

Chen Shui-bian stable after suicide bid

Written by Taipei Times

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Former president Chen Shui-bian waves as he arrives at the Taiwan High Court in Taipei on Aug. 26, 2011.

Photo: AFP

Former president Chen Shui-bian (陳水扁) attempted to commit suicide by hanging himself with a towel at a prison hospital in Greater Taichung on Sunday night, but was stopped by a caretaker, the Ministry of Justice said yesterday.

Deputy Minister of Justice Chen Ming-tang (陳明堂) said that Chen, who is serving a 20-year jail sentence for corruption, was distraught that public funds could now be spent legally in hostess bars, while the courts had found his use of them for diplomatic projects to have been a criminal offense.

Chen Shui-bian was apparently referring to former independent legislator Yen Ching-piao (顏清標), who was sentenced to three-and-a-half years in prison for the misuse of public funds in hostess bars during his term as Taichung County Council speaker, but who may be released from jail once an amendment to the Accounting Act (會計法) is promulgated.

The deputy minister said that at 9pm on Sunday, Chen Shui-bian tied a towel to a 90cm high shower fitting in his bathroom and attempted to hang himself.

A caretaker stopped him and medical staff then checked his blood pressure, heartbeat and other vital signs.

Chen Ming-tang said that Chen Shui-bian's condition was stable.

The deputy minister added that Chen Shui-bian's medical team asked him why he had tried to

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commit suicide.

According to Chen Ming-tang, Chen Shui-bian said he was upset that his bid to rejoin the Democratic Progressive Party had not gone well, and also because the involvement of elected officials and professors in irregularities related to the use of public funds could be decriminalized following the passage of the public funds amendment, while his use of public funds on diplomatic projects would not be decriminalized.

The deputy minister added that the prison hospital sent a psychiatrist from Taichung Veterans General Hospital to visit Chen Shui-bian.

The ministry on April 19 transferred Chen Shui-bian from Taipei Veterans General Hospital to Taichung Prison's Pei Teh Hospital, where a special medical zone was set up for him.

The former president has been diagnosed with severe depression, sleep apnea, non-typical Parkinson's disease, a speech disorder and mild cerebral atrophy.

His office confirmed his suicide attempt in a press release yesterday afternoon.

Citing a prison staffer's conversation with Chen Shui-bian, the office confirmed that the former president had tried to kill himself because of his anger over the decriminalization of hundreds of university professors' and local councilors' irregular use of public funds.

Chen Shui-bian's son, Chen Chih-chung (陳智雄), wrote on his Facebook page that his father was calling for "a uniform standard" to be set for all legal proceedings, rather than different standards for specific individuals.

"I cannot accept [the double standard], nor could anyone; let alone someone with serious illnesses," Chen Chih-chung wrote.

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“Chen Shui-bian’s health suffers a blow every time he sees that someone else has received preferential treatment,” said Janice Chen (陳幸嫻), spokesperson for Chen Shui-bian’s private medical team.

In response, Chen Ming-tang said that Yen would be released from jail once the amendment to the Accounting Act is promulgated.

He said the ministry looked into Yen’s case yesterday and decided that Yen’s case would be applicable under the new law.

Source: [Taipei Times - 2013/06/04](#)