

International

BRIEFLY

Quake shakes Romania: A tremor measuring 4.9 on the Richter scale shook eastern Romania just after midnight, the state news agency Romprea reported Friday, says AP from Bucharest.

The quake occurred at 12:32 am (2132 GMT) in the Vrancea region, about 200 kilometres (125 miles) northeast of Bucharest, Romprea reported. It originated 120 kilometres (75 miles) below the surface.

No damages were reported, but the quake could be felt as far as Bucharest.

6 killed in Georgian train crash:

A suburban train derailed and overturned near the town of Gurjaani, killing six people and injuring 100, an Interior Ministry spokesman said Saturday, reports AP from Tbilisi.

Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze and other officials rushed to the scene of Friday night's accident, about 90 miles (145 kms) east of the capital, Tbilisi.

Railway workers were investigating the possibility that the train's brakes failed. Witnesses told reporters they saw crew members trying to stop the train with emergency brakes.

Interior Ministry spokesman Valiko Gogolashvili said 20 of those hurt in the accident suffered critical injuries.

Australian non-nuclear sub:

Naval officials officially launched Saturday what they said was the world's largest and most technically advanced non-nuclear submarine, reports AP from Adelaide.

The 255-foot (78-metre), 3,000-ton Her Majesty's Australian Submarine Collins is the first of six submarines being constructed at a shipyard in Adelaide.

Prime Minister Paul Keating was among 4,000 guests at the launch ceremony, where two protesters carrying a flag with a peace sign breached security and stood near the official podium. They caused no problems and were not evicted.

The Australian Submarine Corp, an Australian-Swedish joint venture, is building the new fleet, which will cost \$3.4 billion. The subs will replace British-built Oberon-class submarines purchased in the 1960s.

Ghali condoles Brazil massacre:

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Friday extended condolences to the Yanomami people of Brazil following a massacre in which 73 Indians died, reports AP from United Nations.

He urged authorities to bring the perpetrators to justice. The killings, blamed on gold miners, were first reported August 17.

This tragic event, which took place during the International Year of the World's Indigenous People, puts in relief the plight of indigenous people around the world, Boutros-Ghali said in a statement.

The UN chief said he was confident the Brazilian authorities "will not spare any efforts to ensure that justice will be served."

Cuban labour leader freed:

Cuban labour leader Rafael Gutierrez was released from jail in Cuba this week but continued to be under surveillance, the AFL-CIO said Friday, reports AP from Washington.

Gutierrez, president of the Cuban Workers Trade Union had been held without charges since February 6 and was released on Monday, said the AFL-CIO largest US labour federation.

The AFL-CIO said Gutierrez was arrested for advising Cubans to boycott the one-state election held last February.

AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland described Gutierrez release as a positive development but criticized Cuban leader Fidel Castro's government for what he said was a threat to put the labour leader on trial for exercising free speech.

Ten killed in Lankan gunbattles

COLOMBO, Aug 28: Security forces and Tamil guerrillas fought separate gunbattles in curfew bound northern Sri Lanka, killing an estimated 10 people in another flare-up of violence in the region, the military said today, reports AFP.

Troops mounted the offensives in the Jaffna peninsula in a bid to dislodge positions of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) just outside two military camps, a defence official said.

He said an army lieutenant was killed and eight more were wounded in Madagal where LTTE guerrillas offered stiff resistance to an intense air, sea and

land offensive launched under the cover of a curfew Friday.

"Tigers put up a lot of resistance. We have confirmation that Tigers lost at least eight cadres at Madagal," he said adding that the curfew imposed at dawn Friday was lifted in the afternoon and reimposed this morning.

In the second gunbattle in Iyakachchi, at the southern tip of the Jaffna peninsula, an army soldier died and six others were wounded during an attack on LTTE positions, the official said.

The rebel casualties there were not immediately known.

WTC bombing suspects on hunger strike

NEW YORK, Aug 28: Some suspects in the World Trade Center bombing are on a hunger strike, at least one suspect since Monday, two of their lawyers say, reports AP.

Also Friday, a federal prosecutor said the government will likely seek one trial for all 15 defendants accused in an alleged terrorist conspiracy centered around Muslim Sheikh Omar Abdel-Rahman, one of the 15 arraigned Thursday.

Two lawyers said some of the 15 suspects as well as four of five men held on charges of bombing the trade center are on a hunger strike to protest conditions at a federal jail in Manhattan.

They are protesting that jail officials open the suspects mail, limit their exercise to five hours a week and restrict phone use, visits and prayers.

Mohammed Salameh, a suspect in the trade center bombing, has been on a hunger strike since Monday, said his lawyer, Robert Precht. Bob Ellis, who along with Michael Washor represents Bilal Alkassbi, said Salameh, Alkassbi, Ahmad M. Ajaj, and Nidal Ayyad stopped eating to protest the "medieval, gothic conditions" at the jail.

Five defendants in the terror plot case, charged with plotting to bomb the United Nations, commuter tunnels and a bridge and a federal office building, also are not eating, Ellis said.

The issue of whether to have a single trial for the 15 defendants in the terror case was raised Thursday when they pleaded innocent.

Matthew E. Fishbein, chief assistant US attorney, said he would not discuss reasons for holding one instead of many trials until he had presented the reasons to defense lawyers.

The February 26 trade center blast killed six people and injured more than 1,000.

Tajik President in Kabul

KABUL, Aug 28: Tajikistan's President Imam Ali Rakhmonov arrived in Kabul today on a three-day official visit, the first to Afghanistan by a foreign head of state since Muslim guerrillas took power in April last year, reports Reuters.

"It's very much a goodwill visit," Rakhmonov said on arrival at Kabul airport, where he was received by Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Foreign Minister Hidayat Amin Arsalan.

Relations between Afghanistan and Tajikistan have been strained because of violence along their border.

Top Indian military analyst says US action against China, Pakistan too late

NEW DELHI, Aug 28: India maintained a diplomatic silence on US sanctions against China and Pakistan for violating a missile technology accord, but a top military analyst said here Friday that Washington had acted too late, reports AFP.

"We are aware of the sale of missile parts and technology by China to Pakistan," the Foreign Ministry spokesman said, as commentators warned that India could be the next US target.

"As far as the sanctions are concerned, we have no comment because it is a matter that concerns the three countries," he said of the limited trade sanctions slapped by the Clinton administration this week.

The US administration accused China of selling M-11 missile technology and components to Pakistan in violation of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in announcing the two-year sanctions.

Both Beijing and Islamabad have strongly condemned the US decision, saying the missiles did not come under the purview of the MTCR.

But India's leading military analyst Jasjit Singh, a former Air Force Pilot and Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis here, likened the US action to "locking the stable after the horse has bolted."

"The missiles and technology have already been transferred to Pakistan," he said. "When the transfers were taking place the United States chose to turn a blind eye like it did when Pakistan was pursuing a nuclear weapons programme."

"What is the use of the putting a lock on the stable now?" he asked.

New Delhi has in the past expressed concern at growing Sino-Pakistani military cooperation including the sale of Chinese missiles and technology, and the sanctions were expected to have gladdened the government's heart.

But Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao goes next month to China as part of a continuing effort to normalise ties, and a public welcome of the sanctions could have clouded the trip, explaining the taciturn reaction.

Observers also noted that India has itself been a victim of the strong US stand on curbing missile proliferation which forced Russia last month to cancel a crucial rocket technology deal with the Indian Space Agency.

Moscow bowed out of the deal under a threat of sanctions despite New Delhi's protests that it needed the technology for purely space programme purposes that had no military angle.

Some commentators saw the US sanctions against China and Pakistan, both of which have fought wars with India, as a show of the Clinton administration's even-handed attitude over the missile proliferation problem.

The sanctions, expected to

cost the United States nearly half-a-billion dollars in exports to China, came at a time when Indian Foreign Secretary J N Dixit is in Washington for talks on nuclear and missile proliferation issues.

India, which in 1974 exploded a nuclear device, has refused to sign the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT) despite strong US pressure on grounds that the NPT discriminates between haves and have-nots.

India, which also has an advanced missile development programme that has attracted US, also cites the Chinese nuclear capability and Pakistan's alleged clandestine pursuit of nuclear weapons.

"It is quite possible the sanctions may be used by the Clinton administration to turn the screw on India as well, to pressure the Rao government to abandon the indigenous missile programme," The pioneer warned.

US troops must stay in Somalia until security restored: Aspin

WASHINGTON, Aug 28: US forces must stay in Somalia until security is restored in Mogadishu, progress is made in disarming warlords and police are in control in major cities, Defence Secretary Les Aspin said on Friday, reports Reuters.

"When these three conditions are met... then I believe that the US quick-reaction forces can come back," Aspin said in a speech on US objectives in Somalia.

On Thursday the first of about 400 army special forces commandos arrived in Somalia to reinforce some 1,200 US

combat troops already providing security there for a United Nations Humanitarian Operation.

Another 3,000 US troops are helping to distribute food and medicines under the UN umbrella.

Defence sources said the new arrivals included members of an elite counter-terrorist unit known as Delta Force, trained in daring behind-line operations and prepared to search out and capture fugitive Somali warlord Mohamed Farah, Aided.

NBC news reported on

Friday that the troops should capture Aided, the United Nations was considering options including holding him on islands off the Somali coast or aboard a ship until a court system can be re-established in Somalia to put the warlord on trial.

UN commanders blame Aided for violence that has disrupted food distribution and nation-building in Somalia, and Aspin said that violence must be ended.

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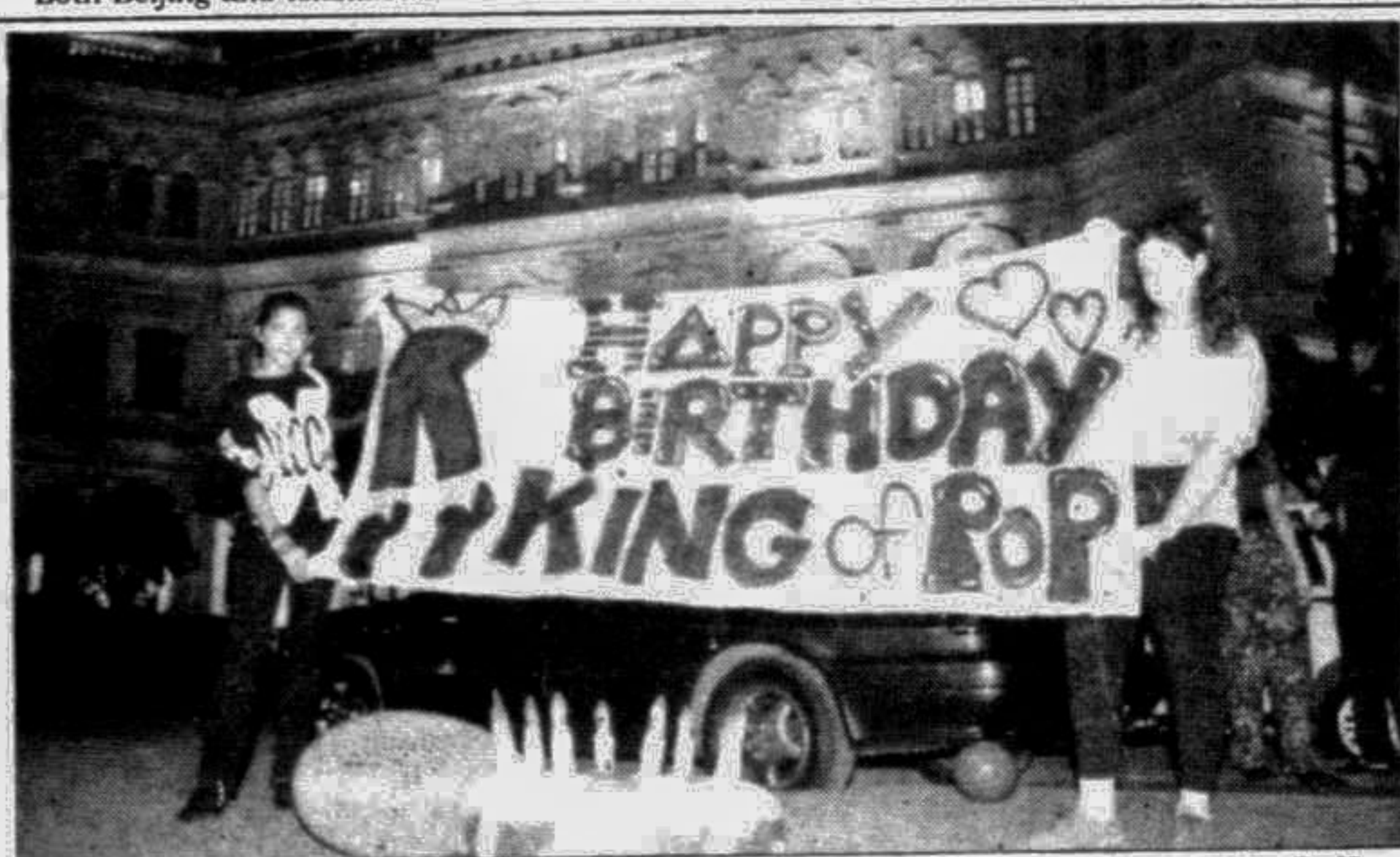
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Two Italian Michael Jackson fans hold up a 'Happy Birthday' banner in front of the Raffles Hotel in Singapore yesterday where Jackson is staying. Jackson celebrates his 35th birthday today.

Liz, Janet to meet Jackson in Singapore

BANGKOK, Thailand, Aug 28: American pop singer Michael Jackson departed for Singapore Saturday on the second leg of his "Dangerous" world tour, reports AP.

Expected to meet him in Singapore are actress Elizabeth Taylor and a sister, Janet Jackson, who were flying out to provide moral support in wake of allegations that the singer sexually abused a 13-year-old boy.

"It went very well. We're happy and relieved," said promoter Brian Marcar about Jackson's second and last concert in Bangkok, which was seen by about 40,000 fans Friday night.

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Managua may extend amnesty for Contras, Sandinistas

MANAGUA, Aug 28: President Violeta Chamorro's top aide says the government may extend an amnesty for leftist and rightist gunmen despite the dual hostage crisis that rocked the country this month, reports AP.

But Attorney General Guillermo Vargas Sandino says he'll press ahead with charges against the commando leaders who seized more than 70 hostages. The charge would only stick if they rejected the amnesty terms.

Chamorro's aide, Antonio Lacayo, told journalists Friday night the amnesty for crimes might be extended to mid-September from the current mid-August cutoff.

He said the aim is to convince the rearmend civil war fighters to "disarm, and contribute to the total pacification of Nicaragua," which is still convulsed by political violence.

Some 1,400 gunmen have been roaming northern Nicaragua, led by rearmend members of the US-backed Contra rebels or the leftist Sandinista government they fought throughout

the 1980s. A government team had gone to the porth to explain terms of the amnesty offer to former Contra Jose Angel "The Jackal" Talavera on August 19, but he took them hostage to demand elimination of Sandinista control over security.

Talavera also at times demanded the ouster of Lacayo, accuse by conservatives of masterminding Chamorro's policy of conciliation with the Sandinistas she defeated in 1990 elections.

The gunmen also demanded the dismissal of Col. Lenin Cerna, the army intelligence chief who was intelligence boss when the Sandinistas were in power.

Reports Friday said Chamorro would sacrifice Cerna to placate US Senate critics who have shut off aid to Nicaragua.

A day after the seizure in the north, a group of pro-Sandinista gunmen retaliated by seizing the headquarters of an anti-Sandinista political coalition in Managua, along with Vice President Virgilio Godoy.

Off the Record

US army secy cited for shoplifting blouse

WASHINGTON: The army's acting secretary, John W. Shannon, has been cited for alleged shoplifting at a post exchange near the Pentagon, the Army said Friday, reports AP.

The incident occurred Thursday at the Army PX at Fort Myer, Va., said Army spokesman Col. Steve Rausch. A store detective apprehended Shannon, 59, for allegedly shoplifting a woman's blouse, the spokesman said.

Shannon has been acting as the Army's top civilian official pending the confirmation of a new secretary by the Clinton administration.

After the incident, he was placed on administrative leave at his own request. The Army Chief of Staff, Gen. Gordon R. Sullivan, has taken over as the acting Army secretary in the interim, Rausch said.

Shannon was taken to the store manager's office and a military policeman was called, Rausch said. The Army secretary then was issued a citation alleging shoplifting and was allowed to leave the store, the spokesman said.

"Normal procedures were followed," Rausch said. "Mr. Shannon offered no resistance."

The spokesman said the Army would have "no further comment during the ongoing legal process."

If Shannon were to be tried, it would be done in the federal civilian court system, since Shannon is a civilian and the incident occurred on federal property. There was no immediate indication whether the incident would be resolved short of that.

Kidney transplant from twins to parents

GRAND JUNCTION, Colo: Olivia Kuzov has a special reason to be thankful for her twin daughters.

Five years ago, one daughter donated a kidney to their ailing father, Ed Kuzov. Next week, the other daughter is to give one to their mother.

"God must have known what he was doing when he gave me twins," Olivia Kuzov said.

Olivia, 54, is losing her kidneys from diabetes. She already has been blinded by glaucoma triggered by the disease. Her 61-year-old husband needed the transplant because of high blood pressure.

For two years, Bernadette Kuzov, 27 has undergone tests to confirm that her mother can use her kidney. Without it, her mother faced an uncertain future on an organ waiting list.

"They never asked us to do this," Bernadette Kuzov said as she sat in the small dialysis waiting room at St Mary's Hospital. "I'm going to feel better because they're going to feel better. They're retired; they should be having fun."

Her twin, Bernadette Dugan, encouraged her sister. "There's hardly any pain," she said. "What there is, is healing pain. You can survive on one-tenth of one healthy kidney."

Their mother is looking forward to the end of painful, energy-draining dialysis treatments. "That's the biggest part of it," she said.

A trust fund has been set up to help pay the cost of the operations, scheduled for Tuesday at Salt Lake City's University Hospital.

Teacher's memo with 10 errors

KEY LARGO, Fla: School officials ruefully acknowledged as "an embarrassment" a teacher's memo on classroom discipline riddled with at least 10 errors in spelling, grammar and syntax, reports AP.

A copy of the two-page memo was sent to the Miami Herald by an angry parent, the newspaper reported Friday.

The memo given out this week stated that some assignments "will take approximately 30 minutes." Students can be bounced from class for "possession of band substances" such as weapons or alcohol.

It also warned that "Gum chewing is not be allowed." "That's an embarrassment," said Monroe County School Superintendent Rober Walker. "It certainly is not up to the standards that we would expect from a teacher."

Officials refused to identify the author, other than to say he was a first-year teacher.

"In his zeal to get ready for the first day of school, he failed to go over the proofreading procedures for everything that goes home to parents," said Key Largo School principal Frances McCormick. "I have since met with him to work through the process again."

Azeri refugees may spill over into Iran

BEYLACAN, Azerbaijan, Aug 28: About 200,000 refugees are fleeing ethnic strife in south-western Azerbaijan and large numbers may spill over into Iran if Armenian forces block their escape, western officials say, reports Reuters.

UN officials said on Friday they believed the refugees were moving eastwards along the Iranian frontier and up dusty roads towards the Azeri capital Baku.

Aid agencies say tens of thousands could start pouring into Iran, over the Araks river which marks the frontier, if he Armenians succeed in cutting off southern Azerbaijan.

Iran, with a large ethnic Azeri population of its own, does not want to import trouble and has several times protested against what it calls Armenian aggression near its borders.

A five-year Azeri-Armenian struggle for control of disputed Nagorny-Karabakh has spilled

over the borders of that territory, with Armenians capturing large tracts in Azerbaijan itself.

For many Azers, war, chaos and suffering have made a mockery of a referendum scheduled for Sunday on confidence in President Abulfaz Elchibey, who fled his capital two months ago to escape and armed insurrection.

But local officials in Beylagan, bordering the southern front, played down difficulties of organising the poll in a town whose 53,000 population had been swelled by 80,000 refugees.

They also expressed no doubts about the legitimacy of a vote in such conditions.

The refugees themselves, huddled among huge piles of brightly coloured bedding between trees or ramshackle huts, have nothing to say about politics. Some spit at the ground when they hear Elchibey's name.

wrote of briefly being taken prisoner by the Germans and then released.

He remained in Warsaw with his wife, who had wealthy German relatives, and appears to have enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle in the midst of the war — a fact that, along with other descriptions in the book, indicates he was collaborating with the Nazi occupiers of Poland, said Hier.

In January 1943, Shalchkashvili joined the Georgian Legion — formed by Georgian expatriates to fight with the Nazis against the Soviets. He was almost immediately shipped off to Normandy where his

Shalchkashvili's father was able to enter the United States even though he had served in the notorious Waffen SS.

Father of Clinton's top military nominee served in Nazi unit

WASHINGTON, Aug 28: The father of General John Shalchkashvili, President Clinton's nominee to command the nation's military, served in a Nazi Waffen SS unit that fought the US-led allies in World War II, archive documents show, reports AP.

According to his own writings, Dimitri Shalchkashvili appears to have collaborated with the Nazis almost from the start of the war in hopes that the Germans would defeat the Soviets and thus free his native Georgia from communist rule.

It was not immediately clear whether the White House knew details of the late Shalchkashvili's

wartime service when his son was nominated earlier this month to succeed General Colin Powell as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

"It was certainly known that his father served in the German army," an administration official who spoke on condition of anonymity said Friday.

In any case, said White House spokeswoman Ricki Seidman, "his record stands on its own and his father's history is not relevant." Defence Secretary Les Aspin echoed that view, saying Shalchkashvili's superb record of achievement in the United States Army speaks for itself.

Jakarta to send 25 peacekeepers to Bosnia

JAKARTA, Aug 28: Indonesia will send 25 military observers to join the United Nations peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, a press report said here today, according to AFP.

The Kompas Daily quoted military spokesman Brigadier General Syrwam Hamid as saying that the military had decided to add five more observers to the 20 observers already requested by the UN.

Hamid said Indonesia had also pledged five million dollars in aid to Bosnian Muslims.