

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 Alexander Korzhakov, the ex-head of Boris Yeltsin's security service now embroiled 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 Tula constituency that Korzhakov should be his replacement.

Lebed and Korzhakov were in Tula 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 Korzhakov's behalf, Lebed responded to reporters, "Of course."

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

advisors 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 Korzhakov of trying to extort 40 million dollars from him.

The fund, a shadowy cash-raising organisation inside the Kremlin, was taken over by Korzhakov 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 Korzhakov 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.

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.

Liu, 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 Yugoslavia:

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 peper 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.

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 Reuter.

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

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.

Some 60 tanks were massed

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 Reuter.

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 Qarab 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 Qarab Bagh, the witnesses said.

"It seems the cutting of the road there and Masood ambushed 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.

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 Hezbollah, Karim Khalili was also present.

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 Teneran.

Afghan warlord Abdul Rashid Dostum 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.

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'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 faces defeat. 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 to 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 Iraq 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. The 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 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.

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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.

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

The more pictures we excavate, the more losses we 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 Wuhai city government allocated special funds to build the "huashougou 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.

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 up to sign the oath, reports AP.

Diplomatic pressure on the Serbs is increasing after the Bosnian-Serb member of the collective presidency, Momiclo 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. In

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 released from prison 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 years or less.

One participant is 21-year-old Axel (not his real name), a mechanic from Malmö 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 leaves his home at 8.15 am precisely and returns at 5.45 pm on the same day.

At the weekends he is al-

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.

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

Farrakhan urged 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.

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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

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 drugs, 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 oversleeping also had to be taken off the scheme, but that's unusual. We have also caught people trying

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.

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