

N-weapons can be moved to Russia : Yeltsin

Crimea declares independence

MOSCOW, Sept 6: The Crimea, a Soviet Black Sea region, declared 'independence' on Thursday but made clear it was not breaking away from the republic of the Ukraine, Tass news agency reported, says Reuter.

Vytautas Landsbergis said here today. 'This decision is very welcome, and positive in every aspect not only for Lithuania and the Baltic republics, but also for all the international community,' he told journalists in the parliament building.

Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar said that the world community had not erred by recognising the independence of the Baltic republic.

The November 7 Red Square military parade, one of the Soviet Union's principal commemorations of the 1917 communist revolution, has been cancelled by newly installed Defense Minister Evgueny Shaposhnikov, the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper reported today.

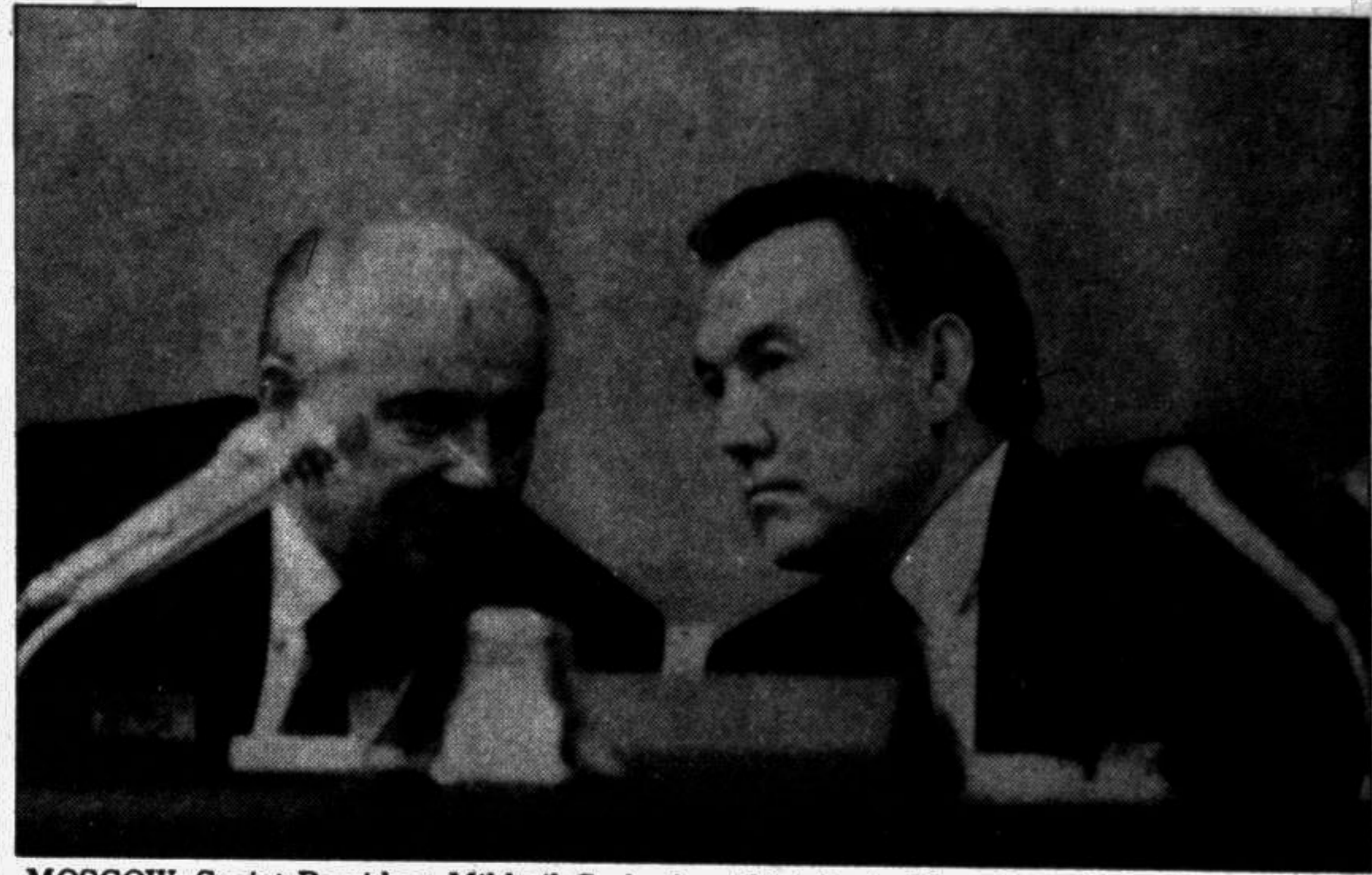
Another Reuter report adds All Soviet nuclear weapons could be moved to the largest and most powerful republic, the Russian Federation, its President Boris Yeltsin said today.

'I think there will be a process of moving the weapons from the Ukraine and Kazakhstan to the Russian Federation,' he said.

'Why because the main thing is our responsibility for control of nuclear weapons, and not only for nuclear weapons,' Yeltsin said on the US television channel ABC in a programme shown live in Moscow.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev also appeared in the programme.

Western experts have expressed concern the transformation of the Soviet Union into a loose federation could mean nuclear weapons were no longer under unified control.



MOSCOW: Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev (L) talks to Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan, here September 5 at the Soviet Congress of People's Deputies' fourth day of debate. The Soviet parliament dropped the post of Vice-President and created a new State Council for a transitional period until a new constitution is adopted. —AFP/UNB photo

Gorbachev likely to run for another term

WASHINGTON, Sept 6: President Gorbachev's new chief of staff Grigori Yavlinskiy has said in Moscow, Gorbachev is likely to run for President early next year in open elections, the Washington Post reported, says PTI.

He shared Russian President Boris Yeltsin's optimism that all 15 republics will sign a new economic union and nine or ten will participate in a political alliance, the post dispatch said on Thursday.

Such a new economic union, Gorbachev said, envisages a common banking and financial system, a transfer to private property and a five-year plan to privatise state-owned industries, according to a member of a committee working on the plan.

Gorbachev, said the paper, has also confided to political allies that he intends to 'move closer' to the new movement for democratic reform headed by former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

At the moment, said the Post, Gorbachev's ratings in the polls are abysmal but if he wins the support of Yeltsin and leaders of other republics, his chances could be enhanced considerably.

Judge's call to keep politics out of Noriega trial

MIAMI, Sept 6: A stern judge told potential jurors in Manuel Noriega's drug and racketeering trial to leave politics outside the courtroom, reports AP.

US District Judge William Hoeweler and the lead prosecutor began grilling a panel of 115 people Thursday, and the questioning was to continue Friday.

The judge noted the widespread publicity surrounding the case since Noriega's 1988 indictment and the US invasion of Panama the following year — then told the panel to ignore it.

'As far as I'm concerned, there will be nothing about this case that has anything to do with politics,' Hoeweler said.

The judge has said he hoped to seat a jury in a few days — but both sides acknowledged it will be hard finding an impartial panel.

All the potential jurors said they had heard of Noriega. In subsequent individual questioning, several expressed doubts about being able to judge him fairly.

'Deep down inside I know I'm prejudiced against the defendant,' Guyanese immigrant Raymond Cheddi told lead prosecutor Michael Sullivan. 'I lead a straight-track life.'

Vanuatu Prime Minister ousted in no-confidence vote

PORT VILA, Sept 6: Father Walter Lini, one of the South Pacific's longest-serving prime ministers, was removed from office by a vote of no-confidence.

The vote in Parliament against Lini, who led Vanuatu to independence in 1980, was carried by 24 votes to 21 in the 46-member chamber. The Speaker is not required to vote.

Parliament also voted in Donald Kalpokas, the former foreign minister dismissed by Lini, as the country's ninth Prime Minister.

Lini, 48, led the former British-French condominium

of New Hebrides to independence 11 years ago. In recent weeks he fell into disfavor among his own party after leading figures including Kalpokas, the chief law officer, the ambassador to the United Nations and the chief of police.

He also fired eight other ministers, including some of his closest former allies, and 50 public servants who disagreed with his policies.

Lini, an Anglican minister, was defeated by an alliance of 18 members of Parliament from his party and six opposition politicians.

Speaking in favour of the

no-confidence motion, Kalpokas said the prime minister had breached the Constitution by denying freedom of expression in the country.

Last month, the Vanuatu party held a special congress during which it chose Kalpokas to replace Lini as its president.

At the time, Lini claimed the congress, which he boycotted, was improper. The Supreme Court ruled against Lini's appeal.

Vanuatu is a chain of 80 islands, with a population of 142,600.

US Embassy in Tokyo evacuates employees

TOKYO, Sept 6: The US Embassy in Tokyo evacuated several hundred employees today after a telephone bomb threat, but police found no evidence of a box, police and embassy spokesmen said, reports Reuter.

The embassy evacuated the whole building around noon after a Japanese man called saying a bomb would go off about 20 minutes later.

'We searched the building and found nothing,' the US Embassy Press Attache said, 'we have resumed normal operations.'

'We think it was a practical joke,' a Tokyo police spokesman said.

Global chaos if Japan-US tension does not end

WASHINGTON, Sept 6: Former US President Jimmy Carter and former Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone said on Thursday that global chaos could be triggered if the growing mistrust between their two nations was not ended, reports Reuter.

They said in a joint report that world peace depended on stability in major nations such as the Soviet Union.

But they added, 'The global future will, in the long run, equally or even more critically depend on whether two economic superpowers—the United States and Japan—can foster and consolidate a constructive cooperative relationship.'

The Carter-Nakasone report was aimed at improving ties between their two nations—the world's two largest economies with nearly 40 per cent of the global gross national product between them.

But their ties have worsened recently due to a big US trade deficit with Japan, the greater role Japan is playing in the US economy and US complaints Japan is not taking a role in world affairs equal to its new economic strength.

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Opinion poll shows Conservatives in lead

LONDON, Sept 6: Talk of a November election in Britain received a fresh boost when a new poll showed Prime Minister John Major's ruling conservative party 4.5 per cent in the lead, reports AFP.

The latest poll, for the Friday edition of the conservative daily the Telegraph set the ruling party 39.5 per cent of voters' support, for the opposition Labour Party fell from 41 to 35 per cent, the poll claimed.

Conservative Party managers had sought to dampen speculation of an early election Thursday saying there was still 'much to be done' before Major would want to go to the polls to win his own mandate.

There was no need to 'hurry' into an election, Conservative Party Chairman Chris Patten said.

But the confirmation of the trend towards the Conservatives, helped this week by the high international profile taken by the Prime Minister, was felt bound to increase pressure on Major to call the election early.

Major's personal popularity rating remains well ahead of that of Labour leader Neil

Kinnock and was increased this week by the visits to the United States, Soviet Union and Hong Kong — all impressive to the voters.

The Tories went into the lead in the polls Sunday with a two point advance in the Mori poll in the Conservative Sunday Times, reversing a Labour Party lead of up to 10 per cent held for most of the year.

Then a half percentage point cut in interest rates down to 10.5 per cent Wednesday stoked election fever further.

The fall in rates, helpful to hard-pressed home loan payers, was widely seen by city analysts as a 'politically-motivated cut.'

And with inflation thought likely to fall to 3.8 per cent by the end of the year, November could provide Major with his best chance to win his own electoral mandate.

82 killed in train accident in Brazzaville

BRAZZAVILLE, Sept 6: At least 82 people were killed when a passenger train and a freight train crashed early today the line between Pointe Noire and the Congo, capital of Brazzaville, Congo Radio said, reports AFP.

The army was sent to the scene to help rescue survivors, and an appeal was made for blood donors.

The radio said there were also many injured in the train accident.

The collision occurred about 30 kilometers (about 18 miles) from Dolisie, which lies 400 kilometers (250 miles) south of the capital. The freight train was traveling from Pointe Noire and the passenger train from Brazzaville, the radio said.

One of the passenger wagons was hurled into a ravine from the impact of the crash. Two trains crashed on the same line in July, leaving two dead and several injured.

Pakistan accuses India of killing 4,000 Kashmiris

ACCRA, Sept 6: A senior Pakistani government official said on Thursday that Indian troops had killed more than 4,000 Kashmiri civilians in the last 20 months, reports Reuter.

The figure was given by the deputy head of Pakistan's

Foreign Ministry, Shaharyar Khan, who is representing his country at a ministerial conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Ghana.

He told delegates that daily life in the Indian part of Kashmir had been paralysed by a crackdown on Muslim militants fighting Delhi's rule in the mountain state.

'Since January 1990, over 4,000 innocent civilians have been killed,' Khan said. 'The political and administrative system has broken down. The economy is in a state of collapse. Medicines are not available and medical assistance virtually non-existent.'

Khan said the Muslim uprising was gaining momentum despite the presence of more than 400,000 Indian military and para military troops in the state.

Indian and Pakistani forces have recently clashed in heavy fighting on the border between Indian Kashmir and Pakistan's

Azad (Free) Kashmir. Several deaths have been reported on both sides.

The two countries accuse each other of sending troops across the heavily-fortified frontier, which has provoked two wars between them and remains a major stumbling block to better relations.

Khan said his country wanted constructive dialogue with New Delhi, which accuses Islamabad of fomenting the uprising, Pakistan denies the charge.

He also repeated Pakistani proposals for arms limitation talks in the South Asian region, saying the two neighbours should meet with the United States, the Soviet Union and China to thrash out a nuclear non-proliferation agreement.

All weapons of mass destruction should be banned in the region and conventional forces cut on both sides.

US waives visa for 13 countries

The United States Thursday waived visa requirements for citizens of 13 countries for visits of 90 days or less, reports Reuter from Washington.

The State Department said citizens of Spain, Austria, New Zealand, Finland, Belgium, Denmark, Norway, Iceland, Luxembourg, San Marino, Andorra, Monaco and Liechtenstein would no longer need to obtain visas for tourist or business trips.

The waiver already had been in effect for citizens of Britain, France, Japan, Italy, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland.

19 killed in violence in Kashmir

Sixteen Muslim militants, two paramilitary troopers and a civilian died in separatist violence in Kashmir late Wednesday and Thursday, officials said, reports AFP from Srinagar.

Fifteen of the militants were killed in a single gunbattle with security forces in the northern state of Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district, state government officials said. They did not give details.

Army, Croatians reach truce

An agreement on application of the ceasefire in Slavonia and Baranja (in eastern Croatia) was reached between the army and local Croatian authorities on Thursday in Ostjck, Tanyug news agency said, reports AFP from Belgrade.

It said the accord was signed in Ostjck, capital of Slavonia, in the presence of European Community Ambassador Henri Wynacnda.

The two parties agreed on Thursday 'not to fire first on each other' and in case of clash, they will settle the problem in the presence of European observers.

The agreement also provides that neither side is to oppose the presence of representatives of the Serbs in Croatia who are involved in the fighting.

HC order on Babri cases being examined

The Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh, said the government was examining from the legal point of view the present directive of the High Court on the Babri Masjid cases, reports PTI from Lucknow.

The chief minister said this at a press conference in Lucknow when his opinion was sought on the court directive given on Tuesday last.

Lightning disrupts power supply in Japan

Lightning put three atomic power reactors in Fukui prefecture in western Japan out of action briefly but there was no danger of a radioactive leak, nuclear safety officials said Friday, reports AFP from Tokyo.

The reactors cut off automatically Thursday evening after the lightning hit a Kansai Electric Power CO. transmission line in Shiga prefecture but resumed operations about 20 minutes later, they said.

Benazir in Paris

PARIS, Sept 6: Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto arrived Thursday in the French capital for a visit which was to include



talks with President Francois Mitterrand, reports AFP.

She was met at the airport by Minister for Relations with Parliament Jean Poperen.

Bhutto was also to attend a conference on north-south relations.

Sharif assured of Saudi help for Afghan solution

ISLAMABAD, Sept 6: Saudi King Fahd Bin Abdul Aziz's special envoy discussed prospects of a political settlement to the Afghan conflict with Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif here Thursday officials said, reports AFP.

Abdullah Al Turki assured Sharif of full Saudi cooperation in promoting a just solution, an official statement said.

The meeting came a day after US special envoy to the Afghan resistance Mujahideen Peter Tomsen held talks here with Pakistan Foreign Ministry Secretary General Akram Zaki.

Tomsen discussed prospects for an early settlement of the 13 year-old Afghan war in view of recent developments in the Soviet Union and promised continued US humanitarian help for the Afghan refugees, officials said.

The Saudi envoy was also to hold talks with Zaki and meet

members of the Pakistan based Afghan resistance, the official statement added.

His seven-member delegation includes the Imam of the holiest Muslim shrine Kabba in Makkah, Saudi Arabia.

Abdullah's visit, the second by a royal envoy in about a week follows recent Afghan talks in Teheran and Mujahideen in-fighting in the eastern Afghan province of Kunar which Mujahideen sources said disturbed the Saudi leadership.

The Saudi intelligence chief Prince Faisal Al Turki met Mujahideen leaders here in late August as fighting raged in Kunar between the Saudi backed Jamiat-ud-Dawa and Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-Islami.

The Hezb claimed to have driven out the rival faction from Kunar's capital Asadabad,

8,000 to run for first Polish polls

WARSAW, Sept 6: Nearly 8,000 candidates have registered to run for 560 seats at stake in the first free parliamentary elections ever held in post-war Poland, the PAP news agency reported Thursday, reports AP.

The sheer number of candidates led the state electoral commission to decide to issue booklet-size ballots of up to 17 pages and prepare larger-size ballot boxes, PAP said.

The ballots will even include a table of contents to help voters find party lists and candidates they favour, the news agency said.

With democracy taking root in post-Communist Poland, 67 parties have registered to take part in the October 27 elections.

A total of 7,382 candidates have registered to run for 460 seats in the Sejm, or lower house, in the Senate, or upper house, 607 candidates are competing for 100 seats.

Political analysts expect that the main battle for parliamentary seats will be between two parties rooted in the Solidarity labour movement: the Centre Alliance, a party backing President Lech Walesa, and the Democratic Union, chaired by former Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, who ran behind Walesa in the presidential race.

The two parties differ on their concepts for Poland's future political system, with the Centre Alliance calling for a stronger presidency and Mazowiecki's party opting for

more parliamentary powers. Recent election polls have showed the strongest support for the Democratic Union and surprising strength for the Liberal-Democratic Congress, a small but influential party which counts Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki among its leaders.

A total of 391 of the Sejm seats will be allocated proportionally in 36 election districts nationwide and 69 seats will be filled from national party tickets.

The current parliament, elected in June 1989, is still dominated by former Communists and their allies who were allotted 65 per cent of the seats according to an agreement between the then-

ruling Communists and Solidarity. At the same time, the Senate was elected in a democratic vote and Solidarity won 99 of the 100 seats.

After the election, several of the smaller parties joined Solidarity to form a parliamentary majority that led to a Solidarity-dominated government headed by Mazowiecki, the first non-Communist government in the former Soviet East bloc.

Walesa became the nation's first popularly elected president last December.

The upcoming parliamentary election will complete the democratic change of state authorities. The new Parliament is expected to draft and approve a new constitution.

Off the Record

Not even a penny from Anne

LONDON: A group of Britons trying to raise money for charity have hit out at Princess Anne for refusing — literally — to give them a penny, the Daily Star reported Friday, reports Reuter.

The newspaper said the group wanted a penny coin from Queen Elizabeth's daughter to publicise their bid to lay a three-mile (5-km) trail of pennies to raise 3,000 pounds (£5,000 dollars) for charities.

Organiser Jane Matthews said charities which will benefit included the Princess's now Save The Children Fund, but her assistant private secretary had written to say Anne could not single out one worthy cause and not another.

'I couldn't believe it. You would think she could spare a penny, Matthews said.

Buckingham Palace was not available to comment.

IRA bomb gets bogged down

BELFAST: The IRA built the biggest bomb ever assembled in northern Ireland but its bid to launch the deadly cargo with a human time bomb at the wheel of a tractor got bogged down in a field, reports Reuter.

The Irish Republican Army, battling to oust Britain from the province, on Thursday admitted loading three and a half tonnes of explosives onto a tractor trailer for an attack on a border checkpoint.

It took a Protestant farming family of five children hostage and singled out the eldest son, aged 22, to drive the bomb to the army post.

But the attack, which security forces admitted would have devastated the Country Fermanagh checkpoint, failed when the trailer got bogged down in soft ground and overturned.

Police said army bomb disposal experts, wary of IRA booby traps, spent the whole of Thursday defusing the bomb.

The one who finally succeeded said it would have obliterated the lookout post, killed everyone inside and damaged a nearby village.

'If this had detonated, it would have caused total destruction for a radius of 200 metres ... and damage for a radius of 1,000 metres (half a mile), he said.

Recruit beauties, not brains

BANGKOK: Air stewardesses should have beauty not brains, says the boss of Thai Airways International, reports Reuter.

'Intelligent women tend not to be good-looking, said Air Chief Marshal Kaet Rojanai, who is a member of Thailand's military junta, the Air Force chief and President of the airline.

He ordered the airline to hire prettier girls, saying some customers had complained about the looks of the present stewardesses.