

## International

## Russian parliamentary by-polls Lebed to support Yeltsin's former security chief

TULA, Russia, Oct 14: Russia's security chief Alexander Lebed said Sunday he will support Boris Yeltsin's security service now enroled in a Kremlin scandal, in parliamentary by-elections, reports AP.

Lebed, who gave up his seat in the State Duma when he was appointed security chief in June, told his Tulsa constituency that Kozhakov should be his replacement.

Lebed and Kozhakov were in Tulsa to attend a celebration of the city's 850th birthday and sat together to watch a parade across the central square. They also shook hands and walked together with big smiles on their faces for TV cameras and photographers.

Asked if he would make public appearances on Kozhakov's behalf, Lebed responded to reporters, "Of course."

Kozhakov was head of the presidential security service and one of Yeltsin's closest

advisers until he was fired this summer in a pre-election Kremlin housecleaning.

He is now at the centre of a Kremlin power struggle touched off by the illness of Yeltsin, who is sidelined as he awaits heart bypass surgery.

Last week, Boris Fyodorov, the former director of the National Sports Fund, accused Kozhakov of trying to extort 40 million dollars from him.

The fund, a shadowy cash-raising organisation inside the Kremlin, was taken over by Kozhakov after the dismissal last summer of Fyodorov, who described it as "a government racket."

Fyodorov's accusation was seen by some observers as an attempt to discredit Kozhakov and force Lebed to distance himself from the former Yeltsin crony, who is believed to have accumulated huge amounts of cash and potentially damaging information during his years in the Kremlin.

## Court extends Rao's bail until Nov 6

NEW DELHI, Oct 14: An Indian court today extended former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao's bail in a criminal forgery case until November 6, a lawyer representing Rao told Reuters.

RK Anand said Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Prem Kumar extended the temporary bail, which was granted to Rao last week, until one week after a hearing in the case set for October 30. Kumar had been scheduled on Monday to take up Rao's request for an extension of the temporary bail until the completion of the trial.

Rao has been summoned to appear in court on Wednesday in a separate case of criminal conspiracy to cheat.

However, it was not clear whether that hearing would be held as the Supreme Court has ordered any court appearances by Rao to be held away from the local courts in a more secure location.

# Hundreds of Islamic militias killed, 400 held Taliban preparing defence of Kabul after losing two key towns

KABUL, Oct 14: The Afghan Taliban militia was preparing the defence of Kabul today after suffering stunning reverses north of the city at the hands of the government it ousted less than three weeks ago, witnesses said, reports Reuters.

They said the purist Islamic militia, which had swept all before it until coming up against the wall of the Hindu Kush, was reinforcing positions on the two roads north of the capital and one entering the city from the west.

A large force of Taliban was assembling about 20 km (12 miles) north of Kabul to block the main road from the north and moving artillery and other weapons to block the second road, they said.

Some 60 tanks were massed

outside Kabul on the main road from the west, apparently to block any attempt by the forces of former government military chief Ahmad Shah Masood to make a flanking attack, the witnesses added.

Masood's forces have swept the Taliban a long way back from their former front line, at Jabal Os-Siraj at the mouth of the Salang pass going through the Hindu Kush, in the past two days.

Less than a week after being besieged in his Panjsher valley Fortress, a two-hour drive north of Kabul, and apparently fighting to survive, Masood has pushed the Taliban much of the way back to Kabul.

He took Jabal Os-Siraj on Saturday and they pushed the Taliban out of Charikar, a 30-

minute drive to the south, later in the day after a fierce five-hour battle.

It was not clear how far south of Charikar his largely ethnic Tajik forces had pushed or whether Masood intended to attack Kabul, the city he left without a fight on September 27 in the face of a lightning push by the Taliban.

But witnesses said the town of Qarah Bagh, on the road about a third of the way between Charikar and Kabul, was deserted and the largely ethnic Pushtun Taliban were massed nearby.

They said it appeared the Taliban controlled little more than the roads after Masood sent guerrilla bands behind the front lines.

Other groups, which had

joined the Taliban as they took Kabul, had switched sides again and had cut the road below Qarah Bagh, the witnesses said.

It seems the cutting of the road there and Masood's ambushes behind the lines at Jabal Os-Siraj prevented reinforcements and ammunition reaching the Taliban up there, said one Afghan watcher in Kabul.

Masood's guerrilla bands also appear to have isolated Taliban forces at Bagram, the government's main air base 50 km (30 miles) north of the capital.

Taliban fighters in the area said on Sunday the guerrillas had moved south of the air base and the road from it to Kabul had been closed to civilian traffic.

Earlier Reuter report says, hundreds of Taliban fighters were killed and 400 captured when the Afghan Islamic militia were driven out of the town of Charikar, north of Kabul, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported, quoting Afghan officials in Teheran.

Afghan warlord Abdul Rashid Dostam today met former government commander Ahmad Shah Masood to discuss the possibility of forging an alliance and strategy against the Taliban militia, spokesmen for both parties told AFP.

The meeting was held in a tin hut at the entrance to the Salang tunnel, in northern Afghanistan, they said. The chief of pro-Iranian Shiite Hezb Wahdat, Karim Khalili was also present.

## BRIEFLY



Turkish Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan acknowledges applause as he appears at a bi-annual congress of his pro-Islamic Welfare Party in Ankara Sunday in which Erbakan is running uncontested in a vote for the party leadership. — AFP/UNB photo

### Clashes leave 10 killed in Philippines:

Ten people were killed and 81 injured in two days of clashes between government troops and Muslim guerrillas in the southern Philippines, the military said Monday, AFP reports from Cotabato.

The army unleashed artillery and mortar barrages on several villages around a Japan-funded irrigation dam project in the town of Carmen on Saturday and Sunday, forcing 750 families to flee, army Lieutenant Noel Detoyato told reporters.

### Works of Kim Il Sung published:

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) has published the 15th volume of the complete works of the late president Kim Il Sung, Xinhua reports from Pyongyang.

The volume, published several days before October 17, the 70th anniversary of the founding of the Alliance to overthrow imperialism by Kim, contains 55 reports, speeches, summaries, talks, orders and instructions which he delivered between May 1, 1952 and July 30, 1953. The volume was brought out by the publishing house of the Workers' Party.

### Taiwan's top official in China:

Despite strained relations, Taiwan's top official for cultural and educational exchanges with China left Monday for an 11-day visit to the mainland, AP reports from Taipei.

Lu Mu-lin, director of cultural and educational affairs for the Cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council, will meet officials in four Chinese cities, the council said.

Lu, who heads a 19-member delegation, is the top council official to visit since He Si-chun, the council's secretary-general, travelled to China this summer.

### Illegal goods seized in Pakistan:

Pakistani customs have confiscated goods worth 750,000 dollars smuggled on a motor boat from the Gulf sheikhdom of Dubai, customs officials said Sunday, AFP reports from Karachi.

The cache included liquor, cigarettes, cloth and electronic items, a customs official said. He said five smugglers managed to escape in their boat as the customs police raided their coastal hideout.

### 190 kg heroin seized in Y'slavia:

Yugoslav customs officials seized 190 kilograms of heroin Sunday aboard a lorry at Gradina on the border with Bulgaria, the Daily Politika reported Monday, AFP reports from Belgrade.

The drug was hidden aboard a lorry delivering 20 tonnes of peaches to Slovenia, the paper said. The driver, Marko Osel, 40 was arrested but denied having been present when the lorry was loaded. The paper said the haul was one of the biggest in recent years. In Spain meanwhile 1.13 tonnes of hashish were seized on Thursday near Malaga on the Mediterranean Coast, Spanish police said Sunday.

### Blast kills 3 in Philippines:

An alleged drug addict tossed a grenade at a group of people on a street corner in the central Philippines at the weekend, killing three children and injuring 15 others newspaper and radio reports said yesterday, AFP reports from Manila.

Police in the town of Talisay arrested the 20-year-old suspect shortly after the blast on Saturday, the Manila Standard Newspaper said.

## Peace laureate denies murder accusations

SYDNEY, Oct 14: An East Timorese who shared a Nobel Peace Prize for trying to end Indonesia's occupation of his homeland denied on Monday Indonesian allegations that he advocated murder and torture, reports AP.

The Indonesian-appointed governor of the former Portuguese colony accused resistance leader Jose Ramos Horta on Sunday of approving murders, tortures and arrests during a civil war before Indonesia's 1975 invasion.

"I was away from East Timor during the civil war. I had no part in it," Ramos Horta, who lives in exile in Australia, told The Associated Press.

Indonesia invaded a few months after Portugal pulled out, and annexed the territory in 1976.

## Female circumcision Egyptian court turns down HR group's lawsuit

CAIRO, Oct 14: A Cairo court has turned down a lawsuit filed a year ago by a human rights group against the country's highest Sunni Muslim authority over his support for female circumcision, judicial sources said on Sunday, reports AFP.

The court ruled that the Egyptian Organisation of Human Rights (EOHR) had "no interest at stake" in the unprecedented lawsuit it filed in April 1995 against the late head of Al-Azhar, Sheikh Gad- Al-Haq Ali Ghalal-Haq.

The cleric, who died on March 15, had issued a Fatwa (religious decree) in October 1994 stipulating that circumcision was a duty for men and women and that religious leaders should urge people to perform the operation.

The EOHR protested by filing suit and demanding 500,000 pounds (150,000 dollars) in damages which it planned to put into a fund to finance a campaign to fight against female circumcision.

## Farrakhan urges supporters to mark day of 'Million Man March'

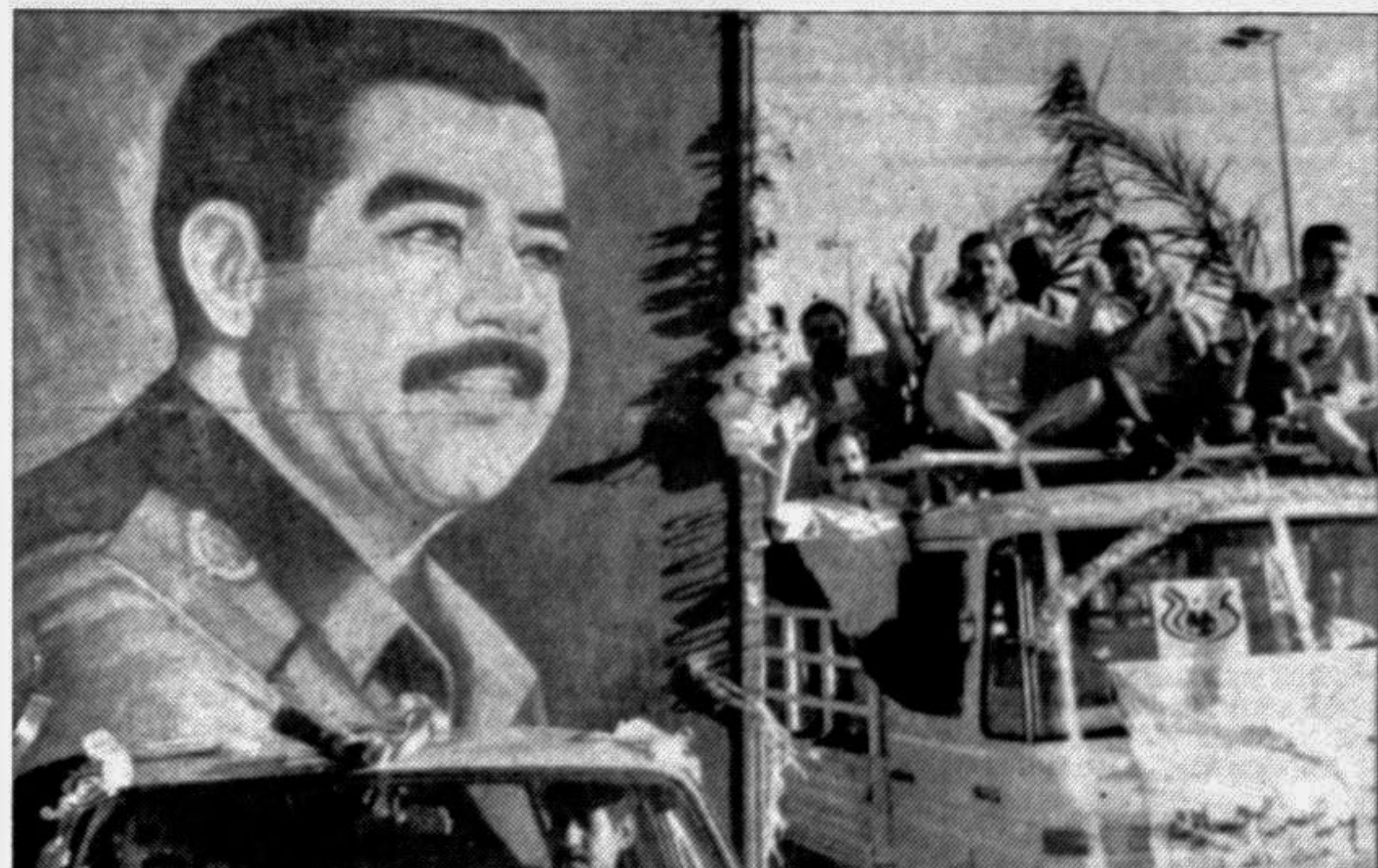
WASHINGTON, Oct 14: Controversial Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan urged supporters to join him in a 'world atonement day for war, violence and murder' Wednesday in New York, reports AFP.

Farrakhan said on Sunday that the event would mark the first anniversary of the 'Million Man March' in Washington.

In an interview with Cable News Network, Farrakhan defended his organisation a year after it persuaded an estimated 800,000 black men to demonstrate peacefully in the US capital.

Critics of the black leader have said he failed to take advantage of the unprecedented show of force.

Farrakhan urged blacks to participate more actively in politics and to vote in the November 5 presidential and congressional elections.



Iraqis carry pictures of President Saddam Hussein on their cars after Iraq's TV announced that Hussein's government urged Sunday rival Kurdish factions in northern Iraq to stop seeking support from foreign forces and instead start negotiations sponsored by Baghdad. — AFP/UNB photo

## ME peace remains in jeopardy, warns King Hussein Syria urges int'l community to exert pressure on Israel

DAMASCUS, Oct 14: Syria called Sunday on the international community to exert pressure on Israel to abandon its 'aggressive' policies which it said could spell disaster for the Middle East peace process, reports AFP.

The National Progressive Front, a coalition of seven parties including the ruling Baath Party, issued a statement after a meeting Sunday urging international pressure on Israel to end its aggressive policies.

It said the 'irresponsible' positions of Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could mean 'catastrophe for the peace process.'

Syrian-Israeli 'peace talks' have been frozen since February, and Damascus says they will not resume until Netanyahu pledges an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights captured from Syria in the 1967 Arab-Israeli War.

Netanyahu, however, has backed off from the principle of land-for-peace which Arab countries say is the foundation of the peace process.

Another report from Jerusalem says, the Israeli Cabinet on Sunday approved the opening of an ancient underground Muslim prayer hall next to Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, state television reported.

AP adds from Amman: King Hussein, who has become increasingly critical of Israel's peace policy, warned Sunday that the Middle East peace process remained in jeopardy.

Speaking to reporters, Hussein also said he was promised a 'good surprise' for a breakthrough in Arab-Israeli peace negotiations.



Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat (L) walks with former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres Sunday in Nablus. The two Oslo peace accord makers had lunch and a long discussion before answering reporters questions. Peres urged Palestinians not to lose hope, 'don't think the peace process is in danger, but it is facing certain difficulties,' he said. — AFP/UNB photo

## 'Barzani is finished politically' PUK forces have killed 364 KDP fighters

DUBAI, Oct 14: Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) forces have killed 364 fighters from the rival Kurdistan Democratic (KDP) party, whose leader Masoud Barzani prevented PUK chief Jalal Talabani said in remarks published today, reports AFP.

'Barzani is finished politically and his military end is very near unless Saddam Hussein intervenes,' Talabani told Al Hayat newspaper in an interview from the town of Sulaymaniyah, which the PUK recaptured from the KDP on Sunday.

Talabani said he had 'for now' intention of retaking the city of Arbil, because it is surrounded by Iraqi tanks, but he added it 'is unlikely that Saddam will launch a military attack outside the suburbs of Arbil.'

The PUK leader told the London-based daily, which is distributed here, that Iraqi artillery had briefly shelled the area of Chamchamal, on the road Sulaymaniyah to Kirkuk, before stopping.

## Ex-minister Sharma's house seized

NEW DELHI, Oct 14: Indian detectives have seized a dream holiday home built by a former minister who faces charges of bribing four parliamentarians three years ago, a newspaper reported today, says AFP.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) sealed the imposing cottage, belonging to former petroleum minister Satish Sharma, at Kaplani village.

## Off the Record

### Delhi dwellers in a monkey dilemma

NEW DELHI: New Delhi's authorities have been flooded with complaints of attacks by monkeys, a newspaper reported Wednesday but officials say they cannot tackle the problem because of the animal's status in Hindu religion, reports AFP.

Groups of monkeys have reportedly attacked and bitten scores of men and women in the city's southern and central areas, The Times of India daily said.

'On an average we receive six or seven frantic calls a day to remove the monkeys,' an official of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) was quoted as saying.

The MCD does not allow monkeys to be killed as they are considered an incarnation of the Hindu Monkey-God Hanuman.

Even trapping them is difficult.

'No Hindu volunteers for the job although we pay 100 rupees (three dollars) for each monkey,' the official said.

The MCD's sole monkey-trapper, meanwhile, wants to quit and a recent advertisement for monkey-trappers evoked no response.

The Times said monkeys were a common sight in many areas. They could be seen on electric posts and in parks, moving in large groups. Many residents reportedly use batons to protect themselves.

'They tear clothes hung out for drying, use drain pipes to enter our kitchens and sometimes even help themselves to the food in the refrigerators,' an exasperated resident said.

A 17-year-old girl was bitten on her thigh a fortnight ago, while another was dragged by her hair. The bulk of people bitten by monkeys have been taken to the nearby Safdarjung Hospital for rabies treatment.

## Ancient petroglyphs discovered in China

HOHHOT: A large number of ancient petroglyphs have been discovered in recent years in the city of Whohai in north China's inner Mongolia autonomous region, and will greatly aid the study of the history and culture in the area, reports Xinhua.

The stone pictures depict the lives of ancient people who lived 5,000-6,000 years ago in the region, which is part of the vast desertland in southern inner Mongolia.

However, local experts are hesitant to continue digging, saying there is not enough funding to protect those petroglyphs that have already been uncovered.

Whohai is located in a Karst area, where pictures carved on limestone are easily damaged by wind, sunlight and rain.

The more pictures they excavate, the more losses they will suffer, 'a local expert noted, for example, he said, a particular series of star-shaped figures on a large stone would disappear within a few years.'

In response to the call for preservation of the carvings, the Whohai city government allocated special funds to build the 'huoshagou stone picture museum,' which is now open to the public and has nine employees.

There is now sufficient funding to set up storage buildings for the other four large groups of stone pictures unearthed so far.

## Low-risk offenders to serve their jail terms at home in Sweden

STOCKHOLM, Oct 14: Sweden is to become the first country in Europe to introduce a nationwide scheme that will allow low-risk offenders to serve their jail sentences at home, watched over by an electronic big brother, reports Reuters.

Over the past two years, certain offenders in six districts have been able to opt out of serving their time in jail, choosing instead to be tagged by an electronic ankle and follow a strict timetable set by the probation service.

Probation officer Mara Lofgren said the trial had been so successful that Sweden's prison and probation administration has decided to extend the scheme to cover the whole country from January 1.

'It really is far more economical if people can stay at home,' Lofgren told Reuters. 'It can also be better that low-risk offenders don't meet all the other prisoners who are more

deeply involved in criminal activities.'

Sweden is one of several countries, including Britain, the Netherlands, the United States and Canada, that are looking at. Electronic surveillance of prisoners as a cheap alternative to locking up low-risk offenders.

So far about 700 people have taken part in the Swedish scheme, which started on August 1, 1994, it was open to people with prison sentence of two months or less.

One participant is 21-year-old Axel (not his real name), a mechanic from Malmo in southern Sweden, who was given a two month jail term and banned from driving for two years after driving home drunk after a party.

Every weekday, Axel leave his home at 8.15 am precisely and returns at 5.45 pm on the dot each night.

At the weekends he is al-

lowed out for an hour a day.

If he departs from this schedule he risks setting off alarms in a nearby monitor centre and could be taken off the scheme.

'Thanks to this scheme I have been able to carry on working and keep up with my normal life,' said Axel told Reuters.

'I have to watch the clock all the time but it's far better than being locked away.'

More than half the prisoners on the scheme have been convicted on drink-driving offences. Seventeen per cent were convicted for assault and the rest for theft, fraud, embezzlement, drug offences and refusing to undertake an alternative to military service.

The nationwide scheme, which will involve about 5,000 people over a year, will be expanded to allow anyone with a jail sentence of up to three months to apply for the scheme.

The Department of Justice is considering extending the scheme to offenders with a sentence of less than a year, a move which would take in about 85 per cent of the 14,000 or so prisoners sentenced to jail in Sweden each year.

Ulf Johansson, national project coordinator at Sweden's prison and probation administration, said the costs of home imprisonment were far lower than incarceration, even taking into account the regular home visits needed.

He said it could even lead to the closure of several Swedish prisons in coming years.

'Electronic tagging costs about 450 crowns (68 dollars) a day per prisoner whereas it costs about 1,000 crowns a day to keep an offender in an open prison,' Johnson told Reuters.

Johnson said there were several criteria for accepting an offender on the scheme. They must have a suitable

home with electricity and a telephone, as a receiver is installed in the home and connected to the electric mains and the phone system.

Signals from a small transmitter on the offender's ankle are relayed several times a minute to a host computer in the probation office in which offenders' daily plans are stored.

If people on the trial depart from the timetable, drink alcohol or take any illegal drug, they risk being taken off the scheme and serving the rest of their sentence in jail.

'We have only had to terminate about seven per cent of the cases who have attended the project, usually for people caught drinking alcohol,' Johnson said.

'Someone who kept over-sleeping also had to be taken off the scheme, but that's unusual. We have also caught people try-

ing to manipulate the monitoring equipment.'

'It is of great interest among prisoners and more than 70 per cent of the total target group have applied to join the scheme, which is voluntary.'

The scheme has been criticised as a soft option in the handful of US states where it has been tried. A major federal study also declared it useless as a deterrent.

In Britain, trials are underway in three areas — reading, just outside London, Norfolk in the east of the country, and greater Manchester in the north — but have also come under sharp criticism for excessive leniency.

Lofgren said a vital part of the project was regular, random home visits.

'You do have to conduct regular visits as well as the electronic monitoring so may be this is where other countries have gone wrong,' she said.

## Allegiance pledge of Serbs Muslim leaders won't wait indefinitely

SARAJEVO, Oct 14: Muslim leaders insisted Sunday they won't wait indefinitely for their Serb counterparts to pledge allegiance to a united Bosnia, demanding that a deadline be set to sign the oath, reports AP.

Diplomatic pressure on the Serbs is increasing after the Bosnian-Serb member of the collective presidency, Momcilo Krajisnik, boycotted the October 5 inauguration ceremony of Bosnia's three-man presidency.

The two other members of the new collective presidency — Alija Izetbegovic, the Muslim member and Kresimir Zubak, the Croat member — swore allegiance to a United State at the Sarajevo ceremony.

Krajisnik cited security concerns in refusing to attend. International officials, however, viewed his absence as an attempt to obstruct the newly elected joint presidency set up by the peace accord that ended the 3 and half year war in Bosnia.

Bosnia's Serbs insisted throughout the conflict that they did not want to be part of a united Bosnia and structures dominated by Muslims. Signing a loyalty oath for such a loosely United State would mean reneging on their goal of secession.

Mirza Hajric, an adviser to Izetbegovic, said Sunday that Muslim leaders will ask international mediators to give the Serbs a time limit to pledge to a united Bosnia. He said it was up to the Serbs to make the next move.