

BRIEFLY

Australian to die on drug charges:

An Australian was sentenced to death Saturday for heroin trafficking, reports AF from Kuala Lumpur.

Michael Dennis McAuliffe, 35, of Brisbane was the third Australian sentenced to death under Malaysia's mandatory death penalty for drug traffickers. The first two were convicted and hanged in 1984.

McAuliffe was convicted by a court in Penang, 300 kilometers (180 miles) north of Kuala Lumpur, of trafficking in 141.89 grams (five ounces) of heroin at Penang International Airport in June 1985, the National News Agency Bernama reported.

His lawyer, Karpal Singh, said they would appeal to the supreme court.

Since 1975, when parliament allowed the death sentence, 385 people have been sentenced to death. Some 110 convicts have been hanged, including Thais, Singaporeans, Hong Kong Chinese and Filipinos.

A powerful body behind Bakhtiar's killing:

An Iranian Human Rights activist said on Friday a powerful organisation was helping the killers of former Prime Minister Shapur Bakhtiar elude a massive police manhunt in France and Switzerland, reports Reuter from Paris.

Two of three men who visited Bakhtiar about the time of his death last week have since been sighted several times in France near the Swiss border but each time slipped through the dragnet.

"There is a powerful organisation behind the murderers, protecting them, giving them money to sleep in hotels," Karim Lahidi, exiled President of the Iranian League of Human Rights, told French television in Paris.

Vast areas flooded in Moscow:

Thousands of acres of farmland and scores of houses have been flooded in western Moldavia by the river Prut overflowing its banks, the Russian news agency RIA reported Friday, reports AFP from Moscow.

The floods, caused by recent heavy rains, have caused more than 600 million rubles (360 million dollars) worth of damage, according to the authorities in the Moldavian Republic.

US student held for blackmailing:

A Harvard University student has been arrested on suspicion of trying to blackmail a doctor who tested positive for the AIDS virus by threatening to publicly expose him if he did not pay 10,000 dollars, police said in Los Angeles on Friday, reports Reuter.

The student, John Fountain, 21, who was working in a Los Angeles accounting office during his summer break, is being held in lieu of 5,000 dollar bail on suspicion of extortion, a police spokesman, Sergeant Larry Lincoln, said.

3 S African mine workers killed:

Three workers were killed in fighting at a South African platinum mine on Friday, the mine owners in Johannesburg said, reports Reuter.

A statement by General Mining, Metals and Minerals Ltd (GERMIN) said three employees of Impala Platinum died at the Wildebeestfontein north mine, northwest of Johannesburg.

It said security staff used tear gas to disperse brawling workers.

About 30,000 mine and refinery workers began a go-slow on Thursday to press their demands in wage negotiations.

The mine's management said production had not been hampered by the go-slow impala is the world's second biggest producer of the metal.

Turkish polls likely this year:

Turkey's ruling centre-right Motherland party announced on Friday that it would call a general election this year, one year ahead of schedule, reports Reuter.

The party in Ankara said after a meeting of its 275 deputies that the election would take place between October 20 and December 1, the semi-official Anatolian News Agency reported.

Motherland, whose popularity has declined since former Prime Minister Turgut Ozal led it to election victories in 1983 and 1987, has a commanding majority in the present 450-seat chamber.

Under the constitution a General Election must be held by November 1992.

4 US navy airmen missing:

Four US Navy airmen were declared missing at sea Friday after their helicopter crashed north of the Marshall Islands in the Pacific late Wednesday, a Navy spokesman said, reports AFP from Honolulu.

Lieutenant Ken Ross, speaking for the US Pacific Fleet, said the CH-46 Sea-knight helicopter went down near Wake Island, midway between Hawaii and Japan, during routine cargo restocking of the USS Nimitz Battle Group.

He added that rescue efforts were called off Thursday night.

Iraq terms UN resolutions unfair:

The official Iraq News Agency (INA) on Friday criticised three UN Security Council resolutions on Iraq, passed Thursday, as unfair, reports AFP from Baghdad.

The resolutions which concern damages to be paid as a result of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, authorise it to make limited exports of oil and condemn it for concealing its biological, nuclear and chemical arms capacity — were adopted under pressure from Washington, London and Paris, INA said.

Those countries were the three main allies in the anti-Iraq coalition which ended Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait in February.

6 shot dead in Guatemala:

Guatemalan police shot six people, including a baby girl, in the head on Friday and left their bodies by a road, authorities said, reports AP from Guatemala.

Police said the bodies of Antonio Wellman, 68; his son Carlos, 14; Oliver Ruiz, 40; Tullio Rollet, 24; Romelia Pereira, 20, and her 18-month-old daughter Maria Jose were found near San Pedro Carcha, 60 miles (96 kilometers) north of Guatemala city.

Wellman owned a farm in the area, said National Police officer Flavio Larios, who spoke by telephone from Coban, capital of Alta Verapaz province. He said Ruiz, a Costa Rican, was reportedly accompanying Wellman to advise him on agricultural matters. Rollet was identified as a driver and Ms. Pereira as a servant, according to Larios.

Larios said two cars in which the victims presumably had been travelling were found untouched down the road from where the bodies were sprawled.

Wallets were found on the bodies leading authorities to discard robbery as the motive.

Iraq returns 3,216 gold bars to Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY, Aug 17: Iraq has returned all 3,216 gold bars looted from Kuwait during its seven-month occupation of the emirate and has begun sending back commemorative coins, a UN diplomat said Saturday, reports AP.

Richard Foran, a UN assistant secretary-general who is coordinating the transfer, said all of the gold was back in Kuwait's Central Bank vaults as of Thursday.

The gold, weighing some 40 tons, has been valued at \$1.5 billion.

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He said commemorative coin sets were on the way, via the Saudi Arabian border city of Arar.

"On Monday we start bank notes, then Kuwaiti coins," he said. He said he expected the transfers via Arar to be completed by the end of this month and gave a date of Sept. 14 for the start of the transfer of museum pieces and the national library.

"We are very pleased with the gold," Foran said. "All this was handled in an extremely professional way. It could not have been better."

Irwin, who walked on moon, buried

WASHINGTON, Aug 17: Astronaut Jim Irwin was buried with full military honours Thursday and remembered for his twin careers as a moon-walker and as a minister whose unmet goal was to find traces of Noah's Ark, reports AP.

Irwin, 61, is the first to die of the 12 men who walked on the moon. His death in Glenwood Springs, Colo., from a heart attack Friday came one day after the 20th anniversary of his return from the moon.

"He flew because he loved to fly," said the Rev. William Rittenhouse of Nessau Bay Baptist Church, near the Johnson Space Center in Houston.

Rittenhouse recalled that while riding across the lunar surface in a motorized

Irwin, who walked on moon, buried

vehicle, Irwin's companion, David Scott, commented about the magnificent mountains in the distance. That prompted Irwin to recite a verse of scripture, "I look into the hills from whence cometh my help," Rittenhouse said. And then, realizing his words were being monitored at Mission Control, the minister added, Irwin said "We're getting a lot of help from Houston, too."

Rittenhouse recalled that on watching that scene on television, Irwin's mother said to him "Listen to him, Brother Bill, he's preaching to the world."

Irwin was born in Pittsburgh and graduated from high school in Salt Lake City. He was a 1951 Naval Academy graduate and a test pilot

Irwin, who walked on moon, buried

who rose to colonel in the Air Force. He is the 12th astronaut buried in Arlington National Cemetery.

Irwin's widow, Mary, and mother were among the mourners. His grave is next to that of two other astronauts, Virgil I. Grissom and Roger Chaffee, who were killed in a fire during an Apollo launch pad training exercise in 1967.

Present, too, were fellow astronauts Richard Truly, who now heads NASA as administrator; retired Gen Thomas Stafford, and Al Worden, who stayed in the orbiting command module circling the moon while Irwin and Scott were on the surface.

From the moon, Irwin brought back a rock dubbed "The

Zia's son demands criminal inquiry into '88 plane crash

ISLAMABAD, Aug 17: The eldest son of late Pakistan President Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq demanded a criminal investigation into the 1988 plane crash that killed his father, as thousands gathered today ahead of his anniversary of Zia's death.

"I am under tremendous public pressure", Mohammad Ejaz ul-Haq, a government Minister, told AFP, as thousands of supporters gathered at the tomb of his late father.

Zia, a dozen top military officers and US Ambassador Arnold Raphael died when the Air Force C-130 transport plane in which they were travelling crashed in mysterious circumstances in Punjab on August 17, 1988.

Two official inquiries raised the possibility of sabotage in the crash, which brought Zia's 11-year military rule to an end and marked a turning point in Pakistani political history.

Picture posters of Zia dominated the scene here and in nearby Rawalpindi amid a fair-like atmosphere around the grave, which is adjacent to the imposing Faisal Mosque.

A stream of buses ferried people from far and near for what Ejaz said was a "private" event, as the government and ruling party stayed aloof in contrast to past anniversaries.

Huge crowds also turned up at the two previous commemorations. The current Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, led the ceremonies amid confrontation with then Premier Ben-

azir Bhutto, whom President Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed just before the second anniversary in 1990.

"The people of Pakistan want the government to unveil the culprits" behind the crash, he said.

Ejaz, Minister for Manpower and Overseas Pakistanis, appeared dissatisfied with the work of a committee appointed by Sharif and led by Interior Minister Chaudhury Shujaat Hussain reopening the inquiry.

He said the main questions were why there had been no criminal inquiry and why the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) had failed to investigate as important US personalities died in the crash.

In the army when even a bullet is lost, a proper inquiry is held and the guilty are taken to task, said the 38-year-old ruling coalition leader, who left the bank of America to enter Pakistani politics after his father's death.

Referring to the investigation into opposition leader Rajiv Gandhi's May assassination in neighbouring India, Ejaz lamented that Pakistan had failed to take similar steps following the death of a sitting President.

He recalled promises by Sharif and other leaders of the ruling Islamic Democratic Alliance (IJI) ahead of October 1990 elections to probe the crash and said he had told the Interior Minister "hand over charge to me for only three weeks" to expose the "cover-up."

"They have taken an apologetic stand right from the first day," said Ejaz, who is also chief organizer of Muslim League, the pivotal party in the IJI.

If the government is serious it should not be difficult to solve the mystery, he said, adding that all concerned agencies should be taken to task for failing to find the truth.

"Everyone, from President to a peon, can be asked questions", he said, adding "no one is above law."

Junta cancels election of another MP in Burma

BANGKOK, Aug 17: Burmese military authorities Friday stripped another member of the country's main opposition party the National League for Democracy (NLD), from the list of elected members of parliament, the official Radio Rangoon said, reports AFP.

David Hal Myint was removed from the list by the ruling military government's general Elections Commission after a criminal court charged him with desecrating the national flag, the radio said in a dispatch monitored here.

Myint was elected for southern Burmas Ngapudor Township Constituency in Irrawad Division during the elections on May 27 last year, the radio said.

He was the second elected NLD MP to be removed by the military junta this week.

On Wednesday, Maung Maung Kyaw was removed from the list after the commission said he was facing charges of misappropriating funds.

BJP popularity attributed to CPI (M) weakness

CALCUTTA, Aug 17: The West Bengal CPI (M) Secretary, Sailen Dasgupta, has attributed the "significant" rise in the percentages of BJP votes in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections in the state to the "weakness" in his party's campaign against the BJP, reports PTI.

Analysing the reasons of increase in the BJP's percentage of votes to 11.67 per cent in the Lok Sabha and 11.37 per cent in Assembly polls from 1.7 per cent in 1989 elections, Dasgupta said it was because of the high-profile campaign by the BJP, basically communal in nature.

Dasgupta was talking to news persons here Friday after the state committee meeting of his party, which analysed the election results on August 10 and 11.

Replying to suggestions that the substantial increase in BJP votes had established the party as a third force in the state, Dasgupta said, "we feel that the impact of its performance would be temporary as it was achieved mainly by arousing religious passions directed against a minority community."

Dasgupta, who is also the Chairman of the ruling Left Front, said that BJP had garnered the Hindu votes and this "is a dangerous trend."

Asked if BJP's dent into the Congress vote was more serious than that of the Left Front, Dasgupta said "it is true that it (BJP) had eroded a bit more in the Congress vote bank."

650 Romanians deported from W Europe

BUCHAREST, Aug 17: More than 650 Romanians have been deported from Western European countries for various crimes and misdemeanours, the Rumanian representative to Interpol said here Friday, reports AFP.

Most of the 655 Romanians in question already had criminal records, Vasil Troneci said.

Just under 300 of these were deported for theft, he said.

"The number of offenses committed abroad in 1991 by Romanian nationals was distinctly higher than in the previous two years," he noted.

In the first six months of 1991, 22, 516 applications by Romanians to emigrate have been received, including 6,752 concerning children adopted by foreigners, official sources said.

Of these, 11,800 would be emigrants had no profession, the sources said.

Gorbachev's top adviser quits: CP leadership planning coup

MOSCOW, Aug 17: Alexander Yakovlev, a former top adviser to Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, announced Friday he was quitting the Communist Party and warned that the party leadership was planning a coup d'etat, reports AFP.

In a communique published by the government Daily Izvestia, Yakovlev said he was "offended" by the party's decision announced Thursday to have him expelled and denounced the "social revenge and coup d'etat" which he said headline party leaders were planning.

"I want to warn society that an influential Stalinist group has formed within the leadership core of the party which is against the political course of 1985," Yakovlev said.

Gorbachev, who is Soviet Communist Party General Secretary as well as President, came to power in the spring of that year and launched his reform movement known as perestroika.

"Despite its declarations, the party leadership is eliminating the democratic wing and is preparing social revenge, a coup d'etat, and plans to take control of the party," Yakovlev said.

Yakovlev's statement came a day after the party's control commission accused him of trying to split the party and "remove it from the political arena" and ordered him expelled.

The expulsion order, reported by the official Tass news agency, must be ratified by Yakovlev's local party body within the Secretariat of the Central Committee.

In the statement Yakovlev said he learned of the decision by the party to expel him while listening to a radio broadcast, but said it had not come as a surprise.

"I'm not surprised, given the unfounded accusations against my political activities during the last four or five years at plenums of the Soviet Communist Party Central Committee, the Russian Communist Party and in the press."

"In these conditions I believe it is impossible and immoral to serve the cause of the democratic reform within the Communist Party," Yakovlev said Friday. "I am obeying my conscience."

The communique was released to Izvestia by the press service for the Democratic Reform Movement (DRM) which Yakovlev, along with former Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze and a handful of other reformers, founded in June.

Off the Record

Barbara not angry with Bush

NENNEBUNKPORT, Maine: Barbara Bush said on Friday she was not angry with her husband for saying her golf game stunk, because he had been quoting her, reports Reuter.

"The President was quoting me," Mrs Bush told reporters at the Cape Arundel golf club house near the Bush family's vacation home.

"It was absolutely a disaster," she said of her performance on the golf course on Wednesday while President George Bush was giving a speech in Pittsburgh.

On Thursday, the President told reporters that his wife would not be joining him in a game of golf because she was "recovering" from her poor game a day earlier.

"Which means she stunk and didn't want to play today," he said then.

Asked whether she had thrown the President out of the house on Thursday night because of the remark, Mrs Bush indicated she had not learned of it until Friday, when she read it in the newspaper.

But she denied she had taken up golf recently after a lapse of 20 years just to spend more time with her husband, who plays frequently.

"I only played with him one day," she told reporters. "I hit a beautiful drive off the first tee and none of you saw it."

She said she had just finished a golf lesson on Friday at the Cape Arundel course.

"When the pro-calls and says 'how about coming out and having a lesson,' you know you're in deep trouble," she said.

President Bush, emerging from the club house for a game his son and two other men, said he was glad his wife had cleared up the "misunderstanding" about his remarks on her game, which were widely publicised.

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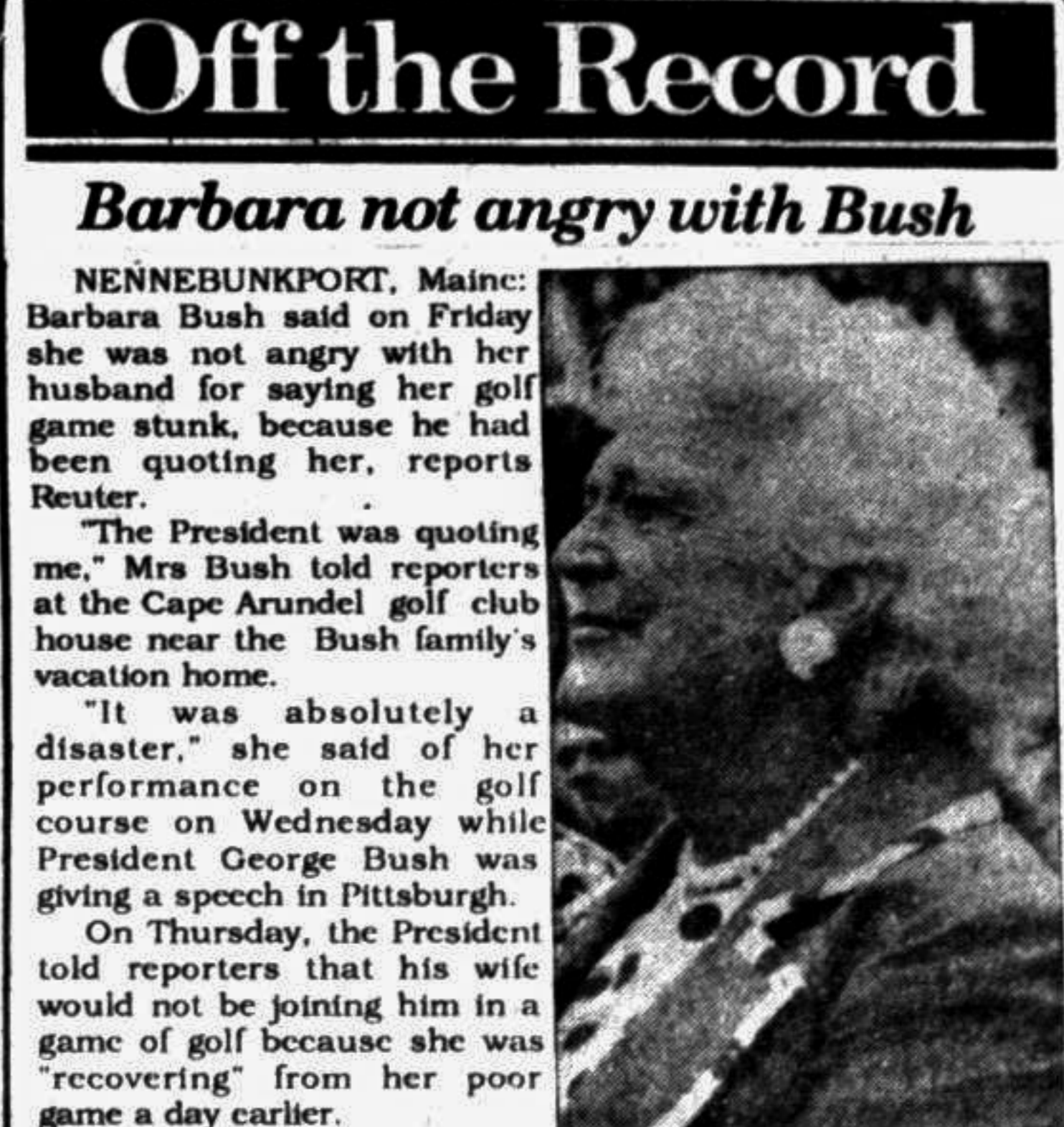
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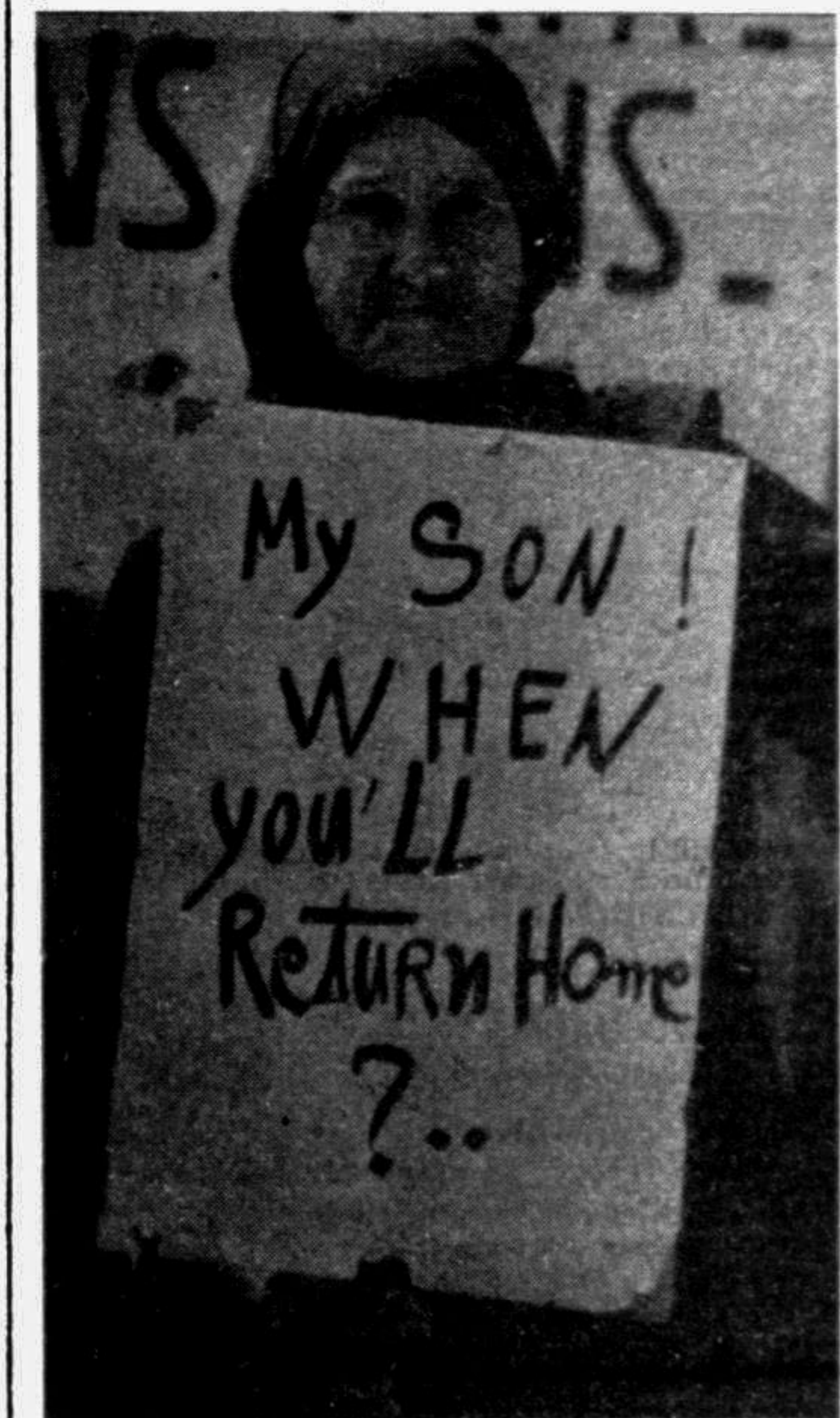
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BEIRUT: An unidentified mother of one of the Lebanese held prisoner in Israel displays a placard asking for the release of her son, here August 16 during a sit-in protest at the entrance of UN office in Beirut. — AFP/UNB photo

Men given wrong heart

PORTLAND, Oregon: A man given the wrong heart in a transplant operation was put at the top of the waiting list for another heart on Friday as hospital officials tried to find out what went wrong, reports Reuter.

"He does know what happened to him, the doctors told him last night," said Lee Lewis Husk, spokeswoman for university hospital. The man, who was not identified, was in stable but critical condition.

The spokeswoman said the man's family was upset when they found out about the mistake but were calm and hopeful the man could live for some time on the mistaken heart.

He was brought to the hospital early on Wednesday for the operation, which began at 4.30 am. It was not until five hours later that a tissue laboratory found the error, too late to stop the procedure.

The man has type O blood but was given a type A heart mistakenly identified as type O, Husk said.

There have been eight other such mix-ups and one person lived for more than two years with the wrong heart, she said.

Even chairs of G-7 leaders expensive

LONDON: An unidentified Japanese businessman paid 30,000 pounds sterling (50,000 dollars) on Friday for chairs used by leaders of the world's richest nations at last month's G-7 summit in London, reports Reuter.

The company that hired out the 26 chairs used by leaders and ministers at the summit put them up for auction to raise money for a children's hospital in Birmingham, central England.

Each bears a plaque saying which leader graced it, including Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev who met the leaders of Britain, the United States, France, Japan, Italy, Canada and Germany after they ended the Group of Seven summit.

Anti-Asian racism grips New Zealand

WELLINGTON, Aug 17: Anti-Asian racism is a "real problem" in New Zealand, Trade Negotiations Minister Philip Burdon claimed Friday, reports AFP.

Speaking at a seminar, he said innate racism threatened level of investment in New Zealand.

"I am very concerned about a degree of racial prejudice in this country against Asian investment and Asian participation which I believe is unacceptable," he said.

"We do find some appalling examples of racism in certain sections of New Zealand society where you expect better," he said. Burdon cited suburbs in Auckland known to be attracting mainly Chinese business migrants.

He said the north shore, Pakuranga and Howick were areas where racism among white, middle-class professionals was directed at Asians "we do have a real problem here," he said.

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