

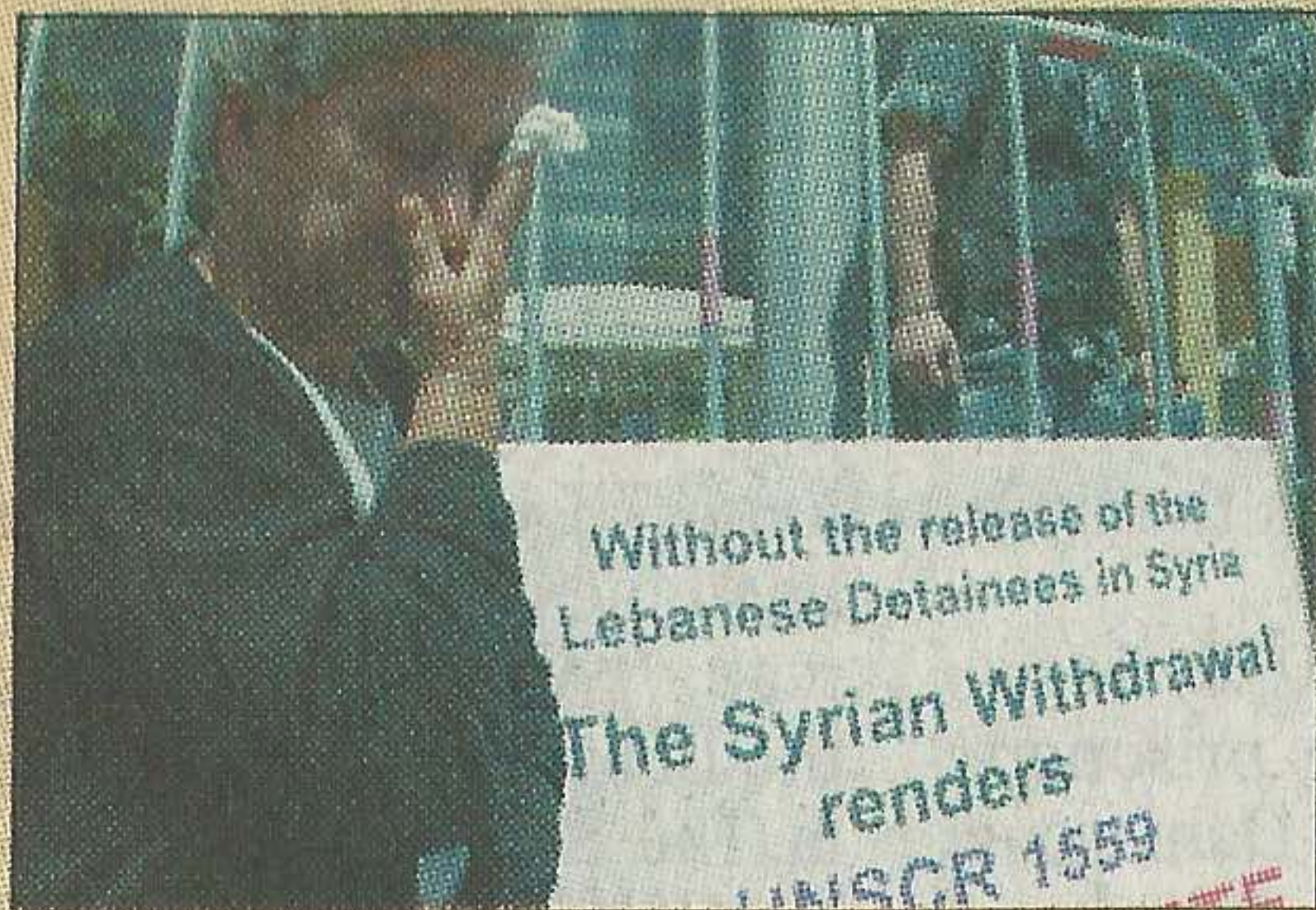
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Hungry for truth

Relatives of Lebanese citizens imprisoned in Syria started a hunger strike Monday hoping to uncover the fate of their loved ones. **Page 2**



Bomber identified

Egyptian authorities announced that an extremist student was responsible for the bomb in Cairo last week that which killed three tourists. **Page 6**



Music and unity

Beirut's Martyrs' Square has been transformed from a site of protest into a site of musical celebration as Lebanon's pop stars sing in the name of unity. **Page 12**

'No comment' as Lebanon's leaders fail to form Cabinet

HOPES FOR TIMELY ELECTIONS FADE

Nayla Assaf and Nafez Kawas
Daily Star staff

BEIRUT: Lebanon's leaders failed to form a Cabinet last night in a move that is certain to end any hope of the country's elections taking place next month.

Following a five-hour meeting at the Presidential Palace, President Emile Lahoud, Prime Minister-designate Omar Karami and Parliament Speaker Nabih Berri left the premises refusing to comment.

The latest impasse, which reveals serious cracks in the loyalist camp, was caused by political bickering over what posts some politicians were to be given.

It is understood that outgoing Interior Minister Suleiman Franjeh, who earlier refused to serve in the new Cabinet, has agreed to remain in government provided he has a say in some of the appointments.

There are also differences between the prime minister-designate and the president over the electoral law which will govern the framework within which the

weeks of constitutional vacuum and lead the country into the parliamentary elections scheduled for May.

It remains unclear when the lineup will be unveiled.

Outgoing State Minister Albert Mansour indicated surprise by the move. Mansour said: "I have no information - I do not know what happened this evening."

But an insider who attended the meeting said Karami might decide on a new date during a meeting of the Ain al-Tineh loy-

Latest impasse reveals serious cracks in the pro-Syrian camp

alist camp later today.

Talks had been underway to resolve the dispute among politicians over the new electoral law. But as a solution was nearing, other problems arose over key Cabinet portfolios.

A source close to Franjeh said the firm

The source said Lahoud had contacted Franjeh to propose the Labor portfolio "but Franjeh refused, saying he would only be part of the Cabinet if he is given the Health Ministry and if his ally, (Batroun MP) Sayed Akl, is given the Environment Ministry."

Another Syrian ally, outgoing Minister for the Displaced Talal Arslan, also insisted he be given the Public Works and Transport Ministry.

The original division had been over the electoral law, with Karami and Berri on the one side, wanting to revoke Franjeh's draft law and Franjeh and Lahoud wanting to go ahead with it because of a pledge made to Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Butros Sfeir.

But Karami had denied the fallout. He said: "The atmosphere with Minister Franjeh has always been positive."

Franjeh's draft law had been adopted by the outgoing Cabinet in February and was awaiting approval in Parliament before the February 14 killing of



Bush greets Sharon upon his arrival to the president's ranch in Crawford, Texas. The president's dog Barney looks on at left.

Hizbullah spy drone invades Israeli airspace

Leila Hatoum
Daily Star staff

BEIRUT: Hizbullah flew an unmanned surveillance drone over northern Israel yesterday afternoon in a move that signals the resistance group's determination to continue to bring its war deep into Israel.

Hizbullah said: "In response to repeated and continuous enemy violations of Lebanese airspace, the surveillance plane Mersad 1 carried out a reconnaissance mission in the skies of occupied northern Palestine, flying over several Israeli settlements."

The Israeli army confirmed the drone breached its airspace and responded by dispatching some warplanes over the southern Lebanese towns including Tyre.

The United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), which monitors the border between Israel and Lebanon, said: "There have been a few violations by drones and jets today."

The drone, the second launched by Hizbullah since last November, reached the coastal city of Akka at around 5:15 local time before returning safely to its base in southern Lebanon.

This latest action by Hizbullah comes amid mounting international and some domestic pressure for the group to disarm and become fully integrated into Lebanon's political system.

Last month U.S. President George W. Bush indicat