

International

Common religion not enough to ensure OIC unity: Laraki

Economic, trade benefits needed to safeguard the body

KUALA LUMPUR, June 30: Members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) need more than a shared religion to ensure unity and must work towards building a Muslim trade bloc, the OIC chief says.

and trade cooperation are very much in need today to safeguard the Muslim organisation. Laraki had told delegates Tuesday that global trade liberalisation "constitutes an environment which is fraught with danger."

The OIC is regrettably on the weak side. But there is power in unity and Islamic states have to cooperate and show solidarity," he said, calling for steps towards an Islamic common market.

The OIC allows ministers and heads of member states to exchange views. This is an approach which has helped us to overcome many problems which would have otherwise erupted," he said.

Solomon Islands elects new PM

SYDNEY, June 30: Opposition leader Mannasseh Sogavare was elected the new prime minister of the Solomon Islands today and pledged to resolve the Pacific nation's political crisis, reports AFP.

Iranians vote again amid tension

TEHRAN, June 30: Residents of the Iranian capital began voting again today in the second round of legislative polls, amid political tension after a spate of arrests against reformist lawyers and intellectuals, reports AFP.

Turkish parliament clears two ex-PMs of corruption charges

ANKARA, June 30: Parliament cleared two former prime ministers of corruption charges in what was considered a test of Turkey's campaign to weed out corruption and strengthen its bid to join the European Union, reports AP.

Congress rejects Basu's appeal for support to form CMC board

CALCUTTA, June 30: Congress yesterday rejected the appeal of Chief Minister Jyoti Basu to support the Left Front as the Trinamool Congress extended confidence to form the board in the hung results to the 141-ward Calcutta Municipal Corporation (CMC), reports PTL.

Chinese PM meets German Chancellor

BERLIN, June 30: German Prime Minister Zhu Rongji held talks here today with German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder at the start of an official four-day visit, reports AFP.

Taliban free 46 prisoners

KABUL, June 30: The ruling Taliban freed 46 prisoners from a jail in western Afghanistan, calling the release a "good will" offering to their enemies, the state-run radio reported Friday, says AP.



Youth Congress activists are hit with police water cannon as they attempt to break through police barricades during a protest against Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's BJP government near the parliament in New Delhi yesterday. The demonstrators demanded that the pro-BJP Hindu militant organisations RSS and Bajrang Dal be banned, as the Congress Party had blamed these organisations for the recent attacks on Christians and churches in India. — AFP photo

HR Watch urges Jakarta to control troops in Maluku

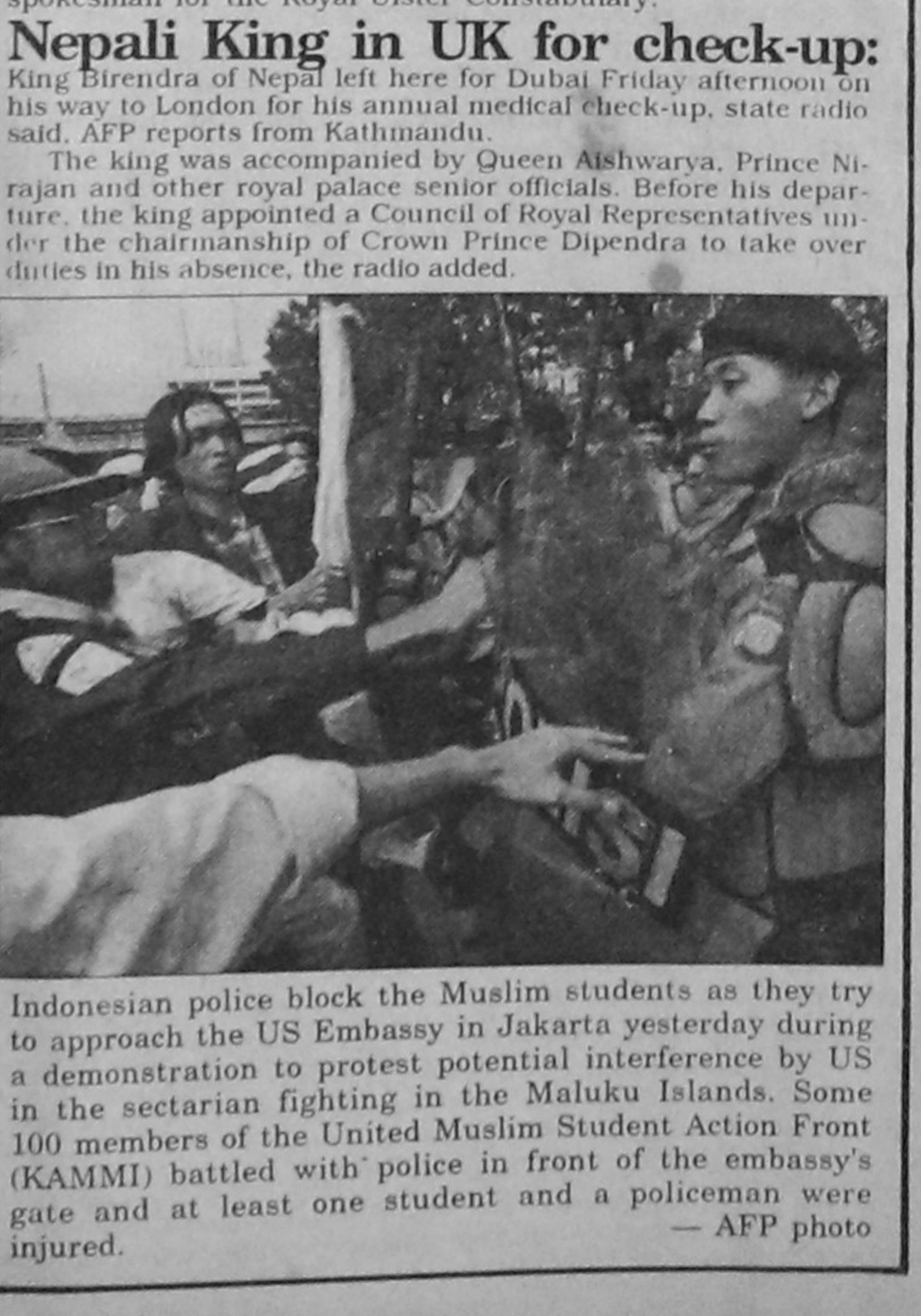
JAKARTA, June 30: Human Rights Watch today urged Indonesian authorities to suspend from service and ship out all military troops who have taken sides in the bloody Muslim-Christian fighting in the Maluku Islands, reports AFP.

Hostages at Disney resort freed: A man who took two people hostage - including his four-year-old son - in a hotel room at the Walt Disney World resort in Orlando, Florida released them unharmed early Friday, a police spokesman said, AFP reports from Miami.

Explosion in N Ireland: Police were on Friday investigating an explosion that happened overnight near Newry, southwest of Belfast, after an anonymous call to local media, AFP reports from Newry.

Nepali King in UK for check-up: King Birendra of Nepal left here for Dubai Friday afternoon on his way to London for his annual medical check-up, state radio said, AFP reports from Kathmandu.

Indonesian police block the Muslim students as they try to approach the US Embassy in Jakarta yesterday during a demonstration to protest potential interference by US in the sectarian fighting in the Maluku Islands. Some 100 members of the United Muslim Student Action Front (KAMMI) battled with police in front of the embassy's gate and at least one student and a policeman were injured. — AFP photo



Lawmakers give Putin right to sack governors

MOSCOW, June 30: Russian lawmakers today approved a controversial law allowing President Vladimir Putin to sack regional governors and dismiss regional assemblies, reports AFP.

MOM activist murder Troops called out in Hyderabad

KARACHI, June 30: Paramilitary and police were called out today in Hyderabad, southern Pakistan, to control protesters angry at the murder of an activist with the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) ethnic party, officials said, reports AFP.

Fountain of youth may not be out of reach

SHANGHAI, June 30: The fountain of youth, the age-old dream, may not be out of reach, reports Reuters. Chinese medical researchers say they have found herbal medicines effective in slowing down the inexorable process of ageing.

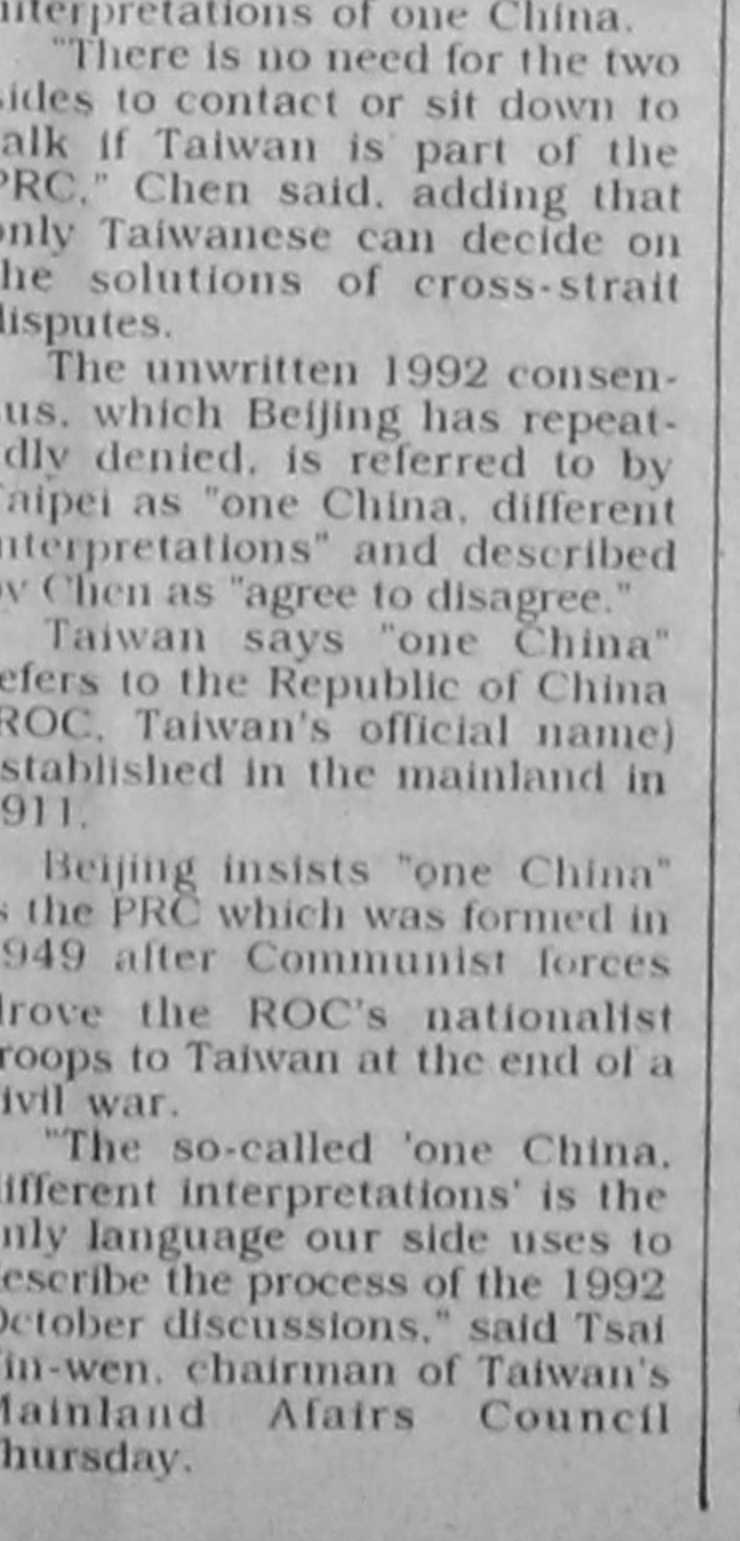
Mugabe vows to seize 800 more farms

HARARE, June 30: Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe has vowed to press ahead with the seizure of over 800 farms, as white farmers reported bands of roving war veterans descending on their land and giving them two days to leave, reports AFP.

Taiwan president rejects 'one China' principle

TAIPEI, June 30: Taiwan President Chen Shui-bian reiterated today his rejection of the "one China" principle on Beijing's terms, vowing to defend the island's dignity and sovereignty, reports AFP.

Maoist guerillas of the Peoples War Group hold a meeting on June 26 at a village in the north eastern Indian state of Bihar. The guerillas vowed revenge for the recent massacre in the village of Mianpur of 34 people including 20 women and six children from the lower caste Hindus in a revenge attack by suspected members of a banned private army. — AFP photo



Lankan SC rules tight censorship illegal

COLOMBO, June 30: Sri Lanka's Supreme Court today ruled the tight censorship imposed by President Chandrika Kumaratunga in response to the country's civil war was illegal, and ordered the state to compensate an anti-government newspaper group, reports AFP.

500 feared dead in Spice Islands' ferry disaster

JAKARTA, June 30: Nearly 500 people, most of them refugees fleeing sectarian bloodletting in Indonesia's Spice Islands, were feared dead today after an overloaded ferry was lost in stormy waters, reports AFP.

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PLO to debate proclamation of an independent state

GAZA CITY, June 30: Palestinian leaders gather in Gaza City Sunday and Monday to debate the upcoming proclamation of an independent state, a decision they insist has already been taken, regardless of the developments of the peace process, reports AFP.

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KABUL, June 30: The ruling Taliban freed 46 prisoners from a jail in western Afghanistan, calling the release a "good will" offering to their enemies, the state-run radio reported Friday, says AP.

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