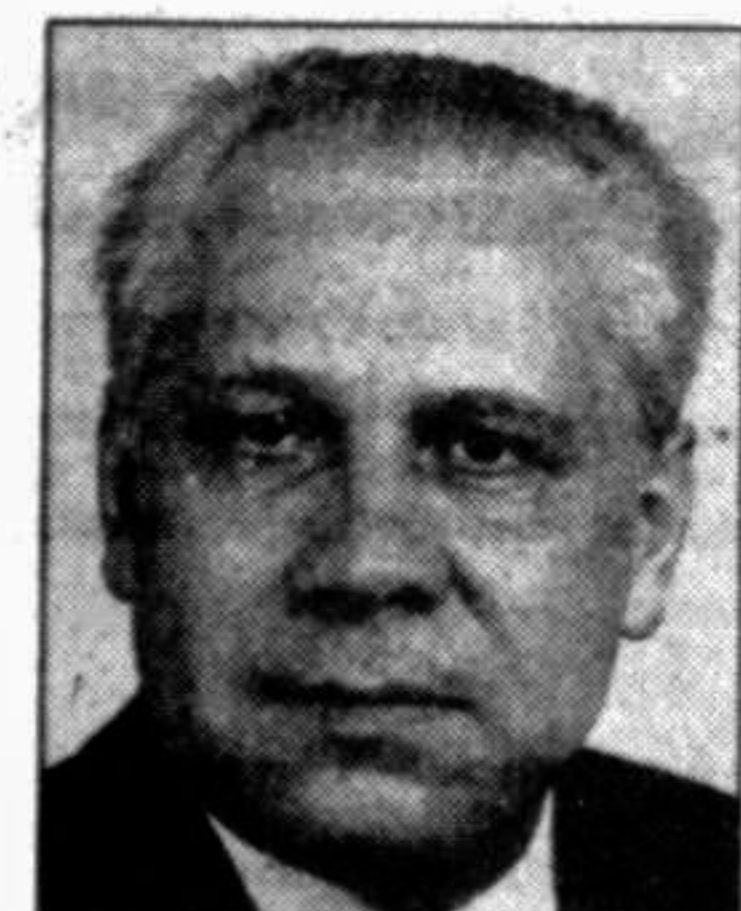
US President Bush told reporters he was encouraged by his telephone conversation Wednesday with Russian republic President Boris Yeltsin, who had ousted leaders of Monday's coup and led the resistance.

"Yeltsin tells me that he thinks five of the coup leaders have left Moscow," Bush told reporters in Kennebunk port, Maine. But Bush cautioned that it was impossible to be certain of the fast-moving situation in Moscow.

In Warsaw, President Lech Walesa also spoke with Yeltsin by phone and the Russian President told him the coup leaders might be put on trial.

During the 10-minute conversation, aired throughout Poland in a special television newscast, Yeltsin said Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was "blocked in the Crimea" and all efforts to contact him had failed.

Yeltsin suggested that a special international medical commission should examine Gorbachev and "if he is able to run the country then we could remove this (National Salvation) Committee and put it before court."



Soviet Federal Parliament Speaker Anatoli Lukyanov who flew to the Crimea to meet Gorbachev.

French government spokesman Jack Lang, speaking earlier, said Paris had known "from the first moment" that the coup d'etat could only fail.

Yeltsin and Russian legislators loyal to him said the coup leaders had fled the Kremlin for a nearby airport, possibly intending to flee. Tanks were leaving Moscow, and the Soviet Communist Party denounced the coup.

Radio Russia, a station loyal to Yeltsin, reported that the eight-man committee that overthrew Gorbachev left Moscow by plane and was heading to Soviet Central Asia.

The Foreign Minister of the breakaway Soviet republic of

Latvia, Janis Jurkans, told Britain's Sky television the coup leaders should be arrested and tried.

"Before that is done, we can never be sure if there are forces ready to repeat such coups to shed blood of those who strived to restore democracy," Jurkans said.

The hard-liners cracked down hard on Latvia and the other two independence-seeking Baltic republics of Lithuania and Estonia during the three-day-old coup.

US Secretary of State James A Baker III said he was "heartened by reports that events in the Soviet Union may be leading to a return to constitutional government." Baker

was in Belgium for a meeting of NATO leaders.

British Prime Minister John Major told reporters in London: "The situation is still threatening, and nobody should be certain the situation has ceased to be threatening until this matter has been properly resolved and legitimate government is back in charge in the Soviet Union."

In Czechoslovakia, the two top Soviet diplomats denounced the hard-line crackdown in Moscow and pledged allegiance to Gorbachev. The Soviet ambassador, Boris Pavlov, called the coup "a fatal mistake."

According to the official

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Yanayev still in Kremlin

MOSCOW, Aug 21: Gennady Yanayev, the Soviet Vice-President who took over from Mikhail Gorbachev following his ouster as president, was in his Kremlin office today, a presidential press spokesman said, reports AP.

Gorbachev's spokesman, Vitaly Ignatenko and his press service had been unavailable since Monday's coup.

The press spokesman's statement that Yanayev was still in the office at 6:00 pm (1500 GMT) today appeared to mean that he had not joined other members of the State-of-Emergency Committee who flew out of the capital earlier in the day.

All but one nominations found valid

Scrutiny of the nomination papers filed for by-election to the eleven vacant seats of Jatiya Sangsad was held Wednesday by the returning officers concerned, according to Election Commission sources in Dhaka, reports BSS.

Of the 68 candidates who filed their nomination papers for these by-elections, nominations of 67 candidates were found valid after scrutiny, while nomination of one candidate in 286 Chittagong-8 constituency was rejected.

The constituency-wise number of validly nominated candidates after scrutiny is as follows:

A. 19 Rangpur-1: 6 (six), B. 20 Rangpur-2: 7 (seven), C. 23 Rangpur-3: 5 (five), D. 24 Rangpur-4: 7 (seven), E. 42 Bogra-7: 5 (five), F. 118 Bhola-2: 3 (three), G. 184 Dhaka-5: 8 (eight), H. 188 Dhaka-9: 7 (seven), I. 217 Madaripur-1: 4 (four), J. 218 Madaripur-2: 10 (ten) and K. 286 Chittagong-8: 6 (six).

Explosions kill one, injure 10 in Rangamati

From Our Staff Correspondent
 CHITTAGONG, Aug 21: A tribal boy was killed and 10 persons including five tribals were injured, seven seriously in two explosions at Marissa Bazar under Bagaichari upazila of Rangamati district today.

The killed tribal is Simoy Chakma (10). The seriously injured are: Abul Hossain Sowdagar (52), Md Syed Hossain (20), Monica Chakma (16) Ajoyoti Chakma (32), Bakka Chakma (60), Ganit Chakma (30), Chandra Kumar Chakma (40).

The seriously injured persons were flown to Rangamati by a helicopter and admitted to Rangamati hospital.

Shahabuddin urges people to give verdict in referendum

Acting President Justice Shahabuddin Ahmed called upon all including the leaders and workers of political parties, teachers, students, and workers and employees to extend full their cooperation towards successful holding of the September 15 referendum on the change of the form of government, reports BSS.

"Today we have reached the final stage of the transition to a full democratic system. Therefore, all out steps should be taken so that the verdict of the people is reflected through the referendum," the Acting President told the nation in a radio and television address on Wednesday night.

Justice Shahabuddin said since there would be no candidate in the referendum it was not the duty of the government alone to inspire the voters to be present at the polling centres.

Rather it was an obligation

on the part of the political parties too to participate in this task and advise the voters to be present at the polling centres for casting votes, he said.

The Acting President said nearly four lakh government and semi-government employees and school teachers were being entrusted with the task of holding this referendum. He urged them to perform this important task with full sincerity. The Deputy Commissioners and Upazila Nirbahi Officers would hold meetings at the district, union and municipal levels to provide in details regarding the holding of referendum to them, he added.

The Acting President referred to the forthcoming by-elections to 11 parliamentary constituencies to be held on September 11 and urged all to hold those elections in a free,

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'Pay hike will adversely affect economy'

Star Economic Report
 Bangladesh Employers Association (BEA) and Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) reacted Wednesday sharply to the announcement of new national pay scales for government and public sector employees.

The pay hikes are contrary to the two basic principles — capacity to pay and relationship with cost of living index — due to compensation policies

Press note
 The government Wednesday expressed the hope that all its officers and employees would fully cooperate with the government by being at their respective places of work and perform duties with dedication and discipline following the positive and sympathetic decision.

Work stoppage continues Govt employees reject pay offer

By Staff Correspondent
 Official source told The Daily Star that the government will stick to its decision on office timings and the new pay scale.

Meanwhile, different organisations of government employees rejected the newly announced pay scale and office timings. Leaders of the organisations said that the new pay scale failed to fulfill their hopes and aspirations.

At the Bangladesh Secretariat, employees held rallies and brought out processions in protest against the new pay scale and the office time schedule.

A rally, organised by Government Employees Solidarity Council was addressed

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Arms recovery drive fails in Karachi

KARACHI, Aug 21: Pakistan's drive to persuade people to surrender illegal weapons has failed in its biggest city Karachi, where more than 1,500 people have been killed in ethnic and political violence since 1986, report agencies.

Only 71 weapons had been surrendered by Tuesday, the last day set by the government for depositing illegal arms without penalty, a police spokesman said today. "The drive has not been successful," he said. "We have not been able to get a desired result."

Arms surrendered since the drive began in June included 10 sub-machineguns, five Kalashnikov assault rifles and eight shotguns.

After the deadline, twice extended because of poor response to the government's amnesty offer, people caught with illegal arms could face a life sentence and seizure of their property.

The English-language daily Dawn reported that the drive was more successful in the most populous province Punjab, where 4,306 illegal weapons were handed into po-

lice.

Provincial governments in Baluchistan and the North West Frontier Province refused to take part, pleading that tribal traditions in their areas required men to hold arms.

Afghan refugees living in camps along the Afghan border are heavily armed and local people refused to surrender their weapons unless Afghans did so first.

Earlier this month opposition leader Benazir Bhutto released what she said was a leaked intelligence report that accused the Sind provincial

government in Karachi of handing out 16,000 arms licences to its political allies holding unlicensed guns.

Despite the results, Interior Minister Shujaat Hussain told a parliamentary committee on Tuesday that the government remained committed to free the country of the "Kalashnikov culture".

Large numbers of Kalashnikovs, rockets, mortars and even anti-aircraft weapons have flooded into Pakistan in the past decade, diverted from the guerilla war in Afghanistan. In rural Sind, gangs of ban-

its routinely use rocket propelled grenades to assault villages, while in Karachi it is possible to hire a Kalashnikov by the day. Ammunition is sold on use or return basis.

According to an Interior Ministry announcement, weapons now considered illegal include all types of artillery, mortars, machineguns and anti-tanks rifles.

resolutions calling for an impartial plebiscite in Kashmir, the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) said.

Addressing a public meeting at Nilab in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, Sharif said India troops were committing "untold atrocities on the people in Indian held Kashmir, he said.

Reterring Pakistan's moral and political support for the Kashmiri self-determination struggle Sharif said, war was not the way to resolve problems between India and Pakistan.

Plebiscite

Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif urged the United Nations today to implement