

# News Digest

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## Another Yeltsin candidate refused

MOSCOW (AP) — Lawmakers rejected Boris Yeltsin's candidate for prime minister on Monday for a second time, throwing Russia into even deeper political turmoil as the economy hurtles out of control.

In other blows to Yeltsin on Monday, the ruble crashed again dramatically and the Central Bank chairman offered to quit. Some Russians flocked to stores to buy goods before prices shot up any higher.

"The economic crisis is gaining momentum with catastrophic speed," acting Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin warned the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, before it torpedoed his nomination 273-138.

"We are all standing on the edge and no time is left for settling scores," he said. "We must begin acting."

The vote sets the stage for a final confrontation between the president and his opponents. Yeltsin must decide whether to nominate Chernomyrdin again or find another candidate. If the Duma rejects Yeltsin's choice a third time, the constitution requires the president to dissolve parliament and call new elections within three months.

Russia has been operating with an interim govern-

ment for two weeks, since Yeltsin brought Chernomyrdin back after firing him in March. Chernomyrdin's efforts to win confirmation by parliament have left him little time to devote to the worst economic crisis since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The president suggested that the parliament confirm Chernomyrdin, and then assess his performance after a "trial period" of six to eight months.

Communist leader Gennady Zyuganov said his party, the largest in the Duma, would never accept Chernomyrdin. He complained that Yeltsin was not interested in a real dialogue with parliament and had not listened to opposition calls for an alternative candidate for prime minister.

"This is not a victory," Zyuganov said after the opposition defeated Chernomyrdin. "The country is in trouble."

Chernomyrdin picked up 44 more votes Monday than during the first vote Aug. 31. He needs 226 votes to be approved.

The Communists and their allies say they have nine alternative candidates, including several top Soviet-era bureaucrats. Meanwhile, the Central Bank

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VIKTOR CHERNOMYRDIN  
acting Russian prime minister

set the official exchange rate at 18.9 rubles to the dollar, down sharply from 17 on Friday. Deals that are to take effect today pegged the rate as low as 30 rubles a dollar.

The ruble was trading at about six to the dollar when the crisis hit last month.

Chernomyrdin is advocating an ambitious if somewhat unclear plan to stabilize the economy within several months. He has also sought to reassure Western governments and Russians that there would be no retreat to a Soviet-style economic system.

## Divers search for box

Signals detected may be from Swissair's device

HALIFAX, Nova Scotia (AP) — A Canadian navy submarine detected a signal Monday believed to be from the second black box aboard Swissair Flight 111, boosting investigators' hopes of solving the mystery of the plane's horrific crash.

Divers equipped with hand-held sonar searched 190 feet underwater for the cockpit-voice recorder, hoping to repeat Sunday's success when they retrieved the other black box — the flight-data recorder.

That device was sent to experts in Ottawa, who were trying to determine if they could retrieve the more than 100 types of information it is designed to record.

Together, the two black boxes could be key in explaining why the wide-bodied MD-11 crashed off Nova Scotia late Wednesday, killing all 229 people on board.

The voice recorder, if intact, would reveal other noises in the cockpit besides the pilots' conversation with controllers, portions of which were released Saturday. That conversation was cut off 10 minutes after the pilots reported smoke in the cockpit and six minutes before the crash.

Divers also were trying to confirm if three large pieces of wreckage found near the flight data recorder are sections of the plane's fuselage.

Although officials have declined

to give an updated figure of how many bodies have been recovered, they have indicated that most still remain in the water. Recovery of the fuselage also could lead to recovery of many more bodies, officials said.

The Geneva-bound Swissair plane crashed 16 minutes after the pilots reported the smoke and decided to attempt an emergency landing more than an hour after leaving New York's Kennedy International Airport.

After reporting an emergency, the plane started toward the Halifax airport, but made two sharp turns as it tried to descend and dump fuel.

Swissair officials say the plane couldn't have made a direct approach to Halifax because it was flying too high and was too heavy with 30 tons of fuel. The call was made 70 miles out of Halifax, but the pilots would have needed 130 miles to make a direct landing, Swissair said.

Alan Wolk, a U.S. pilot and aviation lawyer, said Sunday that Flight 111's pilot, Urs Zimmermann, should have begun a direct emergency descent sooner.

"The MD-11 could have been landed overweight without difficulty," Wolk said. "We have learned from aircraft fires historically that the only procedure that has a prayer of avoiding an accident is the quickest possible descent and landing."

## Sides differ on progress of West Bank withdrawal

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel and the Palestinians diverged widely Monday, the eve of a new U.S./Middle East peace mission, on how much progress has been made in talks on a West Bank troop withdrawal.

Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said a deal was "very close," while Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said the gaps between the two sides are substantial.

With their contradictory assessments, each side apparently hoped to invite maximum American pressure on the other side.

U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross was expected in the region on Wednesday to try to clinch a deal. Ross was scheduled to meet with Arafat on Wednesday and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday.

On the table is a U.S. proposal that Israel withdraw from 13 percent of the West Bank and the Palestinians commit to a detailed blueprint for fighting Islamic militants under close U.S. supervision.

The Palestinians have accepted the U.S. proposal.

Israel, after first rejecting the scope of withdrawal, said it would

hand over 13 percent, on condition that 3 percent of that area be declared a nature reserve in which Palestinian land use is restricted.

Israeli officials have said the two sides agreed on the scope of the withdrawal and that the key sticking point was a Palestinian refusal to commit to security measures as part of a crackdown on Islamic militants.

"We think we are very close to achieve agreement with the Palestinians," Mordechai told reporters Monday in his halting English. "It needs that the Palestinians will be flexible ... to fight against terror. The gap, I think, is very close."

Netanyahu said Israel and the Palestinians had reached "an understanding that was not written officially, but was clearly the basis for continued progress."

Arafat, however, denied there was agreement on key issues. "No understanding has been reached, and the gaps still remain wide," he said.

The Palestinians have said the withdrawal issue is still on the table and that they have not agreed to the restrictions on land use proposed by the Israelis.

## Clinton issue polarizes Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are split as to whether censure or impeachment is the best way to handle President Clinton's indiscretions when a special prosecutor's expected report reaches Capitol Hill.

Republicans appearing on the Sunday news programs were more united in their belief that a verbal slap at the president over his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky would not be sufficient.

"I think we have passed the point where we might wish this away," Sen. Phil Gramm, R-Texas, said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., said he expected the House to receive Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's report on the Lewinsky matter soon and that the issue could occupy Congress well into next year.

Democratic Sen. Joe Lieberman, a leading critic of the president, said the president had hurt both the party and the nation with his "immoral behavior."

The Connecticut moderate, whose Senate speech last week galvanized Democratic feelings about the presi-

dent's personal problems, said he hoped a vote of censure would be "the maximum we will want to do to end this sad chapter in our history."

But Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, D-N.Y., said Congress must move forward with impeachment proceedings.

"We have a Constitution. Let us live by it," he said.

Moynihan said both perjury and abuse of power, charges Starr may suggest, were impeachable offenses.

Sen. Robert Torricelli, D-N.J., noted that other presidents had lied to the American public on such matters as U-2 flights, the Bay of Pigs, Vietnam and Iran-Contra.

He said that while Clinton had "engaged in some rather significantly immoral acts, it is not clear whether that constitutes a statutory offense that in any way approaches the constitutional standards for impeachment."

The House Judiciary Committee, after receiving Starr's report, must decide whether to send articles of impeachment to the full House, which then votes on whether to send the matter to the Senate for a final judgment.



## Two die in New York during thunderstorms

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Violent thunderstorms with hurricane-force wind bent flagpoles like paper clips and killed two people at the New York State Fair early Monday. Thirteen others were injured, one critically.

Heavy hail, rain and lightning battered the central part of the state, and the National Weather Service reported wind gusts of 75 mph at Syracuse Airport. Tornado warnings had been issued before the storms struck around 1 a.m., and there were two unconfirmed sightings of twisters.

At the state fair grounds in Syracuse, today's closing day was canceled. Flagpoles at the main entrance were bent in half. Monuments, tents and stands featuring carnival games were blown down and washed away.

Vendor John Perry, 43, was killed when the roof blew off the fair-ground dairy building and hit the tent he was sleeping in. Beryl Stone, 61, was killed when a tree limb slammed into his trailer.

## Scientist: Sheep in Britain may have mad cow disease

LONDON (AP) — Research into whether sheep have been infected with mad cow disease is urgently needed, a top government adviser said Monday.

Jeff Almond, chairman of the sheep subcommittee of the government advisory group on mad cow disease — formally called bovine spongiform encephalopathy — said there is a "distinct possibility" that sheep are infected.

"It would be a national emergency," Almond said in a British Broadcasting Corp. radio interview.

The government would face the dilemma of risking public health or ordering the slaughter of 40 million sheep and causing the collapse of the industry, he said.

Scientists have known for two years that sheep could be infected because they were fed the same suspect feed — containing parts of sheep — that caused the disease in cattle. The suspect food is no longer used.

## Ozone hole over South Pole expected to be largest ever

GENEVA (AP) — The hole in the ozone layer over the South Pole is expected to be as big this year as it's been since measurements have been taken, the World Meteorological Organization said Monday.

The whirlpool-like wind that develops every year in the stratosphere above the South Pole is very strong, threatening to create a large ozone hole, said John M. Miller, chief of the U.N. weather agency's environment division.

The hole, which forms annually over the South Pole and will probably last until December this year, allows the sun's dangerous ultraviolet radiation to reach the Antarctic. As in some earlier years, it may be large enough that radiation hits the southern tip of South America.

Miller and other U.N. officials said efforts to stop the production of chemicals that damage the ozone layer continue to be successful, but there will be little noticeable improvement for 20 years.

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