the fleet sheet's final word

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Disposable Bém



Next week might be Mirek Topolánek's last as ODS chairman. A group of leading ODS officials, goaded on by Václav Klaus, is apparently merely waiting for the end of the second round of the Senate elections to demand Topolánek's scalp. The heir apparent as party chairman is Prague Mayor Pavel Bém, who is constantly referred to in the media as Klaus's favorite. Anyone who has read this week's issue of Respekt - which speaks of a police investigation into businesspeople close to Bém - must wonder how long Klaus's favorite can survive in the ODS hot spot. With the police already on his back, Bém would have a more-difficult starting position than even Stanislav Gross, who was brought down by a housing scandal after just 15 months as ČSSD chair. Bém's vulnerability raises the question of just how devoted Klaus is to Bém and to what extent the president is merely using his sycophant as a stepping stone for installing a provisional government that executes the plan of redrawing the CR's relationship to the EU.



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