

Bush reclaims powers after surgery

AP, Washington

Doctors removed five small polyps from President Bush's colon yesterday after he temporarily transferred the powers of his office for two hours to Vice President Dick Cheney under the rarely invoked 25th Amendment.

The polyps, or growths in his large intestine, were found during a routine colon cancer scan. They all measured less than a centimeter and none "appeared worrisome," White House spokesman Scott Stanzel said.

The colonoscopy, performed at the Camp David presidential retreat, last 31 minutes. The polyps have been sent for microscopic examination to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. Results were expected within 72 hours. Most polyps are benign, or noncancerous. But over time, some types of polyps can grow and turn into cancer. To be safe, doctors remove all polyps and test them.

Bush invoked the disability clause of the Constitution at 7:16 a.m. EDT and transferred his authority to Cheney, who was at his home on the Chesapeake Bay in St. Michaels, Md., about 30 miles east of Washington. Nothing occurred that required Cheney to take official action during the transfer of power, Stanzel said.

The president invoked Section 3 of the 25th Amendment "out of an abundance of caution," Stanzel said. The amendment, approved in 1967, four years after President Kennedy was assassinated, had been used only twice before.

The transfer of power took place with letters Bush sent to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., president pro tempore of the Senate. Bush reclaimed the powers at 9:21 a.m. EDT with follow-up letters once the colonoscopy had ended.

The president spoke by phone before and after the procedure with first lady Laura Bush, who was in Midland, Texas, celebrating

her mother's birthday. After the colon check, Bush had breakfast with chief of staff Joshua Bolten, White House counsel Fred Fielding and national security adviser Stephen Hadley.

Later, Bush played with his dogs, Barney and Miss Beazley, and planned a bike ride in the afternoon at the presidential compound in the Catoctin Mountains of western Maryland.

"The president was in good humor and will resume his normal activities at Camp David," Stanzel said.

Dr. Richard Tubb, the president's doctor, supervised Bush's colonoscopy, which was performed by a team from the Bethesda medical center.

Two polyps were discovered during a similar examination in 1998 and two more were found during a colon scan in 1999, while Bush was governor of Texas. That made the 61-year-old president a prime candidate for regular examinations.

It was the third time that the presidential disability clause has been invoked. During a screening on July 29, 2002, Bush relinquished powers to Cheney for more than two hours. No abnormalities were found during that scan. In July 1985, President Reagan had surgery and turned over power to his vice president, George H.W. Bush.

For the general population, a colonoscopy to screen for colon cancer is recommended every 10 years. But for people at higher risk, or if a colonoscopy detects precancerous polyps, follow-up colonoscopies often are scheduled in three- to five-year intervals.

According to the National Cancer Institute, an estimated 112,340 new cases of colon cancer and 41,420 new cases of rectal cancer will be reported this year. About 52,000 people in the United States will die this year of colon and rectal cancer.

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DU teachers

FROM PAGE 1

by doing favours to some specific groups.

Many of the teachers yesterday alleged that they were quizzed by members of intelligence agencies for taking part in the protest while others including the general secretary of Dhaka University Teachers' Association (Duta) received threats over the phone from anonymous callers.

Meanwhile, Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), student wing of AL, calls for a day-long strike at all educational institutions across the country today protesting Hasina's arrest. The DU unit of the student organisation held a brief protest on the campus yesterday dodging strong vigilance of the law enforcers including different intelligence agencies.

A huge number of police and members of different intelligence agencies have been deployed on the campus since the arrest of Hasina on July 16. Police also raided four residential halls for males in the early hours of July 17, but left without rounding up anyone. Khaleda Zia has also been under a virtual house arrest recently following a tense drama of the government's failed attempt to oust her from the country.

Many of the teachers of DU yesterday were seen in classes and in teachers' lounges wearing black ribbons. Most of the pro-AL Blue Panel and pro-left Pink Panel teachers wore black ribbons, but a few others, mostly loyal to BNP and Jamaat, kept themselves away from the protest.

"Police quizzed some of our colleagues asking if we had the right to hold such demonstrations when a state of emergency is on in the country," said Anwar Hossain, general secretary of Duta. He said the law enforcers wanted them to withdraw the call for today's protest.

"The decision to protest against the government's actions was taken by the university teachers unanimously and we are all in it together," he said adding that the teachers will boycott classes today. He however said the exchange with the law enforcers was not necessarily an outright interrogation, rather it was a discussion.

The Duta general secretary said he received an anonymous phone call threatening to kidnap his 'near and dear ones'.

"An intelligence agency member stopped me in front of the Arts Building and asked about the protest," said a teacher of the department of mass communication and journalism, who was wearing a black ribbon. "The agency member wanted to know about tomorrow's work abstention programme," he said.

Professor AK Azad Chowdhury, former vice-chancellor of the university, with close ties to AL, was also among the teachers who were questioned. He said some police officers came to his university flat and asked him about the Duta members.

"Teachers, irrespective of their

political choices, have observed the protest and it was a spontaneous response to the present government's actions," said Prof Harun-Rashid, dean of the faculty of social sciences.

He also faced questions from law enforcers and said police asked him if they could withdraw the call for the protest programme. "But, we told them it's a protest of all teachers and we will observe it," he said.

Duta President Prof Sadru Amin said he personally did not support the protest, but he endorsed it as the chief of the teachers association.

Prof Sadru Amin, a pro-BNP teacher, was not present at the Arts Building during the protest. "I did not go to the department as I am not feeling well," he said.

Meanwhile, a number of students talking to The Daily Star expressed their mixed reactions over the teachers' protest programmes.

Some students said whatever protest programmes the teachers adopt, they should be very careful in making sure that the students do not become the hostages, while another group of students saw the teachers' agitation as rightful.

A four year student of the department of international relations said, "Teachers have their rights to hold demonstrations, but we the students want to see the university running normally."

Another student of the philosophy department said, "When teachers of the country's highest educational institution take a stand against or in favour of something, I think they take the decision for proper reasons."

Meanwhile, the DU unit of BCL yesterday morning held a brief demonstration at the business studies faculty of the university. Witnesses said about 10 to 15 BCL activists around 9:30am led by its President Sohel Rana Tipu and General Secretary Sazzad Saqib Badsha chanted slogans demanding release of Hasina and in favour of their today's strike.

Within minutes police and intelligence branch members rushed to the spot prompting the demonstrating BCL activists to spread out inside the faculty building.

US, Pakistan

FROM PAGE 1

our partners to deny safe haven to the Taliban and al-Qaeda in Pakistan -- or anywhere else in the world," Bush said.

Musharraf is battling a wave of Islamist violence, sparked by the bloody storming by government forces last week of the pro-Taliban Red Mosque in Islamabad.

The death toll from the Islamist carnage passed 200 in less than a week Friday, after another suicide attack killed four people in the tribal area of North Waziristan, where militants last Sunday tore up a shaky ceasefire pact.

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"Teachers, irrespective of their

Bomb plot

FROM PAGE 16

cancellation of the official launch of "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows" at the Liberty Books shop in the shopping centre in Pakistan's largest city.

Police were trying to trace the call, and were interviewing the woman from whom the car was stolen at gunpoint on July 10 for a description of the thief.

Amid global "Potter mania," around 2,000 Pakistani fans, mostly children and youths, had reserved copies of the book at the launch.

"At around 9:00 pm last night a call was received from an unknown caller," said Mughal.

"He said that he had put explosives in a car outside the Pak Towers, but then he realised it would cause damage to the children, and that is why he informed them."

A wave of deadly suicide bombings and other attacks has claimed more than 200 lives in a week in Pakistan in apparent backlash violence to the army's deadly storming of a pro-Taliban mosque.

The government should not go for any policy that will harm the people, he said.

DU Geology professor Badrul Imam said projected production of 20 million tonnes (mt) of coal annually in the first 10 years from now and 40 mt annually in the next 10 years is totally a fantasy.

Not more than 1 mt coal production is possible in the first 10 years if underground mining method is followed, he said referring to the draft policy. Production of 20 mt coal annually in the first 10 years will require at least 3 to 4 simultaneous mining in open pit method, he added.

Prof Anu Muhammad, member-secretary of the national committee to protect oil, gas and ports, said mineral resources are a strategic things which should be owned wholly by the people of the land.

Other speakers at the roundtable included economist Qazi Khaliquzzaman Ahmad, columnist Syed Abul Maksud, Maj Gen (retd) Golam Maala, Jatiya Party leader GM Quader, journalist Naemul Islam Khan, BNP leader Sardar Sakhatwan Hossain Bokul, geologist prof Hossain Mansur, prof Shamsul Alam and ActionAid Country Director Farah Kabir. Saptahik 2000 Acting Editor Golam Mortuza moderated it.

Draft policy

FROM PAGE 16

independent consultants, he stressed.

"A government institution should be created for producing and ensuring its (coal) proper use," he said. The proposed coal policy speaks of energy security but it is not possible to ensure such security for 50 years if 80 percent of the coal is exported, he added.

"Thinking of coal export will tantamount to sedition," he observed.

Renowned economist and Dhaka University (DU) professor Abu Ahmed said, "The profit made by exporting coal will go to the lessee, not to the government. The foreign companies therefore do not hesitate to bribe the experts and even media people here to work in their favour."

The economist proposed formation of an independent commission for assessing the damage, if caused, while mining the coal fields. The government should not go for any policy that will harm the people, he said.

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Adviser slams

FROM PAGE 1

tell you that you'd have to give loans for this purpose or at this rate."

"Having observed some of the changes not only in financial sector but in other areas, I tend to be optimistic. It is my understanding that the nationalised commercial banks will transform themselves from a bitter past into a better future," Aziz said.

Khondkar Ibrahim Khaled, former deputy governor of Bangladesh Bank, said her party had earlier said coal should not be exported without keeping its reserve to be used for 50 years.

"We don't want to be another Nigeria," she said, adding that natural resources of the country should be owned by the people.

Communist Party of Bangladesh General Secretary Mujahid Islam Selim said a policy on coal or other energy resources is a very crucial issue and it must not be finalised without thorough analysis and discussion in parliament.

"Why is the government in so hurry?" he questioned. "If finalisation of the coal policy is so important, hold the general election in five months and then finalise it," he added.

National interest cannot be abandoned in the name of globalisation, he noted.

AL leader Col (retd) Faruk Khan said the draft coal policy should be discussed in parliament for its finalisation. He stressed training of manpower on