

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, celebrat-

DU teachers

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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 like 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 move.

"Teachers, irrespective of their

Bomb plot

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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 in Islamabad earlier this month.

Nawshin

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Shajahan Mia, security guard of the building, was arrested on Thursday and taken on a two-day remand on Friday. He, however, could not provide any substantial information regarding the incident, police sources said.

"We are yet to receive the autopsy report," said AKM Daulat Akbar, officer in charge of Ramna Police Station adding, "We cannot make any comment about the investigation as Nawshin's parents are yet to return. We need to interrogate them further for details."

On Thursday, Nawshin's father Sultan Faruk, an accountant of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR), filed the case with Ramna Police Station accusing his brother-in-law Zahidul Haque Rintu as the prime suspect.

BNP reformists

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central executive committee are, however, maintaining silence over the initiative to hold the council keeping the party chairperson away.

"Khaleda Zia is the symbol of party's unity... so it is tough for us to take position against her although we are unhappy with Tarique Rahman," an executive committee member said, adding that field level councillors also will not accept any decision without Khaleda's participation.

But pro-reform leaders claim that many former lawmakers and most presidents and general secretaries of the party's district units are with them and want to hold the council as soon as possible.

Almost all the party councillors have already received a copy of the reform proposal and pro-reforms leaders are maintaining close contact with the councillors as part of their strategy to muster support to hold the council.

Harry Potter

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Bloomsbury. The price has been fixed at Tk 1,500.

The previous instalment of the series, "Harry Potter and the Half-blood Prince", sold around 800 copies, according to the organisers.

Govt criticised

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went to the residence of Swandip Babul, a victim of the August 21 grenade attack who died yesterday after prolonged suffering.

Razzak said, "Sheikh Hasina's arrest shocked all leaders and workers. Swandip's death is another sad incident."

Meanwhile, AL Acting President Zillur Rahman yesterday said the arrest of the AL chief created temporary crisis in the party but it is over now. He said no reforms and council will take place keeping Hasina in jail or excluding her.

"Although a temporary crisis arose in the party after the arrest of Sheikh Hasina, it does not exist now," he said at a press conference at his Gulshan residence.

"No one in the party is in favour of holding the council keeping Sheikh Hasina in jail," he said, adding that the reforms will be decided by the councillors in presence of Hasina.

Asked about the party's plan to go for a movement to free Hasina, Zillur said, "At present, we are preparing to fight the charges brought against Hasina... We will think about the movement later."

TOFAIL OUT OF DANGER

Meanwhile, the condition of AL Presidium Member Tofail Ahmed who has been suffering from high blood pressure improved yesterday, AL sources said. Hospital sources said the AL leader is now out of danger.

Tofail was admitted to ZH Sikder Women's Medical College and Hospital in Gulshan on Friday after he felt sick.

He is under observation at the Coronary Care Unit of the hospital.

Draft policy

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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.

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.

The Economist

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remain suspended. It stepped up its purge of corrupt politicians, officials and businessmen, more than 150 of whom have been arrested since the beginning of the year.

The police arrested and jailed Sheikh Hasina Wajed, prime minister between 1996 and 2001. She is accused of both extortion and complicity in murder. The police also summoned her nemesis, Khaleda Zia, prime minister until last October, but now in effect under house arrest, to appear in court next month. Both leaders will have to submit "wealth statements" to a powerful Anti-Corruption Commission. Unlike Mrs Zia, who has been more or less dropped by her party, Sheikh Hasina is still popular. So security forces were on the alert after her arrest. But protests were patchy rather than nationwide.

The government had earlier tried-and-failed to exile the two "begums". In April it barred Sheikh Hasina from returning to the country from Britain, but relented under domestic and international pressure. Then it banned her from leaving. If the prosecutions of the two begums fail, it could spell the end of the interim government. The abortive bid to exile the

women, who both led kleptocratic regimes, has already badly dented its credibility.

The anti-corruption drive has made the unelected regime relatively popular. But critics are now accusing it of abusing its wide-ranging emergency powers for political purposes. With almost the entire political class behind bars, the fear is that elections staged at the end of the clean-up will produce a puppet regime.

Last week the army chief, General Moeen U Ahmed, said that there was a need to "correct the constitution", after a new parliament is in place. Though largely unreported, General Ahmed's promotion in May to a four-star rank means that he will stay on as army chief beyond his original retirement date of June 2008 into 2009, beyond the deadline for elections. There is already talk in Dhaka that the army is thinking of changing the constitution along Turkish lines, giving itself a bigger role. This raises a grim prospect of a technocratic, top-down constitutional review, and an outcome few Bangladeshis would accept as legitimate.

New party launched

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figures who took initiatives to float Jatiya Janata Party during the first martial law in 1976. Later, he joined the move to float the BNP. He was first elected as a lawmaker in 1979 from BNP.

Announcing the name of the new party at a press conference, Qureshi said a convening committee of the party with representation from all districts will be formed soon. The constitution and manifesto of the party will be declared after discussions, he added.

On the ban on indoor politics, Qureshi, also editor of the daily Deshbangla, said there is no logic now to keep the ban. He urged the government to lift the ban on indoor politics "in phases, if necessary".

He claimed that in the changed situation thousands of leaders and workers of the BNP, Awami League and Jatiya Party frustrated with their leaderships contacted with them.

He said the PDP will contest all the 300 constituencies in the next general elections, which, he believes, will be held by the end of 2008.

"The country is on the right track... I hope a free, fair and credible election will be held in 2008," he said.

Asked what post he will hold in the PDP, Qureshi said he will remain as its coordinator until everything is finalised.

Kazi Firoz, who was a minister during military dictator HM Ershad's regime, said he and a few other JP leaders resigned from the party as they are now engaged with the new party.

On the ban on political activities, he said everybody is doing politics. The party's convening committee will be formed within a week, he added.

Adviser slams

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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, presented a keynote paper while Agrani Bank Chairman Siddiqur Rahman Chowdhury, Janata Bank Chairman Suhel A Choudhury and Managing Director Mukter Hussain, among others, spoke at the seminar.

In his presentation, Khaled said top management in general and chief executive in particular constitute the most critical factor in hierarchical organisation for visualising and implementing any change programme.

"The CEO and half a dozen top management personnel with proven competence and market-based compensation package should be recruited from within and outside by a competent search committee," he recommended.

He also suggested that the appointments be contractually subject to achievement of goals.

"Top management may evaluate performance of all officers. High achievers should be given immediate and attractive rise in compensation while organisational burdens with acute inefficiency should be offered golden handshake with reasonable compensation," he said.

Rab foils

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persuade the four children for the last few days saying that he would give them dolls.

The children informed their parents about the matter, who in turn informed Rab about the incident.

Shikder came to the area yesterday and tried to take the children with him. At that moment Rab conducted a raid in the area and arrested him, sources said.

During interrogation, Shikder, who pulled rickshaw for 15 years during his early days in the capital, confessed that he used to kidnap children and supply them to some persons who usually traffic children in the United Arab Emirates.

He used to take Tk 50,000 for a child.

Shikder also admitted that he used to kidnap children aged between six and ten each Friday. Members of his syndicate used to wait at some fixed place in the capital on Fridays.

Street urchins and slum children are the main target of the gang as it is easy to induce them, Shikder told Rab.

Raid is being conducted in the capital to capture persons involved in the syndicate, said Rab sources adding that Shikder is a field level member of the gang and named some of his bosses during the interrogation.

Rab handed over the arrestee to police.

A case was filed with Khilgaon Police Station.

BSF kills 1

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the border at around 5:00pm. Minhaz died instantly.

The BSF men took away the body. BDR protested the killing and sent a letter to its Indian counterpart demanding return of the body.

3 suspects

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Abdul Hakim, sub-inspector of Kafal Police Station.

Family members said that on Thursday at 7:45pm, on the evening of the incident, they spoke with Atiar over cellphone after he had returned from Kushtia and got off a Hanif Paribahan bus at Kalyanpur.

Atiar told them that he was about to board a CNG-run auto rickshaw and would reach his house at Ahmedbagh, Basabo within half an hour.

Later that night, at around 3:00am, Atiar's family learnt from the police that Atiar was dead.

Victim's son son Mamun Ferdous, a textile engineer, told The Daily Star over cellphone that he and his family suspect that Atiar might have been killed by either Malam or Agyan Party muggers.

He also suspected that the muggers decided to kill his father when they realised that chances of getting away after the mugging were slim since Atiar was an NSI official.

He did not however rule out involvement of others who had animosity with his father during his posting in Kushtia.

Sabina

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"Her case was discussed by the board comprising all top doctors involved in the management of lymphoma, including medical oncologist, radiation oncologist, lymphoma pathologist and radiologist," he said.

Before flying to Singapore, Sabina was under treatment at a city hospital.

Rangs claims

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building, they said the country's economy will be affected if the building is demolished, since about 64 business organisations are operating their businesses from that building.

"We purchased the land from different persons and Rajuk gave us the approval... and we have all the proper documents," Syed Nazimuddin, senior vice-president of Bank Asia, also one of the owners of the building, said in a written speech, at a news briefing held in a restaurant in the capital.

Local Government and Rural Development Adviser Anwarul Iqbal recently said in an interview that the Rangs building was constructed flouting proper procedures.

When the building owners' attention was drawn to that comment, the owners said they do not know why the adviser called the building illegal. They also said the building was established with proper permission under existing laws.

"Rajuk is our opponent but the government formed an inquiry committee with a high official of Rajuk in it... so it is clear what kind of recommendations the committee will make," a representative of the owners said when asked about the government's initiative regarding the building.

"But we will accept the court verdict as the case is in court now although the High Court already said the Rangs authorities had constructed the building according to an approved design, so the notice of Rajuk for cancelling the permission and for demolishing the building above the fifth floor is not lawful," he added.

Electoral roll

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for preparing voter list with photo, updating of voter list every year, display of draft voter list along with photographs.

Chief Adviser's Press Secretary Syed Fahim Munaim briefed the newsmen about the outcome of the meeting.

The council also approved in principle the Acid Control (Amendment) Ordinance 2007 changing clause 4 of the Acid Control Act of 2002 and incorporating three more persons as members of the existing council under the Act. The three new members to be included are inspector general of police, secretary of the law ministry and secretary of the social welfare ministry.

As per the proposed amendment, the government, if necessary, can anytime co-opt new members and cancel the nomination of the members. The term of the membership of the council is for two years.

Other members of the council include minister or state minister for home affairs, minister or state minister for social welfare, a woman member of parliament nominated by the speaker, secretaries of the home, industries, health, and women & children affairs ministries, presidents of the FBCCI and the Jatiya Press Club, professor or associate professor nominated by vice-chancellor of Dhaka University either from chemistry, applied chemistry, bio-chemistry and pharmacy departments, and an expert from BCSIR and two persons from NGO nominated by the government.

The council meeting also discussed the ongoing case between Tulip, a computer company of the

Abducted Germans

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"We executed one of the Germans and will kill the other one unless the government of Germany or the Afghan government contact us for negotiations," he said after a noon (0730 GMT) deadline passed. He added that the German was killed by a bullet.

After the second deadline had passed an hour later, he said in another phone call: "Since the governments did not contact us, we killed the second German hostage at 1:10 pm."

The rebel spokesman offered no evidence but said the Taliban would consider how to hand the bodies over to German or Afghan authorities "if they ask for them," adding: "Otherwise we'll dump them to somewhere."

Germany's Foreign Ministry said it was taking "very seriously" the Taliban's claims but had no independent confirmation.

"We are taking these declarations very seriously and are following the situation closely. But so far we have no independent confirmation that a kidnapped German has been killed," ministry spokesman Martin Jaeger.

The two Germans, whose identities have not been revealed, were kidnapped Wednesday along with five Afghans, provincial officials and police said.

A day later militants abducted the 18 South Koreans, evangelical Christian aid workers aged in their 20s and 30s, the biggest group of foreigners to be kidnapped in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban regime in 2001.

Both kidnappings took place on the Kabul-Kandahar highway leading to the insurgency-wracked south.

South Korea's President Roh

Owners of the Rangs building firmly said it will not be wise to demolish the building in the name of an obstruction to the flight path of airplanes using an abandoned airport and a plan for constructing a link road.

"Tejgaon old airport was declared abandoned in 1980 when Zia International Airport was opened up, so the Rangs building is not an obstacle to using the old airport as a helipad," said Maj (ret'd) Abul Fattah, a representative of the building owners. He also said there was no link road from Bijoy Sarani to Tejgaon Industrial Area in the city master plan of Rajdhani Unnayan Karttripakkha (Rajuk) at the time of construction of the building.

He said, "A proposal for a Y-model link road was placed before Ecneec during the immediate past government's rule. But hundreds of personal and government owned multi-storied buildings had already been established on the way of the proposed link road."

About the approval given by Rajuk, the owners said Rajuk approved the design for a proposed 10-storied shopping plus office complex building on July 6, 1989 after examining all necessary documents. Later the Rangs authorities submitted a revised design for a 22-storied building due to an expansion of the land, which Rajuk approved on May 15, 1990.

Jaglu Kabir, executive-director of Shanin Group, Habibur Rahman, director of Rangs Pharmaceuticals, Aminul Islam, deputy managing director of Bank Asia, Kutub Uddin, corporate manager of Rangs were also present. Maj (ret'd) Abul Fattah explained the details of the matter.

Netherlands, and the Bangladesh government over payment of compensation to the company following the cancellation of an agreement with the government on supplying computers.

The meeting asked the ambassadors of Belgium and the Netherlands to open up dialogue with Tulip to settle the matter out of the court.

Tulip made an agreement during the caretaker government on June 30, 2001. Under the agreement, the company was to provide around 10,888 computers worth about Tk 100 crore with 50 percent Dutch grant for 3,382 educational institutions.

As the agreement was scrapped in 2003, Tulip filed a case with a Dutch court and the court in a unilateral decree ordered the Bangladesh government to pay Tk 31 crore in compensation to the company. Bangladesh government preferred an appeal to the Dutch court against the decree and the court is set to pronounce its verdict on September 11 this year.

Tulip has made an offer to settle the matter out of the court if the government purchases computers from the company.

A presentation on the activities of the local government was also made at the meeting.

Advisers to the caretaker government, the cabinet secretary, the press secretary to the chief adviser and other secretaries concerned were present at the meeting held at the Chief Adviser's Office.